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NUNLEY, John Wallace, 1945-
SISALA SCULPTURE OF NORTHERN GHANA.

University of Washington, Ph.D., 1976
Fine Arts

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Sisala Sculpture of Northern Ghana

by

John W. Nunley

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1976

Approved by Rene' A. Brumman

Program Authorized
to Offer Degree Art History

Date December, 1976

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Date: July 27, 1976

We have carefully read the dissertation entitled Sisala Sculpture of Northern Ghana

_____ submitted by
John W. Nunley _____ in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

In most West African societies, the visual arts form an impressive portion of the total cultural domain. Among the Sisala of northern Ghana, however, the arts appear to enjoy only a peripheral position. Mr. Nunley's dissertation is an attempt to deal with the basic questions of why this particular aspect of creative life is so "impoverished" among the Sisala, what are the societal and historical features that have contributed to this lack of emphasis on the visual arts, and finally, what are the roles and status reserved for the artist within such a social setting. These are all important questions in the growing field of art studies devoted to African cultures.

Nunley begins by examining the various historical and social forces which have helped to shape present day Sisala life. The available evidence indicates that this sector of northern Ghana represents a "cultural backwash", characterized by a high degree of political and social instability. Having given us an historical portrait of Sisala land, he then proceeds to describe the contemporary social and economic features of this culture. Against this backdrop, Nunley describes for us the few sculptural traditions which still exist--a handful of masks, occasional stools and staffs, and the twin surrogate figure carving, daalieriddang, a commemorative figure carving created to placate the spirit of a deceased twin. Focusing on the daalierriddang, he then examines the lives of six carvers, Semani, Gbene, Baton, Mula and Buyuga, and Ntowie, men with the special skills required to carve this particular sculptural type. A close look at each of these carvers illumines the training of these artists, the self-concept of each of these men and finally how each of them has survived as an artist within

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a society which attaches little importance to their particular abilities. Finally, Nunley attempts to wrestle with the question of how artists come to the fore in Sisala land despite the lack of encouragement offered by society as a whole. Cultural indifference, he argues, can allow for individuals to pursue their own inner artistic vision, thus enabling them to produce new and unique carving styles. The creative spirit can exist and persist within the most restrictive and indifferent environments.

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OCTOBER 23, 1976

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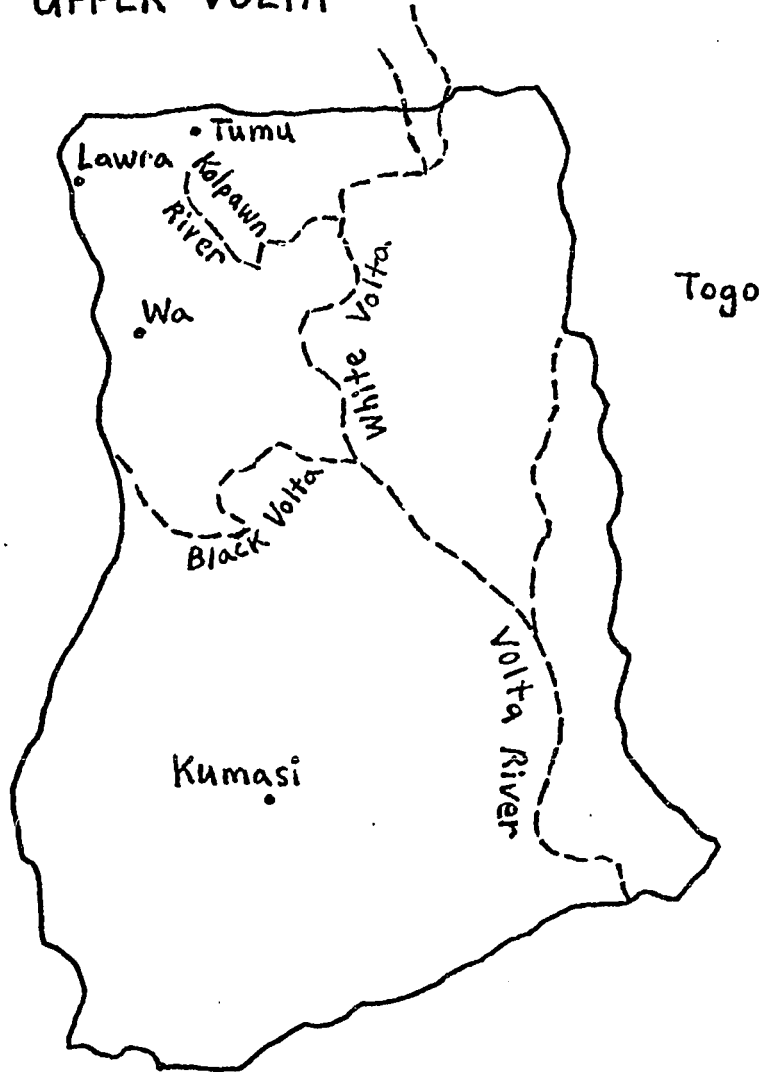
PREFACE

I wish to acknowledge Rene and Stevie Bravmann for their friendship, encouragement, and advice throughout my graduate career. Their support has been invaluable and greatly appreciated. Simon Ottenberg's thoughtful comments and questions on each draft of the paper have contributed significantly to the final shape of my work. To my wife, Linda, who supplied the illustrations of the text; and a special thanks to Louise Love whose judicious editing brought clarity to the end product.

To friends in Ghana I would like to thank my field assistants Edward Borsu Kanton, D.L. Kanton, and Kennedy Kanton; the late Tumu Kouro and Issaka Kanton; Margrit Haudenschild, Leonard Pole, Father Guido Kraemer, and Semani Wisituwo whose willingness to share his knowledge helped me to understand the life of a Sisala sculptor.

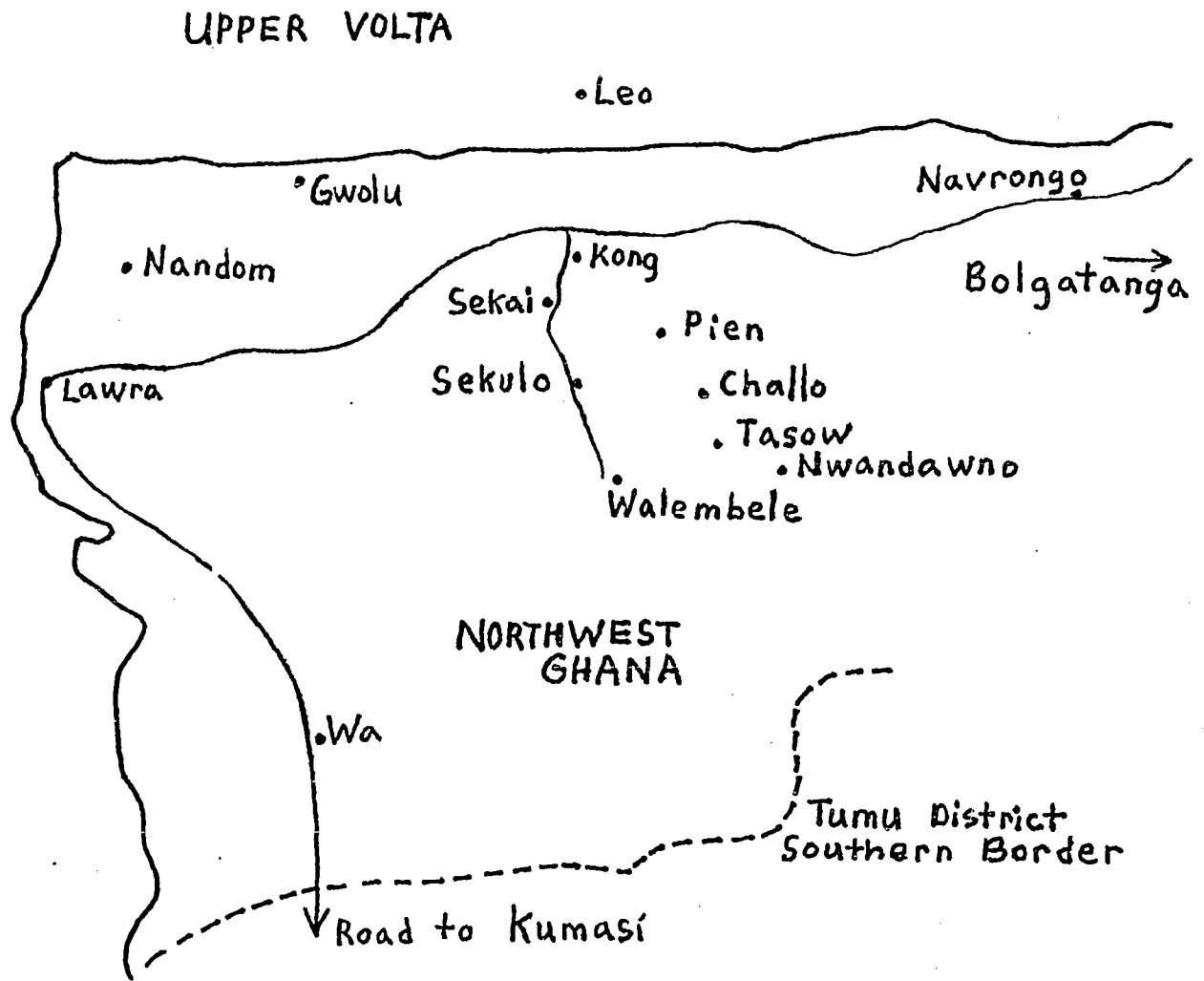
I would also like to acknowledge the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana which through my affiliation helped make this work practical.

UPPER VOLTA



MAP OF GHANA

Scale 1:4,000,000



MAP OF THE TUMU DISTRICT WITH TOWNS

Scale 1:1,000,000

(From Bruce Grindal's Education and Cultural Change Among the Sisala of Northern Ghana, p. 4.)

INTRODUCTION

As a student of West African art, I am profoundly impressed by the rich variety of sculpture that appears from one community to another in that region and by the extreme diversity of sculptural style that is characteristic of West African art. Equally exciting to me has been an ever-deepening recognition of the interrelationship between local African art forms and the societies that engender them. The masks, ancestor figures, surrogate figures, and other such ritual-based genres offer to the outsider a metaphorical view of the social, moral, and economic behavior of the people who produce them. Art, artistic process, and society in West Africa are more than closely related; they are mutually expressive. In many of the cultures of West Africa, such as Yoruba and Ibo, where carving is a thriving and vital part of ritual life, sculpture reveals aspects of social behavior from an astonishing number of vantage points. But what is the relationship of art to society where the visual arts as in Sisala-land play a minor role in the institutions of communal life?

Are Sisala art and aesthetics perhaps expressed more elaborately by other elements of culture? Certainly Sisala praise songs and the music of the paired xylophones is rich in the containment of oral tradition and a complexity of musical

style. The energy and great enthusiasm given to this art form stands in high contrast to the plastic arts of Sisala-land. James Vaughan, Jr. has noted a similar phenomenon in the arts of the Marghi of Northern Nigeria. According to Vaughan:

The Marghi have no tradition of art carving such as masks, headdresses, or statuary. The only carved artifacts are stools, stirring sticks, pestles, mortars, and beds, and of these only stools have any decorative markings. . . . Anyone with the requisite skill may make these items. Carvers are not full time specialists and are considered similar to petty merchants or butchers. . . .

Marghi do not readily perceive aesthetic qualities in objects but the performing arts of music, dance, and folklore are treated differently. Good dancers and, particularly good singers are widely known and appreciated for their talents.¹

Like Marghi musicians the reputations of Sisala praise singers and xylophonists are widespread and their talents highly sought after.

The disparity in the arts of these peoples is a phenomenon that deserves our attention, yet in regards to the Sisala it must be postponed for another occasion.² Considering only wood sculpture of the Sisala; however, can we assume that its impoverishment is inadequate to the task of social revelation or is it possible that impoverishment itself is revealing? With this question in mind I decided to carry out my research among the Sisala of Northern Ghana, a people whose art had been scantily documented by Western scholars. Prior to my journey to

¹James H. Vaughan, Jr., "əḵkyagu as Artists in Marghi Society," p. 186.

²Mary Seavoy's dissertation is concerned with Sisala music, particularly that of the xylophones. She is currently at UCLA writing up her research.

Sisala-land, I was unsure as to whether the lack of information concerning Sisala art could be attributed to mere oversight and indifference on the part of my forerunners; or whether, as I suspected, it reflected directly the low status and underdevelopment of the visual arts in the specific admixture that goes to make of Sisala culture. The publications that were available in 1972 on topics concerning the Sisala were very vague in their treatment of the arts. It, thus, became my mission to further the documentation of the art of Sisala-land and to observe and explain the relationship of art to society in this circumscribed area. As a graduate student in art history at the University of Washington and under the aegis of the African Studies program at the University of Ghana, Legon, I lived and worked with the Sisala people from December, 1972, through July, 1973.

Part of my expectation and hope, in choosing Sisala-land for my research, was to find there a Voltaic mask tradition similar to that of the Simma cult which is described by René A. Bravmann for the Vagala and Tampolense of Northern Ghana¹ and the masks Triande credits to the "Gourounsi" of Upper Volta.² On-the-site investigation, however, gradually made clear to me that Sisala-land represents an area where few mask rituals have survived the political and social turmoil of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I found three wood masks and one raffia costume all in various states of physical and ceremonial decay

¹René A. Bravmann, Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa, 1974.

²Triande, Masques et Sculptures Voltaïques, 1969.

(Plates I,X,XI). Only the mask at Tumu, the administrative center of Sisala country, is used in the original context of dance ritual. Thus, early in the field work it was apparent that wood masks were not a prominent feature of Sisala culture.

Apart from the few remains of masks and occasional stools and staffs, there are no flourishing sculptural traditions in Sisala-land. The closest thing to such a tradition is the twin surrogate figure (daalieridaang) which is carved to placate the spirit of a deceased twin. The inevitable low incidence of commissions for those carvings and the fact that the twin figure operates only on a family level and has no application to larger units of social integration prevent the making of the daalieridaang from securing an important position for Sisala carvers.

A few non-traditional sculptures from Sisala-land were displayed at the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board in Accra (The Ghana National Museum). These contemporary-looking carvings including a military man, a school boy, and a market woman aroused my curiosity about who carved them and why and in what context they might have been carved (Plates XXXIV,XXXV,XXXVI, XXXVII). Since they had been produced during a time of British occupation I considered whether the British colonial presence could be directly credited with the emergence of new art forms among the Sisala; and whether, conversely, it could be credited with the demise of traditional and ritual Sisala carving.

Other factors that I believed had to be assessed in order to arrive at an understanding of the state of the arts in Sisala-land were the slave wars and the population movements

that occurred before the arrival of the British. The French explorers Binger¹ and Delafosse² noted that Sisala villages were rent asunder and destroyed as a result of these events, and that mistrust and divisiveness were widespread throughout the affected area. Historically, the low population density and the availability of land encouraged the Dagomba, Zabarima, and other Grusi groups to immigrate to Sisala-land; this resulted in the settling of numerous ethnic groups in proximity. In the absence of strong tribal ties and village unity, the powerful slavers were encouraged to invade and exploit the region. Sisala villages were often caught between shifting alliances, making them vulnerable to the invaders as well as to each other. The migrations in many instances produced settlements composed of strangers unwilling to unite in higher forms of social organization. The resulting social fragmentation and absence of initiation societies, secret societies, and other units of ritual life effected the impoverishment of Sisala ceremonial traditions and their concomitant accoutrements. The lineage is now the only Sisala corporate group and is by far the most important instrument of enculturation; yet, within the lineage there are few demands for sculpture and, thus, little need for the skills of the carver.

The soundness of the foregoing discussion must be tested by comparative materials focusing on the plastic arts of peoples who share with the Sisala similar social structures and

¹Binger, Du Niger Au Golfe de Guinée, 1892.

²Delafosse, Haut-Senegal-Niger, 1912.

historical backgrounds. Though comparative data of this kind is not sufficiently available we may, for the moment, take a cursory look at the Sisala's neighbors who have somewhat the same backgrounds. The critical test might concern the Gurunsi peoples north of the Sisala in Upper Volta. There in spite of the slave raid and colonization the carving of masks and figures is still very active. Reports, however, suggest that the area has remained quite stable experiencing little immigration, rather some of the people there migrated south to Sisala-land. The fact that the Sisala blame the British policy of forced labor for the atrophy of their masking tradition underlines our need to understand the impact of the French occupation of Upper Volta. The French administration may well have encouraged mask traditions as was once exemplified at Leo, Upper Volta (fifteen miles north of Tumu) where the former colonists sponsored masquerade competitions among nearby villages in celebration of July 14, the date marking the anniversary of the French revolution. East of Sisala-land live the Builsa who (based upon the field notes of Roy Sieber in 1964) also have few forms of the plastic arts. Builsa history may be similar to that of the Sisala, but again, we simply lack the information to make this a test case. The argument for the negative impact of Sisala social structure and history on the plastic arts is plausible, yet its strength will be determined by its ability to withstand comparative analysis of future research.

Given these qualifications it is likely nevertheless that the cataclysmic demographic upheavals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought about significant change in the

production of the visual arts in Sisala-land. Thus, it became part of my job to evaluate to what extent social breakdown contributed to a decline in particular art traditions and how it has affected the canons of style. Towards this end Chapter I provides the social, historic and demographic material that is needed to deal with questions of how the arts in Sisala-land fit into the larger cultural context.

The fact that the history of Sisala-land can be used to illuminate the present condition of wood carving traditions prompted me to use both synchronic and diachronic methods in the study of Sisala sculpture. Towards the application of these methods I worked with several carvers directly and, at the same time, gathered historical, social, economic and political information about Sisala-land. My primary method of field work was that of participation-observation. Much of my time was spent visiting as many villages as I could in the hope of reaching a representative sample of Sisala carvers. By the end of three months of inquiry, I had made contact with five carvers who demonstrated great variety in their sculptural abilities and in their commitment to artistic specialization. I also learned of a carver who had died in 1957 whose reputation as a sculptor had earned him the exclusive title of saaruhien, or first carver. The six carvers around whom my research centered all had one ability in common--they had all made the human figure, primarily in the form of the daalieridaang. This is the criterion I used to select carvers other than those persons who might engage in carving to more practical and non-ritual-based ends.

The most impressive or the living carvers, Semani Wisituwo exhibited more skill and dedication than the other artists; he believed himself to be first a specialist craftsman and secondly a farmer. This self-conception is a sharp departure from the Sisala norm by which manhood and farming are strictly identified. Many difficulties beset my relationship with Wisituwo. As a practicing diviner, he claimed that his artistic abilities were linked with his worship of the fairy spirits (kantomung). Under these circumstances it was necessary for me to become Semani's apprentice, present sacrifices to his fairy shrines, and occasionally live with his family. Once I had affiliated so closely with Semani, most of my research was focused on the apprenticeship. Nevertheless, I remained in contact with the other four carvers: Gbene, Baton, Mula, and Buyugo, and also collected information concerning the life and reputation of Ntowie, the saaruhien.

After describing the varieties of wood carving that I found to exist in Sisala-land in Chapter II, I have devoted Chapter III to the four "non-specialist" carvers and a separate chapter each to Ntowie (Chapter IV) and Semani (Chapter V). Because Sisala culture does not encourage the production of art or the pursuit of specialist occupations, the two carvers, Ntowie and Semani, who chose to reject the prescribed Sisala "way" in favor of their own inner promptings, symbolize through their lives as well as their works the high degree of individuality that characterizes the few examples of Sisala art that do exist. The art forms they produced are as much a reflection of

their own tastes and inner vision as they are reflections of cultural norms and rituals.

Neither Ntowie nor Semani could operate totally outside of the economic and social parameters of Sisala life. As a result, they were forced to exercise considerable ingenuity to effect a compromise between their own artistic temperaments and the restrictive dictates of Sisala cultural norms. To understand how the two specialist carvers found support, both economic and spiritual, for their anomalous lives became a theme of importance in my study and a matter of especial fascination to me.

The secondary method of research, that which supported the diachronic approach, was the historic reconstruction of the Sisala people from oral accounts that covered royal genealogies, migration narratives, and stories about the remains of old artifacts. Other data were extracted from accounts of the nineteenth century slave raids, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial explorations, and scholarly publications in the fields of agriculture and land settlement. Further information came from reports of district administrators, diaries, my own observations, interviews, apprenticeship, and publications by M. Manoukian (1951), Grindal (1969), Toumani Triande (1969), and Mendonsa (1973).

I also employed some of the standard methodology of art historians and the survey technique to canvass a sample of Sisala citizens in an attempt to discover whether or not there exists a shared aesthetic or culture-wide attitude towards sculpture and wood carvers. The results of this survey and the inferred concept of tribal and individual styles are detailed

in Chapter VI. In general, the public's lack of understanding and interest in the carvers allows for significant variation in sculpture, particularly in the production of the daalieridaang. Thus, out of indifference, springs a broad tolerance for unique and original carving styles.

The diversity that is demonstrated in Sisala figural carving contradicts the one-tribe/one-style assumption that has been made by many art historians in the past. This view of tribal art sees the tribe as a network of interrelated settlements whose features, including sculptural style, are similar throughout. This hypothesis is seriously called into question with regard to the Sisala twin carvings which embrace a wide range of individual styles that vary greatly in size, proportions, surface treatment, and applied decoration. Such artistic variation in terms of the one-tribe/one-style hypothesis would imply that certain features of Sisala society differ significantly from one location to another. While it is certainly true for some groups, like the Yoruba, Fang and Dogon that there exists a collective world view that is plastically expressed with stylistic cohesion, it is also the case that some societies do not express themselves artistically with comparable uniformity. Where the arts are an integral part of a tribe's total expression of culture, one could reasonably expect a high degree of uniformity in form and style (commensurate with the degree of homogeneity and integration of the culture). However, in a case like Sisala-land, where the plastic arts are everywhere ignored and where the practice of those arts is, almost by definition, an expression of deviance, the creations of those few

individuals who persist in artistic pursuits are certain to be highly individualistic, original, and innovative. The style will reveal strong inner drives rather than conventionalized external traditions.

The essential insight that grew out of my work in Sisalaland was the conviction that the union of individual experience and social setting are what conspire to determine the configuration of Sisala sculpture. This proposition assumes that the art of a people can be understood by examining the artistic process within the broader context of the social and historical setting. Conversely, analysis of the art itself should shed light on this process, the extent of artistic specialization which is part of the process, the type of social organization for which the art exists, and even something about the history of the society that produces it.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

It is desirable to postpone the direct examination of Sisala wood sculpture long enough to provide a sketch of the wider cultural setting. This chapter should anticipate and answer questions that would otherwise be raised concerning the geographic, demographic, religious, diplomatic, social, and historical facts of Sisala life. All of these aspects of Sisala culture have relevance and ramifications for the arts. In later chapters it will be demonstrated that, against this larger cultural framework, the individual artist can sometimes emerge in Sisala-land and single-handedly challenge (with varying degrees of success) the cultural and historic forces that conspire to discourage the development of endemic traditions in the plastic arts.

Geography

The Sisala are located in the Tumu District in the Upper Region of Northern Ghana (Maps 1 and 2). Their settlements border the Lobi and Dagari people to the West and the Builsa to the East. The southern boundary is situated at about 10 degrees north latitude, nearly parallel with the old city of Wa. The northern frontier is more clearly defined by the Upper Volta border with only a few Sisala villages beyond that line.

Like most of the savannah Sisala-land is covered by hard laterite soils which accomodate sparse woodland areas and grasslands. Wild animals including antelope, lions and elephants were previously abundant in the area, but stepped-up hunting activity coupled with the widespread use of firearms has diminished the supply. Winds off the Atlantic coast bring the rains from April through September, the wet season. During this period most people move from the village compounds into temporary shelters on the farm, making it more convenient for planting, weeding and protecting the primary staples of millet cereals and yams from the animals. A variety of fresh vegetables are grown on smaller plots near the village compounds. From September through April, the dry season, more time is spent hunting, repairing compounds, and clearing new land. This period is also marked by intense ritual life and second burial rites of those who died the previous season.

Tumu is the headquarters of the District; there reside the District Administrative Officer and the once Paramount chief of the Sisala, the Tumu Kouro. A training college, two middle schools, several primary schools, the largest Sisala market, and the only outlet in the District for the Ghana National Trading Corporation are also located in Tumu.

Language Classification

The Sisala are a part of the Gourounsi or Grusi speaking peoples.¹ Louise Tauxier, an early twentieth century

¹"Gourounsi" is the french way of spelling the word whereas the English is "Grusi."

Africanist, believed that the term Grusi was used by the Mossi to describe the autochthonous groups within their empire in the Voltaic basin.¹ The late nineteenth century explorer Maurice Delafosse claimed that the word described such diverse groups as the Fulse, Nionionse, Kipirisi, Nuruma, Sissala and the Nounouma.² Tauxier's linguistic classification of the Grusi included the Kipirisi (Lelese), Nounouma, Kassouna-Fra, Kassouna, Sissala, Larhama, Kansi (Builsa), Nionionsi (Foulse), Ko, and the Degha.³ More recently, Joseph Greenberg has included within the Grusi language group of the Gur subfamily the Awuna, Kasena, Nunuma (Nounouma), Lyele, Tamprusi, Kanjaga (Buils), Degha, Siti Kurumba (Fulse), and the Sisala.⁴ Bendor-Samuel notes that within the Grusi subgroup there is more linguistic divergence than among the major groups of Gur. This is most likely the result of political and social fragmentation that has long characterized the history of the Grusi people.⁵

Settlement Pattern

According to J. Brian Wills there are two general types of settlement in Northern Ghana. The most common one is the dispersed settlement where compounds of either circular or square

¹L. Tauxier, Nouvelle Notes sur Le Mossi et le Gouronsi, p. 36.

²M. Delafosse, The Negroes of Africa, p. 101.

³Tauxier, op. cit., pp. 46-51.

⁴Joseph Greenberg, The Languages of Africa, p. 8.

⁵Bendor-Samuel, "The Grusi Sub-Group of the Gur Languages," Journal of West African Languages, p. 49.

rooms are separated by farm land. The other type is the nucleated village, consisting of interconnected compounds of square rooms with farm land surrounding the village at a distance of four to ten miles.¹ The Sisala live in a second type of settlement where clans occupy one or more villages and in some instances several clan fragments constitute a particular settlement. Sisala villages are supported by a system of land rotation where five to seven planting seasons are followed by about a fifteen-year fallow period.

The population of Sisala-land in 1960 averaged 16 per square mile whereas in the dispersed homesteads of the Dagari, Tallensi, and Lowiilli of Northern Ghana it was respectively 105, 204 and 105 per square mile. The Sisala's immediate eastern neighbors, the Builsa, numbered 59 per square mile according to that census.² The large unused areas necessary for land rotation foster molestation by game animals and the spread of disease which further limit population growth. Polaris noted that onchocerciasis (river blindness) and trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) occasionally destroyed entire Sisala villages. At one time the town of Bakwala, with a population of 263 was nearly annihilated by sleeping sickness and as a result was relocated at its present locale 5 miles south of Tumu.³ Babatu's slave raids also contributed to the reduction of population; and in areas where this occurred, wild game returned bringing

¹J. Wills, Agriculture and Land Use in Ghana, p. 216.

²B.T. Grindal, "An Ethnographic Classification of the Sisala of Northern Ghana," Ethnology, 11, 4, p. 422.

³Polaris, West Africa.

with it the tsetse infestation. Once the land was covered by the bush, it required tremendous energy to reclaim it. Consequently, people remained on the old soil, thereby accelerating erosion.¹

The low population density of the last two centuries combined with a rather flexible system of land rights has stimulated migration in the Sisala region. According to Pogucki, a migrant could easily acquire land through original occupation, long-term usage, conquest, or transfer. He adds that land rights were nullified once farm plots became fallow.² Under these conditions strangers to Sisala-land could establish themselves with little effort.

Early Migration

The oral tradition of the Crow clan illustrates the dramatic impact of migration upon the people of Northwest Ghana.³ The original home of the Crow was Karaga in Northeast Ghana, and there the clan was part of the Tampolensi and Vagala people.⁴ Oral tradition reveals that a fight among the Tampolensi and the Crow erupted over the distribution of a dog sacrifice, thus causing the breakup of the group. The head of

¹T.E. Hilton, "The Settlement Pattern of the Tumu District of Northern Ghana," pp. 869-883.

²Pogucki, Gold Coast Land Tenure, pp. 217-230.

³The history of the clan was obtained from interviews with the late Tumu Kouro and from Robert Rattray's book, Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland.

⁴Interview with the Tumu Kouro at Tumu, December 28, 1972. Confirmed in Rattray, p. 516.

the clan, Kpotabagaben, led his people from Karaga along a northwest route to Nyagene, then through Yagaba, Nangruma, Igantu (Yigantu), Gyikwie, and finally to their present location at Tumu.¹

The question concerning the date of the Crow's arrival at Tumu is far from settled; yet, several clues provided by the late Kouro's genealogy of the clans ruling elders place the Crow at Tumu by 1800.

Crow migration coincides with other social movements and political instability of late eighteenth century Northern Ghana. During this period Karaga, the original home of the Crow, was wracked by the tension and uncertainty of the slave raids. The town was divided into many strangers' quarters for traders and dislocated persons, and it functioned as a missing persons center and as a protective shelter.² Political flux coupled with the prevailing threat of slavery provided more than enough incentive for the Crow to emigrate.

Upon arriving at Tumu the clan conquered and organized a people called the Kulumwala. Rattray was informed that the Crow also attacked the nearby Han viara, but were defeated at Gyikwie.³ This offensive action indicates that the Crow were interested in political expansion well before British contact, but resistance

¹Rattray, op. cit., p. 468.

²Interview with the Tumu Kouro, January 4, 1973.

³Rattray, op. cit., p. 468. The Han viara includes those who share a common ancestry and who refuse to drink from a red pot.

from neighboring groups especially the powerful Han viara impeded their efforts.¹

Immigration in Sisala-land like that of the Crow resulted in the settling of numerous ethnic groups and clan fragments in the same territory. It became dangerous for one to travel outside his village, for strangers of nearby settlements might kidnap the unprotected and sell them to the slavers. Conditions worsened until the arrival of the British who the Sisala hailed as the "bringers of peace."

Dagomba and Zabarima Occupation

The Dagomba and Zabarima invasions of Northern Ghana were largely in response to the expanding Ashanti Confederacy to the south. As early as 1744-45 the Ashanti exacted a tribute from the Dagomba amounting to 500 slaves, 200 cattle, 400 sheep, 400 cotton cloths and 200 cotton and silk cloths.² Taxation continued to the end of the nineteenth century and by 1860 the tribute totaled between 200 and 3,300 slaves each year.³ Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Dagomba warriors managed to collect the tribute including slaves;

¹Such was the pattern of conquest throughout the Voltaic region until the twentieth century particularly among the Dagomba and Mamprusi of Northern Ghana, and the Mossi of Upper Volta. It is possible that the Crow themselves were formally Dagomba; Kanton II claimed that at Karaga his ancestors spoke Dagomba. Like the Dagomba the Crow may have disposed of the autochthonous Kulumwala earthpriest, intermarried with the daughters of the local inhabitants, and claimed ownership of the earth shrines and subsequently the land.

²Ivor Wilks, The Northern Factor in Ashanti History, p. 14.

³J. Holden, "The Zabarima Conquest of Northwest Ghana," p. 63.

however, when the Dagomba failed to meet greater Ashanti demands, they hired Zabarima mercenaries from Mali to capture slaves in the Sisala territories.¹

The Dagomba-Zabarima alliance was abandoned in the 1860's when the mercenaries themselves became interested in state building and trade in Northern Ghana. Alfa Gazare dan Mahama, a Zabarima in charge of a Dagomba cavalry unit, was the first to rebel and he united with the Sisala to expel the Dagomba.² In the early 1880's the famous Zabarima military figure Babatu succeeded Alfa Gazare, severed all alliances with the Dagomba as well as the Sisala, and established a trading emporium at Kasana. He overcame an organized resistance by the Sisala at Sekulo and Sakailo and then opened relations with the elder's council of Walembele.³

Zabarima occupation of Sisala-land depended on divisiveness among Sisala villages and the creating and breaking of alliances--in short, a strategy of divide and conquer. To clarify lines of authority the Zabarima bestowed titles of chieftaincy upon clans of non-autochthonous origin thereby stimulating the development of secular chiefs.⁴ With these tactics Babatu might

¹Polaris, op. cit., p. 155. Delafosse remarked that the Sisala, a rather "insignificant people," were pressured by the Nankana from the north and the Dagomba to the east causing vast reductions of their territory. M. Delafosse, Haut-Senegal Niger, Tome I.

²Holden, op. cit., p. 65.

³Ibid., p. 71.

⁴Grindal, op. cit., p. 421.

have created a Grusi state, but the British position of strict neutrality essential to Zabarima conquest was to be short-lived.

The British maintained a somewhat ambiguous policy with respect to Babatu, though they valued his force as a buffer against Samori Toure, the great moslim military figure. His presence on the other hand, endangered the British ally, the Dogomba. In the absence of a well defined British policy Zabarima power increased and by 1895 Babatu claimed hegemony over the Dagari, Kipirsi, Sisala, and Builsa. To secure his position he sought a non-aggression pact with Samori; such a threat to British colonization could not long be ignored.¹

The initial action against Babatu was not taken by the British, but by Sisala warriors from Challo who ambushed a Zabarima munitions caravan. Their attack was countered by a punitive expedition resulting in the capture of the Sisala villages of Nabolo, Basiasan, Kulufu, Nwandawno, Zinzini, Bujan, and Bechembeli. The Sisala defeat was accomplished within less than one month; yet it demonstrated that, through alliances, Babatu's position was vulnerable.

Opposition to the Zabarima also came from Amaria, a celebrated Grusi soldier who achieved a high position in the Zabarima military structure and enjoyed the cooperation of many Sisala towns as well as local recruits. During the early 1890's he led a revolt against Babatu and by 1896 had captured Seti in Upper Volta and signed a treaty with the French; thereafter

¹Holden, *op. cit.*, p. 81. For more information on Samori Toure's attempt to create an Islamized state in Gonja see Nehemia Levtzion's Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa, 1968.

proclaiming himself the chief of all Grusi speaking peoples.¹ According to Holden, Amaria controlled the Northern Grusi, whereas the Sisala to the south were still under the hegemony of Babatu. The situation was considered untenable by the British who with the help of the Sisala defeated the Zabarima in 1897.

Migration, invasion and colonization of the nineteenth and twentieth century significantly affected Sisala social organization. The Dagomba, Zabarima slavers, and numerous Grusi groups who came to Sisala territory were looking for new land, refuge from the slave trade, or opportunities for political exploitation. The intruders settled nearby the autochthonous peoples and married their daughters; and as a result lineages and clans of diverse origins often lived in the same village. Strong family allegiances and separate traditions prevented these groups from uniting under a strong centralized leadership. Later, the British implementation of the dual authority of the District Commissioner and the Native Authority (rule by local chiefs), was to further hinder Sisala unification.² Mendonsa rightfully concludes:

The history of Sisala-land shows a high degree of tribal mixture and clan migration and in the north-east this was more extensive and hence the clan structure there is

¹Ibid., p. 82. Whittall referred to a powerful "Gourounsi" chief at Leo who was Kasari's house boy. This is no doubt the chief Holden called Amaria-Whittall's Amarija--who revolted against the Zabarima and with the aid of the French broke Babatu's political hold in the North. Babatu retreated south through Sisala-land, but was driven into berman country by Captain Sir Donald Stewart. Whittall, A Short History of the Tumu District Before it Came Under British Influence, p. 157.

²For a detailed account of Sisala political and social development see Eugene Mendonsa's dissertation, Divination Among the Sisala of Northern Ghana, 1973.

more dispersed. A village there tends to have various segments of different clans within it. In this case the clan segment acts much as the village in the localized clan of the south-east.¹

Under these circumstances the development of political structures capable of organizing lineages, clans and villages within larger social groups was unlikely. In the absence of higher units of social integration the enculturation of Sisala offspring was primarily left in the hands of the lineage and kaala, those agnatic kin who share the same courtyard within the lineage compound.

Without social solidarity and unifying traditions, endogenous craft groups like those among the Bobo, Senufo, and the Bamana chose not to live in Sisala-land; and though Mossi brass casters and weavers worked as itinerant craftsmen in the region, they did not stimulate the growth of specialized craft institutions. Thus, Sisala artists and particularly wood carvers (saaro) were obliged to learn their skills within the context of the lineage and kaala.

There is no doubt that in the short run the Zabarima and Dagomba wars were destructive to Sisala social organization and consequently to the plastic arts of the region. Some scholars; however, have pointed out that confederacies, chieftaincies and other centralized groupings were forming during the latter phase of the conquests. Confirmation of this comes from the second District Commissioner of Tumu who reported that a petty chieftaincy at Dolizan protected its nearby villages from the Dagomba raiders by hiring Zabarima soldiers with funds obtained from an

¹Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 59.

inter-village system of taxation.¹ Moreover, Tamakloe in his history of Northern Ghana states that Babatu subjected Tumu to a large tribute of one million cowries and 100 slaves. The immensity of such a tax must have required a measure of administrative organization on the Sisala's part to insure its collection.²

Military contingencies of Sisala soldiers also contributed to the widening system of social integration and Sisala group consciousness. Recruits from Lambussie and Tumu united against the Zabarima at Mwandawno, while divisions from Gwolu, Ulu, Sorbele, and Kasana combined with Amaria in the revolt against the intruders.³ Sisala military alliances extending beyond the clan or village certainly encouraged politically oriented individuals whose interests were served by promoting pan-Sisalaism.⁴

Paralleling the move toward unification among the Sisala was a shift from dispersed settlements to more compact defensible villages where lineage compounds became linked by continuous walls. Innovations in building technique and structural elements like the mud roof and parapets were also utilized for defense. Grindal's conclusion that nucleated settlements are a result of nineteenth century Zabarima warfare is supported by

¹P. Whittall, op. cit., p. 156.

²Holden, op. cit., p. 78.

³Ibid., p. 80.

⁴Henri Labouret concluded that the presence of Islam at Walemblele further contributed to the developing concept of chieftaincy among the Sisala. H. Labouret, Africa Before the Whiteman.

Hilton who notes that settlements in southern Sisala-land are separated by large open spaces between compounds, whereas to the north the ravages of war forced people into compact defensible settlements.¹ Conditions of the latter sort existed at Tumu; for when the British arrived in 1906, they declared that all compounds should be separated by a minimum space of 100 yards. Ostensibly the order was effected to reduce the possibility of epidemics and generally improve the deplorable health conditions of the village.² Prior to British occupation the village must have resembled a fortress like the present-day settlement of Sekai twelve miles south of Tumu.

Though most historians have emphasized the destructive role played by the Zabarima it is more likely that the invader's primary interest was the development of trade and politics in Northwest Ghana. The slave trade was merely a short term project in the larger process of state formation. The success of Zabarima expansion depended not upon military conquest, but on expanded commerce and the neutrality of the colonial powers. Kwabene Dickson, an economic historian at the University of Ghana, believes that the Bole-Wa-Tumu route leading to Leo, Seti and Oaugadougou could have supplied Babatu with guns, cattle, cotton, salt, Kola nut, and the revenue needed to support his regime.³

European explorers and military personnel were unfamiliar

¹Grindal, op. cit., p. 420.

²The Official Diary, pp. 161-2.

³K. Dickson, Historical Geography of Ghana, p. 113.

with the complexities of small scale warfare; consequently their reports contributed to the negative opinion about nineteenth century Sisala social organization. Binger and Delafosse believed that the Sisala were completely disorganized owing to their individual spirit which obstructed state formation, while it stimulated internicine fighting. They also believed that under these circumstances the slavers and Babatu's state-building stratagem were inevitable.¹ In retrospect these seemingly divisive Sisala activities may well have been the initial step towards social unification extending beyond the lineage or clan.

Islam, The Orthodox Faith

The spread of Islam in Sisala-land was rather late compared to its earlier advances in adjacent territories. The Sisala generally acknowledged Babatu as the propagator of Islam; and, according to Tauxier, persons forced to join his army returned to their native villages converted. At Lambussie seven roofless mosques each constructed of low wooden walls and earth floors were built after the return of local Sisala males from Babatu's forces.² In the late 1880's Musa, a Sisala muslim and an officer in the Zabarima army established a large trading network at Seti and then pushed south conquering fifteen Sisala villages taking slaves and making converts along the way. (Musa's rebellion and commercial adventures were ended by Babatu in 1892.³)

¹Delafosse, op. cit., Tome I, p. 349.

²Tauxier, Le Noir du Sudan, p. 359.

³Ibid., p. 354.

Despite these early attempts at conversion the number of Sisala muslims at the beginning of the twentieth century must have been small. The Ghana District Office record of 1912 lists seven muslims in Tumu, surprisingly few considering that the village was a major terminal on the trade route from Bole to Oaugadougou.¹ The number of Islamized Sisala may have increased by 1915, for according to the Tumu record book the first celebration of Ramadan was held that year. Perhaps British efforts to develop Tumu's market attracted more traders and their families thereby creating a better atmosphere for the spread of Islam.

There are no statistics concerning the size of the Islamic community at Tumu now, but probably well over half of the residents in the zongo, the stranger's quarters, are muslim. Even among the Crow several of the chief's brothers and sons claim Islam as their faith. Many Sisala become muslims in the hope of establishing private businesses. The realization of their ambitions has had a tremendous impact on the development of the Tumu markets, and has also contributed to the widening world view of the Sisala.

Ahamdiya Islam

The spread of Ahmadiya Islam is dramatically symbolized by the Tumu mosque which is the largest structure in the village excluding the buildings constructed by the National and Regional government. After World War II a highly motivated group of followers introduced the Ahmadiya sect to the West coast of

¹The Tumu District Record Book, December 12 entry.

Africa. The movement eventually challenged orthodox Islam in the interior of Ghana, and a new sect at Wa under the leadership of Imam Alhaj Salih, was established. Imam Salih educated his son in Arabic and religion and in 1960 his son was posted at Tumu as a teacher at the zongo primary school and the training college. Three years later he returned to the Lawra District to teach Arabic and to make converts at Nandom and Lambussie, then in 1972 he moved to Tumu and became Imam Qasin, the leader of the new mosque.¹

The Ahmadiya mosque has attracted many non-Sisala into the district; among the elders at the time of my research were twenty Wala, thirty-five Sisala, two Dagari, and three Fra Fra.² Included in the congregation are such notables of the village as the administrator of the Ghana National Trading Corporation, a few traders, lorry owners and drivers, tailors, teachers, agricultural officers and the only butcher in town.

The impact of Ahmadiya as well as orthodox Islam in the villages surrounding Tumu has not been clearly assessed, but certainly the Tumu zongo has been affected by its presence. Its impact is seen in the mosque's evening classes which will undoubtedly broaden its pupils' outlook and encourage their contact with people of different ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, these classes should provide opportunities for some individuals to acquire new skills in the crafts and commerce which, in turn, will better prepare them for life outside the district.

¹Interview with Imam Abdula Qasim, January, 1973.

²Dates for the construction of the mosque have not been determined, but hopefully these will be known in the near future.

Islam offers economic alternatives that compete successfully with Sisala traditional specialized skills. Though the main occupation in the district is the farming of yam and millet cereals the arts of divination, blacksmithing, carving and even brass casting have traditionally served as alternatives for individuals seeking social mobility and cash income. More effective to these ends, Islam can offer its converts the opportunity to become a lorry driver, trader, small retail merchant or tailor. These occupations seem to be monopolized by muslims in Northern Ghana and anyone wishing to pursue them will do so at the expense of traditional Sisala crafts.

The Mossi

The Mossi Empire has occupied a dominant position in the Voltaic basin for the past four centuries. Through a pattern of conquest and occupation ancestors of the present Mossi kings established the Dagomba and Mamprusi states in Northern Ghana and the Mossi Empire at Ouagadougou, Upper Volta. Maurice Delafosse visited the Morho-Naba (the Mossi king at Oaugadougou) in the last decade of the nineteenth century and was told that the kingdom encompassed the Nounouma, Nankana, and the Sisala people.¹ The royal claim is slightly exaggerated, for evidence indicates that the British part of Sisala territory was occupied only by Dagomba and Zabarima forces. The Naba's reputation, however, was well known to many Sisala chiefs like the late Tumu Kouro who frequently described with pride his interview with the Mossi king. Generally Mossi influence upon the Sisala has been

¹M. Delafosse, op. cit., Tome II, p. 126.

the consequence of its southward expansion which forced intermediary groups like the Dagari and other Grusi groups into Sisala territory, thus contributing to the complexity of the population movements there.

Mossi impact on the Sisala has been primarily in the areas of trade and the crafts. The Official Diary of Tumu records numerous complaints made by local Sisala about the high market prices charged by the Mossi merchants.¹ The "foreigners" maintained monopolies in brass-casting, weaving, and general trade. Itinerant Mossi brass casters supplied the Sisala with various kinds of body ornaments and funerary bells called pissa.² Cotton thread was also introduced by the Mossi who wove it in four inch strips for making men's smocks. In the early part of the twentieth century Mossi weavers rented space in compounds of small Sisala villages like Kong and there they produced cloth for the local male population.³ The presence of these craftsmen stimulated Sisala cotton production of which in 1914 the British purchased 90 pounds from Sekai, 139 from Kwapo, 72 from Basisan, and 27 from Dolbizan.⁴ Presently Mossi weavers live in the zongos of larger Sisala towns supplying the bulk of the hand-woven material.⁵

¹The Official Diary from the Tumu District Record, entry 6/19/15.

²Interview with Baoule at Tumu.

³Interview at Kong.

⁴Official Diary, entry 1/19/14.

⁵Economic dependence on the Mossi extended to other parts of the Grusi territories and according to Tauxier the itinerant weavers made cloth for the Kassounas, and not until the latter

The British

In 1906 the British established a station in Tumu which later became the District headquarters. Throughout the Northern territories the colonials implemented the Native Authority and as Chamberlain wrote Hodgson in February of 1900, "It would be impolite even if it were practical not to utilize the agency of the native chiefs."¹ Chamberlain apparently overestimated the institution of Tumu chieftaincy, for succeeding commissioners complained of the chief's inability to execute British policy.

The objective of British occupation in Sisala-land was primarily economic, and in 1907 Captain Poole effected the Mines and Labour Requirements Act obligating the Sisala to work in the mines and in general construction. The chiefs in 1906-07 supplied the Captain with 100 men a day for the building of 2 European bungalows, soldier lines for 25 men, a guard room, magazine, vault, district court, quarter-master store, and a hospital store.² The British were enthusiastic about the prospect of developing trade at the Tumu market and in 1908 a caravancera consisting of a 5-foot walled enclosure and 6 huts were constructed as the exemplary terminal for other markets in the district. British administrators believed that the cattle caravans from Upper Volta and Mali, Mossi traders, local iron smelting, and the beeswax industry justified the development of

were taken as slaves or converted to Islam did they learn to weave.

¹Holden, op. cit., p. 86.

²Polaris, op. cit., p. 389.

the Tumu market.¹ Revenue from the caravan trade and general commerce, however, did not meet the costs of British occupation and the Tumu station was closed in February 1909.²

The station was reopened in 1912 and with hardened determination the first commissioner, Whittall, ordered the Tumu headmen to deal directly with him rather than through the chief.³ Still the acting commissioner of 1915 complained that the inability to conscript Sisala labor slowed construction of a roof for the market. Ambivalence of the first colonial administrators concerning Indirect Rule probably hindered the development of a strong chieftaincy as well as the execution of British policy.

Among the Sisala, Indirect Rule was slow to catch on as we have seen. From time to time the District Commissioner had to step in and rule directly, often coming into direct conflict with the Tumukouro. The Commissioners had a great deal of freedom to act on their own initiative due to poor communication and isolation, and lacking a clear-cut directive from headquarters they often applied ad hoc solutions that might, or might not, conform to a concept of Indirect Rule.⁴

Problems with administration centered around the poor British understanding of the powers shared by the earthpriest, tintentina, and the secular chief, Kouro meaning rich or big man. Generally the Kouro represented his village in negotiations with the British, yet the authority the colonials expected of the chief was primarily in the hands of the earthpriest making it impossible for the chief alone to execute colonial policy.

¹The Official Diary, pp. 161-62.

²Polaris, op. cit., p. 411.

³The Official Diary, p. 162.

⁴Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 35.

Rarely the office of kouro and tinteintina descended upon the same individual (this did happen in the case of the Tumu Kouro Wugere and the late Luri Kanton III).¹

After 1915 Indirect Rule was reinstated, and the Tumu District was divided into twelve divisional chieftaincies under the hegemony of the Tumu Kouro, who later became the Paramount Chief of the district.² Unequivocal power of the Tumu Kouro was established by Kanton I who began office May 25, 1918 and ruled to his death on January 19, 1951.³ In March of 1936, under the Native Authority Ordinance of 1932, Indirect Rule was declared a success among the Sisala.

Despite the confusion in District politics the British progressed toward their economic goals. According to the Official Diary the divisional chiefs spent the majority of time organizing work details for the construction of wells, roads, latrines, administrative quarters, and ordering carrier assignments. Those individuals who refused to work were subjected to a two-month prison term.⁴

The impact of colonial rule upon Sisala culture, society, and especially political organization is clearly seen with

¹Interview with the Tumu Kouro, February 28, 1973.

²From 1920 to 1946, the British closed the Tumu station and at Lawra established a headquarters for both the Tumu and Lawra Districts. The twelve subdivisional chieftaincies of the Tumu District were Tumu, Gwolu, Bellu, Bewisabelle, Dolbizan, Santi-jan, Zini, Walembelle, Kwapu, Sorbelle, Dasima, and Sekai. Grindal, op. cit., p. 154.

³Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 33.

⁴The Official Diary, entry 1916.

respect to forced labour practices.¹ Such a policy meant that able-bodied Sisala men were absent from their villages in the dry season, the most ritually active period of the year and the only occasion for funerals and the arts. Tiawan, a head man of the Tiawanjan lineage of Bujan, explained that the elders could not dance with the mask, sikilen, because as young men they were forced by the British into labour crews. He further explained, "We went to the Obuasi gold mines or worked on the bridges, roads, and schools of the District. In our absence most of the old men died and the knowledge of the fetish, sikilen and instructions as to its proper use were lost, hence the dancing stopped,"² (Plate I). Two other sikilen masks at the village of Chinchán similarly fell into disuse.³

In more positive respects the Pax Britannica fostered trade and travel and a resultant broadening of the Sisala world view. Larger and more effective systems of communication and transportation were responsible for the introduction of foreign "medicines" and shrines and non-traditional art forms, thus in some respects furthering wood carving as a specialized occupation. Drum carving and leather working adopted from the various kinds of Dagomba and Ashanti regalia increased with colonial support of the Sisala chiefs.

In the long run British involvement in Sisala-land probably

¹For a more elaborate account of colonial rule see Mendonsa, op. cit.

²Interview with Tiawan at Bujan, February 12, 1973.

³Interview with Badi at Chinchán, February 15, 1973.

inhibited the development of high endemic political organization. The long standing British policy of employing two distinct political apparatuses, namely the District Officer and the Native Authority hindered the developing chieftaincies which historically were checked by the powers invested in the earthpriests. Perhaps the Zabarima or the Sisala chiefs unchecked by colonial policy could have attained greater political unity in the area.

Present Migration

The nineteenth century migrations of Northern Ghana were followed by relative population stabilization. Today the Dagari constitute the largest immigrational force, and according to Delafosse they have moved steadily across the Black Volta since the eighteenth century.¹ Their migration has resulted in acculturation particularly where the Dagari and the Sisala co-exist at Lambussie, Pipenu, Twun, Sanua and Feilmon. These villages are distinguished by a dual settlement pattern, where the Sisala live in a compact village connected by continuous walls and the Dagari in dispersed hamlets outside the village. The difference in architecture is indicative of the social relationships between the two peoples. Funerals and weddings are seldom shared events, leaving the market as one of the few places for open contact between the groups.²

¹Delafosse, op. cit., Tome I, p. 313. The strongest stimulus for Dagari immigration may be linked to the availability of land in the Tumu District; in the Nandom area population density is considerably higher and there is less soil available for agriculture. The population density in the Dagari area is about forty people per square mile and in the Tumu District is between five to twenty. Hilton, op. cit.

²Interview with the Tumu Kouro, December 28, 1972.

The eastward drift of the Dagari has occasionally produced tension and conflict among the Sisala. During the funeral of an elder wife of the Tumu Kouro a dispute erupted when a member of the Kanton lineage of the Crow clan from Feilmon sacrificed a Guinea fowl and put its body on the funeral stool, kpanjanga, where the surrogate corpse of the deceased woman, gungun, was propped (Plate II). A strong protest was voiced by the deceased woman's lineage from Jeffisi along with some of the members of the Kanton lineage. The protestors insisted that the custom was not a Sisala one, but Dagari claiming by Sisala tradition that only a lover of the deceased could place a fowl next to the gun-gun.¹ Other problems involve marriage of Sisala males to the Dagari. It is not unusual for the Sisala to marry other Grusi-speaking females in Upper Volta; yet, marriage with the Dagari is discouraged. The mutual prejudice expressed by these people is likely due to different customs and also the fact that their languages are mutually unintelligible. Unlike the Sisala who belong to the Grusi sub-group the Dagari belong to the Mossi sub-group.

The Dagari have contributed to the spread of the fairy spirit cult (kantomung) in Sisala-land. Many Sisala express doubts about the fairies, yet this has not discouraged some craftsmen like Semani Wisituwo, one of the best Sisala carvers, from adapting the fairy spirit philosophy for the protection and improvement of their practices. The Dagari travel to the Sisala

¹Funeral at Tumu, January 20, 1973.

market of Bugubele to buy terra cotta images of the fairies from Semani; few Sisala purchase the figures.

The Dagari movement into Sisala-land is expected to continue for some time. The current District Administrative Officer, Mr. Pimé, is a Dagari and his administration includes many Dagari friends and associates from Nandom, the residence of the Dagari chief. Many of the instructors at the Kanton Training College are also from the Nandom Area. Together these groups form a small enclave that supports a pito bar owned and operated by a Dagari family.¹

Sisala Social Organization

Clans

The Sisala are organized according to a system of segmentation in which the patrilineal clan is the largest social group. Each clan traces its origin to a common apical ancestor and defines its social boundaries through exogamous marriage. Clans often occupy one or more villages, but in some instances they are dispersed in fragments along with parts of other clans in a single settlement. The village of Chinchán, for instance, is occupied by fragments of the Crocodile, Cricket and Leopard clans whereas the Han viara is exclusively settled at Dange, Kong, Sekai, Nankpawie, and Bakwele.²

Though clans hold land they are not corporate groups they seldom sacrifice as a unit or participate as a whole in the

¹Pito is the Grusi term for a locally made millet beer, the corresponding term in Mande is dolo.

²Interview at Chinchán, February 23, 1973.

sowing and harvesting of crops. Clans primarily function in matters concerning land distribution and marriage. Mendonsa notes that each group's identity is closely tied to the commonly held tract of land together with its shrine. Only when the land is defiled do the village earthpriests from various settlements make clan sacrifices at the common parish shrine.¹

The Han viara is one of the largest and most highly organized clans in the Tumu District. The clan elders acknowledge the Sekai Kouro as the Han viara chief and agree that their ancestors came from Savelugo (near Tamale) prior to Babatu. According to their tradition the ancestors were horsemen who hunted and raced the roan antelope. One of the ancestor's sons rode an antelope which did not stop after the race; consequently, the child's family followed the animal and eventually came to Santijan where they found the youngster dead. The clan moved to Kong, but as the villages became overcrowded other Han viara settlements were established.²

Notables of the Han viara like George Nanjo, the present Middle School Headmaster at the Tumu Boarding School, and once District Commissioner; the famous carver Ntowie; and the exemplary chief of the clan have won the respect and admiration of other clans. British appointment of the Sekai Kouro as a divisional chief has contributed to the clan's strong sense of identity.

Tightly structured clans like the Han viara are the

¹Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 55.

²Interview with the Sekai Kouro, February 12, 1973.

exception among the Sisala especially in the Northeast where the nineteenth century slavers often destroyed entire villages.

Mendosa concludes:

Sometimes, there are segments of clans scattered throughout Sisala-land. Some of these groups are not aware of each other, but others have myths of migration from the home parish. However, ritual links are not maintained when the distance is great. In most cases the people of the home parish think of them as strangers who share the totemic avoidance, but who are not members of the clan as a descent group. For example the case of the village of Pieng. Living there are a group of people who taboo the crocodile. This village is only a half-day journey from Bujan, the head village of the crocodile Clan. Many people from Bujan have taken wives from there and vice-versa. The mere fact that they have the same taboo does not make them part of the clan. Descent is the critical factor of clan membership, but descent ties can be forgotten in time or erased by out-migration or due to the effects of slaving and war.¹

Village Settlements

Compared to clans, villages (tang) are far more effective agents of social organization and according to Mendonsa, "One's village of birth is a most critical factor in the life of a Sisala and ideally one should be born and raised in the village of one's father."² Each village is divided into two reciprocal burial groups referred to as nyungniaa (up people), and Bubuongniaa (down people), and each has its own myth of origin and shrines which are kept by the local earthpriest.

Residents of each village assemble once a year to make sacrifices at the village shrine to insure good health, fertility, and a successful harvest. Rattray concluded that the Tumu shrine called Wea (Mendonsa referred to the shrine as Tumuwihiye)

¹Mendonsa, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

²Ibid., pp. 63-64.

invoked the ancestors and God who together symbolized the entire village.¹ Although the Crow occupy one village it is clear from the work of Grindal and Mendonsa that other such shrines act as unifying agents in villages that are composed of clan segments or part of one clan.

The Lineage

The primary unit of social organization, the lineage or jeckiking, consists of agnatic males and their wives and offspring. The males of the lineage trace their descent to a particular ancestor who is the recipient of the most important sacrifices. Crucial to the establishment of a lineage is the collective ancestor shrine, the lele. This shrine is made of several clay mounds, each one representing an ancestor. Bracelets (nadima) and anklets (natassa), of the ancestors are strewn about these mounds. The lineage shrine is located in the house (dia), of the lineage head (jechikintina), who is obligated to perform sacrifices to the shrine as well as at funerals for the members of his lineage. The Sisala believe that upon death the human spirit becomes a wandering ghost (nedima), and only after the completion of the funeral and proper sacrifices is the potentially reckless force of the nedima converted to an ancestor spirit which then protects the lineage. Mendonsa summarizes the life cycle of a lineage member:

Becoming a lineage member is a process which begins with birth and lasts, ideally, forever. It is said that when a child is born, it becomes a member of the lineage but it is also said that one cannot be sure

¹Ibid., p. 147. Rattray, op. cit., pp. 509-11.

if it will remain or not. The first important sign of permanency is the naming of the child. Once this happens the child is given a funeral, albeit of a restricted nature until it grows into a 'child with sense.' Once a person receives a name he or she ideally remains lineage member forever. In reality, one remains a member as long as one has descendants who remember one's name and personality. The Sisala believe in partial reincarnation, that is, part of a person's personality may return in a lineage child, but once dead, the living soul (dima) becomes a ghost (nedima) and then an ancestor (leleung, pl. lele). One remains in this state as long as one is remembered and propitiated at the lineage shrines but once forgotten, the soul passes out of existence; literally a fate worse than death and one which every Sisala hopes to guard against by leaving behind many progeny.¹

Ideally one's self-concept in Sisala-land is dependent on lineage membership, and identity in life as well as in the ancestor world is realized through this tie.

The authority of the lineage extends to the production and consumption of millet, considered by the Sisala as the only "true food." The lineage head is responsible for organizing the sowing and harvesting of millet crops which are stored in a special granary (viribalung), entered only by himself. The viribalung is inherited by the successor of the lineage head who ideally would be the head's next younger brother or eldest son. The lineage head distributes the millet to each compound head (kaalatina) who in turn shares it with his younger brothers, or sons and their wives who comprise each household (dia). Mendonsa summarizes the importance of the lineage:

Thus the lineage can be viewed as the basic corporate unit of Sisala society. Members live together, work together, eat together, mourn their dead together, consider themselves to be 'one' (la nga kubala ne, 'we

¹Mendonsa, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

are one'), are considered by outsiders as one, and most important of all share a common ancestry and sacrifice one lele shrine.¹

Diagram A depicts a lineage of the Han viara at the village Bakwele located on the main truck road two miles south of Tumu. The founders of the village lived at Batuomo near Lilixi, but slavers forced the inhabitants to move to Kong and later to their present location. The head of the lineage is also the Bakwele Kouro, yet due to his old age and declining health actual authority is invested in a lineage elder called Mama. Unlike the lineage of Nahenjang of Bujan diagramed by Mendonsa,² this group has passed through segmentation demonstrated by the road dividing the lineage. Mama explained that the road was formerly an open courtyard of the lineage when it was smaller.³

The Kaala

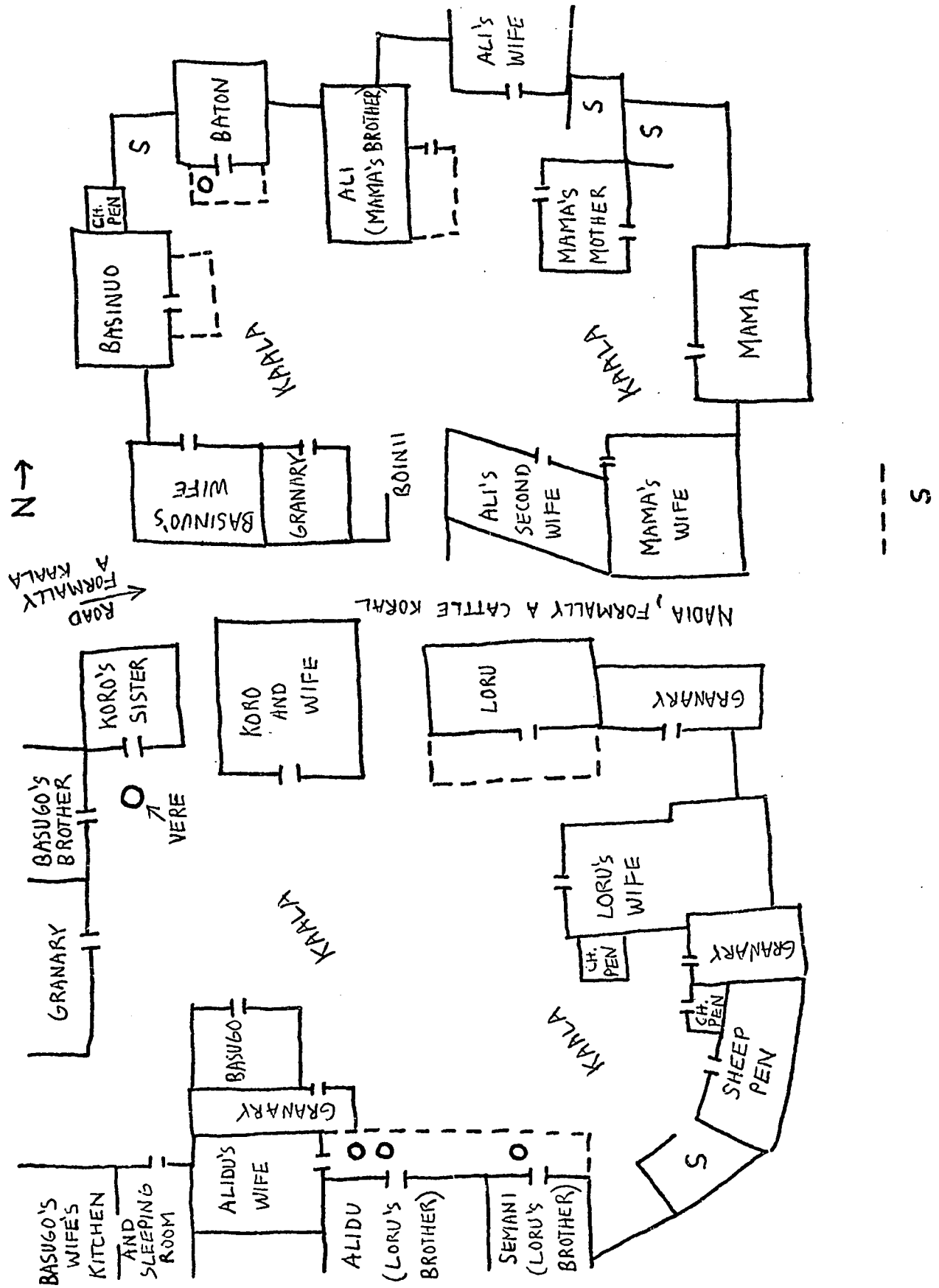
The primary unit of each lineage, the kaala, is composed of several households and is headed by the Kaalatina who sacrifices to the kaala shrines and participates at the lineage level in lele sacrifices and meetings with the elders. The houses within each kaala face an open courtyard where everyday activities and the primary enculturation of Sisala offspring establish strong group identity.

Except for millet crops the kaala grows yams, groundnuts, and where conditions permit, rice. These crops are exclusively

¹Ibid., p. 85.

²Ibid., p. 79.

³Interview at Bakwele with Mama, June 20, 1973.



consumed by the kaala, yet they may be shared with less fortunate households of the lineage.

The most frequent source of segmentation within the Sisala lineage is the kaala for when it reaches maximal size the kaalatina may argue that his group deserves lineage status. Quarrels concerning the distribution of millet cereals, the right to sacrifice to the lele and general dissension over leadership underlie the split. Architecturally the separation of the rebellious kaala from the parent lineage marks the formation of a new lineage dwelling but, until the newly formed group establishes its own lele shrine its leader must present ancestor sacrifices to the parent lineage shrine. After the death of the head of the offshoot "lineage," his personal shrine, dima, and bracelet become the nucleus of his lineage's own lele shrine, thus confirming the new group's lineage status.¹

The dia

The dia or household refers to the single room of a bachelor or husband and his wife or wives and children. Generally the single room is occupied by a bachelor or a newly married couple until the wife gives birth, then the husband opens the lineage compound wall and makes another room for the mother and child. The dia is subservient to the kaala and its lineage members must work in the non-millet fields held in common by the

¹Mendonsa, unpublished manuscript. According to Mendonsa the newly created lineage is not officially recognized until the millet granary (virEbalang) is constructed, prior to this time the departed group is required to participate in the production of millet with the parent group.

kaala as well as the millet field. Small compound gardens consisting of tomatoes, okra, onions, and other condiments are cultivated by the dia and privately consumed or sold at the market. Like the kaala the dia may reach optimal size and then break with the parent group. Segmentation at this level depends on the size of the household and the death of the kaalatina. Under these conditions a man of wealth, many wives, and children may dispute succession for lineage headship and in the process may secede from the parent kaala.

Traditional social organization among the Sisala thus occurs at the clan, village, lineage, kaala, and household level. These social groupings function within a well defined hierarchy based on age, and they regenerate themselves through the process of segmentation. The clan may occupy one or more villages or perhaps only a part of one. Its members recognize an apical ancestor and together they form an exogamous unit. Beyond these considerations and land distribution it has no authority.¹ The village is unified by the institution of chieftaincy, the village earth shrine, and the village earthpriest. It is the most important social unit in Sisala-land. The only corporate group, the lineage, is responsible for millet production and the collective sacrifice to the lele, the act which identifies and sanctions the lineage group. The kaala consists of two or more agnatic males, their wives, and offspring; and it is headed by the kaalatina whose responsibilities include the distribution

¹With the developing institution of chieftaincy some heads of clans simultaneously hold the office of chieftaincy, consequently they have assumed additional powers over the clan particularly in matters of debt and tax collecting.

of millet at the kaala level, sacrifices to all the personal shrines, and the coordination of the production of all non-millet crops. The kaala is the center for social intercourse among the Sisala and it insures the vital enculturation of its offspring. The kaala is also the source of segmentation, its size and charismatic qualities of its leader eventually determine the formation of a new lineage.

The dynamics and stability of the Sisala social order largely depend upon population growth and the replacement of exhausted social units with the new. Such is the challenge to Sisala society, for the decrease of its able bodied male population through disease and out-migration poses a serious threat to the existing social order and by extention to the arts and the entire fabric of Sisala culture.

CHAPTER II

TRADITIONAL SISALA WOOD SCULPTURE

The nineteenth century slave raids, forced migration, and colonial occupation in Sisala-land explain to a large extent why so few rituals involving wood sculpture have survived to be practiced and handed down at the village level. The low demand for wood sculpture that resulted aggravates the already difficult position of the Sisala carver who depends more upon his public than, for example, his Western counterpart who freely criticizes his audience and is even given the opportunity to transform its basic tenets. The Sisala dictate what its artists produce and how much they produce and at the same time discourage individual artistic achievement. Because there is little market for wood sculpture in Sisala-land and because local society determines conceptual and stylistic limitations of art, the Sisala carver remains culture-bound; his productivity is dictated by public demand.

Such an art market is essentially static. No matter what an artist does to change his repertory, that is, supply, the supply is always determined by the demand. In contrast, the Western art market is governed by the free flow of the coordinates of supply and demand. In the hope of increasing demand, the Western artist is encouraged to create new kinds of art,

experiment with many media, and develop a personal style. Energies have been expended in these directions by some Sisala artists, but their efforts have been met with public disapproval and the absence of buyers.

Warren L. d'Azevedo summarizes the problem confronting artists like the Sisala:

The vocation of artistry, involving a clearly differentiated role of artist, may appear only in societies where artistic activity and its products are distinguished from other activities and products-- that is, where a degree of institutionalization of artistry obtains. In many primitive societies, the relation of artistry to religion, technology and recreation is intimate. The differentiated role of the artist seems to appear only where there is a sufficient degree of social stratification to produce an unequal distribution of power and wealth. At the minimal level of differentiation, the practice of artistry is the service of other ends than those of art, and the artist is confined almost entirely to traditional forms and the application of his talent to enhancement of existing institutions.¹

Walking Sticks, Stools, and Doors

Historically, there has been a minimal need for wood sculpture in Sisala communities. Male elders once carried elaborately carved walking sticks (daantining) and sat upon men's stools (kanjanga) (Plates III and IV). The walking sticks have all but disappeared; only Semani is still making them for sale at markets nearby Challo. His hopes for selling them are unrewarded because the introduction of the more highly esteemed European cane obliterated the market for the traditional

¹Warren L. d'Azevedo, "The Artist Archetype in Gola Culture," Conference on the Traditional Artist in African Society, Tahoe Alumni Center, Lake Tahoe, California, p. 3.

carved ones.¹ The men's stool has been replaced by the chaise lounge also manufactured in Europe and the larger cities on the West African coast. Many Sisala remarked that imported lounges were no more expensive and worked as well and that greater prestige was attached to owning the European product. The kanjanga's gently curving back support is comparable to the adjustable support of the lounge, and in this respect the European item is also very competitive. (I found the curving back rest of the traditional stool to be far more comfortable than the sharp angular connection of the back rest and seat of the chaise lounge.)

Tomie, an elder carver at Kong, is one of the few successful stool carvers in the Tumu area. His early years were spent in Kumasi where he worked in the cocoa plantations, but after his father's death he returned to Kong and became a farmer.² Tomie was taught carving by his classificatory brother, Ntowie, whose reputation as a great sculptor contributed to Tomie's large clientele at Kong, Bandai, Sakai, Pien, and Tumu. He is most proud of the Kong Kouro's kanjanga which measures about three feet high at the top of the back support and three feet long. (The word for back support is bagni, which literally means "neck.") Tomie also carved round stools and a miniature version of the Akan stool which he saw in Kumasi. There are several round carvings in the villages nearby Kong, but only two of the

¹Other walking sticks elaborately decorated with animals and human figure sculpture were made by Ntowie and Buyugo of the Han viara. One cane by Buyugo is displayed at the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board in Accra.

²Interview with Tomie of Kong, March 25, 1973.

Akan type--both at Kong. The women there generally prefer the traditional four-legged stool (kpassa) but these are also being replaced by stools made by Western trained carpenters (Plate V).

The income Tomie derives from carving is minimal, he nevertheless shows great enthusiasm for his work. He takes especial delight in the spaces created by the upper and lower platforms and the legs of the Akan stool, which he believes is superior to the Sisala carvings. Tomie regrets the fact that there have been few commissions for the "Akan" stools in the past several years; indeed, none since 1972 (Plate VI).

A superbly carved kanjanga with a serrated ridge on the neck and a boss in the middle of the underside of the seat is owned by Loru of the Crow clan at Tumu. From the side the stool resembles a quadruped, yet Loru claims that its carved embellishments are simply decorations which make it beautiful (zomo).¹ He purchased the carving at Leo, Upper Volta for six cedes believing that the Gurunsi there were far better carvers than the Sisala (Loru's men's stool, Plate VII).

Doors for compound rooms (dia) were once made from a single block of wood with decorations of relief carvings of animals and human forms. Now these items are made by Western trained carpenters; and, of the twenty-two villages surveyed in the course of my field work, only one traditional door was found to be in use. The carving was made by Ntowie for his brother, Baduamie, who, not being satisfied with the work, attempted to "modernize"

¹Interview with Loru at Tumu, December 23, 1972.

its appearance by drilling a non-functional keyhold on its left side. Later he added a fragment of a hinge to repair a crack on the lower right side of the carving and also to give it the appearance of a swinging door. To achieve a balance of the old and the new, he widened the opening of his sleeping room and covered the larger space with a modern door and the traditional door nailed together onto a square wooden frame.¹ The Sisala do not suffer from the symptoms of awed seriousness that typify Western response to "art," as attested to by the liberties that Buduamie took with a product of the hands of Sisala-land's most redoubtable carver.

Hoe Handles and Other Utensils

In the rich art producing societies of West Africa, hoe handle carving is not an important part of sculptural artistry. Carvers may begin by making tool handles, but by no means is this a guarantee of their future success. Hoe handle carving and artistic development are much more intimately connected among the Sisala where carvers who wish to specialize in sculpture often depend on this activity for a living. Most Sisala begin their artistic careers by making hoe handles; and carvers like Ntowie have sustained themselves by this means, thus allowing them to continue in their specialized pursuit. As young men Mula and Baton enjoyed the cash income they received from handle carving; and as a result, they learned to carve other kinds of sculpture. Though tool carving does not promise a Sisala artist eventual

¹Interview with Baduamie at Kong, April, 1973.

success, it does serve as a stepping stone and motivator for young carvers to develop their artistic inclination.

The demand for hoe handles is very high, and often the farmers make these items for themselves. Three kinds of handles are required in the course of Sisala farming: the santongu-nang for yam cultivation; the disawa for millet, and another handle also called disawa for weeding and planting groundnuts.¹

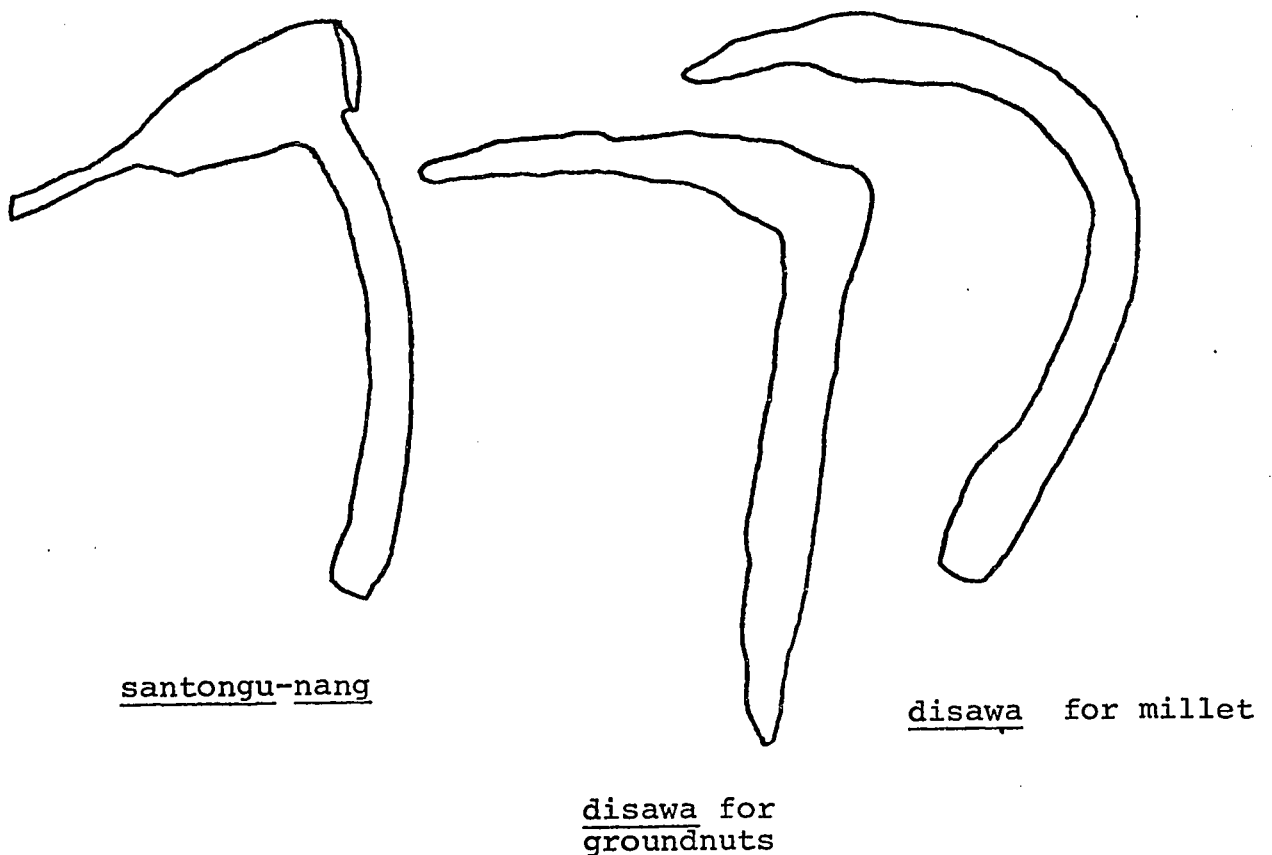


DIAGRAM B

¹Interview with Abu Nyile at Kong, March 25, 1973. For each tool the angle formed by the blade and the handle varies according to its use. Yam cultivation requires the displacement of large amounts of earth, a task facilitated by the maximum leverage provided by an acute angle. The lighter the work the less acute the angle.

Mortars, pestles, and other cooking utensils are generally supplied by the males of each lineage since most men have skills sufficient for the carving of these objects. Semani, the only carver commissioned by non-kin, claimed that he payed for his wife with a bride price consisting of three mortar and pestle sets.

Regalia

Staffs, judicial sticks, and talking drums associated with chieftaincy and particularly the Tumu Kouro were not part of nineteenth century Sisala carving tradition. These regal articles were introduced as part of the British implementation of Indirect Rule which depended upon the selection of a local leader who could effectively administer colonial policy. This kind of leadership, according to the Official Diary, barely existed prior to colonization. The British asked the Tumu elders to select someone from their ranks to be their chief. This office required a new set of symbols, a royal regalia, that had to be imported from outside Sisala-land. One such item, a Royal staff belonging to the Tumu Kouro, depicts a carving of the founding ancestor of the Crow clan, Kpotabagaben, with a rifle over his shoulder (Plate VIII). This object was carved by an Ashanti artist in Kumasi which, no doubt, explains its stylistic resemblance to Akan linguist staffs. Its association with Akan regalia adds to the prestige of the Kouro, and on ceremonial occasions the staff as well as several royal umbrellas brought in from Kumasi are displayed. These objects are

used to reinforce the concept of hierarchical rule in what had previously been an acephalous society.¹

Prior to the death of Kanton I in 1953, three judicial sticks were commissioned, and though some Sisala attributed the carvings to Ntowie there is little certainty about their origin. Most informants recall that the objects were decorated with a few burned marks and incised notchings along the shafts, similar to the lower part of the walking sticks carved by Semani. The sticks functioned like Ashanti message swords, instructing an individual's behavior in court proceedings when violations of Sisala law and custom were committed. After Kanton's death a new court system established by the National government diminished the power of the Tumu Kouro particularly in judiciary matters, and soon afterwards the sticks were abandoned.²

The three sculptures were named according to their specific encoded message. Chakilintolo was used in this context: "A" gives his daughter to "B" as a wife. She leaves "B" in order to marry another man. "B" now goes to the chief and tells him the story. ("A" does not know that his daughter left "B".) The chief gives the chakilintolo to "B" and "B" then gives it to "A". When "A" sees the stick he immediately knows what happened. He also knows that he has to go to the chief with "B" and settle the matter. Viaankulaa, another stick, states that "A" is

¹For a detailed account of the transplantation of Ashanti political art in Northern Ghana see René Bravmann's "The Diffusion of Ashanti Political Art" in Art and Leadership, eds. Douglas Fraser and H.M. Cole.

²These carvings may lie in storage at the British Museum or since the death of Kanton in 1971, might have been destroyed.

married to "B". They quarrel, "A" (husband), does not want "B" (wife), anymore. She goes back to her village and because her husband does not come to fetch her back she goes to another village and marries another man. After this "A" (husband is sorry that he has not taken his wife "B" back. He goes to the chief and tells him the story. The chief gives the viaankulaa to "A". "A" takes the stick to his wife's father. The wife's father immediately knows what has happened. He also realizes that he has to go to court (to the chief), with "A". The last stick, called wumilia describes a situation in which "A" charges "B" with a criminal act toward "C". However, "B" is innocent. "C" accuses "B" before the chief. The chief gives wumilia to "C" to pass on to "B". "B" and "C" go to court. If "B" is not proven guilty, "A" will pay a fine.¹

With the exception of Semani, the talking drums (tangpenni, singular), are the exclusive property of the Sisala chiefs.² The Tumu Kouro's master drummer plays these hand carved, paired instruments every morning at dawn (Plate IX). The low tone male drum and the high tone female drum sound daily messages concerning court cases, the arrival of distinguished visitors, funerals, meetings of the elders, etc. Dima Luri of Tasow, the only drum carver near Tumu, has made the talking instruments for the chiefs of Challo, Nabugabele, Walembele, Funsu, Tasow and

¹Correspondence with Margrit Haudenschild from Tumu 1973.

²The talking drums are another example of an importation from Ashanti. The Akan royal musicians also recite messages on their drums named atumpan, a term from which the Sisala word for the instruments is certainly derived.

Sakailo.¹ Chiefs from smaller settlements like Kong and Dange cannot afford the drums for their cost often exceeds 100 cedes, about 85 dollars.

Drum carving is not prevalent in the vicinity of Tumu, rather it occurs in the south of the District. Dima Luri believes that many of the instruments are made thirty miles south of Tumu at Walembele, the place his drums were made. The figurative decoration and precise form of the Kouro's instruments testify to the claim for specialization of drum production in the South particularly at Walembele. The fact that the carvings are found in about one-half of the villages in the Tumu area and that the drums are more frequently made in the southern region helps explain why few commissions for those objects are given to Sisala wood sculptors near Tumu. Though Semani has carved two pairs of the drums for fairy worship he has not been able to establish a clientele that is willing to use the instruments for such worship, consequently he has stopped producing them.

Funerary Sculpture: Masks,
Stools, Fifes

The rare appearance of masks in Sisala funeral rituals is in marked contrast to other West African societies as, for instance, the Bobo who use masks of numerous kinds during such rituals. In Sisala-land only one kind of mask (sikilin nyuchuulo, sikilin hat), is found, and only one of the three remaining examples is used in its proper ritual context. The two best preserved objects are oval shaped casque masks with

¹Interview with Dima Luri, June, 1973.

open beak-like forms protruding from their centers. One of these carvings is located at Bujan and the other at Tumu (Plates I, X). The Tumu carving is occasionally used at funerals, being carried during the second burial rites of male elders every four to five years. The Bujan mask is relegated to the status of a sedentary shrine next to a lineage ancestor shrine where sacrifices are performed for the health and successful crops of the lineage members. The Chinchán mask is also kept near a lineage shrine (Plate XI). Its decomposed states makes it very difficult to conceptualize its original shape. Badi, the mask's custodian, once placed the three remaining fragments of the carving upon his head to illustrate its form, which in that way resembled certain Gurunsi (sometimes called Bobo) masks with flat curving horns projecting on top, a small rounded head accented by large concentric circular eyes and an appendage extending from the chin,¹ (Plate XII). Incised decoration on the horns of the Chinchán sikilen which consists of diagonally placed parallel lines and rosettes march the designs on the flat surfaces of the Tumu and Bujan carvings as well as the stylistically similar Gurunsi and Bobo masks.

The Sisala greatly fear and respect the power of sikilen, but ironically their reverence prevents the dancing and replacement of the carvings, thus contributing to the decline of the mask tradition. Tiawan of Tiawanjan in Bujan explained that the last mask dancing in his village occurred nearly forty years

¹Robert Thompson, African Art in Motion, p.135. Wallace Pinfold has noted several such masks among the Ko who use them in funeral celebrations. Personal communication, 1976.

ago during which time he and his age mates were working in the British labor crews building bridges, schools, and mining gold at Obuasi. In their absence the grandfathers and fathers of the lineage died, and with them the knowledge concerning the proper way of using the sikilen was lost. Without this information it is impossible to carry the sikilen, for it is believed that a single mistake in the dance might result in the death of the performer.¹ Badi of Chinchán similarly described the danger of dancing with his lineage's mask but noted that the carving was destroyed when the compound where it was housed collapsed during the heavy rains. The high cost of a new gown and mask prevent Badi's lineage from replacing the old costume with another one from Upper Volta, which leaves no alternative avenue for replacement since the breaking of the taboo against a lineage member carving the mask could result in the death of the carver.²

In addition to the fear the Sisala harbor against the incorrect use of the masks and the belief that any attempt on their part to replace them will result in death, I believe that the decline of the mask tradition has in part been effected by the discrepancy between its original usage and the current dispersed condition of the clans. Sisala villages are now heterogeneous, frequently consisting of several clan and lineage fragments. In Chinchán, for example, where three clan fragments are represented by five lineages, the clans claim different

¹Interview with Tiawan at Bujan, February 12, 1973.

²Interview with Badi of Chinchán, February 15, 1973.

origins and migration histories, each blaming internal lineage and village conflict for leaving their original settlements. Under these circumstances the masks were brought to their present location by lineage fragments. From the beginning the benefits of sikilen were intended for the entire clan or village, not just the lineage where it was kept.

When the feuding lineages separated and took some of the masks to their new locations the owners found themselves co-existing with indigenous peoples and other migratory groups who were unfamiliar with the sikilen ritual. The use and benefits of the mask were confined to the uprooted lineage rather than to the larger units of clan or village, thus reducing the extent of the occasions the ritual could be performed.

Support for this conclusion is found in the Voltaic village of Longu near the original home of the Bujan mask at Tapara (perhaps Tapania, located North of Tumu on the Upper Volta border) and the home of the Chinchin mask at Bagonu in the Volta state.¹ Tibayere, a classificatory father of the custodian of the Longu masks explained that wango (the Mossi term for mask rituals) are performed for the entire village at funerals of important men and also on Upper Volta Independence Day sponsored by the French colonists and later by the national government. On the latter occasions all the masks from villages nearby Leo are invited to dance.² It is likely that the sikilen masks

¹The people at Longu call themselves Gurunsi-Kasena. Interview with Tibayeri at Longu, Upper Volta, May, 1973.

²Because of the wider social context of the Upper Volta masks, it has been essential that the Kasena continue their production.

also functioned in a larger context at their original locations, but immigration of the custodial lineages into Northern Ghana restricted their use. Subsequently, in an area where villages were compounded of alien groups, the sikilen was relegated to a position within the lineage, a situation which negated its significance in the wider village context.

One of the most important implications of the sikilen is that the indigenous Sisala, those living in Sisala-land before the nineteenth century migrations, probably never performed with the mask. Their rituals focused on the mud-shrine sculptures, lele, representing the ancestors. The "intrusive" mask type probably introduced at the end of the nineteenth century established itself briefly, and through time the tradition atrophied to the extent that only the Tumu mask survived in dance ritual context.¹ The Sisala of Tumu honor few of their members with the sikilen; performances occur only once every four to five years. The Crow clan relies on other ritual devices to secure protection, health, and prosperity.

Funerary Stools

Funerary stools (kpanjanga), are impressively large bench-like forms carved from a single block of wood. The carvings measure about twelve feet long, two feet wide, and two feet high and weigh nearly 700 pounds depending on their condition (Plate II). The surrogate corpse of the deceased (gungun), is

¹It should be noted that if the sikilen were carved by a caste group as is common throughout the Voltaic basin; then this further accounts for the inability of the Sisala to keep their masking tradition in tact.

placed upon the stool during the three day funeral celebration. The funerals begin by carrying the stool into the funeral yard (biling). If the deceased is well known and powerful his surrogate corpse together with his widows sit upon the stool in the procession to the biling. Dances are performed around the kpanjanga and sacrifices and the possessions of the deceased (tools, weapons, baskets, beads, etc.) are placed nearby. The end of the funeral, generally the third day, is indicated by turning the stool on its side and afterward the next of kin "play" with the gungun which is then dismantled.

In the past every lineage possessed a kpanjanga, but like the sikilen most of the carvings have rotted leaving only a few in recognizable form. The author saw two well preserved stools, one from the Crow clan of the Kanton lineage, and the other one at the chief's palace at the Gurunsi village of Longu. Most funerary beds, however, are splintered and in several pieces making them difficult to identify. The stools belonging to Belnanajan of the Crow clan and the frog clan at Kowie are in such poor condition that short five-six inch diameter logs and other wooden props hold the stools together while they are used to seat the gungun (Plate XIII).

Since the making of the Kanton kpanjana over forty years ago, (just after the visit of Captain Rattray), funerary beds have not been produced. Considering that the funerals involving these carvings are essential to the continuity of Sisala society, it is perplexing why carvers have not replaced the worn out ones. Frequently people remarked that it was impossible to carve such a large object and even in the "old" days after the carver

finished the work he died. Though such remarks rationalize a fading tradition, the high cost of the stools and the limited resources of most lineages, in fact, prevent their being replaced. According to Kennedy Kanton, a son of the late Tumu Kouro every compound once had a kpanjanga, but the rains and harsh sunlight gradually took their toll and the stools rotted. The wealthy Kantons have a shelter to protect their funerary bed, and most of the lineage's members believe that if the stool breaks it will be replaced. Nowadays many lineages of the Crow clan use the Kanton carving and though communal use discourages the making of new stools, it seems to be one of the few ways to maintain the tradition.

Fifes

Sisala fifes (nmulaa) are similar to other Voltaic basin three and four valved instruments. Some fifes are anthropomorphic, but most of them are cylindrically shaped having two "heart" shape sections, one near the mouth piece and the other at the bottom of the cylinder (Plate XIV). The fifes are played in the funeral processions of important elders and chiefs, at assemblages of warriors, and after murder has been committed. At the late Luri Kanton's burial the nmulaa were played by the nyinnia, (the reciprocal burial group of the Kanton lineage) in a procession that led to the roof of a sleeping room in the chief's palace. Upon reaching the top of the compound room relatives of the deceased knocked it down (giri).¹

¹Correspondence with D.L. Kanton, June 14, 1974.

Fifes play a crucial role in the performance of funerals of important men, yet carvers who are well qualified technically are not commissioned to replace them; instead the instruments are carved by the fife trustees themselves. Nidzon, custodian of the flutes for the Nyaminjan lineage of the Crow clan, and Kaki another of the clan's custodians claimed they could make the carvings without having prior experience.¹ Their low opinion of carving skills again illustrates the Sisala's lack of respect for their artists' abilities.

Divination Sculpture: Wands and Fairy Figures

Diviners wands (vugutu daan) are usually simply shaped forked sticks with minimal decoration on the handles consisting of notchings² (Plate XV). The wands are owned by all diviners and they are stored in a goat skin bag along with other divination equipment. During consultation the soothsayer holds the top of the wand with his left hand and the client grasps the bottom of the stick with his right hand and in this manner the wand moves in various directions indicating the responses to questions posed during the session, thus cueing the diviner and client as to a proper course of action with respect to the client's problem. Because of the simplicity of the carvings most of the diviners are able to carve their own sticks.

¹Interview with Nidzon and Kaki of Tumu, February 5, 1973.

²According to one of Mendonsa's informants the diviner's wand is frequently carved in the shape of a bird (kolounko) "which sings the truth in the night." Op. cit., p. 262.

Fairy Spirit Sculptures

Some diviners communicate with the fairy spirits which on occasion are represented by male and female wood or ceramic pairs (Plates XVI, L). The complexity of these works require the diviner to commission a trained artist. Gbene, a diviner from Bujan, commissioned a pair of the fairy spirit sculptures from Ntowie in the early 1950s remarking that before the commission his wife and children were sick and that his soothsayer's bag was "troubling" him. Reacting to these misfortunes, Gbene consulted another diviner who advised him to obtain the fairy sculptures. He purchased the carvings for a price of a basket of millet, a hen, tobacco, and eighty cowries for the female and sixty cowries for the male. Gbene keeps the spirit figures in his soothsayer's bag except during divination when they are placed against a compound wall to issue advice concerning his clients' afflictions.¹ Because most people mistrust individuals who are in contact with the fairies, the demand for these sculptures is relatively poor. The only diviner I met besides Gbene who used the spirit images was Semani, and his objects were made of terra cotta.

Surrogate Twin Sculpture

The demand for twin surrogate sculptures (daalieridaan, twin stick), exceeds that of any other Sisala ritual carving. Ranging from about nine-nineteen inches high, these objects are made to replace a dead twin and placate its spirit (dima) that

¹Interview with Gbene at Bujan, February 13, 1973.

otherwise might wander through the family compound and, like the fairy spirits, cause injury or even death to the surviving twin or the immediate members of the family (Plate XVII).

After a twin dies, the father visits a diviner or a carver to inquire about the cause of death and the cost of the twin surrogate. If he decides to commission the carving, the father gives the carver some tobacco, a guinea fowl, or chicken, kola nut, and cowries all amounting to three cedes (about two dollars). He then places the figure by the side of the mother who must be asleep or the surviving twin might die. Upon discovering the daalieridaan the following morning the mother feeds and ritually bathes the carving. The mother and her child will care for the surrogate until the living twin is mature; in a few cases twins have been known to attend the carvings throughout their lives.¹

The respect and care given to these sculptures testifies to the vitality of the ritual; yet the frequency of demand hardly supports a wood carver's position in Sisala society.² Of the 22 villages surveyed including a population of 17,592, there were 5 carvers who together produced less than 50 sculptures. Because the Sisala demand for twin figures, as anywhere, is genetically determined and the incidence of twin births is less frequent than, for example, among the Akan or Yoruba speaking

¹Interview with the carver Semani of Challo, May 1973. Hellia of Sekai has carried her daalieridaan for nearly forty-five years during which time she has continually bathed and fed it.

²Pascal Imperato's comparison of the high incidence of twins among the Yoruba (45.1/1000 births) to that of the Bamana (17.9/1000) suggests that the Sisala incidence of twins is also well below the Yoruba mark. "Bamana and Maninka Twin Figures," African Arts, Summer, 1975, p. 52.

peoples there is little opportunity for a Sisala carver to specialize in twin figure sculpture.

Conclusion

The considerable variety of Sisala sculpture described in this chapter is somewhat misleading, for few of the carvings constitute thriving traditions. The demand for utilitarian objects like tool handles, stools and cooking utensils is primarily satisfied by production within the kaala. Prestige items including walking sticks and royal regalia are imported or, in the case of the talking drums, are carved in the southern part of the Tumu District. Other objects such as the sikilen, funeral stools, diviner's wand, fairy figures, fifes and the twin sculptures still play an important role in Sisala ritual life, but the demand for these objects is low. In many instances discarded objects are replaced by their owners rather than by specialized carvers. Only figure sculpture requires the experience and expertise of the artist. Within such limitations the Sisala public seldom acknowledges the accomplishments of its carvers who must depend on personal satisfaction and perhaps a spiritual calling for the development of their artistic skills.

CHAPTER III

THE NON-SPECIALIZED CARVERS

Insight into the personalities and methods of Sisala carvers resulted from my working with five artisans, Gbene, Baton, Mula, Buyugo, and Semani, and by researching and reconstructing the life and work of Ntowie who died in 1957. From the interviews and carving sessions that I conducted with each of the five carvers, I came to understand some of the reasons behind the low demand for wood sculpture and the impact of this low demand on carving technique. I also learned much about the view that Sisala takes of its carvers as well as the carver's view of himself. This chapter deals with the non-specialized carvers, Gbene, Baton and Mula, and with Buyugo who is somewhat transitional between the non-specialized and the specialized carvers. A separate chapter is devoted to my findings on Ntowie, and another chapter belongs to my apprenticeship to Semani. The amount of contact I had with each artist depended on the amount of time each man allotted to his craft; consequently, biographical data and discussion of carving techniques for each individual range from mere sketches to elaborate descriptions. I visited Gbene, Baton and Mula on an occasional basis in accordance with their farming schedules. Buyugo, who once aspired to be a full-time carver, has a very

complex carving technique which required a more comprehensive study. The majority of my time was spent in an apprenticeship capacity to Semani who offered the fullest embodiment of a serious artist and whose conception of the carver-specialist role and its link with the fairy spirits merited prolonged investigation. Ntowie was the only known Sisala sculptor to truly practice his art full time; his memory is the inspiration to other men like Semani and Buyugo who wish to excel in areas apart from farming. The study of Ntowie's life brings into focus some of the important variables working for and against wood carving in Sisala-land.

Like most Sisala, the three non-specialists, Gbene, Baton and Mula, were raised in the villages of their fathers and travelled as young men to the larger cities in the south. Their contact with other cultures appears, however, to have had minimal impact on their artistic and world views. Powerful medicines like padlock (bilimenchis), alternative philosophies, and unfamiliar types of sculpture were met on their part with indifference (Diagram C). Gbene, Baton and Mula have a narrow conception of art and think of themselves primarily as farmers. They respect the ancestors and the lele and unlike Buyugo, Semani and Ntowie, they show little interest in the fairy spirits or protective medicines. The non-specialists make utensils and tool handles for their lineages and villages and have never been commissioned by individuals outside Sisala society. Buyugo also prides himself on his farming, but he also had ambition at one time to the title of saaruhien or first carver. Historical circumstances at Tumu in the 1950s and early

60s were very supportive of Buyugo's artistic development, but now conditions in the district work against all the carvers and have virtually precluded the possibility of selecting a future saaruhien.

Gbene

In March, 1973, the Nankpawie Kouro and I talked about the old brass casters of the village and those persons who made tool handles. The chief's son showed me several double-headed adzes, hoe handles and a ceremonial adze in wood carved by Gbene, who was the only figural carver in the village. Although his carvings were crudely made, I believed that an examination of his very simple sculptural technique would add perspective to the study of specialization and development of Sisala carvers.¹

Gbene was born at Nankpawie, the birthplace of his father and one of several Han viara villages (Plate XVIII). His ancestors came from Northeast Ghana, near Savelugo about eighty miles from Tamale. Gbene's travels were confined to Ghana; and like most young Sisala males, he went to Kumasi and worked in the gold mines and for rural development projects. He went there twice, each time staying in the Sisala quarter with his brothers and seldom venturing outside the ethnic enclave. When he returned home the second time, he assumed the responsibilities of adulthood; and, following the rule of exogamy, married a Sisala woman from another clan.² Since then Gbene has devoted himself to farming and to the raising of his three children.

¹Interview with the Nankpawie Kouro, March 25, 1973.

²Interview with Gbene at Nankpawie, March 28, 1973.

The family currently resides on the outskirts of Nankpawie sharing two rooms within the lineage compound. The family is considered poor by Sisala standards, and its small farm confirms this evaluation.

Gbene's association with the Han viara has given him the opportunity to observe more figure sculpture than most Sisala artists. He first witnessed the carving of a fairy spirit which impressed him for its decorative detail and the fact that it was carved from one piece of wood. Later, he visited his classificatory brother, Ntowie, and watched him work; however, Gbene insists that neither Ntowie nor anyone else taught him figure carving. His skills, he said, were derived from making tool handles. (At twenty cents a handle, he could afford tobacco, matches, pito, and other desirable market items.) Gbene added that his father, also a part-time carver, commented about his carving only when mistakes were made; otherwise, he was self-taught. Learning by the indirect method and observation are the primary avenues in Sisala music, dance, and blacksmithing as well. Since formal institutions capable of transmitting skilled techniques are conspicuously absent in Sisalaland, carvers depend primarily on their own talent (wujimin, my experience) to develop their abilities and creativity.

(Wujimin is fully treated in Chapter VI).

At the request of a nearby relative Gbene carved his first daalieridaan by simply "imagining" the human figure in wood and then cutting out the material to conform to the image. The carving sold for a chicken and two cedes (about two and a half dollars). Gbene believes that the sculpture compared favorably

with Ntowie's work which at the time received considerable praise from the European community as well as the district headquarters of Tumu.

The few comments Gbene made about the quality of his work revealed something about the Sisala concept of education and talent. He stated, "I have learned to carve the figure by experiencing it"--Me wujimin. According to Gbene the variables affecting an artist's development are chiefly innate talent and the ability to learn. Learning, he emphasized, was most important. "When you were born could you write?" "One is born with a mind which must be fed by the elders." Gbene admitted that his skills were developed to a lesser degree than the other carvers of his clan, explaining that because his clientele was small there were few opportunities for him to work and after farming little time remained for practice.¹

Refusing to try figure sculpture outside of the demand for the ritual twin stick, Gbene has been called upon to carve only two surrogate sculptures. When asked why his figurative works were not found in his own village, he replied that no one had given birth to twins. Despite his claim, there are many daalieridaan in the nearby Han viara villages, yet, such works are entrusted to artists with greater reputations like Buyugo of Sekai. Gbene's work is chiefly confined to tool handle carving. In 1972 he carved twelve hoe handles and sold them all at the Tumu market to clients from Lelixi, Pulima and Tumu.

¹Interview with Gbene at Nankpawie.

Material and Technique

Gbene carves a soft, light colored wood from the gbrogunor tree (Combretom Nigricans).¹ The material is valued for its crack resistant qualities particularly important during intensely dry periods. Because the wood breaks rather easily, it is not recommended for rendering detail in figure carving. This limitation on the properties of the wood is no drawback in Gbene's case because his carvings are crudely executed. This artisan carves exclusively with the adze, eschewing tools like the pen knife, chisel, and nail.

During our first session Gbene worked on three sculptures explaining, "It is easy to move from one carving to another correcting mistakes along the way."² Carving extremely fast, Gbene moved from one figure to another shaping the body masses and carving out (kire ta) all the negative spaces. He stopped after an hour had passed and left the sculptures unfinished; the work had tired him rather quickly. On my return to Nankpawie the three carvings were completed with pyro-engraved decoration (Plate XIX). Since I had missed the major part of the work, another session was scheduled with the understanding that he would work only in my presence.³

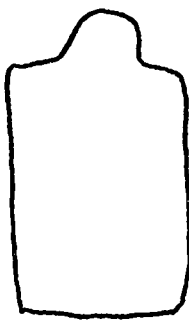
¹Correspondence with J.B. Hall, Curator of the Ghana Herbarium, October 4, 1973.

²Prior to our work the artist had carved only two twin figures.

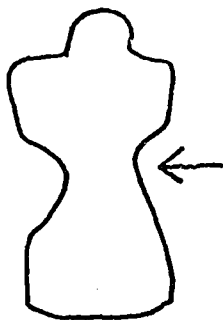
³Interview with Gbene at Nankpawie, April 21, 1973. During our first meeting Gbene understood that my primary purpose was to obtain examples of wood sculpture not realizing that my major concern was his technique and artistic procedure.

For the next meeting Gbene had already cut the gbrogunor tree which he explained was too small to warrant a sacrifice. He sharpened his adze blade on a large rock within an abandoned smithy in the center of the funeral yard (biling) outside his compound. It appeared that other craftsmen had worked at this spot, for the stone was well worn by the effects of sharpening. Sitting on the ground with the adze in his right hand and the chunk of wood resting directly on the ground, he began shaping the body masses of the sculpture without removing the bark beforehand as most artists prefer to do.

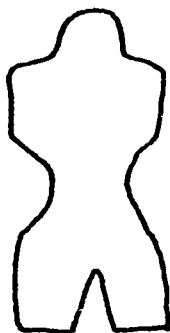
The head was shaped first.



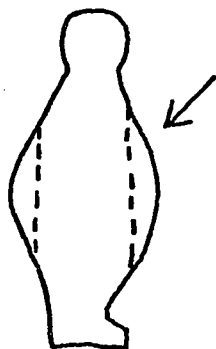
The first three stages of the work were completed in about ten minutes. The act of carving was characterized by long rapid wavering strokes which deviated with respect to their intended mark. This resulted in a large factor of error causing the torso of the sculpture to twist slightly off the center vertical axis, thus it was not symmetrical or balanced (a pii, literally meaning the branches are too many for the trunk).



In the second stage the artist narrowed the sides of the carving which helped define its legs and chest.



The third stage marked the completion of naasing bubuong, the space between the legs.



At this point the sculpture was turned ninety degrees and the back and chest were articulated simply by sloping the plane of the chest and back toward the head and then removing much of the wood from the central part of the carving.



It required twenty minutes to finish the arms and feet, and an equal time to fashion the mouth, nose and ears.¹

¹Interview with Gbene, April 21, 1973.

Decoration (nmungse) was applied upon completion of the roughed-out carving. (Gbene claims this method as his own invention.) The artist believes that articulation of the smaller parts of the body with the hot knife makes the figure more beautiful (zomo). The physiognomical features as well as Sisala body decoration were hastily applied in about ten minutes, whereas Mula spent almost two hours engraving six figures and Semani about an hour for each carving.

Gbene's concern with the speed of execution was apparent in other phases of his work. He often carved moving from one mass to another with no apparent order, and when mistakes were made he relied on the hot knife to correct them. In one instance, prior to carving, the artist expressed concern over the height of a chunk of wood, considering whether it was too short with respect to its width, but the hesitation lasted briefly and he began to shape the piece into a figure.

Gbene's approach to carving is reflected in other aspects of his life. He is a nervous man who continually moves and twists his head while talking and chewing tobacco. During the times I photographed his sculpture, he carved other pieces of wood instead of resting. His status as a carver as well as his position within the village and lineage is inconsequential. He has a small farm and family and only one personal shrine. He has few decision-making responsibilities; evidently, his carving role has not elevated his status within the lineage.

Baton

I met Baton in December, 1972, and scheduled a carving session with him four months later in the wet season after the harmattan subsided thus reducing the possibility of the wood sculpture cracking. Our work was delayed when the artist was afflicted with a respiratory infection. During recuperation he slept on a grass mat in the biling where his shallow breathing and coughing were heard throughout the compound. Using aspirin and local medicines he recovered by April, 1973.

Baton was born at Dange, located about 6 miles from Tumu and 2 miles west of Kong. According to the 1970 census Dange claimed 137 people all of which belonged to the Han viara. Dange residents maintain that their ancestors lived in Northeast Ghana; before coming to Kong, and then the Zabarima raids caused some of the kaala groups at Kong to create the settlement at Dange.¹

Like Gbene, Baton traveled South for three years staying in Accra and then Kumasi. He also visited Fra Fra country in Northeast Ghana and the Dagari people west of Tumu. He was largely unaffected by his travel experiences never having seen wood sculpture or medicines outside the Tumu District. Returning to Dange, he married a Sisala woman, established a farm, and then moved into a compound with his brother Dimie who carved tool handles. Dimie taught Baton how to carve the handles and also the daalieridaan.

Baton justifies the time he spends carving by showing that

¹Interview with Baton at Dange, January 24, 1973.

the earnings from the twin sculptures and tool handles are enough to supply him with kola nuts and tobacco. He feels that it is also wise to follow the example of his elder brother, Dimie, who before going blind was a sculptor.¹

One afternoon I met Baton by chance on the path to Sorbelle. He carried a soothsayer's bag (vugutu purung) and admitted, after I questioned him, that he is a diviner. I pressed him further about the association of divination and carving, but he denied any connection between these two specialized occupations. His distinction between the two is not entirely accurate; for when a twin dies, the father usually consults a diviner about the cause of death and the possibility of commissioning a surrogate figure. The opportunity for Baton to play a dual role in this respect may explain the large number of twin stick commissions he has received (amounting to fifteen during the past twenty years). This dual role is indicative of a general connection between divination and specialization. Those Sisala who become blacksmiths, artists, brass casters, etc., are frequently advised by diviners whose instruction solves various spiritual and psychological afflictions experienced by the would-be specialists.

Baton's sculptural repertory consists of the kpsa, kanjanga, tool handles, and the daalieridaan. He has made some of

¹Though Baton admires Ntowie's work and the attention it was accorded by the whitemen and the District Commissioner, he maintains that the saaruhien did not instruct him about carving. Moreover, during an interview regarding Sisala aesthetics, Baton attributed a twin figure to a carver from Kong, but he refused to identify the artist. His reluctance to identify Ntowie was probably an outgrowth of the bitter feeling existing between the two villages since their separation. Interview with Baton, March 28, 1973.

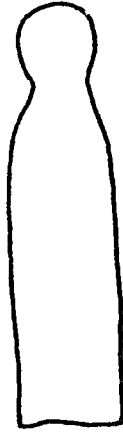
the best kanjanga of the smaller kind which are carried over the shoulder not unlike lobi stools (Plate XX). Ntowie also made these, but his were decorated with a carved animal or human form on the top of the extended back or neck (bagni). Baton has carved several of the stools popularized by Ntowie for his Han viara kinsmen at Sorbelle, Tumu Zongo, and Lelixi; yet, he has not been commissioned by local chiefs, District Officials or Europeans.

Material and Technique

Baton prefers the wood from the shea nut tree which he calls choichoie (Lannea microcarpa).¹ He explained, "When the wind blows the wood refuses to crack." He occasionally rubs his sculptures with oil of the shea nut which helps prevent cracking. The adze, a small knife, a flattened nail and hot irons are his only tools.

Beginning our first session we walked a mile or more into the bush and selected a small, straight shea tree. Baton felled it without smearing pagata (the general Sisala term for tree medicine) on the stump, claiming that the tree was not large enough to host a harmful spirit. Next, he removed the bark and carried the eight-foot log back to the compound. He explained that some people leave the bark believing that it keeps the wood moist, thus preventing the wood from splitting. After reaching the compound Baton chose a place under some trees just outside the compound in the biling, near a vacated smithy, and there he sharpened his tools on a stone and began carving.

¹Correspondence with J.B. Hall, Curator of the Ghana Herbarium, October 4, 1973.



The first stage of Baton's work consisted of shaping the head and body masses of the four sculptures. He remarked that it is crucial to establish the right proportions of the head and body because the size of the remaining body parts depends on it. I asked if there was a term for this aspect of the carving and he replied: "o ha didere," meaning it is not finished. Considering his still somewhat weak condition, our work ended here that day (Plate XXI).



Side

The second day the waist, chest and shoulders of each sculpture were articulated. Then the feet and legs were shaped.



Front

Next, the spaces between the arms and legs were carved out. This required about sixty minutes and was clearly the most meticulous part of the task. Baton remarked that in an earlier work he had cut too deeply and the figure cracked. He used a nail with a flattened tip and the back of his adze to chisel these spaces.

Afterwards Baton placed all the figures on the ground and studied them from several vantage points explaining this this procedure helped him determine whether or not the faka (negative spaces) were symmetrical (Plate XXII). Generally, he worked from the top to the bottom of each sculpture, but often he returned to the face to rework the mouth, nose and ears. The sexual features of the carvings were added last. I asked him on what basis the figures were given their sexual attributes and he simply replied that men and women are different. He then showed me his first carving made nearly twenty years before, which was without sexual identity. He explained that the piece was only for practice and was not intended to represent a specific twin.¹ Using a pen knife the artist quickly smoothed the sculptural surfaces and cleaned out small spaces under the arms and between the legs, a technique which adds to the lathe-turned appearance of his work. It took eight hours to carve the

¹In actual practice, the figure would be given the sexual characteristics of the dead twin.

four figures and only a few additional minutes to complete them with pyro-engraved designs.¹

Baton is for the most part indifferent to spiritual forces that might affect his work and, like Gbene, he believes it is unnecessary to make sacrifices to the trees or wear protective medicines when carving. Both Gbene and Baton deny that the fairy spirits can improve the quality of their sculpture and that personal contact with them can have any effect. The spirits, in Baton's opinion, are merely sticks that have no power.²

Compared to the other carvers, Baton is not highly motivated; and though he carves, practices divination, and farms, he is not considered outstanding in any of these pursuits. His position in a given aesthetic ranking is always near the bottom, sharing fifth and sixth place with Mula of Tasow. Baton does make a satisfactory income from his work, enough to afford a prestigious smock that cost about forty cedes (a considerable sum in an area where the medium annual income is only three times that amount). Because his father is dead and his older brother, Dimi, is handicapped by river blindness, Baton sacrifices to the ancestor shrine, a privilege denied all other carvers except Ntowie and Mula. The practice of divination and carving has apparently done little to enhance Baton's position vis-a-vis

¹Interview with Baton, April 22, 1973.

²Interview with Baton, April 22, 1973. Semani's belief in the fairy spirits' connection with the specialized crafts directly opposed the claims of Gbene and Baton. The works of carvers who used medicines and spiritual aids were judged by most Sisala to be superior to those works of carvers who did not.

the other men of the village. Only his right to sacrifice to the lele qualifies him to sit in council with the elders and the village chief.

Mula

I was introduced to Mula by his eldest son, George, who I met at the Tumu pito bars on market day. During our first meeting at Tasow, Mula explained several unusual aspects of the daalieridaan ritual practiced by his clansmen. The residents of Tasow commissioned two sculptures when both twins died, and in one instance an old lady from Mula's lineage replaced deceased triplets with three sculptures¹ (Plate XXIII). Mula scheduled our first carving session for sometime after the dry season to reduce the danger of the wood splitting. We met again four months later in the following year, March, 1973.

Mula was born in Tasow, the birthplace of his father, Lumuadiman, and grandfather, who was abducted by Babatu and taken to Ouagadougou in the slaving days. His ancestors lived in Gbankuru, a village in Dagari country; but the late nineteenth century slave raids caused them to emigrate east to their present location. Mula belongs to the porcupine clan whose members are settled at Walembele, Kulifuo and Bugubele.

Mula traveled extensively throughout Ghana and after a two-year stay in Accra with his younger brother he moved north to Brong-Ahafo where he carved and sold hoe handles for twenty-five pesewas (twenty cents) each. Later, he returned to the land of

¹Interview with Mula at Taswo, March, 1973.

his ancestors in the Dagari area and worked on rural development projects, building either roads or dams. Mula also carved "TZ" sticks (tee zet) which are long handled ladles used to mix millet mush called "TZ" which is sold to travelers and traders by market women. Mula made these utensils at the Navrongo market in Northeastern Ghana. At Leo, Upper Volta, he learned to respect the Gurunsi for their skill in mask and stool carving, but he could not support himself by carving. Wishing to live again with his clansmen, he left Leo and returned to Tasow where he established a farm and family.

As a young man, Mula explained, he began carving hoe handles since it was too expensive to buy both the blades and handles. With the cash earned from selling the handles he bought the blades. Mula currently earns enough money from selling tool handles at the Bugubele market to buy pito for his friends. As a wealthy Sisala and lineage head he is expected in this way to share his good fortune. Following the example of his father, he also learned to make figure sculpture, and the three-legged men's stool. He pointed to one of the stools with pride and added that he was the only man in Tasow (a village of 365 inhabitants) who could carve them.

The artist's repertory includes the twin figure; all varieties of stools except the great funeral carving; flutes; tool handles; and animal and bush spirits which he has carved for himself and three other people at Tasow (Plates XIV, XXIV, XXVI, XXIII). The artist claims that the spirits he carves are not to be confused with the kantomung, though like them, "his" spirits reside in the bush affecting the lives of the people in nearby

villages. Mula's three spirit carvings are implanted on top of a wall projecting from the right side of his sleeping room doorway. They are covered by a sheet of plastic during the wet season or when not in use. The artist's fertile imagination is expressed in the elaborate arrangements of beads and cloth which adorn these sculptures. The center carving called kulungbene (chameleon), separates the red and black caped figures, Wiasinkperu and Aladitenifile, and thereby prevents them from fighting. Symbolically, the prevention of conflict at the spiritual level helps reduce the amount of dissention occurring within the compound,¹ (Plate XXVI).

Inquiries were made concerning the origin of the spirit sculptures, but Mula simply replied that such carvings have always existed in his village. The sculptures may have been the offshoot of the Dagari tradition of modeling fairy sprites, especially prevalent in the area of Diebugu, Upper Volta, which is "famous" for its terra cotta images. It is possible that Mula's ancestors were familiar with that tradition at Gbankuru where they lived with the Dagari. The clay fairy spirits that Semani models and sells exclusively to the visiting Dagari at the Bugubele market (the market also attended by Mula), further supports this eastern connection.

Mula has received commissions for the bush spirit carvings, stools, and the daalieridaan from his kinsmen at Kulifuo, Nabulo and Tasow. He also claims that the late Tumu Kouro once requested a ceremonial hoe with the carving of a human head on

¹Interview with Mula, December 26, 1972.

top of the handle. The broad base of Mula's clientele and the slight competition from his clansmen give him many more opportunities to carve than either Gbene or Baton who compete with their fellow clansmen, Buyugo, and at one time with Ntowie. Mula's circumstances probably contribute to his highly individual style; for, without competition, he is free to make the most of artistic liberty.¹

Material and Technique

Mula prefers the soft, crack-resistant wood of the kaling, yellow berry tree (Diospyros mespiliformis).² His tools include the adze, knife and several pyro-engraving implements ranging from small pokers to old nineteenth century swords. Decoration for his sculptures consist of paint, cloth, clay and beads.

Beginning the first carving session, we searched an hour for a kaling with several branches suitable for making tool handles as well as the daalieridaan. After cutting the selected tree, Mula picked up some soil and spread it on the remaining stump to appease the tree's spirit. We carried the cut branches and the log back to the front of the compound where he began carving. Cutting deeply into the wood while rapidly turning the log, Mula maintained the rounded form of the log, a sharp contrast, to the "cubic" shape of Buyugo's work. The artist moved

¹Mula's creativeness is dramatically expressed by six carvings which were made between our second and third meeting. They range from fourteen inches to three feet high and vary greatly with respect to their general shape and materials used to decorate them (Plate XXV).

²Correspondance with J.B. Hall, Curator of the Ghana Herbarium, October 4, 1973.

randomly from one section of the sculpture to another, yet it was clear that particular areas were carved in sequence (Plate XXVII).



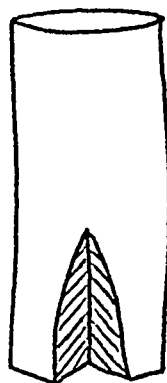
The artist first removed the bark from the log and leveled it at one end explaining that this method prevented the figure from becoming asymmetrical (a pii).



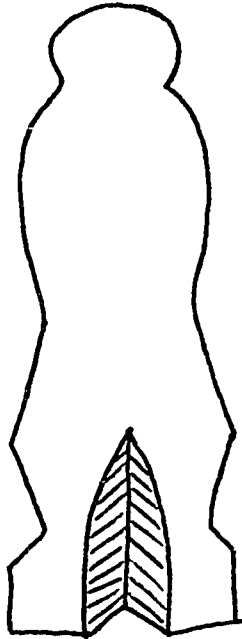
side view

After selecting the side containing the profile of the sculpture, he roughly shaped the legs with long looping adze strokes which left two-inch long wood chips.

Basic shape
of the legs



The log was then turned about ninety degrees so the space between the legs could be easily carved. Unlike Baton, Mula created this opening entirely with the adze.



He rotated the wood while randomly carving its masses until the figure was clearly defined (Plate XXVIII).



Finally, he carved the arms of the sculpture, following a charcoal sketched outline drawn by his son. Mula was the only carver to use line drawing in this manner (Plate XXIX).

The artist completed the pyro-engraved decoration in a subsequent session. To make a fire he placed wood chips left from the previous carving in a six-inch pile and covered them with hot coals, straw, and small branches. Then he placed his knives (made by the Tasow blacksmith) and the sword (left by his father) in the fire. The sword was used to blacken the larger surfaces of the sculpture; and the detailed features including the ears, eyes, and Sisala body decoration were etched with the specially designed curved knives. Working quickly the artist completed the six carvings in less than two hours (Plate XXX).

Though success in other pursuits had earned Mula the respect and admiration of his clansmen, he nevertheless fully applied himself to the task of carving. During breaks in the interviews he preferred to carve miniature stools and animals from nearby scraps of wood rather than to rest. He also produced more of the daalieridaan sculptures than could be sold, insisting that the practice helped improve his work. Such drive enabled him to decorate six carvings in the direct, mid-afternoon sunlight near a fire in temperatures exceeding 110° Fahrenheit.

Mula's accelerated pace is evident in other aspects of his life. He uses an amphetamine popularly called "Nigerian Yellows," and is a hyper-active individual who is always pre-occupied with village politics and the installation of chiefs. One of our interviews, in fact, was prematurely terminated when he was summoned by the elders at Walembele for such an installation. His energies are mostly directed toward his farm, one of the best at Tasow. He hoes the yam mounds with the same quick and vigorous strokes used in sculpture; and while selecting

trees for carving, he often stops along the way to pull weeds in his fields or rebuild an imperfect yam mound. His storage huts are well constructed, his fields cleared of weeds, and unlike other farms at the time of my research his storage sheds contained an ample supply of yams from the previous harvest. Such success in agriculture earns him the respect of his peers and entitles him to be the headman (jeckikintina) of the compound.

Mula is well known south of Tumu, though not for his carving abilities. His reputation is built upon his role as headman, successful farmer, and above all his generosity at the Bugubele market where he freely provides rounds of pito for the elders. His generosity was displayed on the eve of my departure from Tumu when he and his wife arrived by lorry over twenty-eight miles of rough road to present me with guinea fowl, eggs and a large yam.

Buyugo

Buyugo is one of the few Sisala artists whose seriousness and excellence as a carver prompted him at one time to consider full-time specialization and even to aspire to the title of saaruhian, first carver. He is now primarily a farmer whose obligations to the kaala are of first importance; yet his numerous daalieridaan commissions have made him one of the most experienced carvers in the Tumu area. He and I met several times either in carving sessions or informally at funerals and during visits with the Sekai Kouro. Feuding between Buyugo and his eldest brother, the jechikintina and kaalatina, frequently interrupted our meetings. Eventually, we elected to meet in the most

removed areas of the compound yard or in the artist's sleeping room.

Buyugo was born at Sekai, his father's and grandfather's birthplace and the residence of the great Han viara chief. The village's large population of 1,220 is a result of the growing moslem quarter (zongo) which, in turn, is made possible by the lorry traffic passing by the village on the main trade route from Walembele to Tumu.¹ Buyugo claims that his ancestors, like Gbene's and Baton's came from a place near Tamale, having emigrated during the Zabarima conquest. Pointing to Sekai's earth shrine house, he remarked that its circular form exemplified the architectural style of his Tamale ancestors.

As a young man Buyugo went south to Kumasi and lived with his maternal uncle's father. Usually Sisala males remained with their agnatic kin, yet in Buyugo's case living with his mother's grandfather suggested a possible conflict between his own mother and father. Whatever the situation, the artist's strong identification with his mother's kin explained his receiving the powerful "padlock" or (bilimenchis), from his maternal grandfather. According to Mendonsa such personal shrines (tomung), associated with specialization, are sometimes transmitted on the mother's side, by the mother's brother to her son. "Padlock" apparently originated in the larger cities near the coast, and for this reason it is highly regarded in Sisala-land, selling for twenty cedes, one sheep, and two fowls--about thirty-five dollars. Buyugo took the medicine and returned to Sekai;

¹The Tumu Local Council, 1970 Population Census, Provisional List of Localities.

and with the help of Wia and the bilimenchis, he protected himself through all his endeavors.

The artist maintains that his unique carving style has contributed to his reputation throughout the Han viara. Though Ntowie was the most outstanding carver of the clan, Buyugo refuses to acknowledge that carver's impact on his own development. It was through Ntowie, however, that Buyugo became aware of the meetings at Tumu sponsored by George Nanjo, the District Commissioner from Kong in the 1950s. The Commissioner, who considered himself a classificatory son of Ntowie and patron of traditional carving, encouraged the work of his father as well as others like Buyugo by purchasing Sisala sculptures to be used as gifts for visiting heads of state. Buyugo believes that his "padlock" was responsible for the selection of his carvings as gifts.¹

In contrast to the preceding artists, Buyugo has carved for individuals outside of Sisala society including government officials and museum collectors from Ivory Coast and Accra. He stopped carving for the museum people because he claimed they had not payed him adequately.² Many of the artist's commissions belong to the National Museum collection in Accra, and though information concerning the acquisition of these works is not

¹Buyugo also used the "padlock" in connection with blacksmithing which he learned by watching the males of his lineage work at the compound. In the dry season of 1971 he spent four days at Challo teaching a young man the trade, then both returned to Sekai where further instruction continued for six months. In exchange for teaching Buyugo was offered the young man's first five months income from blacksmithing. Interview with Buyugo, July 6, 1973.

²Interview with Buyugo, June 12, 1973.

available they were easily identified by the author as Buyugo's style. The significance of the non-Sisala clientele cannot be overestimated, especially in regard to the Sisala's overall indifference to wood sculpture. Carvers like Baton and Gbene satisfied the demand of the kaala and lineage, but never in their careers have they had the opportunity to work and receive recognition in a context beyond their immediate kin group.

Buyugo's status as an artist stems from a spiritual motivation greater than that of the other carvers. He sincerely believes that the surrogate carvings provide security for those families whose twins have died. He explained, "It is the work of Wia and the ancestors when a twin dies, if a twin stick is not carved it is an act of disobedience punishable by death."¹ Buyugo noted one instance at Sekai where a father was not advised by a diviner to replace the dead twin with a surrogate figure. He believes that this oversight caused the death of the surviving twin. To further protect individuals from hostile spirits Buyugo makes tree medicines (pagata) which are sold or given away.

Buyugo's previous determination to become Ntowie's successor as saaruhien was for the most part stimulated by contact with people outside his society, particularly the museum collectors and visiting officials of the National and regional government. On one occasion he had carved a mother and child sculpture for a visiting state official during Nkrumah's regime in the early 1960s; and in similar situations he had carved a man sitting on

¹Interview with Buyugo, April 19, 1973.

a stool, an elephant, a drummer, a chameleon that looked like it was "ready to walk," and a variety of walking sticks, one of which was decorated with carvings of an eagle, a crocodile, and tortoise on the handle, and serpents in relief on the shaft with a figure sculpture at the base.¹ Buyugo believes that such carvings distinguish him from the other Sisala carvers and furthermore support his bid to become the saaruhien.

Initially it was difficult to accept these artistic accomplishments without corroborating evidence. Fortunately, in the storage area of the National Museum are two objects which on the basis of iconography and style can be safely attributed to Buyugo.² One of the museum carvings, a walking stick like the one described by Buyugo, features several intertwining serpents in relief on the shaft and its handle is decorated with a chameleon (Plate XXXI). Another museum sculpture depicting a seated female about thirty inches high with arms resting across her lap as if to hold a child recalls Buyugo's reference to a mother and child sculpture which he presented at a District meeting.

A stylistic comparison of the museum sculptures with the Buyugo carvings I saw further substantiated this artist's accomplishments. In both works painted decoration is restricted to the edges of the intersecting planes of the sculptural surfaces and the larger surface areas are decorated with elaborate

¹Interview with Buyugo, June 12, 1973.

²The National Museum and Monuments Board in Accra has two works that I attributed to Buyugo, one a walking stick #62,1309 and the other a female figure #62,1308.

painted scarification patterns. Regarding the figural sculptures, stylistic similarities include eyes made of cowrie shells, elongated chins, strong perpendicular intersections of the forehead ridge and nose, the unique use of paint for decoration, sharply protruding buttocks, absence of hips and carved fingers, and truncated cone shaped necks. These features combine in a highly individualized figural style marked by severe angularity and elongation.

The carving that Buyugo had described as "a man sitting on a stool" was made known to me through a photograph that Roy Sieber had taken in the Tumu Kouro's compound in 1964. The Tumu Kouro, who owned the piece, spoke highly of the carver from Sekai. This geographic placing of the artist coupled with Buyugo's own description of the piece make attribution of the stool to Buyugo fairly certain. The piece affirms Buyugo's prominent position among Sisala carvers. I was originally misled by Buyugo's description of the piece and had imagined it to be a seated figure sculpture like those carved by Ntowie, where the figure and stool are rendered in natural scale. The Sekai carver was, however, referring to a figure carving which decorated the handle or back rest of a men's stool rather than an actual figure seated on a stool.¹

Despite the broad base of Buyugo's clientele his repertory is considered very small by Sisala standards. In addition to the daalieridaan and sculpture intended for non-Sisala use he

¹Ntowie's carving is on exhibition at the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board in Accra numbered 65.452b.

has carved only a few mortars and pestles claiming that after his children were born more time was required at the farm. The kanjanga, four-legged stool (kpassa), and flutes (nmuula) are carved by two other men of Sekai; and, according to Buyugo, their work meets the village's demand.¹

Since the early 1960s Buyugo's enthusiasm for carving and expectations for becoming the saaruhien have diminished. He pessimistically explained that the Sisala no longer appreciate wood sculpture and that they are unwilling to pay for it. He continues to carve twin figure sculptures because of his religious convictions. Recent political developments in Northern Ghana have also negatively affected the artist's production. During the 1950s and early 60s the Sisala established close ties with the National government resulting in the construction of the Kanton Training College, Tumu Dam and various other facilities. In 1954 Imoru Egala, a Sisala from Challo, was appointed Gold Coast Minister of Health, and later under Nkrumah he was appointed the head of many important internal departments.² Mr. Egala initiated several building programs at Tumu which were reviewed at District meetings of National officials and the local Sisala elders. It was during this period that George Nanjo encouraged carvers to attend meetings and present their carvings. He believed that the ethnic quality of the sculptures made them

¹Interview with Buyugo, April 19, 1973.

²Polaris, op. cit.

appropriate as gifts from the Sisala people to the National government.¹

The removal of Nkrumah from office marked a turning point in Sisala history. Nanjo was jailed and replaced by a non-Sisala commissioner; the Tumu Kouro's title of Paramount Chief was revoked; and, most importantly, the Sisala building programs were ended. Tumu was no longer slated to play a key role in the development of Northern Ghana. National efforts were instead directed towards the east in Bolga-Tanga and to the west at Lawra. As a result, the number of dignitaries visiting Tumu declined. In the absence of a non-Sisala clientele, carvers returned to the traditional carving repertory which, in itself, contributed to their loss of prestige. Under these circumstances Buyugo turned more and more toward farming explaining, "In the old days I had much time to carve, it was only my wife and I. Now we support five children."²

Material and Technique

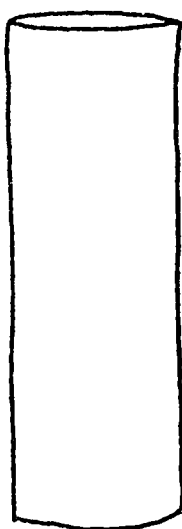
Buyugo uses more kinds of materials and tools for carving than the other artists. He is the only one to use cowrie shells and a black pitch resin for the eyes of his twin sculpture

¹Though written evidence for the Tumu meetings was not available, Mr. Pime, the District Officer from 1972, assured me that they had been recorded in the minutes which unfortunately had been destroyed by a recent fire. Nanjo and Buyugo confirmed one such occasion when twelve people from Lawra and the Omanhene from Kumasi visited Tumu. At their meeting Buyugo presented a walking stick with a carved lizard on the handle and a rooster whose plumage was pyro-engraved. These may be the works presently in museum storage at Accra #62.1309 and #54.2190.

²Interview with Buyugo, April 19, 1973.

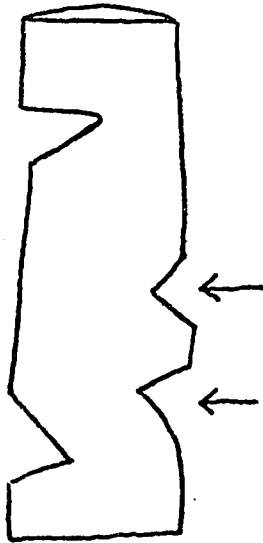
(Plate XXXVIII). Despite his claim that this is his own invention (me wujiming) carvers in Leo, Upper Volta often bring small-scale carvings of crocodiles to the Tumu market which exhibit the same eye formation. The water colors which he uses for decorative purposes are purchased at the G.N.T.C. in Tumu and occasionally at Bolga-Tanga. Buyugo carves the hard wood of the shea nut tree and rubs it with shea nut oil or at times various grades of petroleum to prevent cracking. His tools consist of the adze (sang), pen knife, the protective medicine (pagata), chicken feathers for painting, a tree branch to support the log, and piece of cloth for applying the oil.

In the period that I worked with Buyugo, he carved two daalieridaan upon my request and one other for a Sisala client. Each time he used the same technique which resulted in nearly identical sculptures, differing primarily in absolute dimensions.



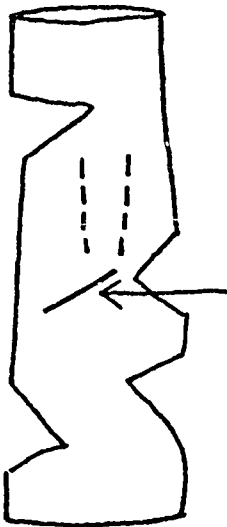
After mixing the pagata on the stone used to sharpen the adze, Buyugo placed some of the medicine on the log and then rubbed the rest on his hands, arms, and head. Then, by striking the back of the adze against the log, he crushed the bark and easily removed it. After these preparation he leveled one end of the log, for only in its perpendicular position to the ground could he visualize the correct body proportions.

Carefully observing the cylinder, Buyugo cut a wedge-shaped space separating the neck from the head. He explained this established the relationship between the head and torso as well as the dimensions of the legs and arms. Next he determined the height of the feet.

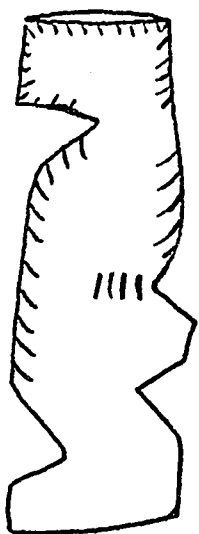


Two wedged-shaped spaces were cut at the back, thereby giving shape to the buttocks.

After these spaces were established, the artist moved quickly and mechanically to remove much of the wood between the wedges. During this phase of the work he frequently rubbed himself and the carving with pagata.



Using the adze he cut a small groove from the top back wedge around the middle of the torso, then outlined the arms. This part of the carving was accomplished with short, controlled strokes, effected by gripping the upper portion of the adze handle.

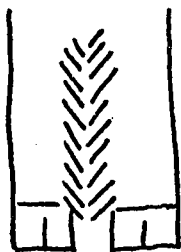


While turning the sculpture with the left hand Buyugo carved in short, light strokes removing about one-half inch of wood from the torso.

A similar amount of wood was removed from the head without changing its angular shape.



By cutting a niche at the base of the sculpture Buyugo determined the space (faka) between the legs.



He used a flattened nail to chisel out the space near the crotch of the figure. The remaining faka was formed with the adze.



Carefully determined incised parallel lines established the size and location of the eyes, nose and forehead.

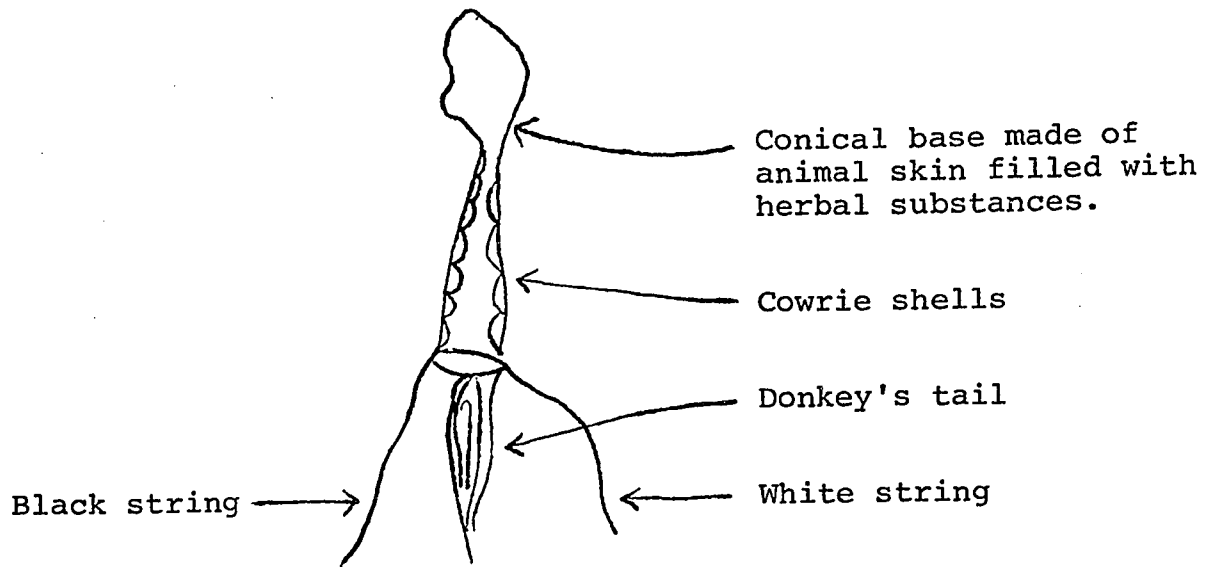
To finish the sculpture Buyugo quickly shaped one mass and then another until a harmony of block-like forms was achieved. He then used a penknife to smooth the sculpture's surface and to define its sexual features. Next he dipped a piece of cloth

into a jar of engine oil and rubbed the carving giving it a reddish tone (atule). The eye cavities were filled with black tree pitch and then one cowrie for each eye was imbedded in the resin which was then heated with a match to make the shells stick (Plate XXXIII). Paint was not used to decorate this particular sculpture. The carving was completed in three sessions of three hours each.

Depending on Wia and certain herbal medicines for protection, Buyugo carefully followed ordained religious practices associated with carving. Like Semani he protected himself from the spirits of trees with tisin kia (also called pagata) which he made from tree roots, an animal skin and roots from water plants. Buyugo remarked that a man from Sakailo was once made sick by the tree spirits but after purchasing Buyugo's mixture of tisin kia, the man was cured.

The stronger medicine that belong to the artist, "padlock" or bilimenchis, was made by his uncle's father of string, herbal roots, animal skin, a donkey's tail, and cowrie shells.¹ The "padlock" is especially effective in competitive situations, and as Buyugo believes, "it assisted one man against all." For example, the day before a court case, he tied the white and black strings of the medicine around the base of a tree; the following day he rubbed himself with "lavender" (any perfume-

¹Two of the eight carvers I interviewed own the padlock believing that it protected them in the practice of carving as well as in many competitive situations. One that differed in some ways from Buyugo's consisted of several types of ground up tree roots stored in a small cloth pouch attached to a four-inch long shaft wrapped with cotton thread, feathers and chewed kola nut. A small European style lock and key which were attached to the object symbolically locked out the competitors.



bilimenchis

DIAGRAM C

like solution purchased at the market) and then went to court prepared to defend himself. Buyugo did not discuss the details of the case because he believed that repeating the stories connected with the dispute might lead to gossip and renew the old conflict. He also used the "padlock" in his early carving years when sculptors were invited to the Tumu meetings for the selection of their work. Despite the fact that Sisala carvers seldom organize themselves or contact each other, there exists a feeling of competition among them, particularly between Buyugo and Semani. Some carvers believe that a competitor might threaten them through a fetish like the "padlock," a fairy shrine, or a sculpture. When Buyugo, Semani and Ntowie brought their carvings to the Tumu meetings, the rivalry must have been intense, sufficient to warrant the use of "padlock" to insure

success. The power of the potential threat was strikingly revealed to me when I showed Buyugo a work by Semani. Buyugo's fear that the carving might harm him impelled him to sacrifice a chicken to his "padlock" and rub himself with pagata.¹

In some ways the most powerful spiritual force affecting Buyugo's work is Wia, the Sisala equivalent of the unique creator God of the West. Buyugo maintains that he was never encouraged to carve by the spirits (kantomung), rather it was the will of God that he become a saaro. Clearly disassociating himself with the fairy spirits he claimed, "Even when twins die it is the work of Wia, not the fairies." He also credits Wia for the effectiveness of his herbal medicines; whereas Semani believes the power of his herbal mixtures rests with the kantomung.

Buyugo's spiritual orientation generally conforms to the expectations of his lineage and particularly the kaala; yet pride in his work and a strong sense of individuality are sources of a certain amount of friction. Like Semani Buyugo views his world as a battlefield where social rules are likely to interfere with one's personal goals and ambitions. His antagonism towards society is manifested by an introversion particularly expressed in the way he treated his kin during our meetings outside his sleeping room. On these occasions we were well hidden by a "Z" shaped entry way which prevented anyone in the kaala from seeing us. We were left alone except when the artist's eldest brother stopped by. These visitations

¹Interview with Buyugo at Sekai, July 6, 1973.

ended in quarrels mainly over the interest I showed in Buyugo's work. The artist apologized for his brother explaining that since he returned from the British army in World War II he was unable to think clearly. To avoid such encounters we thought it would be better to carve in the bush. However, a pulled leg muscle prevented Buyugo from walking long distances; so we resumed work at the compound. The interruptions became more frequent as our relationship developed for the eldest brother believed that as lineage head the gifts I gave to Buyugo should have passed first to him, or at least have been duplicated for his benefit. During the last few sessions we worked until the shouting and name calling between the brothers obstructed further communication.

The noise and constant movement of the children who were curious about our work also disturbed the artist. He scolded them and threw stones, but without success. Therefore, we met inside his sleeping room where even the poor lighting and ventilation were less disturbing to the artist than the constant interruptions. In the sleeping room we discussed medicines and non-traditional carvings, topics that were more freely discussed within the privacy of this space.

Preferring not to communicate with other carvers, Buyugo did not attend Ntowie's funeral. The performance of the left-handed communal carving of a hoe handle at the funeral was to decide the successor of Ntowie, i.e. the new saaruhien (see pp. 111-12). Buyugo explained that the ritual failed to designate the true successor declaring that he himself was the new

saaruhien.¹ Perhaps his absence from the funeral was planned to attract attention and distinguish him from the other carvers thereby increasing his chances of becoming the new saaruhien.

Another occasion marking Buyugo's preference for anonymity occurred when Buyugo sold tree medicine to Mula's brother who had refused to make a sacrifice to Wia and the ancestors. As a result of this demurrer, Mula's wife became barren.² Buyugo gave the man some tisin kia but did not disclose his carving abilities or his name to Mula and his brother. He stated, "When you come for tisin kia there is no need to learn names."

Buyugo plays a minimal role in matters of compound responsibility. He admits that he is not allowed to sacrifice at the lele shrine and explains, without showing disrespect toward the ancestors, that Wia is more powerful and has greater impact on his daily life. Buyugo's strong personal commitment to Wia and secondary regard for the ancestors facilitates his embracing of activities and attitudes that are outside the scope of most Sisala lives. For most Sisala, the practice of farming and worship of the ancestors are understood to be coterminous and mutually inclusive categories. Buyugo's non-conformity to

¹Although it was believed that carvers who did not participate in the left-handed carving would forget how to carve, Buyugo claimed that the ceremony had nothing to do with one's expertise or the selection of Ntowie's successor. The relatives of Ntowie at Kong shared the artist's belief, but they insisted that the next saaruhien had to be reincarnated by Ntowie's to-mung, his personal carving shrine.

²According to Buyugo, the man refused to thank Wia and the ancestors for his wife's conception, and the baby was still-born. Afterwards the mother could not become pregnant. Interview on June 12, 1973, at Sekai.

one side of the conceptual equation allows for, and almost necessitates, an adjustment on the other.

CHAPTER IV

NTOWIE

Ntowie's career is an anomaly in Sisala culture and, as such, reveals much about the norms and expectations of Sisaland. He managed in his lifetime to become a full-time specialized carver and to raise, by the sheer force of his unusual talent and persistence, the prestige allowed to wood carving and to the carver who rejects for his own life the primacy of farming and of ancestor worship. The very concept of manhood is inextricably linked to a man's work in his yam and millet fields. Yet, Ntowie was able to stand against these pressures and to assert his individuality and originality, and to produce the richest body of art that Sisala has ever seen. Ntowie bestowed on himself the title of saaruhien, first carver; and this title was subsequently recognized by his kinsmen and the populus at large.¹ His life, his work, and his title have served as inspiration and encouragement to other Sisala carvers and specialists who wish to break away from the restrictions of traditional Sisala occupation; but none has equalled Ntowie in achievement or in recognition. Although Ntowie's example has not had the effect of making a cohesive group of the Sisala

¹Saaruhien in literal translation means eldest carver, but it more often refers to the best or "first" among Sisala carvers.

carvers, his creation of the title saaruhien has contributed to the sense of pride that is felt by the other sculptors. This pride and the desire to carry on the institution founded by a worthy forerunner mark a self-consciousness which often characterizes the early stages of cultural development--an aesthetic awareness inchoate.

Ntowie's Life

The collection of biographical information on Ntowie was made difficult by the fact that he had died sixteen years before this investigation in a society where the passing down of oral history is not emphasized. The chronology that I put together of the saaruhien's life should not be viewed as totally unimpeachable because the dating techniques that I relied upon were imprecise. The highly stylized narratives about him, moreover, added to the difficulty of obtaining an intimate description of his personality and behavior. Ntowie's classificatory brothers at Kong, and George Nanjo provided invaluable assistance in constructing a general biographical description of the artist.

Ntowie was born about 1910 in his father's village of Kong (a settlement of the Han viara), and there he died in 1957. His Sisala mother was reared at Sekal, south of Sekai on the main trunk road to Walembele. His childhood was filled with tension and conflict brought on by his interest in carving. Many elders described him as a "lazy boy" who disliked farming, preferring instead to carve in the remote and well concealed areas of the bush. Once, after having been severely punished

for his laziness, Ntowie reportedly ran away and was not seen for some time. When he returned to his compound, he brought with him several figurative sculptures so beautifully carved that the lineage fathers believed the work had been inspired by the fairies (kantomung). After this episode Ntowie was never questioned or ridiculed concerning his interest in sculpture. On the contrary, his work was of such quality that the elders encouraged him to spend more time carving.

Despite the anecdotal character of this narrative, it demonstrates clearly the conflict between the Sisala's predominant commitment to farming and the carver's concern and predisposition for craftsmanship. Sculptors are often pressured into farming the lineage's millet and yam fields, and those who refuse are invariably held to be under the influence of personal shrines, the fairy spirits, or powerful medicines like the padlock (bilimenchis).

In early adolescence Ntowie contracted elephantiasis Filariasis which caused severe pain and swelling of his feet and legs and reduced his mobility. As a result, he did not follow the beaten path as so many Sisala young men before him to the large cities of Ghana to seek employment. The disease also contributed to his reluctance to work on the farm (baga) or cut trees for carving. His brother pointed out that everyone who commissioned Ntowie had to bring their own materials.

A major turning point in Ntowie's career as an artist occurred in the 1950's when George Nanjo held a series of positions in the Tumu schools. Nanjo implemented agricultural programs in the primary and middle schools for which large

numbers of hoe handles were commissioned from the carvers of Kong.¹ Ntowie began, at this time, to earn enough income from carving hoe handles to hire young boys from the neighboring settlement of Dange to do his farming. Thus, he was able to spend even more time carving without decreasing support of his wife and children or abandoning his fields. Through this felicitous combination of internal ambition and external opportunity, Ntowie was able to do what no carver before him had managed, that is, to free his hands from the rigors of farming without heaping disgrace on himself by shunning responsibility.

Ntowie's artistic career was further broadened by the short-lived flurry of political and civic activity that took place in the 1950s and early 60s. Like Buyugo, Ntowie was invited to present carvings at the Tumu meetings which were held to review progress on the Tumu Dam Project, the Kanton Training College, and the District Clinic. The influx of national and regional officials as well as local Sisala elders created an opportunity for the carvers to experiment with new forms of carving, for which there had been no previous demand. The traditional twin figure carvings were inappropriate for these occasions, and Ntowie began to make genre sculpture like the works at the Museum in Accra. Ntowie's carvings of a seated military man, a free-standing school boy, and a market woman carrying a basket on her head no doubt date from this

¹The impact of Nanjo's policies was still visible in 1973, for in the Kong lineage of Abu Nyile four men were actively engaged in hoe handle production. Interview with Abu Nyile at Kong, March 25, 1973.

period,¹ (Plates XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII). These pieces do not coincide with the traditional conception of African sculpture; they are made from fresh wood and lack the distinctions of age, old patina, and ritual context. Nonetheless, each carving represents an achievement in the history of Sisala sculpture, illustrating new approaches to problems of form based on the observation of nature and social change.

Although events in Tumu in the 50s greatly contributed to Ntowie's growth, evidence suggests that the artist attained a prominent position even before the district's political ascent. His first twin figure sculptures, numerous requests for men's stools, and the commission of three summons sticks to assist Kanton I in his judiciary duties were testimony to the artist's earlier success. The absence of twin figure sculptures by Ntowie's contemporaries before the 1950s may also indicate the saaruhien's virtual monopoly of commissions for traditional carving in the Tumu area.

The majority of stories that are told by Sisala informants concerning Ntowie's life and career focus on his early defections from farming, his sculptural accomplishments and the belief that his tomung shrine would someday reincarnate his spirit. The only intimate recollection of Ntowie's personal life were provided by George Nanjo who recalled that he liked to tell stories to the children while carving in front of his sleeping room. By comparison most artists prefer to work alone and in extreme cases

¹Museum records show that H.D. Collings collected these sculptures, numbered respective 56.472b, and 56.472(9), in 1956. He attributed them to "Tovia" of Kang--undoubtedly Ntowie of Kong.

throw rocks at children who gather to watch. Unlike Buyugo and Semani, two of the most skilled and serious carvers in Sisala, Ntowie was very popular with his lineage and in his later years became the lineage head (jechikintina). This title brought with it the responsibility of sacrificing to the ancestor shrine (lele); and, for this reason, Ntowie's other spiritual affiliations were not viewed as a direct threat to the Sisala "way," that is, the way of the ancestors.

The Sisala look to the ancestors to account for the success or failure of day to day events. Personal affliction is attributed to errors and oversights in the discharging of duty to the ancestor spirits. Those individuals who traffick with the fairy spirits (often those who have broken away from farming and its concomitant reliance on ancestors) are viewed with distrust and suspicion.¹ Despite Ntowie's traditional regard for the ancestor spirits, his commission of the fairy spirits for diviners suggests that he possessed a knowledge of this area of worship that is antithetical to the sanctioned Sisala way. Other evidence that points to his relationship with the fairies is his tomung which consists of a half-buried figure carving and a yam hoe blade covered with a white enameled metal bowl (Plate XXXVIII). The head of the carving is crowned with a chameleon, an animal often associated with specialist shrines. Because clay and wood fairy spirit images are commonly placed near fairy shrines, it is believed that the many objects

¹Mendonsa found that in a sample of 272 Sisala males only 7.3 percent had ever been to the fairy callers, for most people believed the callers to be outright fakes. Op. cit., p. 220.

reportedly buried beneath Ntowie's shrine were also connected with the kantomung.

The juxtaposition of the hoe blade with the figure suggests a symbolic way of balancing the forces of the ancestors, farming, and the lele with the forces of specialization and quite possibly the fairies. Such a device could certainly help resolve the conflicts faced by a craftsman like Ntowie who followed his artistic calling in a milieu where farming is seen as a necessary condition for manhood.

The accommodation that Ntowie was impelled to make between the demands of lineage headship and his personal artistic bent was short-lived because he served as jchikintina only briefly. Based on a diary of one of his classificatory sons, we can assume that Ntowie died in the winter of 1957. The saaruhien's funeral became the arena for a competition among most of the living Sisala carvers to name a successor to Ntowie's self-bestowed title. Some people believed that artists who declined to participate in the competition would forget their skills, while others including Buyugo denied the very efficacy of the ritual. Many of Ntowie's relatives believed that the next saaruhien would be provided through reincarnation mediated by the artist's tomung.¹

The competition that took place at Ntowie's funeral

¹Mendonsa's research has revealed that a number of individuals named Ntowie appear in the genealogy of the clan, possibly accounting for the expectation of Ntowie's kin that he will be reincarnated. It would be intriguing to find out whether any of the previous Ntowies had been carvers and to speculate on what an excavation of the tomung would disclose.

consisted of a left-handed communal carving of a hoe handle.¹ According to Semani each artist who attended the funeral carved part of the hoe handle with his left hand and then passed it to another carver who continued the work in like fashion. This procedure continued until all the carvers had participated in the carving and the handle was completed. Afterwards the carving was placed near Ntowie's surrogate corpse in the funeral yard. The ritual carving session failed to designate a new saaruhien with the result that most of the residents of Kong came to believe that the new saaruhien would indeed be reincarnated through Ntowie's tomung. In anticipation of his epiphany, Ntowie's memory is rekindled each year prior to the harvest when the elders of the lineage sacrifice a sheep to his shrine to secure their families' welfare for the following year.

Ntowie's Work

Having established the approximate dates for Ntowie's life and work, a framework was available for describing his stylistic development. The most accurate dating concerned the time of his death; according to Alidu Kong, Ntowie died nine months after completing a daalieridaan for Alidu's own deceased twin daughter. Since her death was recorded in her father's diary as March 3, 1956, it followed that the saaruhien died during the winter of 1957. Nanjo places Ntowie's birth in the first decade of this century, believing that the artist lived nearly fifty years.

¹The author believes that the use of the left hand in this context symbolizes the reverse of life, which is, death. Among the Sisala the right hand is used in all life contexts. It is considered profane to do otherwise. Jack Goody, Death Property and the Ancestors, p. 111.

Since Ntowie carved his first twin sculpture in the early 1930's (based on the age of the sculpture's surviving twin, Hellie of Sakai, who was about forty-five in 1973) he was at least twenty years old at the time of this commission which is the age when most Sisala males begin to carve. Based upon these dates Ntowie's early style probably developed between the beginning of the 1930's and the late 1940's while his later style emerged in the 1950's.

Ntowie's work falls within the categories of genre, ritual and utilitarian sculpture. Of the works in all these categories only fourteen objects remain; yet, in light of the Sisala public's minimal demand for wood sculpture it is remarkable that so many of his works have indeed survived. As an indication of the scope of Ntowie's popularity, his carvings are found in many villages including Pien, Tumu, Bujan, Sekai, Kong and Challo. He was also commissioned by persons from clans other than the Han viara, a factor which no doubt contributed to his widespread reputation. Most of the older twin figure sculptures of the Tumu area were made by Ntowie, and only in such distant places as Gwollu, Nwandawno, and Tasow are there such works by his contemporaries. Apparently the artists near Tumu were content to make tool handles and stools during the saaruhien's lifetime.

A daalieridaan representing the deceased twin spirit of Hellia of Sekai, is the oldest sculpture attributed to Ntowie. Hellia has attended her sister's spirit by feeding and washing the twin surrogate for nearly forty-five years (Plate XXXIX). Another twin figure of the same style represents Baduamie's

deceased twin brother of Kong (Plate XL). These sculptures are similar with respect to size (Hellia's is fifteen inches high and Baduamie's seventeen), surface treatment, and sculptural form. Hellia's surrogate is elaborately adorned with a striated coiffure; a pendant or amulet around the neck, and rosettes on the shoulders, back, calves, and wrists. Baduamie's sculpture is more simply distinguished with ears, eye sockets, incised mouth, and the straight line scarification pattern of the Han viara along the ridge of the nose. Apart from the differences in the amount of decoration (probably based upon the Sisala concept of female beauty), use of the pen knife in decorating the figures has resulted in an overall preciseness and clarity of surface pattern characteristic of Ntowie's early style.

Sculptural qualities of these two works are strikingly similar. The volumes of the arms, legs, torsos and necks of the figures are rendered in strict cylindrical terms, whereas movement and elasticity are implied by flexed knees and the acute angle formed by the intersection of the neck and head. In most Sisala figure sculpture this intersection is perpendicular, a feature which adds to the inflexible character of Sisala figure sculpture. Diagram "D" contrasts Ntowie's fluid joining of the neck and head with the typical Sisala treatment of this connection as demonstrated by Semani's sculpture.

The twin figures of the early style are also similar with respect to the proportions established by the height of each work to the length of its arms, head, torso, legs; the height to maximum width; and the length of the neck to that of the head.

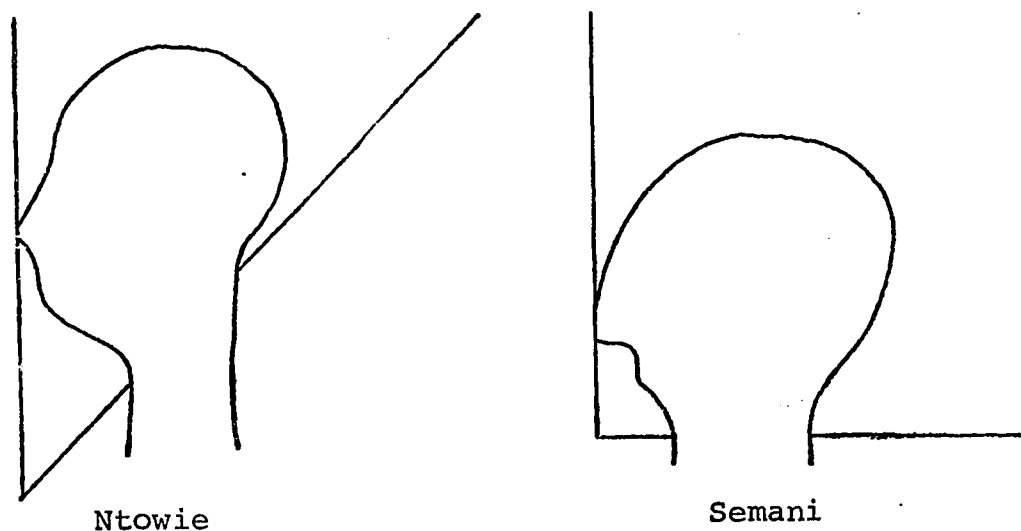
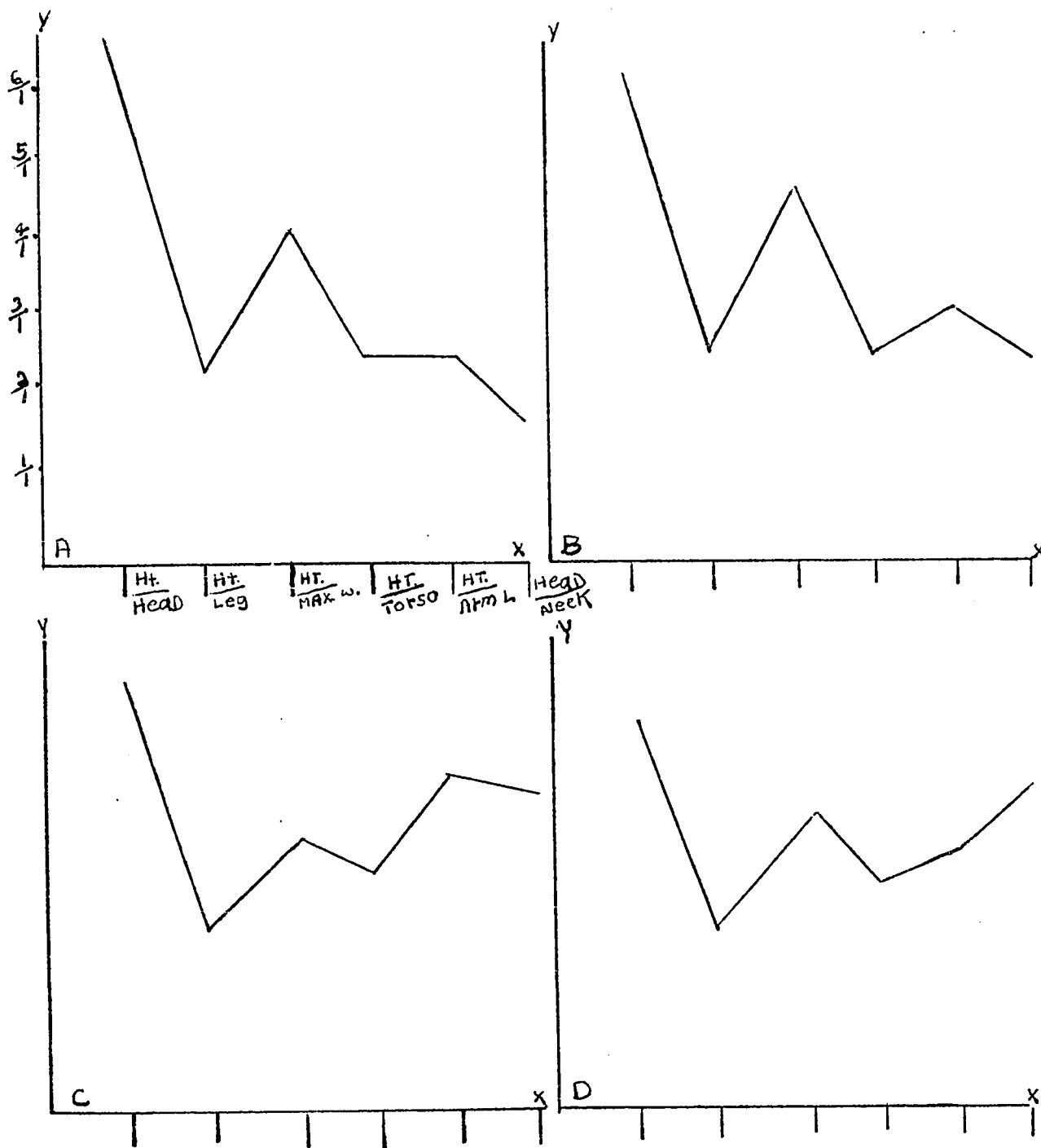


DIAGRAM D

Graphs "A" and "B" of Diagram E illustrate these similarities by converting the sculptures' absolute measurements into ratios as indicated on the "X" axes and plotting those ratios on the "Y" axes. This results in an early comparable profile for each of the sculpture's proportions.

Two daalieridaan of the later style (one belonging to Alidu Kong's daughter of Tumu and the other to a young woman from Pien (Plates XLI, XLII), were carved shortly before Ntowie's death. These carvings average 10.5 inches in height, about 4 inches shorter than the older figures. The proportions of the height of each work to the length of the arms and necks are considerably larger than the same proportions of the early sculptures. Moreover, the shortness of the later carvings contributes to a reduction of the proportions established by their



- A. Baduamie's twin carving Early style
 B. Hellia's twin carving
 C. Alidu Kong's daughter's twin figure Late style
 D. Twin figure from Pien

DIAGRAM E

heights to maximum widths (See Graphs "C" and "D" of Diagram E). Despite these quantitative differences the flexed knees, acute angle joining the neck and head, and the prevailing cylindrical forms are important features common in both his early and late styles.

The most striking differences between the early and late works concerns the execution of body decoration and physiological detail. The shift from an essentially sculptural technique involving the incised markings of a sharp unheated metal blade to the more painterly burned incised markings of pyro-engraving is difficult to explain. A clue to the reason for the shift; however, is found in connection with Ntowie's genre carvings of the early and mid 1950's. During that time the artist discovered that elements of genre such as soldier uniforms, pants, shirts, wickerwork baskets, and ammunition belts were more convincingly rendered by pyro-engraving. The light and dark contrast resulting from this procedure accented the detail of body decoration and clothing. To enhance this affect the saaruhien carved the lighter color woods of the gbrobuner (Combretum nigricans), or fuletia (Hannoa undulata).¹ Nowadays the preference for pyro-engraving is expressed by most Sisala carvers except for Buyugo who rejects the technique and continues to work in shea wood.

Ntowie's later style was partly influenced by his expanding clientele which included representatives of the National government. No longer confined to the tastes of the local population

¹J.B. Hall, Curator of Ghana Herbarium, correspondence October 4, 1973.

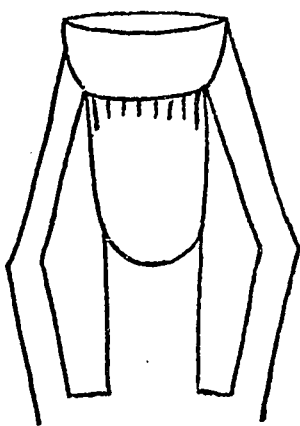
the artist portrayed subjects of the material as well as the spiritual world. Although his experience (wujimin) was geographically limited to Kong and Tumu he was able to observe social and cultural change in such subjects as military personnel, market women, and middle school students in modern dress. These symbols of change demanded new solutions to problems of sculptural form, for the hieractic style of the daalieridaan was not suitable for sculpture based on natural observation.

His new approach to figuration sculpture is best illustrated by the carving of a school boy dressed in short pants and a fish-net style shirt (Plate XXXVI). The head of the figure is slightly turned to the left of the main vertical axis, yet not so far as to conform with the horizontal axis of the shoulders, as, for example, is common in Egyptian sculpture. By depicting the head between the vertical and horizontal axes Ntowie successfully implies motion of his subject and as a result he considerably loosens Sisala figurative style. Prior to this achievement figure carving among his people was based entirely upon ritual-spiritual considerations leading to a strongly hieractic style. Ntowie's sculptural innovation is in every respect comparable to the development of the Greek figure style evolving from the rigid frontality of the archaic kouros to the classical hero whose head and torso depart from the frontal surface plane of the shoulders.

Ntowie's one-piece carving of a seated soldier decorated with military medals also exemplifies innovative sculptural form; although the overall harmony of masses in this work is not completely realized (Plates XXXIV, XXXV). To resolve the complex

arrangement of chair and human legs the artist made the lower limbs of the soldier serve equally as the front legs of the chair. As a result the sculpture lends itself mostly to frontal viewing; seen from the side the fusion of the seat of the chair with the figure is somewhat awkward. Aside from this consideration Ntowie's rendering of the soldier's back supported by the arms with hands resting on the knees conveys the feeling of body weight being properly distributed in the seated position. The rhythm of sculptural contours further adds to this kinetic sense, and as well compensates for the visually disturbing small hands and feet of the figure.

The saaruhien's carving of a market woman with a basket on top of her head is again, unique in subject as well as in its handling of sculptural form. Most striking about the work is



Solution

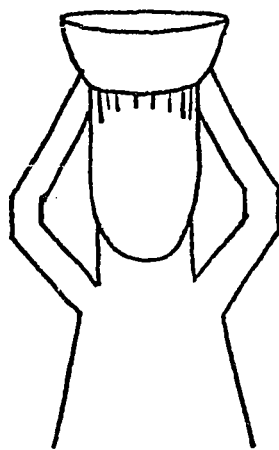
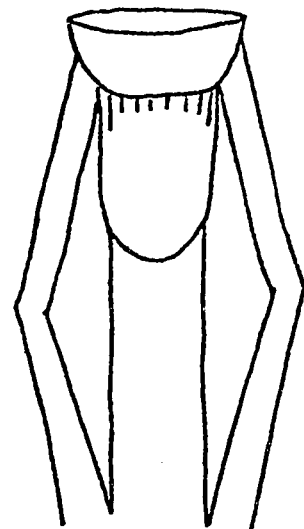
Alternative A
shorter neckAlternative B
longer neck

DIAGRAM F

the extended length of the neck. The original dimensions of the log used in the carving very likely prevented Ntowie from depicting the arms bent at the elbows and extending beyond the width of the shoulders--the way Sisala woman usually carry their loads. Only by radically shortening or lengthening the arms could they have been carved in a bent position, but these alterations would have resulted in similar distortions in the length of the neck, or the height of the head and basket. Avoiding these options Ntowie elongated the neck while maintaining respect for the general lines and proportions of the figure (Diagram F).

A free standing sculpture of a Gurunsi soldier, armed with bandoleers and dressed in short pants and cap came to the author's attention in a photograph taken by Roy Sieber in Tumu (1964)¹ (Plate XLIII). It was believed that the sculpture was carved by Ntowie in the late 1940's, several years after the commission of Baduamie's daalieridaan. Although the strict frontal presentation of the subject is typical of the early style, the elaborately pyro-engarved decoration of the figure and the genre subject itself are more closely identified with the artist's work of the 1950's. The presence of elements from both periods suggest that the carving is a transitional piece representing one of the artist's first attempts in the genre mode. The poorly executed pyro-engraving where line decoration of the figure varies in width and straightness and often overlap with other lines show that Ntowie, thus far, had not perfected this technique.

¹Discussion with Roy Sieber, November, 1972.

Ntowie's genre sculptures, impressive as they are, only hint at the many carvings he must have made; some of the sculptures were undoubtedly more distinctive than the ones that have been described. Regardless of their quality the saaruhien's known sculpture deserves a prominent place in the history of Sisala wood carving. In a society that looks toward the ancestors for interpretation of the present and where the ancestors themselves are exclusively represented by mounds of clay (each mound is called dima, and as a group referred to as lele) Ntowie's freely composed sculptural forms based upon observation of living subjects constitute a major achievement in Sisala figure carving.

Other works by the saaruhien are used in divination and fairy calling. Gbene, a diviner (yugutu) from Bujan, commissioned a pair of fairy spirit sculptures from Ntowie in the early 1950's (Plate XVI). He remarked that before this commission his wife and children were sick and that his soothsayer's bag was "troubling" him. Reacting to these misfortunes Gbene consulted another diviner who advised him to obtain the fairy sculptures. The carvings were purchased from Ntowie for a price of a basket of millet, a hen, tobacco, and eighty cowries for the female figure and sixty for the male.¹ Gbene keeps the carvings in his soothsayer's bag except during divination in which case they are placed against his compound wall where they give advice concerning his clients' problems. Stylistically the sculptures are similar to the twin figures belonging to Hellia

¹Interview with Gbene at Bujan, February 13, 1973.

and Baduamie. Though smaller (eight and nine inches in height), their proportions, rendering of detail, and economy in incised decoration are also characteristic of his early work especially the object photographed by Sieber.

Ntowie's repertory of divination objects includes diviner's wand (yugutu daan, diviner's stick) which belonged to a resident of Kong (Plate XLIV). The typical Sisala wand is a fork-shaped stick about nineteen inches in length with minimal decoration consisting of notchings on the handle. The small size of Ntowie's carving, about two-thirds the length of most wands, makes it impractical to consider it with respect to his early or late style. The closed form, lack of articulated masses, and smallness of the figure decoration on top the wand are not stylistically comparable to the artist's larger twin and genre figure sculptures but the elaborate treatment of this work by Sisala standards is yet another indication of Ntowie's enthusiasm for sculpture.

In light of the fact that soothsayers usually inherit or make their own divination wands it is significant that Ntowie was commissioned to make such objects. Perhaps his commissions indicate a special relationship between himself and the practitioners of divination, a relationship based on something other than simply the diviners' appreciation of his artistic skills. Ntowie's popularity with the soothsayers might have stemmed from his possessing a knowledge of the fairy spirits and divination which was unknown to most carvers. Without such a knowledge it would have been extremely hazardous for him to make fairy spirit carvings. Certainly the saaruhien's tomung with its buried

figure sculptures is tangible evidence of his association with the kantomun.

Ntowie's other carvings include a funerary battle axe, the figure sculpture half buried in his personal shrine, and a door. The funerary axe handle, measuring sixteen inches in length, is decorated with a carving of a human head crested by a chameleon (Plate XLV). The position of the head is carefully determined so that its back side curve punctuates the top of the axe handle while connecting with the curve of the lizard. This linear progression extends to the slope of the nose which parallels the plane of the axe blade. Thus, with only a few sculptural devices Ntowie manages to convey the swinging motion of an axe originating from the handle, moving up and around the top of the head along the downswing through the crest and nose, and terminating at the tip of the blade--the point of impact. Other Sisala artists adopted this common Voltaic Basin motif, yet their execution of it was far inferior to Ntowie's. Another chameleon carving crests the head of the half buried figure sculpture in Ntowie's tomung. Viewing of this object by outsiders is allowed only at a considerable distance; hence its size and style are difficult to determine. (It is the belief of the author that the chameleon like its counterpart in clay shrines, is associated with craft specialization.)

Ntowie's carving of a compound room door for Baduamie is the only one of its kind left in the Tumu area. The shea wood carving measures four feet six inches in height and is decorated with a chameleon or crocodile in relief (Plate XLVI). Nowadays British trained carpenters make enclosures by nailing planks to

square frames. These items are less costly than the traditional door and are far more popular among the Sisala. Even Baduamie's carving was subjected to modernization; for it had been nailed to a frame beside several planks, and for added effect a non-functional keyhole was punched out on the left side rather than the right as is the common practice today in doors with useable built in locks.

This completes the description of Ntowie's surviving sculpture. Nanjo recalls other works of the saaruhien including several stools, walking sticks, double figure sculptures in one-piece carvings, and many animal and genre sculpture. Unfortunately these works disappeared from the Tumu District Office shortly after the fall of Nkrumah, but it is believed that they were made in the same careful and inventive manner as the artist's known sculptures.¹ These works simply add to the accomplishments of an exceptional artist who became the only saaruhien, "first carver" among the Sisala people.

The study of Ntowie emphasizes some of the problems faced by sculptors seeking artistic specialization in Sisala land. To become the only full-time carver Ntowie had to build an income and reputation which could exempt him from farming tasks. Such an accomplishment would have been extremely difficult without Nanjo's school agriculture programs and the non-Sisala clientele appearing during the Tumu District's ascent in national politics. Despite these fortunate circumstances Ntowie was confronted by several other problems in the pursuit of his craft. Early

¹Interview with Mr. George Nanjo at Tumu, January 23, 1973.

childhood stories, for example, emphasize the conflict between the boy's desire to carve and his lineage's attitude about farming and manhood. The quality of his work, fortunately, won him the praise of his kin who eventually rationalized his sculpture as the "business" of the fairies. To protect himself as a specialist Ntowie symbolically portrayed a balance of the forces of farming and specialization by juxtaposing the half buried figure sculpture and the yam hoe blade in his tomung. Though the precise nature of the artist's association with the kantomung is not established, his carving of the spirits at least point to his awareness of such spiritual forces and possibly to a relationship with them which assured his artistic development.

Ntowie's establishment of the role of saaruhien was facilitated by his lineage headship which gave him the right to sacrifice to the ancestors. The converging of the roles of saaruhien and jehikintina in himself implied that as "first carver" he was accepted by the elders of Kong. The left handed carving of a hoe handle at the artist's funeral and his expected reincarnation, moreover, indicate his clansmen's desire to institutionalize the position of saaruhien for future generations. Such dedication and respect expressed toward Ntowie would have been unlikely without his maintenance of a successful farm and his right to sacrifice to the lineage ancestors.

Most significant about the study of Ntowie is that it demonstrates how an artist can become an agent of cultural change. Other Sisala carvers like Buyugo and Semani were strongly affected by the saaruhien's achievements. With the hope of

expanding their local clientele and attracting individuals from other societies they have produced traditional and original works of art. Both artists also have adopted powerful shrines like the padlock or have become associated with the kantomung as a way of securing their positions. The determination of Semani and Buyugo could someday win them the respect and prestige attained by Ntowie, yet despite their efforts neither man has been designated the new saaruhien nor have they equalled the deceased carver's achievements. As the memory of Ntowie recedes into the past and with it the concept of saaruhien, there is an increased probability of these artists failing in their objective to promote carving in Sisalaland. With respect to cultural change; however, individuals like Ntowie will continue to serve as models for other Sisala who are unwilling to conform to the rigorous dictates of tradition.

CHAPTER V

SEMANI WISITUWO

In March, 1973, the Chief of Challo showed me twin figure sculptures by Ntowie and a deceased artist from Mwandawngo, a village twenty-four miles south-southeast of Tumu. The Kouro mentioned that a carver known as Semani lived on the north side of Challo and that it would be in my interest to see him. Shortly after the interview with the chief I went to Semani's compound, introduced myself, and discussed the nature of my research. Within the artist's courtyard I saw a pair of talking drums (tangpenning), a soothsayer's wand and bag (vugutu daang and vugutu purung), and a male and female pair of terra cotta figure sculptures (kantomung) that were modeled by hand, and fired briefly at a low temperature in an open hearth (Plates XLVII, XLVIII, L). Animal carvings conceived out of Semani's delight in sculpture were placed throughout the compound in wall niches and on the ground (Plate XLIX). From my experience this artist was clearly the most enthusiastic sculptor I had thus far met; and judging by the scattering of fresh wood chips about the kaala, it appeared that he was still very active.

I came to realize that it was especially important to work closely and confidentially with Semani because his artistry was intimately linked to his association with the fairy spirits. I

knew that in some way I would have to win his trust in order to discuss openly the role of the fairies with respect to carving; towards this ends we considered the feasibility of apprenticeship: its cost and the benefits of my establishing contact with the spirits and we agreed that one goat, five chickens, and thirty cedes would constitute the sacrifice to Semani's fairy shrine that was dedicated to carving¹ (Plate L). This sacrifice established my relationship to the kantomung, and thus my apprenticeship began on May 18, 1973, some two months after Semani and I had been first introduced.

The opportunity to work with a carver-specialist like Semani helped me to develop a profile of the kind of person who is likely to become a carver-specialist in Sisala-land where social pressure tends to discourage such a choice. My experience with Semani provided me with information and insight into his personal history, his attitudes, his ideas, and the values that shape his life. Such intimate details were not available for Ntowie; yet my description of Semani in some ways complements Ntowie's biography by introducing more material about the personality of a specialized carver and his relationship with the kin group. Certain parallels exist in the lives of these two outstanding carvers: their difficult childhood years, the association of their work with the fairy spirits, the interest in non-Sisala sculpture, and their mutual habitation of Kong for

¹Apprenticeship, while virtually non-existent among Sisala carvers, is not entirely foreign to the Sisala social context. Blacksmiths usually spend a dry season with a master. Semani was familiar with this learning method; and accordingly, his conception of apprenticeship could only facilitate my study.

a period of time. These parallels suggested to me that in studying the life-patterns of these two artists I might find an answer to the question of why certain Sisala men aspire to be full-time carvers and reject the conventional life of farming.

Biography

Semani Wisituwo, which means "God goes with," was born at Challo into the champkai or frog clan. His ancestors were settled at Chakani, a small village near Daboya to the southeast of Tumu. Some of the Chakani lineages came to Challo during the Zabarima conquest, the finding plenty of land and few inhabitants, they settled there permanently. Semani's mother was born at Sorebele and moved to Challo with her husband; after his death, she moved with Semani into her brother-in-law's (bala, sister's husband) compound at Kong. Seeing little of his agnatic kin, Wisituwo lived with his mother until late adolescence. He claimed an acquaintance with Ntowie of Kong insisting, however, that at the time he was not interested in carving and did not watch the saaruhien at work.¹

As a youth Semani joined his brothers from Challo and traveled to Kumasi and with them worked in the lumber camps of the rain forest until one brother was killed in a lorry accident. The survivors returned to Challo to participate in a second burial ritual of the deceased brother. Afterward, Semani returned to Kumasi and worked in the gold mines of Obuasi; but finding the labor very strenuous, he quit after three days and

¹Interview at Challo, June 7, 1973.

began constructing roads for rural development programs. Considering that most Sisala males travel in groups and live in the southern cities with friends and relatives, Semani's second trip alone to Kumasi is very unusual. Such self-reliance testifies to the artist's sharpened sense of individualism as well as his reluctance to depend upon his agnatic kin.

After the Kumasi experience, Semani returned to Challo and for a short time lived with his brothers. The arrangement was disputed when a wife of an elder brother (haala, brother's wife) accused him of being a witch. In response to the charge, Semani built his own compound surrounded by a wall completely separating it from the main lineage dwelling. Conflict and segmentation are common features of the Sisala social process; but the source of the conflict in this instance, an accusation of witchcraft, does not fit the usual pattern.¹ Generally, the reason for segmentation is that brothers reach an age where competition for lineage headship and propitiatory rights over the lele inspire intragroup rivalry. An individual's ability to establish superiority in this kind of conflict depends on his amount of farm land, the number of his wives and children, and the number and strength of his medicines and shrines. Ago also plays an important role in sibling competition but is not the sole determining factor of success.² Since Semani could not bring such

¹Eugene Mendonsa also found witchcraft to be an uncommon phenomenon among the Sisala. Personal communication, 1976.

²At Bakwele, for example, the official jehikintina was too old to actively participate in lineage decision-making; however, a son who competed with his elder brothers eventually succeeded, de facto, to the lineage headship. His large farm and five children were contributing factors to his being

resources to bear in the conflict with his lineage, his separation from the main compound was the only tenable solution.

Segmentation merely postponed further conflict; for the brothers continued to fight until the matter was taken before the Challo Kouro. The chief decided that the husband of the wife who accused Semani of witchcraft and the accused himself should each sacrifice a cow over the vene (the village ancestor shrine). An oath was to be taken before the shrine and the person who swore falsely would die. Several days later Semani's brother was found dead. Wisituwo returned to the vene and sacrificed another cow thanking the shrine for his vindication. The vene wisely instructed Semani to remain at Challo and live outside the main lineage compound.

It is uncommon for a Sisala male to be reared apart from his father's clan, and this to a great extent explains Semani's precarious relationship with his kin. Also his long residence at Kong raised questions concerning his allegiance to his age-mates and ancestors. In the absence of Sisala brotherhood and close ties with the village and ancestors of his lineage, Wisituwo was compelled to look for spiritual support in other areas, in his case this meant the fairy spirits.

The dilemma faced by Semani is similar to that which d'Azevedo describes for the Gola Archetype artist of Liberia who allies himself with sentient spirits called djina, spirits that are associated with artistic specialization.¹ While the

selected over the other brothers who each had one child. Interview with Mama at Bakwele, June 20, 1976.

¹ Warren L. d'Azevedo, The Artist Archetype in Gola Culture, p. 32.

ancestral spirits of the Gola like the Sisala are committed to the custodianship of the public good and are against private or antisocial behavior the djina are not: rather they are likely to be responsible for extremes in artistry and even immoral acts of their human associates.

In the context of social exclusion Semani began experiencing affliction which he believed was perpetrated by the kantomung. One day while cutting a large tree the spirits told him that, since he no longer had dependable brothers, the fairies themselves would support him. The initial encounters with the spirits, were ironically, quite stressful. Semani might be walking on a path and, without warning, the kantomung would make him fly over a tree. Often he found himself seated high on a limb without knowing how he had arrived there.¹ Contact with the kantomung became so disturbing that Wisituwo went to a Kasena soothsayer and fairy caller at a village near Leo in Upper Volta. Through consultation he was advised to become a diviner. Mendonsa insightfully explains the reasons for acquiring divination skills:

Since the status of diviner is no great office in the eyes of the Sisala community, in the sense that it is in some East African communities where the diviner has high prestige and monetary reward, the diviner gains little monetarily or by way of non-material reward. What he does gain by performing his role is freedom from the affliction of his ancestors under whose authority he came when he inherited the tomong shrine.²

Wisituwo was reluctant to discuss the acquisition of his knowledge of divination insisting that only the fairies had

¹Interview with Semani, June, 1973.

²Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 256.

taught him. According to Mendonsa, however, the procedure for becoming a diviner does include an apprenticeship phase.¹ It is unclear just how Wisituwo obtained his divination skills or his tomung, the power source for divination; but it is improbable that he received the shrine from his patrikin. It is possible that Semani's mother's brother (niera) gave him the tomung; for according to Mendonsa, a mother's son can justifiably claim his matri-uncle's shrine.²

Whatever the method of acquisition may have been, Semani's divination practice was considered somewhat unique. Most Sisala do not regard the fairies as important determinants of their fate, and many people view fairy callers with disgust believing them to be outright fakes.³ Hoping to avoid the unpopular title of fairy caller (kantonngo yirang) Wisituwo wisely denied that he could "call" the fairies.

When Semani sought help from the diviner in Upper Volta, who was reputedly an expert in fairy calling, he implicitly demonstrated his willingness to find a solution to affliction outside of the avenues offered by his own culture. This action also betrayed his attitude of superiority regarding his peers. Semani demonstrated his contempt for their priorities when he told me that many years ago Sisala artists simply carved sticks at one end until they were roughly spherical, like a human head (Plate LII). These objects were considered suitable for

¹Ibid., p. 257.

²Ibid., p. 162.

³Ibid., p. 220.

representing deceased twin spirits. (Older carvings of this kind were, indeed, found at Gwolu and Mwandawngo.) Such simple verisimilitude, Semani explained, stemmed from the belief that if one spent too much time at carving, other members of the compound might accuse the artist of self-indulgence and indifference to the real needs of the family.

Semani practiced divination for some time, but still the fairies "maddened" him. The situation prompted another visit with the Kasena diviner who, on that occasion, advised his client to carve the daalieridaang, mortars and pestles. Apparently this appeased the fairies; since that time they have given him helpful instruction in the making of walking sticks and talking drums (Plates XLVII, LII).

Cash income and social mobility are the primary incentives behind Semani's acquisition of specialized skills. The income resulting from carving and divination is small, but it helps pay young Challo males who tend his farm (baga).¹ Semani's enculturation failed to instill in him the personal commitment to farming which is the expectation for Sisala males. A small family of one wife and three children provide a practical reason for maintaining a small plot, but its deteriorated state attests to the artist's minimal interest in agriculture. The business of farming seldom interfered with our interview schedule; for,

¹Many Sisala males elevate their status by joining the moslem faith, a practical step to becoming a trader, tailor, or small shop owner. Semani, however, has little respect for Islamic converts and prefers to remain within the parameters of traditional animism. This practically eliminates other, more effective, alternatives for upward mobility. See B.T. Grindal.

unlike other artists, Wisituwo does not stay overnight at the farm, nor does he farm on consecutive days. A grass roofed roundhouse stands next to his fields; but, judging by its condition, it is seldom used.

In addition to cash income Semani's wood carving helped him obtain a wife. His father-in-law requested from him a large order of three mortars and three pestles, mentioning that he had a daughter who might become the artist's bride for the order plus some extra pestles. The daughter, known as Hellie, came from a lineage at Santie where pottery has been made for three generations. Her ability as a ceramicist suited Semani's plan to become a specialist-carver.¹ Hellie makes pots in her new home at Chalho where clay is available, and sells them at the Nabugubele market on alternate markets, every twelve days. On advice from the fairies Semani has strengthened his wife's

¹Semani's long-range ambition is to become a blacksmith; he believes that as a husband and wife specialist team, he can become independent of farming. Although the smith-ceramicist team does not exist in Sisala-land, it is a common pattern in many Sudanese societies. Perhaps Wisituwo observed this life style while visiting the diviner in Upper Volta.

Choosing to ignore the occupations associated with Islam and colonialism the only logical recourse in Semani's estimation is to invest in blacksmithing. Since farmers need hoe blades Semani believes that if he can produce them for less than the prevailing price he will attract a larger clientele, and thus achieve a kind of specialization. Such a craftsman at Tasow, ten miles south of Chalho operates a forge constructed completely of metal with a hand-powered bellows attached to a bicycle tire rim. With this device he has increased tool production and sales to where he no longer farms. He also makes spare parts for repairing bicycles. Semani is impressed by this operation and he estimates that in five years he will have the three-hundred cedes (about two-hundred and fifty dollars) required to become a blacksmith. The Artist as Entrepreneur, p. 8, unpublished manuscript by the author.

position as ceramicist by constructing a personal pottery-making shrine for her. The shrine (gbene) consists of a fifteen-inch high mud mound with a chameleon in relief on the top (Plate LIII).

The concession that Semani made to Sisala norms in his decision to marry and raise a family might have assuaged the ill will he had generated earlier in his lineage. However, his dissent became an issue again in a conflict involving a cattle theft in which two of his brothers were implicated. Semani claimed that, in atonement for the crime, the guilty brothers should have sacrificed to the kantomung or returned to the owner the money they received from selling the cow. The brothers rejected both alternatives and eventually became blind. According to Semani, the punishment was justified by the unprovoked theft.

The incident resulted in another architectural change in Semani's compound. The outside entry (boinii) to the kaala which faced the main lineage settlement was blocked with mud bricks (tiebiin) and a new entry was made facing the bush. Acknowledging that the remodeling was a result of the conflict, Semani added that it was better that the boinii face the farm and turn away from the lineage.¹

Semani's relationship with the members of his lineage and other residents of Challo is at best ambivalent. His association with the fairies, concern for specialization and lack of interest in farming have impaired his reputation; but his tool handles,

¹Interview with Semani, June, 1973.

animal carvings, haircombs, cooking utensils, twin figures and divination wands have won him a certain amount of respectability. In spite of Semani's discomfoting departures from Sisala norms, many people point to his vast repertory as evidence of his carving ability and give him credit for his artistic imagination and talent. Even his fired clay images of the kantomung are considered quite inventive.

It is noteworthy, in light of the range of Semani's artistic achievement, that he does not see fit to make women's or men's stools (kpsa and kanjanga). Carvers like Gbene and Baton claim that the skills of stool-carving are essential to a saaro's development. Tomie of Kong, who is one of the best Sisala stool carvers, does not consider himself sufficiently skilled to carve the daalieridaang. Semani bypassed this step in artistic development and claims that he was able to deal with the problems of figure sculpture before ever attempting the more utilitarian products. His reluctance to carve the stools no doubt stems from the small return that is derived from their sale. He makes greater profit by carving mortars and pestles at six dollars a set. By comparison, Mula of Tasow is quite satisfied with the money he earns from selling hoe handles and stools at the Nabugubele market. The few dollars he makes is adequate for buying kola nuts and millet beer (pito) for his peers. Such generosity on Mula's part is of no concern to Semani whose low status does not require him to display wealth.

To improve his economic position Semani at one time carved two pairs of talking drums (tangpenning). At the reasonable price of thirty dollars a pair, the artist expected many buyers.

When he was unable to sell the drums, he began to play them himself for the entertainment of the fairies on Fridays, the day that commemorates his first visit with the spirits and also the best time to sacrifice to them. When the author saw the drums in 1973, their rotted skin heads and cracked walls indicated that they had not been used for some time.¹

Semani also promotes the use of the hand carved walking stick (daangtining) with elaborate burned and incised decorations on the shaft and a human figure sculpture serving as the handle. The artist maintains that the idea for the prestigious canes came from the Dagari people who have carved them for many years. His first request for the daangtining came from the chief of his mother's village the Sorbele Kouro who exchanged some of his own medicines for the carving. Semani believes that the Kouro's purchase of the cane brought prestige to his office.²

The making of figure sculpture similar to the carvings on the handles of the walking sticks characterized Semani's early career. The Challo Kouro mentioned that he had received figurative works from the artist several years before, but they had been lost. Apparently the chief did not consider the sculptures important enough to keep. His lack of regard for traditional sculpture was also expressed on one occasion when I

¹The talking drums are popular among the Sisala, but they are used by the chief's musicians rather than by individuals to entertain the fairies. Semani promoted the new use of the drums as a way of competing with the drum carving center of Walembele, a village fifteen miles south of Challo.

²Despite the artist's attempts to sell canes at the Tumu and Bugubele markets, his carvings were outsold by the European style product which is more prestigious and costs half the price --seven dollars.

photographed him wearing a battleship dress (sebsenger) knee-high black rubber boots, and wrist watch. Included in the regalia was a transistor radio, fly whisk, a barber chair which served as a throne, and an imported cane. Previously Semani offered a hand carved cane to the Kouro, but this was rejected in favor of the more prestigious European product.¹

Only twice has Semani been commissioned to make twin sculptures. One of these works was made at the request of Salifu of Pien, a village six miles north of Challos. Salifu's son has cared for the twin surrogate which is now well worn, smooth, and dark in color as a result of the child's vigorous play. The sculptural treatment of this work is similar to Semani's walking stick figures with respect to the rigid frontality and stiffness of the piece. The barely distinguishable separation of the head from the shoulders and the perpendicular position of the head in relation to the neck of the cane and twin figure sculptures underscores the artist's hieratic style.

The lack of subtle plasticity and absence of implied movement in Semani's sculpture is probably an outcome of the small demand for such carvings. Considering his limited experience in figural carving it is surprising that his works are so highly ranked by the Sisala. Buyugo maintains the largest clientele for the twin sculptures and is therefore far more experienced and well known, but his figures are consistently ranked lower than Semani's. In fact, his own clients rank his

¹April 23, 1973. Interview with the Challos Kouro.

work below the sculptures of the lesser known artist. Wisituwo's carvings are praised for their right proportions and inclusion of decoration and physiological detail. In contrast, the elongated chins of Buyugo's sculpture are thought to be a distortion of the human figure, and they are openly criticized for being too animal-like in appearance. The control and complexity of line of Semani's pyro-engraving are also favored over Buyugo's freely painted body decoration. (Further information about the ranking is presented in the chapter on aesthetics, Chapter VI).

Semani's early success in figure carving developed from his accomplishments in terra cotta. Formal analysis indicates that the stylistic features of his wood figures are partly derived from their prototypes, the terra cotta fairy spirits. The web-shaped hand, spider-like feet, and large radial scarification marks around the navel are features of the wood images based upon his previous experiments in clay. In both media the mouths of the figures are sparingly rendered by horizontal slashes leaving no space for chins, and the arms and legs of each kind of sculpture form continuous arcs and arches.

Semani's images of the kantomung are sold exclusively to the Dagari at the large market of Bugubele. Facilitated by government roads and lorry transportation of the Dagari (a people who traditionally practiced fairy worship) come from such distant places as Nandom and Diebugu to buy Semani's sculptures. His attempt to sell the clay figures to members of his own community has met with little success. The failure of this project has contributed to his development of other

sculptural types including the walking stick, twin figure, and talking drums; yet the demand for these objects hardly justifies his ambition to be a specialized carver.

Material and Technique

Spending more time than most Sisala artists in the selection of sculptural materials, Semani examined over twenty specimens of the gbrobuna (Ccmbretum nigricans) before felling the right tree for our first carving. He valued the soft wood of the gbroguna for its crack resistant property especially important for working during the dry season. Adding to the difficulty of the selection were the fairies who withheld their approval until the straightest trunk was discovered. Unlike the other carvers Semani chose trees that were deeply immersed in the bush, thus contributing to the problem of assessing their straightness. He regarded this procedure as a teaching device which helped me develop my visual sensitivity to straightness. He questioned "Mobinna" (my Sisala name) "do you see the tree that is good?" Frequently it was impossible to find the right specimen, but later in the apprenticeship my response improved. Semani preferred a very tall gbroguna with a long straight trunk about seven-eight inches in diameter from which several walking sticks and pestles could be made. Although I was able to single out the right tree, the matter of its straightness was left to the kantamung and Semani.

Wisituwo's carving tools consisted of a pocket knife, machete and a large and small adze (sang and sangwie). A plastic and leather carrying case is used to transport the male and

female fairy sculptures into the bush--usually they accompanied us on an alternating basis.

We generally sat in a small clearing by a large tree where the hard ground and several small logs served as supports for our carving blocks. Since the sessions lasted most of the day we provisioned ourselves with yam and ground nuts for a midday meal.

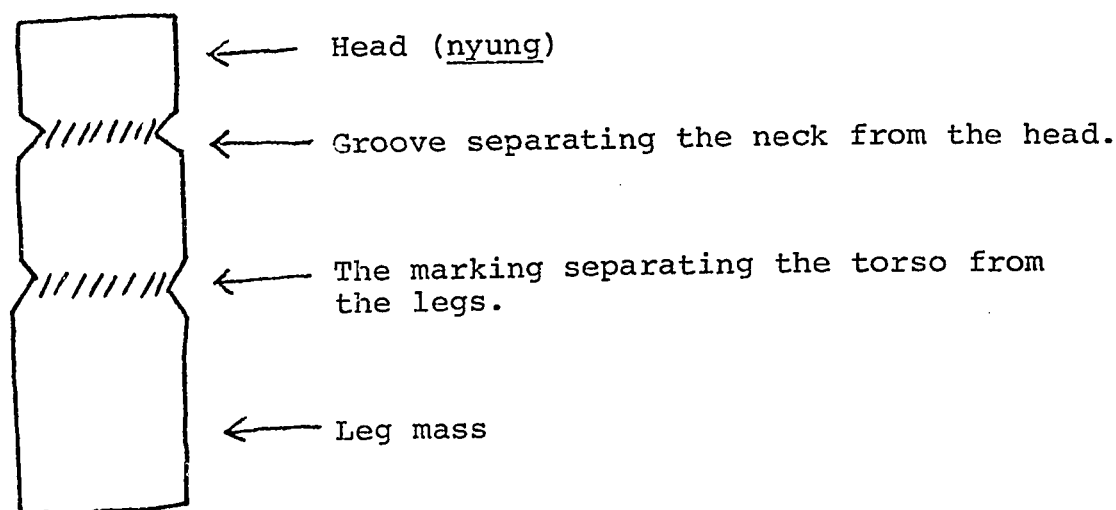
Prior to carving the daalieridaang Semani insisted that we carefully study the clay fairy sculpture before blocking out the main masses of the wood (Kire ta which means "to begin" was the phrase commonly used to describe this part of the work) (Plate LIV). During the first session we used the female fairy with her arms raised to support a bowl on top her head. Although the wood figure's hands are depicted straight down at the sides, the fairy model still served as a guide to zomo carving and to the establishing of proportions.¹

After consulting the fairies we proceeded to protect ourselves from the tree spirits with a medicine composed of muse and pina roots. These materials were blackened over a fire and then mixed with shea butter to form an ointment which Semani stored in a goat horn. He rubbed the mixture on the fairy sculpture's feet, neck and hands, the adze blades and on our backs. This gave us the protection against the spirits of the trees in the clearing, even though the same trees shaded us in

¹On one occasion Semani split an arm of a figure on top of a walking stick. He blamed himself for the accident pointing out that he had not used a fairy sculpture to assist him.

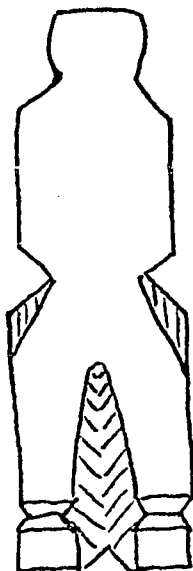
the hot sun of the afternoon. Having carefully prepared ourselves we were ready to carve.

By striking (pil) the butt end of the adze against the freshly cut pieces of wood Semani crushed the bark (tiahare), making it easy to remove. With the machete he cut two grooves around the wood logs, thus establishing the waist (luoru) and the neck (banga), of the figures. These grooves were about three-fourths of an inch deep and one inch wide. To insure the proper location of the markings the artist mixed his saliva with pagata (the generic name for tree root medicines most often used to protect its users in competitive situations) and rubbed the mixture on his adze blade which he then waved across the back of his left shoulder. Similar to Buyugo's carving technique the marking of these grooves established the most important proportions of the figures. Inaccurately placed grooves would have ruined the logs for further carving.

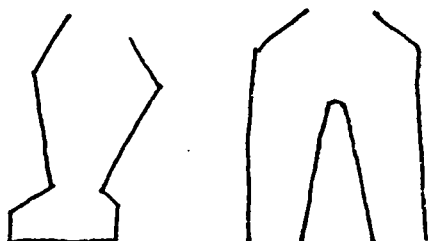




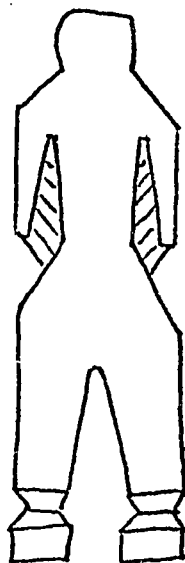
Using the adze Semani removed some of the wood around the side (sem) of the head, and then turning the figure, he cut the excess material from the front (sipaang) of the torso and the legs. The carving was turned once more and the back (naring) was fashioned.



Semani used the machete to level the base of the sculpture, and to block out the feet (naang). Using the adze to cut the space between the legs (naasing bubuꝋng) i.e. hole between the legs) the artist started carving at the base of the figure gradually moving toward the groin area. The hips were articulated by cutting downward from the waist toward the outside of the thigh.



To shape the legs Semani carved in a series of strokes, each of which was determined by the ridge left by the previous stroke (a continuous creation and removal of ridges requiring considerable time).

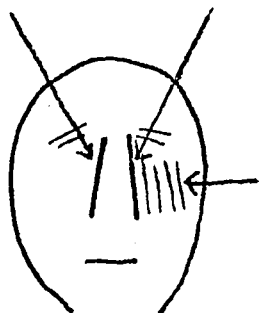


Turning his attention to the top half of the figure, the artist cut the space between the arms and torso. The remaining work consisted of smoothing the rough spots of the sculpture, taking about thirty minutes. Carving time to this point totaled 135 minutes.

We worked on the same carving a few days later in Semani's compound. Having introduced the fairies to the sculptures we were fully protected and no longer needed to hide in the bush.

Semani spent the majority of time in this session carving the head. He fashioned the ears first

believing that if one carved the eyes in the beginning the head would be "spoiled" and it would resemble an animal--perhaps a monkey. The nose was formed by cutting two parallel planes perpendicular to the facial plane. Wisituwo then cut deeper into the front of the face leaving two deeply recessed planes, one on each side of the nose. This technique established the strongly pronounced forehead ridge bisected by the nose, a typical stylistic feature of Semani's sculpture.



Finally, with a knife, he smoothed (mullé) the carving and created the mouth. This session lasted about seventy-five minutes. Total Time: 190 minutes.

During the final seventy-five minute session Semani pyro-engraved the sculptures (lakise, to decorate) with a tool resembling an ice pick. He spent at least five times longer decorating each figure than Mula, Gbene, or Baton. During this phase of the work he relaxed, stopped complaining about relatives, and entertained himself with song. He admired Ntowie's

genre carvings for their pyro-engraved designs for his own decoration was less complex and not as carefully controlled. Claiming that the fairies had taught him the design elements (a lek) he pointed to the terra cotta fairy sculpture decorations which were similar to the motifs on the carvings. Rosettes on the arms and legs, the parallel lines on the back and on the back of the legs, and the marks on the shoulder and around the navel were common features of both kinds of sculpture. Wisituwo showed remarkable concentration during this phase of the work. His strong forearms made it possible for him to hold the figure steadily with the left hand while decorating it with the right hand. In contrast, Mula and Gbene stabilized their sculptures by placing them on the ground.

A prominent characteristic of Semani's figure sculpture is its stylistic consistency based on cylindrical shapes and constant proportions (Plate LV). To accomplish this Semani, like Buyugo, employs near mechanical procedures in his work. Both men consider the first stage of carving critical to the establishment of a continuity in the proportions of their sculpture. With a machete Semani carefully hand measures the places where the neck and waist of the figure are to appear, whereas Buyugo accomplishes this with the adze. Both techniques result in distinctive styles that characterize each artist's work.

Also contributing to the consistency of style that both Semani and Buyugo have achieved, is their superb control of the adze wherein the strokes land smoothly and lightly with equal impact upon the cylinder of wood. By comparison, Gbene and Mula

work very erratically, at times hacking with great force, but never with a smooth continuous action. Their inability to maintain a steady pace makes it difficult for them to carve over extended periods of time, whereas the well coordinated efforts of Buyugo and Semani result in an economical use of energy for three or more hours--twice as much time as Gbene and Mula. Semani believes his control, strength, and patience are elements of wujiming, the faculty most Sisala identify as the source of talent and zomo carving. (A discussion of wujiming is presented in Chapter VI.)

Apprenticeship with Semani meant that I followed his example until a mistake was made, and then he took the carving and corrected the errors himself. My mistakes were frequently caused by the lack of strength in my forearm. Proper control of the adze depends on a good aim and strength, but whenever my adze blade struck the wood it rolled along the curved surface. This rocking movement can be successfully countered by applying a forceful torsion with the forearm; without this kind of compensation the cutting strokes lack a steady cadence necessary for accurate carving. In crucial places as under the arms and between the legs of the figures I carved, this lack of control ended in the breaking off of the carvings' limbs. Many sculptures I attempted were ruined that way.

After such disasters and much laughter from the children, Wisituwo asked if Mobinna would prefer to make something a bit simpler. I replied in the affirmative and it was decided that carving a mud pounder (pipleng), a mallet used in spreading a mud mixture of laterite soil and water on the roofs of compounds

for protection against the rains, would be a better match for my talent. Again, with one of the fairy figures, we went to the bush and started the project. As before, I observed and followed Semani, stopping only when I made a mistake.

Spiritual Orientation of the Artist

During my first visit with Semani it was apparent he was unique among Sisala males. The several medicines and shrines displayed on his compound walls, and the terra cotta fairy figures placed before his soothsayer's bag which hung from his wife's sleeping room door were very unusual. The separation of his compound from the main lineage dwelling seemed to emphasize his atypicality and aloofness from the village.

Semani's terra cotta figure sculptures as well as his concept of divination resemble the works and practice of Kungwan, the great Dagari diviner of Upper Volta who, according to Paternot, is eminently known as a fairy caller.¹ Girault's description of Dagari divination is also an accurate summation of Semani's practice.² Researching divination in Upper Volta, Girault observed that a diviner holds the top of the divination wand (baghr-bor da) while the client holds the object at the opposite end as it moves in various directions and signals the practitioner as to the correct answers to queries posed during consultation. This manner of holding the wand is identical to Semani's technique. Girault also described an opposition

¹Paternot, "Lumiere sur La Volta Chez les Dagari," 1949.
Girault, "Essai sur la religion des Dagara," 1959.

²Girault, op. cit., pp. 329-56.

between the fairies and the Dagari ancestors where the fairies are associated with a god called Mwinle who is in opposition to Mwin, the high creator god and representative of the ancestors. Mendonsa's analysis of Sisala divination reveals a similar opposition where fairy callers rely on the powers of the kantomung rather than the ancestors for whom God (Wia) has instituted divination.¹ With respect to visual representation, the Dagari spirits are rendered in groups of three, one of the fairies frequently being depicted with its arms raised supporting a bowl upon its head. Although Semani's kantomung are portrayed in pairs, his female sculptures likewise carry bowls on their heads which contain sacrificial blood and feathers.

The fairy caller's role is highly regarded by the Dagari as is indicated by the many gifts and considerable sums of money Kungwan received for protecting his clients against the evils perpetrated by sorcerers. Semani interpreted this as evidence of Dagari cultural superiority and deplored the fact that such a position with its attendant financial rewards is impossible to achieve within his own society.

The method by which Semani received the knowledge and accoutrements of divination is not known; however, he claims that during his last reincarnation (at the time he was an old man) he was taught divination by the fairies who later gave him a divination bag. At some point the old man shot some monkeys inadvertently scaring the fairies away and soon afterwards died leaving Wisituwo as his embodiment. This narrative clearly

¹Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 222.

emphasizes Semani's independence from the rest of his lineage, for most Sisala diviners receive their bags from a classificatory father or their mother's brother. Semani, however, insists that his bag was found on the farm and then transmitted to him by reincarnation, rather than through a living member of his lineage.

In his present reincarnation Wisituwo's encounter with the kantomung have been traumatic. His initial contact with them occurred near Challo where as a young boy they hung him between two trees for several days. Much later after this return from Kumasi the spirits prevented him from "thinking" by inducing a condition of temporary deafness and dumbness. During this seven days of semiconsciousness he was brutalized, but well fed. During the third encounter, also lasting seven days, the fairies again made him deaf and dumb. The fourth contact was marked by the loss of all sensory perception. After these encounters the spirits returned Semani to his compound on a Friday, the day he reserves for all sacrifices to the kantomung.

Semani believes that the skills of divination and carving were not taught him until his fifth contact with the fairy spirits who by then made him "whole" by absolving him of all affliction. (Prior to that fifth meeting the Upper Voltaic soothsayer advised him to become a specialist.) Fifteen days after acquiring the skills of divination and carving he met the fairies once more, but they simply watched him cut a tree in the bush and remained silent the entire time.

Semani's spiritual development thus far bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the Gola artist archetype noted by

d'Azevedo:

When a child or young adult has been a long while away--either through child exchange, service or apprenticeship--he may return with an air of aloof independence and with new abilities about which he maintains a high degree of reticence. This is usually taken as a sign that he has gained special knowledge (mane nima) through a djina. It is thought that he has 'found himself' [note the similarity with Semani being made 'whole' by finding himself through the fairies] which may mean that he has discovered the neme with which he was born. Or it is suspected that he has consorted with the strange foreign spirits of some other tribe. If he is an adult, he is too old to admonish, and he can only be observed carefully to see whether he has become a good or a bad person.¹

Semani, unlike Gola artists, was admonished for his behavior being accused of witchcraft etc.; but since he established a separate compound the people of Challo have disengaged from the conflict with him and are waiting to see whether he turns into a bad or good person.

Semani's relationship with the spirits is sustained by a powerful shrine which I saw during my second meeting with him. He was not in the compound that day and his wife let me into his sleeping room to wait for his return. The door to an adjacent room was open, thus allowing me to see an enameled basin full of water next to a mound of clay that resembled a figure sculpture. The darkness of the compartment made this shape difficult to verify. The mound had recently been coated with sacrificial materials. I questioned Semani about the shrine, but he flatly denied its existence. Occasionally other queries were presented regarding this subject, but his responses were always evasive. One afternoon while pressing the

¹d'Azevedo, *ibid.*, p. 46.

issue he became very angry and accused me of entering his private room without permission, though I explained to him that the shrine was discovered quite by accident. He kept the shrine from my view throughout the apprenticeship. Eventually he did admit that the mound was at the base of his association with the kantomung and that the basin of water represents the fairy spirits of a nearby stream.

According to Girault the Dagari maintain three kinds of fairy spirits that are seen near compound walls or ceilings who live in the trees, rooftop spirits who reside in rocky hills next to villages, and spirits who come from streams to live in compounds.¹ These aquatic fairies (man kotmq) are similar to the spirits Semani described.²

My apprenticeship with Semani generally depended upon a multi-faceted relationship where the fairies, the artist and I formed a communicative network. Frequently he talked with the kantomung before responding to my questions and sometimes he preferred that the spirits themselves address me concerning technical as well as spiritual matters. To facilitate this kind

¹Girault, op. cit., p. 343. The classification of these spirits recalls d'Azevedo's description of the various kinds of Gola djina which include small elf-like creatures of the forests, terrifying monsters of the mountains, and spirits of the waters who have human form. d'Azevedo, op. cit., p. 32.

²It must be remembered that by Mendonsa's definition Semani is not rightfully considered a fairy caller. His position is somewhere between the highly "suspected" caller and the socially approved vugutu. Because of his desire for recognition among the village elders he did not wish to be associated with professional fairy callers who were known for telling lies. Semani hastened to remind me that he could not call the spirits and that they had not appeared to him for some time.

of instruction I placed pagata on the lintel above the front door of my house, smearing it on in a cruciform pattern with my fingers. The artist believed this would encourage the fairies to communicate with me. I also had a stone celt (the forerunner of the metal adze) which Semani believed was made by the fairies. According to him my discovery of the object indicated the fairys' willingness to communicate with me. (The celt is now part of the collection at the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board in Accra.)

Protective medicines as well as the fairy spirits support Semani in his specialized roles. The most powerful of these medicines is the padlock (bilimenchis). Though this device is described in Chapter III in connection with Buyugo, my close relationship with Semani and the fact that I had purchased the medicine from him allowed for a greater exchange of information about the subject. Believing that the padlock would assist me in activities involving competition with other individuals, Semani explained that my colleagues, for example, would be unable to interfere in my pursuits and that female palavers, and illness would decrease.¹ To make his point in the Sisala context he told me of a man from Nankpawie who came to him for assistance in obtaining a wife from Challo. Many suitors used Islamic amulets to insure their success in courting the girl, but when the Nankpawie man purchased the padlock from Semani the girl suddenly became "tied" and could not act contrary to his wishes.

¹Interview with Semani at Challo, June, 1973.

Semani attributed the padlock's origin to areas outside of Sisala-land. He first saw the medicine in Kumasi and there approved of its use and diffusion; adding that in the old days the Sisala were ignorant of the world and were denied many such wonderful things. He obtained his padlock from the Kasena diviner and has since reproduced it for several Sisala males. There is a reason to believe that the padlock is widespread throughout West Africa. Liadi Abioye, a Yoruba student at the University of Illinois, Chicago, informed me that such a device called agadagado is very popular among his people.¹ Most significantly, Liadi believes the agadagado is best suited for defending its owners in court--it is also in this regard that it is highly recommended by Buyugo and Semani. Perhaps the symbol of Western retributive justice, that is, the locked prison, is somehow combined with local medicines to protect persons participating in the modern judiciary process. Further adding to the cosmopolitan nature of the padlock is the Sisala belief that the term bilimenchis is a Hausa word.

My padlock is made from roots that grow across foot paths, lion and fox tails, cotton string, a sardine key can opener, chicken blood, feathers, and liver, and chewed kola nut (Plate LVI). In constructing the medicine, the sardine key was bent at each end for form hooks, then several roots were tied to the key with cotton string, animal tails were similarly attached. These materials were then covered with fox skin and wrapped with

¹Less complicated than the Sisala version, the Yoruba medicine consists of a pocket-size lock with roots attached to its front and back by a wrapping of cotton thread.

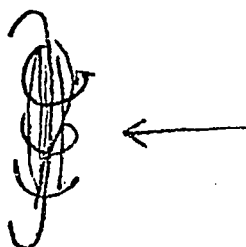


DIAGRAM G

more string. (Unlike Buyugo's bilimenchis red and white strings were not attached to my medicine.) A small metal lock, two keys, and a cloth sack containing extra ground tree roots and pagata were tied to the end of the medicine opposite the tails.

A ritual establishing my ownership of the padlock was performed late in the afternoon on a Friday in front of Semani's compound near the main north-south road. We stood by the crossing of paths, one leading to the artist's dwelling. There Semani addressed the fairies and presented an offering of twenty pesewas (fifteen cents) and a hen which he sacrificed by strangling. The animal remained active for several minutes, but gave no indication of pain. After slitting the bird's neck Semani sprinkled some of its blood over the padlock and then removed some feathers allowing them to fall on the path leading back to the compound. After returning to the compound Semani stirred a millet porridge (tee zet) with my adze handle and then we ate the mush using the same utensil. Employing the handle in this fashion symbolized the fairies' blessing of the padlock and as well my future artistry. To strengthen the bilimenchis a metal ring boiled in shea nut oil was placed on

my right hand ring finger. To activate the "padlock" Semani and I performed a purification rite involving "lavendar" --any perfume-like solution. Unfortunately we could not find a sweet smelling solution at the market, but I did have a can of Rightguard deodorant spray which Semani approved. Placing the "padlock" on the ground between us Semani ignited a small pile of tree roots and then sprayed my entire body with the deodrant. Afterward he spoke to the fairies requesting their support for my use of the "padlock." After I made a similar request to the spirits Semani closed the lock, thus effecting its power.

Metaphorically the padlock's medicines and ritual express very clearly its function. The location of the chicken sacrifice and the roots are chosen so that strangers and potential enemies who come to Semani's compound are likely to step on the kind of roots contained in the padlock. These roots, explained Semani, are easy for a stranger to trip over and therefore serve as symbolic obstacles to rivals of the padlock's owner. The lock is metaphorical in another respect, for when a goal is defined a chicken is sacrificed over the closed lock; thus symbolizing the locking out of competitors. The bilimenchis remains closed until the goal is achieved or a new one proclaimed by its owner.

Included in the artist's collection of medicine are two fairy shrines. The river spirit shrine (the one Semani hesitated to acknowledge) is kept in his private room and is not subject to questioning. However, a representative of that shrine located in the main room of the artist's room is open to questions. Semani insisted that I could only become a saarison, his dialect

for good carver, with the assistance of the kantomung through this particular shrine. I agreed with him and we negotiated the amount of the sacrifice to the shrine and decided that one sheep, five chickens, and thirty cedes would be an appropriate offering. The Challo Kouro and Semani's brothers attended the sacrifice to witness the oaths I took regarding the spiritual rights and social obligations of apprenticeship. With my relationship to Semani publically proclaimed before the shrine any disagreement between us could be taken before the chief for an equitable settlement.

To begin the ceremonial sacrifice Semani carried several pieces of his shrine from the sleeping room and then reassembled them in the courtyard. An old discarded mortar was first placed in the center of the kaala and then topped with a ceramic bowl with holes throughout its walls which were later stuck with chicken feathers. The top of the bowl was covered with a calabash and more feathers. A new divination wand, two briefly fired fairy figures, various smaller shrines, and my adze blade were placed next to this assemblage, all to be blessed by the kantomung. During the subsequent ritual five chickens were sacrificed over the shrine and the nearby objects. The division of a sacrificed sheep among the attending adult males signified the end of the ceremony.

In addition to the fairy shrines Semani owns a fifteen inch high mound-shaped shrine with a chameleon in relief decorating the top. Adding strength to this shrine are several chameleon eggs which he keeps in a glass jar in his compound room. The diviner from Upper Volta advised Semani to construct

the shrine because his farm was not doing well, the fairies still troubled him, and his wife could not have children. Semani credits the shrine with the birth of his two young daughters, further spiritual support for his carving and sooth-saying, and his wife's successful pottery business (see Chapter V, p.110). Wisely, the shrine (gbene) advises the artist to remain with the farm, for the income he derives from incipient specialization is not enough to support his family.

Medicines in many forms are hung on Semani's compound walls, tucked away in corners and at the time, many others were probably hidden from my view. Lacking the time or the spirit to make inquiries about each of these medicines I was only able to estimate their number which amounted to at least twenty. Mendonsa's statistics on shrine ownership in a sample of 271 adult Sisala males show that only 2 percent of the men have seven shrines, whereas the average male possesses four. Although Mendonsa prudently cautions that the modal number of shrines owned by individuals is probably higher, because of the fact that most Sisala males are reluctant to reveal all their shrines, the extent of Semani's collection is nevertheless truly impressive.¹

Social Status

Considering the large number of shrines that Semani owns, it is remarkable that he does not participate in the sacrifices to the lineage ancestors. In many lineages the Sisala male who possesses the most shrines performs these rituals. Because Semani has obtained most of his shrines outside of Sisala

¹Mendonsa, op. cit., p. 146.

culture, receiving many from the Kasena diviner and the fairies, his objects are regarded with suspicion. For this reason he is denied access to the lele.

Semani's link with the kantomung and their desire to promote specialized skills most significantly contributes to his own lack of enthusiasm for agriculture. He complained repeatedly about going to the farm and seldom remained there more than a day. On several occasions we worked on his farm, but only for a few hours at a time. The overcrowding weeds, encroaching bush, and the deteriorated state of his farm shelter indicates that he seldom attends his fields. On the other hand, Mula maintains a large and well kept farm for which he is considered a hard working individual who deserves the respect of his peers. Semani is also a high achiever, but he excels in areas that are not so important to most members of his society. Carving, of course, is the activity he greatly enjoys, but he is also interested in developing a divination practice based upon the kantomung. Ultimately, Semani hopes his specialized activities will provide him the 300 dollars necessary to become a blacksmith--a trade that he believes will make him wealthy and independent of farming.

Having little money, only one wife, three children, and a small compound, Semani, by Sisala standards, is considered quite poor. It is impossible to stand erect in his sleeping rooms, since the walls are less than five feet high. Neither he nor his wife owns the kind of clothing which signify wealth among the Sisala; Hellie is generally dressed in an old printed cloth which hangs around her waist leaving her breasts

uncovered, and Semani wears cut-off pants except on market day when he dresses in full-length trousers. The scarcity of material possessions of the family points up the difficulties they encounter in the absence of a well-developed farm and without the cooperation of the main patrilineage.

Semani, in many ways, embodies the Sisala counterpart of the Western stereotype of the artist as misfit. The accepted institutions of Sisala do not match his personal drives, tastes and priorities. The social, occupational, and spiritual norms that operate for most individuals in society to promote a sense of membership in the community and to provide avenues of communication with the forces that control their destinies offer, for Semani, wellsprings of personal frustration and alienation. If the "well adjusted" person is defined as one who "wants to do what he has to do," then clearly Semani is not a well adjusted member of Sisala society. Because the options in Sisala are so extremely limited, the dissenter must suffer the anxieties associated with disapproval and suspicion; he must improvise methods of accomodation and conciliation both internally in his spiritual and emotional life and externally in his behavior, occupation, and religious observances. The lack of reinforcement that the Sisala way offers for Semani's personal vision impells him to seek the answers to his life crises either within himself or from institutions outside of Sisala. Furthermore, in order to provide for himself economically, he must develop and promote new art forms to create an expanded market for his products. As he works out and weathers the difficulties that attend his non-conformity, Semani is

bringing to his society the possibility of innovation and importation of new ideas and forms that enrich the options of the very people who, by their narrowness, have driven him away and at the same time paves the way for future artists and innovators who may in time choose to break away from Sisala institutions and experiment with the dictates of their own drives and talents.

CHAPTER VI

THE SISALA PUBLIC'S EVALUATION OF THE CARVERS AND THEIR WORK

Because the state of the plastic arts in Sisala-land is underdeveloped and because esteem is granted so grudgingly to the individual artist, it is uniquely difficult for the Western researcher to understand and appreciate the collective Sisala mind with regard to the arts, bringing to the study as he does his own cultural bias, part of which is a profound respect for the arts and for the artist. Recognizing this gap and wishing to make every effort to penetrate the attitudinal differences between the people of Sisala and myself, I designed an experiment engineered to elicit responses concerning the carvers and their carvings in hopes of arriving at the basis for Sisala artistic judgments and an implicit philosophy of aesthetics. In spite of the fact that my questions must inescapably represent a projection of my own attitudes and unconsciously attempt to "lead the witness" I tried to keep an open mind and remain receptive to the pattern of responses that came from the informants no matter how contrary or inappropriate they might seem from a Western point of view.

Open criticism of the arts rarely occurs in Sisala-land. This is probably the case in part because the carvers usually

produce work for clients who are near at hand and in part because art, per se, is not a topic of interest or controversy among the Sisala people. Moreover, carvers themselves seldom express opinions about their own sculpture or that of their fellow artists. Despite the rarity of open criticism of sculpture, the Sisala public does wield some influence over the carver's role primarily through its concept of aesthetics, talent, and style; consequently I felt that it was especially important to survey the populus and communicate with them on the subject of art.

I interviewed a sample of twenty individuals who represented virtually every part of Sisala society: young adults, the aged, chiefs, headmen, carvers, and women who had given birth to twins. Though the sample group is small compared to other sociological surveys, the slight social differentiation among traditional Sisala strengthens the reliability of such a small group and it does indicate very clearly the general nature of the public's perception of art. I presented each of the twenty participants with the daalieridaan that had been carved by the six artists discussed in the preceding chapters; the sculptures were to be evaluated according to the rankings offered by each participant. As it turned out the carvings that were familiar to the participants were often ranked first or second; so, these works were not included for those informants in the final tally. I supposed that familiar works were highly ranked regardless of criteria in order to preserve the friendship between the participant and the particular carver, (Plate LVII).

Another set-back to the progress of my inquiry--but one that was revealing in its own way--was the fact that art

criticism and the interview format were so alien to the Sisala that many people refused to take part in the questioning and others saw it as a waste of time. Even those who cooperated found the length of the questionnaire (one and one-half hours) absurd. Sometimes the participants expressed their impatience and irritation with the survey by answering a question with a question or with total silence. I, in turn, had to keep my sense of humor about the phenomenon that I must have seemed to them, bringing so much interest and energy to bear on a matter that had no more inherent interest to them than the comparison of one park bench to another. In spite of these complications, I believe that the interviews uncovered many areas of consensus which would have gone undetected without persistent and open-minded questioning.

To begin each interview the participants (generally by themselves) were presented with twin carvings of the six carvers. Where there had been previous contact with a carver, his work was not included in the ranking. The ranking was accomplished by simply asking everyone to arrange the carvings in a line starting with the one they liked best. Later in the interviews these arrangements were checked by asking questions concerning groups of preferences as, for example, which three sculptures were liked the most, etc. Another set of items elicited qualitative remarks about the figure sculpture including concepts of beauty, (zomo), size, decoration, "ugliness," and surface treatment. Questions for assessing the artists' reputations were formulated by setting the sculptures before each person and asking him to identify the artist of the work as well as his

village and clan. Participants were also asked to select those carvings that showed the most carving experience, workmanship and talent. To ascertain the Sisalas' level of awareness of sculptural style the participants were asked if they had seen carvings from other cultures and how they could distinguish those works from their own.

Responses to the items of the survey showed a high degree of cultural consensus for the most part, but in some instances they greatly varied. The results of the initial rankings were surprisingly similar indicating the possibility of a common criteria for aesthetic judgement. Formulating questions about tribal and individual style was very difficult, and in some respects this probably affected the variety of responses to the questions. Yet the multiplicity of explanations here reveals a good deal about the Sisala concept of style. The categories of aesthetics, talent, and reputation of the carvers also shows a high degree of consensus. With regards to the reputations of artists, the consensus is that most people are unaware of carvers and therefore are unfamiliar with their reputations.

Ranking

The sculptures were ranked by twenty volunteers; of which nine persons judged the entire collection while others of the group ranked five sculptures after the familiar carvings were eliminated. The results were as follows: Semani's daalieridaan was selected eleven times for first position and Ntowie's nine. With less agreement marking the second position Buyugo was chosen six times, Ntowie five, Semani three, Mula two, Gbene

three, and Baton once. In the third slot Buyugo was selected seven times, Gbene six, Ntowie three, Baton two, Mula one, and Semani once. The fourth place selections were Gbene with eight, Mula five, Baton four, Buyugo two and Semani one. In fifth place Baton was chosen eleven times, Mula six, Gbene two, Buyugo once; and finally in the sixth position Mula was selected five times, Buyugo three, and Baton one.

The rankings were generally awarded on similar grounds, however, explanations for the non-consensual selections and responses varied greatly. For example, a drum carver from Tasow (Dima Luri), had seen sculpture outside Sisala-land and by way of comparison concluded that Ntowie's work was not representative of the Sisala style and therefor could not be ranked fairly with the other carvings. Equally unusual was Baton's single assignment to the second position by Baduamie; but the fact that the two men were clansmen living only two miles apart indicated that they most likely knew each other and that Baduamie was very familiar with the artist's work. Another peculiarity of the ranking was the placement of Mula twice in the second position. Tomie of Kong explained that he had chosen Mula for this spot because the wood (fuletia) was very strong, a factor which he considered more important than the sculptural form itself. Salifu's wife selected Mula's carving for the second position out of random choice, for when asked which three figures she preferred his work was omitted. Hellie of Chinchin assigned Semani's sculpture to the unusually low rank of fourth place explaining that the body decoration and scarification were too complicated and therefore annoying.

The initial rankings were checked against another set of selections wherein each participant was asked to choose the three sculptures he liked best. Comparison of these results with the first ranking showed substantial agreement, for in fourteen instances the order of the three selected works matched that of the original selections. Reconsidering their choices the second time, Tomie included Gbene's carving because he liked the wood (grunguna); Salifu's wife chose Baton's work because the face resembled a human's; Gbene selected Mula's carving for it appeared very strong like a wild animal; and Hellie made two changes which most likely resulted from her random selection procedure.

Sculptural Qualities

The responses elicited by the survey generally indicated the existence of a consensus about what the Sisala believe to be quality figurative carving. Some of the techniques used to discover the criteria for selection were suggested by my informants and others on the basis of my observation. To assess the importance of verisimilitude as a criterion of quality carving the participants were asked to rank the sculptures again according to the degree to which they resembled human beings. Representation here is not the same as the Western concept of naturalism; for the Sisala maintain that a sculpture having physiological details such as toes, fingers, ears, feet, hands, etc., no matter how schematic, is in fact representational. The comparison between the initial ranking and selections based on the veristic criterion demonstrates a significant correlation,

especially where the two most frequently selected artists for each of the six positions is concerned.

1. The two most frequently chosen artists for each position in the first ranking.

<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>
Semani, 11	Buyugo, 7	Buyugo, 7	Gbene, 8	Baton, 11
Ntowie, 9	Ntowie, 4	Gbene, 6	Baton, 4	Mula, 6
<u>6th</u>				
Mula, 5				
Buyugo, 3				

2. The two most frequently chosen artists for each position based on conventional representation or human likeness.

<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>
Ntowie, 9	Buyugo, 5	Gbene, 4	Gbene, 7	Fula, 7
Semani, 8	Ntowie, 6	Semani, 4	Buyugo, 4	Baton, 5
<u>6th</u>				
Mula, 4				
Buyugo, 3				

The same artists appear in the first, second, fifth, and sixth positions of both rankings. There is some variance marking the third and fourth spots; and though Gbene was selected more frequently here, Semani, Buyugo, and Baton competed equally. Variance, in this instance is not surprising considering that the sculptures occupying the middle positions were regarded as nearly the same in quality, being neither especially good or bad. Thus, as the differences in sculptural quality became less distinct the choices were more difficult to make.

Assessing volume and stature as criteria for evaluation was

accomplished by asking the participants which carvings were too tall, short, just the right height, or too fat or thin. Responses to the stature questions were very similar, for only six out of the twenty volunteers thought that some of the twin figures were of inappropriate height. Those people who voiced dissatisfaction mostly complained about the shortness of Gbene's daalieridaan believing that his carvings might be easily misplaced. Though the other participants claimed that all the figures were of an acceptable height, they sometimes qualified their opinions with remarks like: "Ntowie's is just right, but all are within the limits," or "Ntowie's is the best, but none are too short because humans come in all sizes." Although the modal response was "no preference," Ntowie's work, the tallest of the group, was most frequently described as "just right."

Similar results were obtained when the participants were questioned about the volume or "fatness" of each sculpture. Expressing more negative opinions in this regard, nine people believed that some of the twins were either too fat or thin. Seven of this group agreed that Mula's work was too fat whereas the other two persons claimed Baton's sculpture was far too lean. The remaining responses showed the Sisala's lack of concern about the appropriate width or volumes of figurative sculpture. Most people said that human beings were sometimes very fat or thin, but their fatness or thinness fit them.

Ritual requirements rather than aesthetics seem to be the major consideration for determining the dimensions of the twin figures. Several women explained that if the carving was too small it might be misplaced and if it was very large it would be

difficult to carry to school or the market. Generally the Sisala believe that the size of the daalieridaan is irrelevant to beauty, but in other contexts, as for example when the people of Tumu sing a popular song about Musa of Walembele, they clearly express concern about the dimensions of human forms. The key line to the song, "Walembele Musa mesang jang jang jang woo" means that Musa's nose is very very very round; too round and long for his face. Evidently the form of Musa's nose exceeds the communal notion about the proportion of the nose to the face and head and thus to the Sisala it appears odd.

In the realm of sculptural criticism this kind of comment rarely occurs. In a few instances Mula's daalieridaan was selected as the most ugly because it was too round or fat with respect to its height. Hellie claimed that Baton's twin figure was too slender, but the shortness of the sculpture made it "fit together." Hellie's response was similar to Baduamie's statement that fatness or thinness fit some people, meaning that proportions were more important to her than absolute size. Semani explained the concept of proportion with a metaphor about head loads that were too large or heavy for the carrier. He called this vertical imbalance a pii (the branches of a tree are too many for its trunk). The artist used this word to describe the lack of symmetry of sculptures with arms or legs of unequal size. Such imbalance was expressed by the word a pii, or sometimes the phrase "U bi zan" (it is bad).

Other inquiries about the concept of symmetry drew little response from the Sisala, apparently they seldom express themselves in this regard. Only Baduamie and Semani, who might be

considered Sisala intellectuals, explained the concept with a preciseness surpassing the modal response. It is significant that both men expressed their ideas about symmetry, with the word a pii, a term borrowed from another Sisala semantic domain. The absence of a distinct sculptural vocabulary perhaps explains why other participants had difficulty discussing this concept and it also indicates the Sisala's lack of interest in wood sculpture.

One of the most interesting finds of the survey was that Mula's sculpture was generally ranked last because it did not resemble a human (U bi nihuobiine naka), rather it looked more like an animal. Here it seems that formal characteristics were considered in the evaluation; for if there existed a commonly recognized relationship between human and sculptural form, then any marked deviation from that relationship would have been described as non-human or perhaps animal-like. Of the thirteen participants who agreed that Mula's daalieridaan resembled an animal, eight persons concluded that it looked like a baboon. Other people said that the carving resembled a lion, for the jaw was large and powerful. One person thought it looked like a leopard because of the pyro-engraved decoration, and two participants were undecided but felt that in some way it was more animal than human. Two other critics believed that Buyugo's twin figure resembled a monkey or a baboon.

Finding the criteria for judging the animal-likeness of the twin figures was difficult because of the general reluctance of participants to explain their opinions about such resemblances. Many people agreed that the round head of Mula's sculpture was

very animal-like in appearance, whereas other critics claimed that its arms and legs were more animal than human. My impression is that the huge thighs, feet and chest, and broad shoulders of the carving combine to make a very expressive sculpture. Most animal looking is the face, for it lacks a forehead and the slope of the nose begins at the top of the head very much like a baboon's. In this respect Mula's sculpture is unique; for other twin figures have prominent foreheads marked by well-defined ridges just above the eyes. Some people remarked about the cat-like features of Mula's carving especially the large mouth and jaw, and for similar reasons, a few persons believed that Buyugo's work resembled a baboon or monkey. The five participants who claimed that the twins did not look like animals often defended their conclusions with questions like, "Do animals have hands?"

The relative definition of body parts and the extent of physiological detail were the most important variables for determining animal-likeness and consequently the low ranking of some of the sculptures. In my own view Mula's carving is very powerfully rendered and in every respect a monumental work; however, to the Sisala, its incised toes, facial features and arms without hands are too schematic. By comparison Baton's carving is equally schematic lacking such anatomical detail as the hands, knees, and elbows; but the proportions of his sculpture were considered more human-like than Mula's work, a factor which contributed to his slightly higher ranking. These findings indicate that the Sisala prefer a fuller rendering of the human form in figurative sculpture. Though their idea of

representation stands with few restrictions, it nevertheless constitutes a tribal aesthetic ideal. The Sisala aesthetic of mimicry, however, does not give rise to a highly conventionalized tribal style; as it will be shown style, in the Sisala context, is not preconditioned by aesthetics.

Body decoration (anmwensi in Semani's gilbagele dialect; and in the Tumu jsaling dialect, lakise) was an important criterion in the ranking. Many people believed that it added beauty (zomo) to the sculptures. Two persons said that without decoration the carvings were ugly. Gbene (who used a hot knife for decorating his sculptures) summarized most people's opinion by declaring: "You cannot be handsome unless you put on a shirt." Thirteen persons admitted that decoration helped, but they considered the carving more important. Only four participants denied that decoration enhanced the beauty of the daalieridaan. Baduamie's carving by Ntowie is sparingly adorned with the clan scarification marks of the Han viara; yet because of its sculptural form and definition of body parts it was ranked mostly in the first position or second only to Semani's. On the other hand, Semani's carving was praised for the complexity of pyro-engraved decoration rather than sculptural form. Since both sculptures were rated number one or two, it seems reasonable that well executed decoration and good carving were equally considered by the participants of the survey. Where poor form and decoration coincide the sculptures were assigned lower positions.

The smoothness (yara) of sculptural surfaces was another, though less important, criterion in ranking the sculptures.

This quality was most evident to the Sisala in the works of Buyugo who used a pen knife to finish his sculptures; and Semani whose work was enhanced by his ability to control the adze with precisely placed and delicate strokes. Yara contributed to Semani's highly rated carving while it lifted Buyugo's rather animal looking sculpture to the middle ranks.

Some of the questions of the survey dealt with concepts of beauty and ugliness. Aesthetic decisions in this respect were largely affected by the proportions of the sculptures, for in many instances the neck, chin, legs, or arms of the works were considered distastefully long. Asking the participants to select the sculptures on the basis of ugliness Mula's work was chosen eleven times, Buyugo's four, and Gbene's three.¹ Two participants said that it was impossible to make a choice about ugliness because it is a relative concept. Gbene best explained the matter; "there are no ugly carvings because if you throw the ugliest one away you will continue discarding figures until nothing is left."

The term zomo (beautiful, good) was applied to those sculptures with well formed body parts, smooth surfaces and precisely executed decoration. Most participants selected Semani's work as the most beautiful because the decoration was complete and well executed. This explains why he received twelve votes in this category while Ntowie who used decoration more sparingly received eight votes. Despite the earlier responses indicating

¹Ugliness is expressed in Sisala as U bi zoŋ (it is bad); or kuburuŋ, an ugly thing.

that sculptural form is slightly more important than decoration these findings show that surface treatment is necessary for zomo figure carving.

Other comments about zomo carving indicate the originality of the Sisala's thinking. Alidu Kong believed Ntowie's work was beautiful because its knee joints were flexed like a humans, thus making the figure appear to be jumping. Paradoxically Semani claimed that Ntowie and Gbene's twin figures were equal in beauty adding that there was beauty in the extreme ugliness of Gbene's work. Baton described the beautiful as that which was not ugly, a typically guarded Sisala statement.

Only a few carvers possess the talent and skill for making zomo sculpture which in its best form adheres to the aesthetic of conventional realism and is acceptable in regard to size, proportions, smoothness of finish, and the application of decoration. The term most often used to describe the ability to make such sculpture is wujimin (talent and experience). The participants were asked which carvers had the most talent. The results indicated that the assessment of an artist's abilities generally corresponded with judgements about the quality of his sculpture. Unexpectedly, however, Ntowie was selected fifteen times as the artist having the most talent and Semani was chosen only once. Four persons refused to answer this question. The fact that Semani and Ntowie were so differently rated with respect to talent while nearly splitting the vote for first position in the initial ranking required some explanation. Most Sisala conceded that talent was both a function of innate faculties and experience; but on occasion they felt that

experience was more important. This would be expected in what Mendonsa has described as a gerontocracy. Ntowie's association with the ancestors and, therefore, old age and his expected re-incarnation led many participants to the conclusion that his wujimin exceeded that of the other carvers including the highly ranked Semani. The Sekai Kouro added that Ntowie possessed more wisdom because his sculptures were the oldest. Semani's twin figure was less than five years of age whereas Ntowie's was at least forty years. Carvers with superior talent were also described as being patient, yet able to finish their work within a short period of time. Gbene and Mula were rated low with respect to wujimin because they carved rapidly often making undesirable cuts which determined the final form of their sculpture. (My impatience during the apprenticeship with Semani also resulted in the ruin of twin carvings.) Sculptors with wujimin are expected to show their humility by listening to the elders and learning from their experience; but here again Semani was not known to be a respectful listener nor one to take advice from the elders or the ancestors.

The Sisala believe that it is impossible to obtain wujimin without "right thinking" (tubbiinaa). One has to be aware of the two aspects of thinking where the heart and the head dictate respectively the sequence of thought and action. It is believed that the proper relationship between these organic functions determines the development of wujimin and subsequently the actions of a wise man. One does not, for example, allow the head to make decisions regarding the acceptance or rejection of

Islam, but once the decision is made by the heart the head determines the proper action.

The Sisala hold the opinion that one can acquire knowledge and wisdom, yet the development of these qualities depends on innate ability. Alhasan explained that a person could obtain wujimin by listening to the elders, yet in some instances certain persons instructed by the old ones accomplished nothing. Gbene who believed talent and experience to be a function of enculturation asked this question: "When you were born could you write?" Alidu Kong explained that the mind was "raw" at birth, but that it was shaped by the acquisition of wujimin. Taking the opposite point of view Tie explained that, since everyone was born with different amounts of talent, some people could spend ten years or more learning to write but never succeed. Agreeing with Tie, Baduamie maintained that as a carver Ntowie was entirely self-taught, depending on his innate abilities for success.

Despite the differences regarding the origin of talent most participants recognized a relation between wujimin and aesthetic sensibility, i.e., zomo carving. Their aesthetic criteria, however, did not exclude the acceptance of the poorly made twin figures. The quality of verisimilitude, decoration, and surface finish; and the dimensions of the sculptures played an important role in the ranking of the sculptures, but the appraisal of these criteria did not affect the functioning of the twins. Like people, explained the Sisala, the twin sculptures can be made in all sizes and range from the beautiful to extremely ugly. In many cases the acceptance of all the carvings was

rationalized by the concept of wujimin. The participants admitted that a carver could learn from others, but they added that innate abilities (wujimin), were more effective in artistic development. Since artistic ability is not usually passed from one carver to another it is the Sisala belief that self-teaching rather than apprenticeship is a far better method for improving one's carving. Such a conviction contributes to the public's acceptance and, inadvertantly, the encouragement of highly individualized styles, regardless of talent. The absence of a standardized conception of a carver's education and for some individuals the belief that talent originates in private and individualistic ties with the fairy spirits also leaves the way open for considerable contrast in personal carving styles. As if to enforce their individualism carvers who are more mystically oriented are also likely to receive high praise for their sculpture.

Though the Sisala figural style is quite diverse there is to be sure an underlying aesthetic; that aesthetic does not always give rise to a particular style. Although smoothness, symmetry, proportion and decoration constitute a criteria for evaluating Sisala sculpture the single more important criterion is conventional representation, i.e. the extent of physical detail displayed in figure carving. To the Sisala this means that detail with few restrictions to how it is carved is of intrinsic value. Thus, Mula's very rounded figure style is ranked lower than Semani's angular style simply because it lacks important detail regardless of how that detail might be rendered.

Reputation of the Artists

The purpose of some of the interview questions was to determine the extent of each carver's reputation. This was accomplished by asking the critics to identify the artist, his clan, and village on the basis of his work. The survey shows that in nineteen cases the carvers were identified whereas, in twenty-three and twelve instances the village and clan were properly ascribed. It was expected that the artists' clans would be named most frequently, surprisingly though, many people did not recognize the clan scarification marks appearing on the sculptures. Ntowie, the best-known artist, was acknowledged seven out of seventeen interviews and Buyugo followed with five of nineteen, Semani with three of sixteen, Mula with two of nineteen, Baton with two of nineteen, and Gbene with none. Ntowie's village was named eight times, Buyugo's six, Semani's five, Baton's twice, Mula's twice and Gbene's none. Of the twelve instances in which the clan was identified Buyugo's clan was selected four times, Semani's three, Ntowie's three, Baton's once, Mula's once, and Gbene's not at all. Ntowie's reputation, which equals his high position in the ranking, was primarily based on his merits as a sculpture; but his affiliation with the District Commissioner, Mr. Nanjo and his immortalization through his personal shrine contributes to his reknown. Most participants recognized the names of the other carvers, but were unaware that they carved or were unable to identify their individual styles. Mula and Alidu Kong, for example, were acquainted with Buyugo, but neither one knew that he carved twin figures. The Challo Kouro, Sekai Kouro, and the carver Gbene

claimed they were acquainted with all the artists; yet, they too did poorly on the identification. Gbene would not identify any of the carvers and the chiefs recognized only Semani and Buyugo's sculpture--works by artists from their own villages.

In many societies it is important that an artist receive public recognition for his artistry. Among the Sisala, however, the majority of Sisala who were questioned could not identify the carvers by their sculptures. The anonymity of the Sisala artist is partly an out-growth of the ritual context of the twin figure carving, a ritual affecting only the nuclear family (dia) its impact on the wider community being negligible. Comparative evidence for mask rituals shows that masks are usually carried before an entire community, affecting the lives of the kin and non-kin alike. Under these circumstances the audience is likely to proclaim the achievements of its sculptors even though the carving process itself may occur behind a curtain of ritual secrecy. Like the masquerader whose identity is theoretically kept from the public, carvers of masks, theoretically may be recognized on the basis of their unique style and expertise. Where the community is united in dance performances, it is also inevitable that masks will follow a stricter iconographical format and exhibit a greater uniformity of style than is evidenced by the Sisala twin figures.

Style

The fact that many participants who knew the carvers could not identify their sculptures, raised some question about the importance of the concept of style as part of the Sisala artistic process. Support for this question was furthered by the difficulties I encountered when discussing questions of style with my informants. Kennedy Kanton argued that style questions were ridiculous, insisting that a carver could cut the wood in any fashion. He maintained that Semani's sculptures, as an example, might look like the works of any artist, it was simply a matter of chance. Even Hellie, the owner of a Buyugo sculpture, could not identify another of that artist's works until she learned that it was carved in Sekai. Semani left all the questions concerning identification unanswered, but his response was probably affected by a sense of pride and competitiveness that prevented him from acknowledging the works of other carvers. The most informed of the participants was Baduamie whose membership in the Han viara and his relation to Ntowie no doubt contributed to his knowledge of the artists. Baduamie identified the works of Baton, Buyugo, and Ntowie; but to eliminate any bias, he was not asked to rank Ntowie's work during the survey. He wrongly attributed Semani's work to Gbene, an error resulting from his knowledge that both artists used the soft wood of the gurubuna and the pyro-engraving technique for decoration. He also identified the villages and clans of Buyugo, Baton, and Semani.

Since most Sisala were reluctant to comment on individual style, I hoped that questions about tribal style might

stimulate more discussion. To this end each participant was asked if he could distinguish between Sisala and non-Sisala carvings. Seven people claimed they could recognize differences between Sisala works and carvings from other societies. Four of this group explained that they could make the distinction on the basis of clan scarification patterns appearing on the carvings, and the other three critics made the distinction according to their understanding of the concept of tribal style. In this respect Baduamie explained that he learned of the Sisala style during Nkrumah's regime when the chief of the Dagari, the Nandom Na, and several Dagari dancers from the Lawra District came to Tumu bringing their own figure sculptures. On the basis of this experience he was able to distinguish the Sisala sculptures from the Dagaris'. Further elaborating his knowledge of style Baduamie pointed out that the heads of Semani's figure sculptures were always round whereas the necks of Buyugo's carvings were consistently elongated. Alidu Kong claimed that the Sisala have a collective style, wherein each carver occupies a unique position. He remarked that in the old days when the women brought their twin figures to the market he could see that every artist had a different way of carving. (Alidu Kong's recognition of Sisala sculpture is not formulated on the basis of an analytical perception of style, i.e. he does not perceive style as a combination of individual traits, rather he recognizes Sisala sculpture wholly as a Gestalt configuration.) The Sekai Kouro stated that since his attendance at an agricultural exhibition at Zorongo where several Gurunsi (Fra

Fra or Kasena Fra) carvings were displayed he was able to distinguish the Sisala style.

The informants who were willing to discuss the concept of individual and tribal style in every case had seen sculptures of neighboring groups. Those persons uncertain about sculptural style had few experiences outside Sisala-land. Only Hellie and Baton had seen carvings from other societies, but their experience did not help them elaborate the stylistic concept. Baton visited the Dagari at Kalba in the Lawra District; and there at a diviner's house he saw figure carvings resembling Semani's. (The sculptures were among the ritual objects belonging to the soothsayer whom Baton had sought for consultation.) Hellie traveled south to Ho and Augoi and there she saw wood figure sculptures also resembling Semani's carvings. Other critics who were uncertain about the idea of style had no outside cultural experience with figure carving. Gbene thought that questions related to style were indefensible and asked if it were possible to tell where a hoe was made by its appearance. Other people responded to the questions with unrelated comments which revealed a lack of understanding of the stylistic concept.

That thirteen of twenty people were unaware of tribal or individual style is indicative of the low level of interest the Sisala public reserves for its carvers and their art. The indifference to individual sculptural style, though partly due to the rather narrow context of the twin surrogate ritual, discourages carvers who otherwise depend on small pecuniary rewards for development of their skills. In the absence of artistic achievement and clearly recognizable artistic standards it is

understandable why Sisala sculpture lacks vitality as well as a marked tribal style. It also explains the Sisalas' willingness to accept all figure sculptures as surrogate twins.

Clearly, for the arts to thrive in any society, the environment has to offer some encouragement to the artist in the form of interest, respect, enthusiasm, or recognition. Given the apathy that characterizes the typical Sisala reaction to artistic achievement, it is not remarkable that very little carving is being done in Sisala-land. What is perhaps remarkable is that individuals do come along, even in Sisala-land, who have a will to carve (the drive to create) sufficient to stand against the overwhelming powers of indifference and sometimes contempt, and that originality and aestheticism will surface from time to time in spite of all the forces of enculturation and social pressure which conspire to defeat the artistic spirit.

Perhaps of greater significance than the description of Sisala sculpture is the belief underlying this paper that the visual arts of a people can be understood more completely within view of their larger social-historical setting. Conversely, a representative sample of a peoples visual arts should inform us about the society and artistic process responsible for such works. Scarcity of wood carving, highly innovative sculptural style, and variety of sculptural types in the Sisala case, reveal a conception of Sisala social organization and the role of the artist within that organization.

With these points in mind we may ask about the future of wood sculpture in Sisala-land. One cannot easily predict nor account for coming events in the Tumu District, events which in

some way may effect change in the arts. What is predictable, it seems to the author, is that Sisala society is vulnerable to change; its smallness of size, economy, and population can be significantly impacted by most any event. Further research must therefore keep astride of national government policy, migration, religious change, etc. as they relate to the district. The future of Sisala wood carving depends then on the interplay of these forces and the success of non-traditionally oriented Sisala including carvers who seek acceptance and change with respect to their individual life styles.

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PLATE I



PLATE II

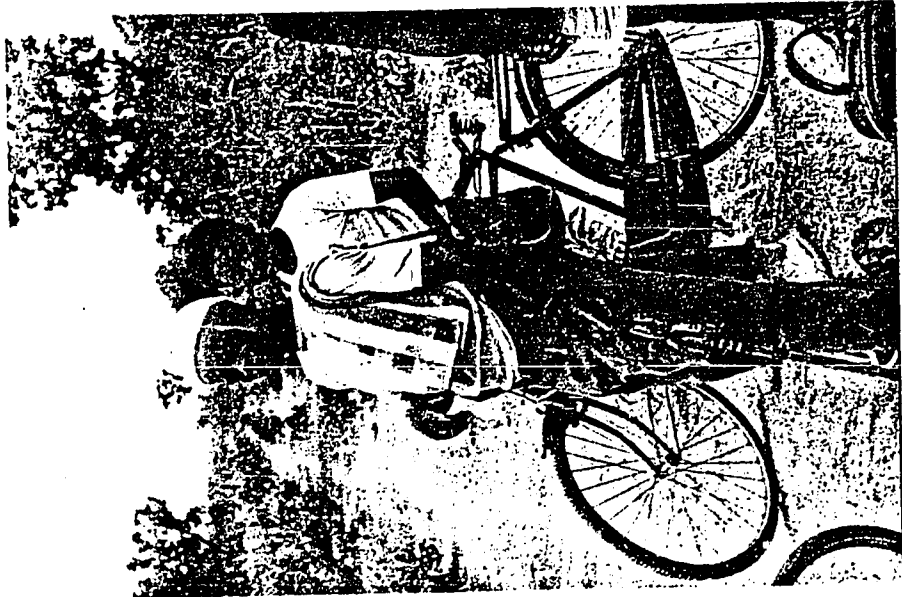


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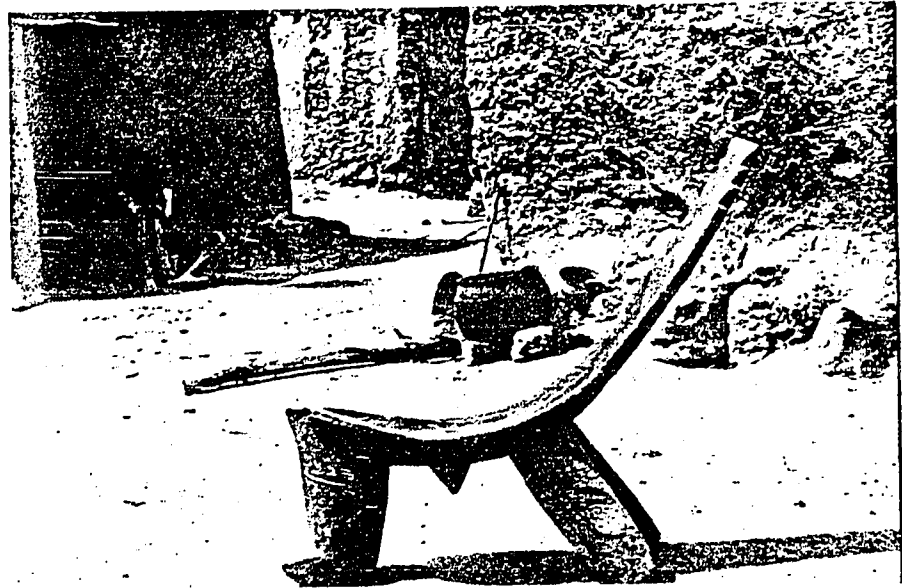


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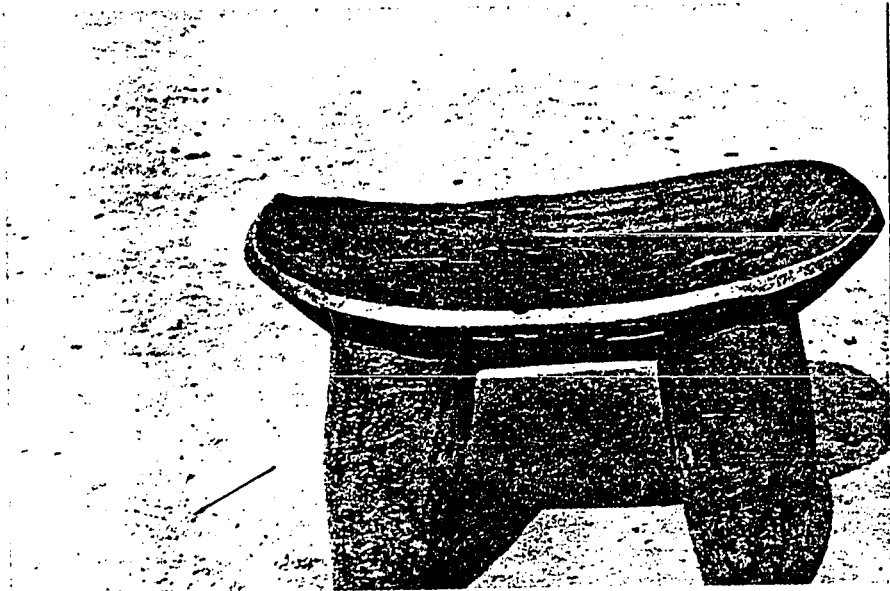


PLATE V



PLATE VI

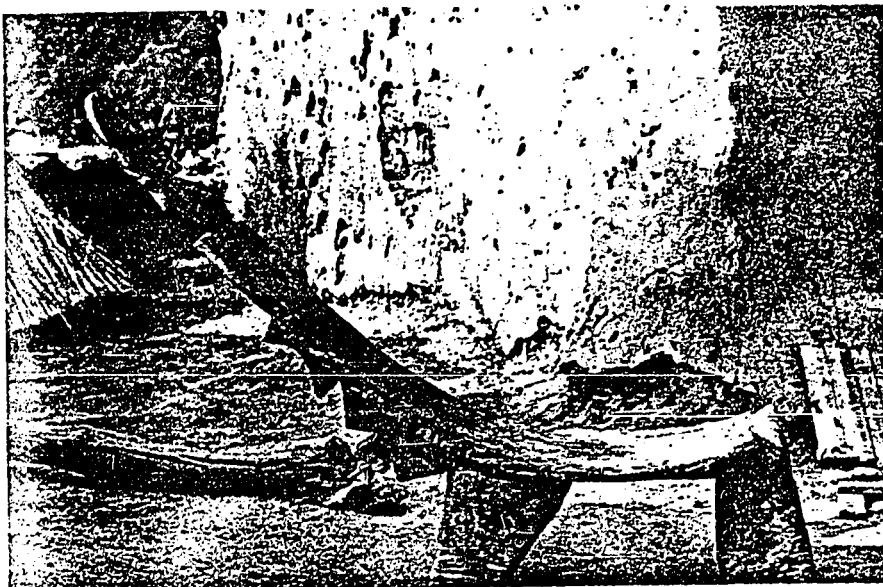


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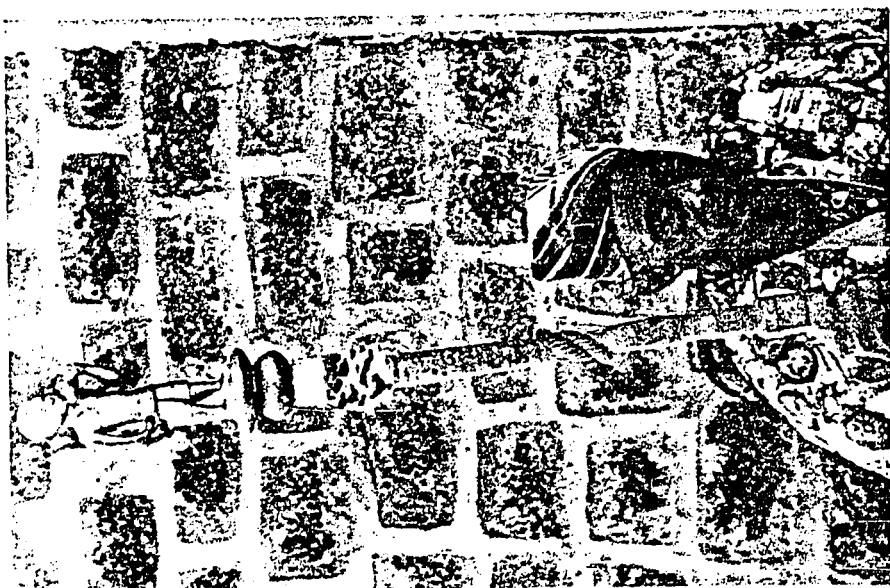


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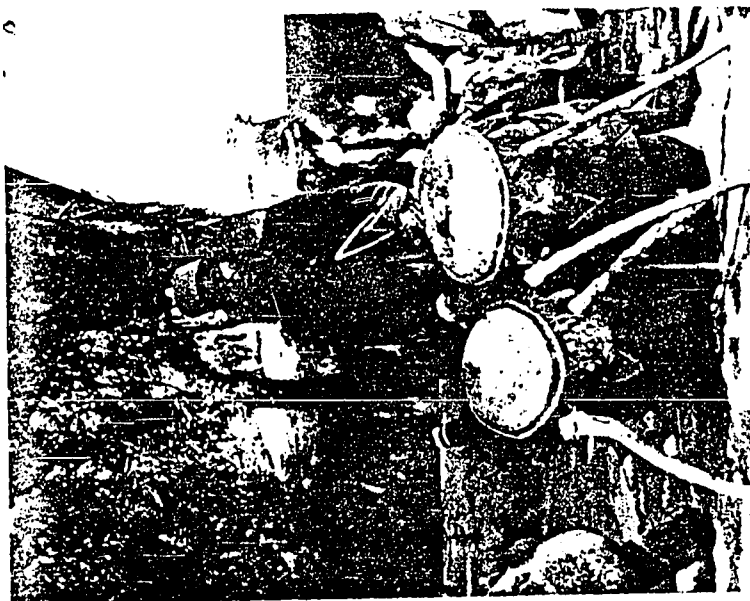


PLATE IX



PLATE X

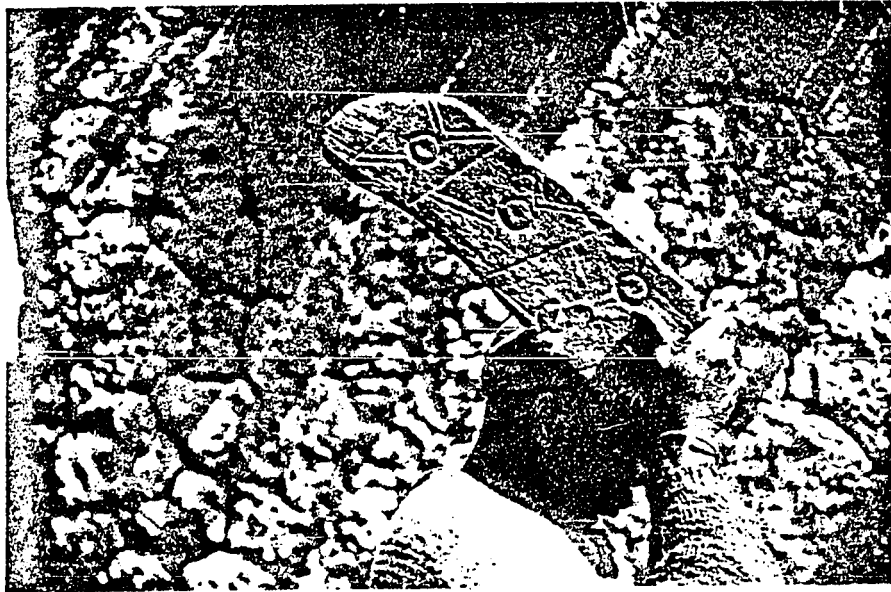


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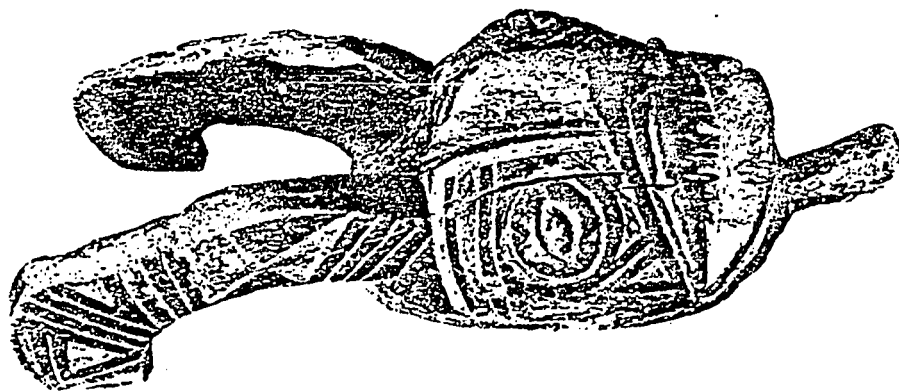


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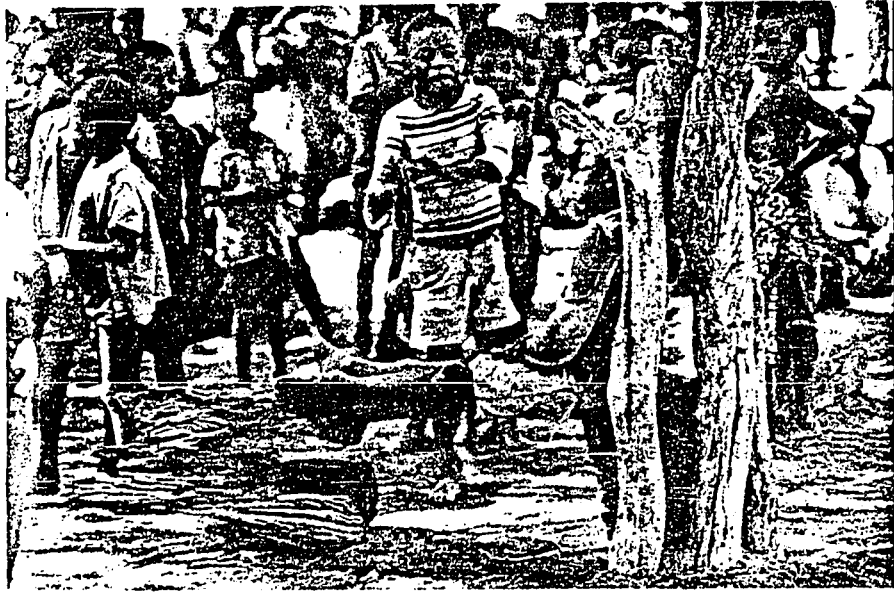


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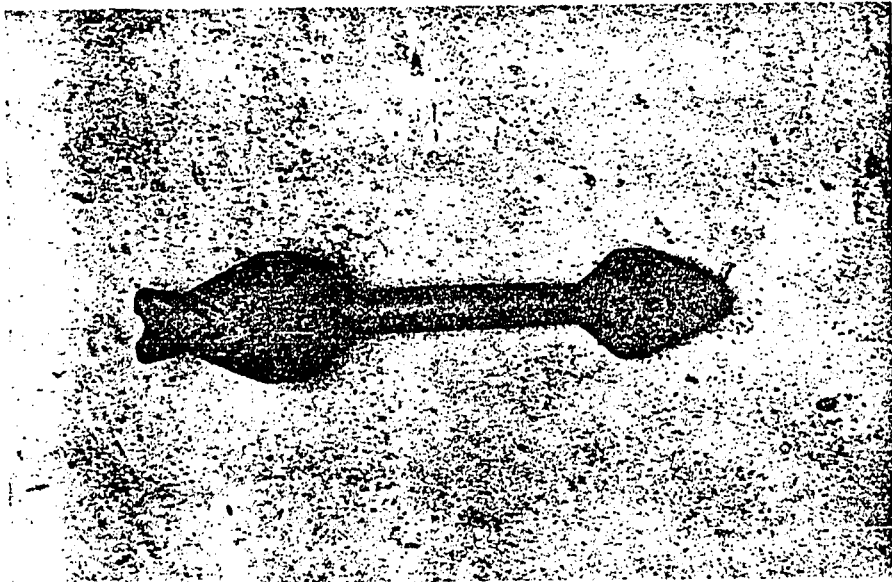


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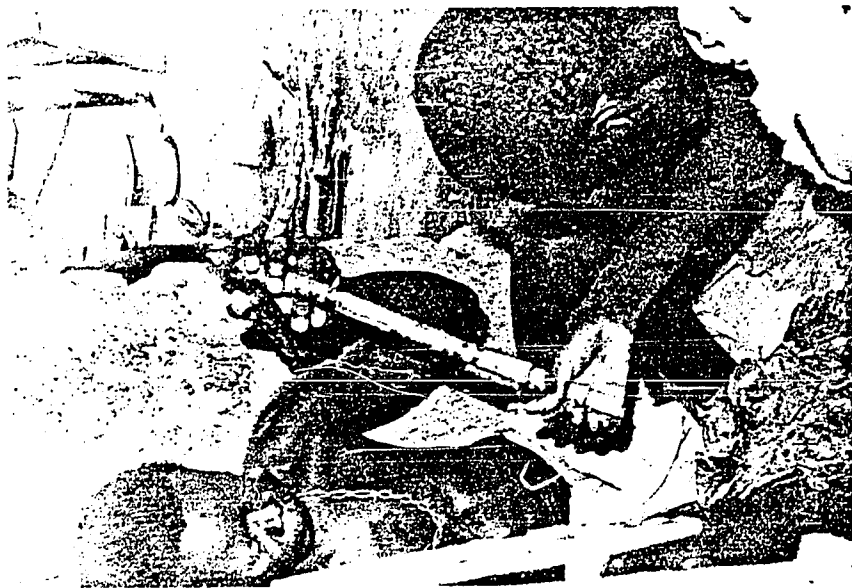


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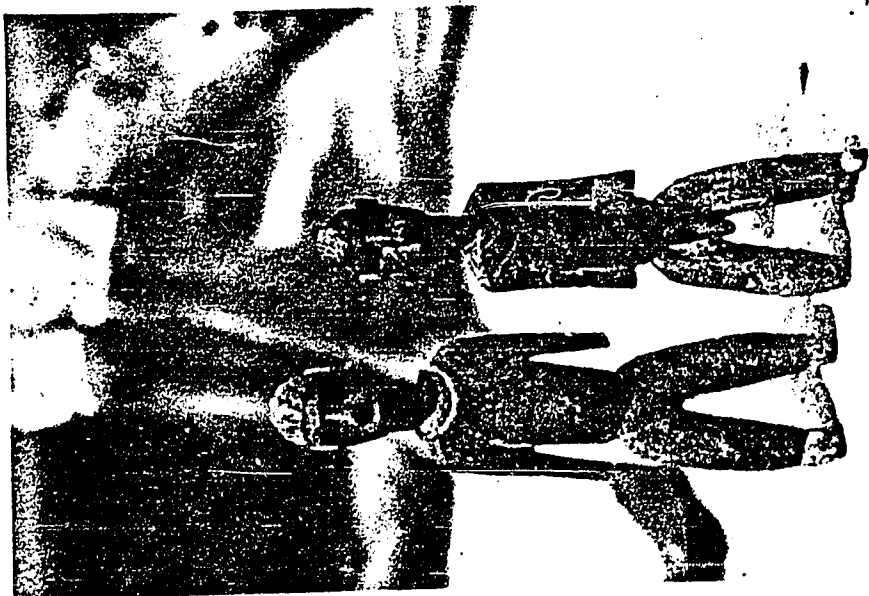


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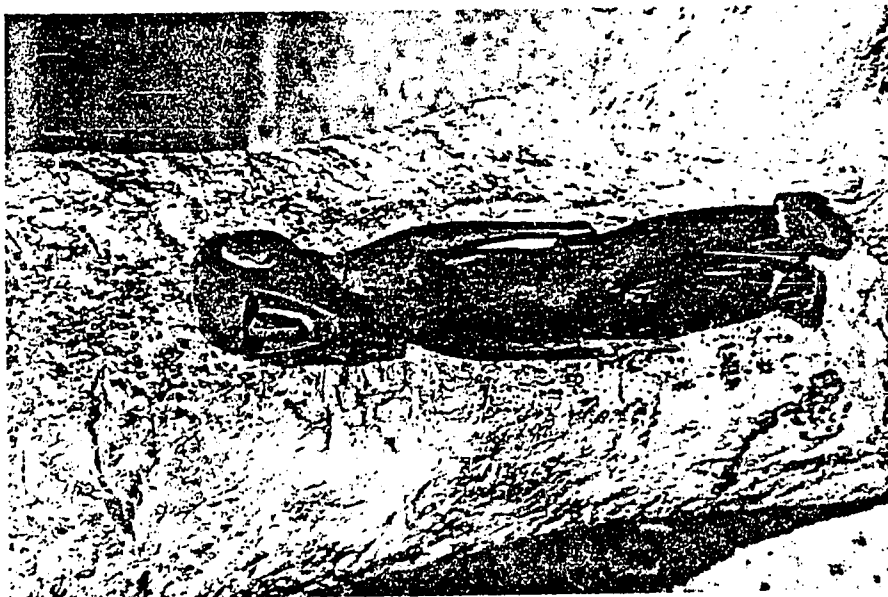


PLATE XVII



PLATE XVIII

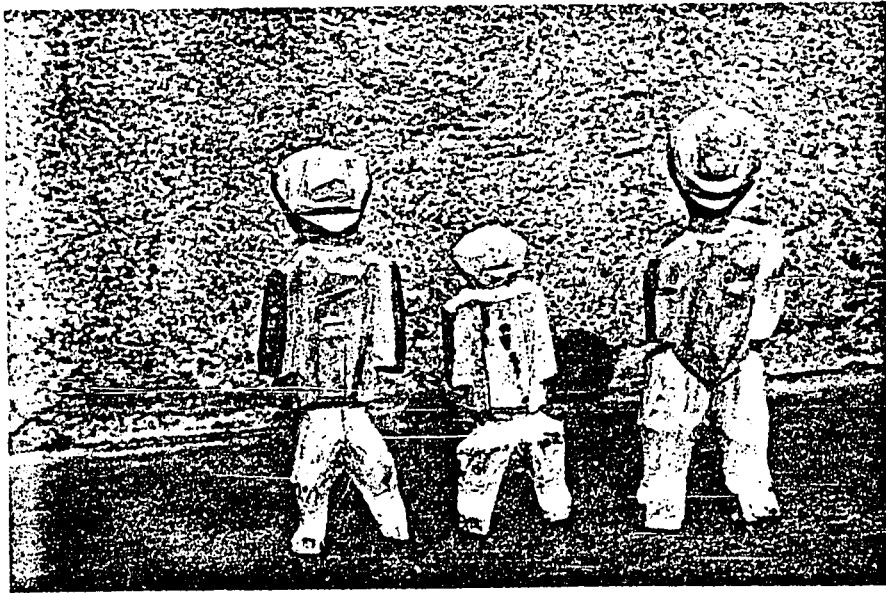


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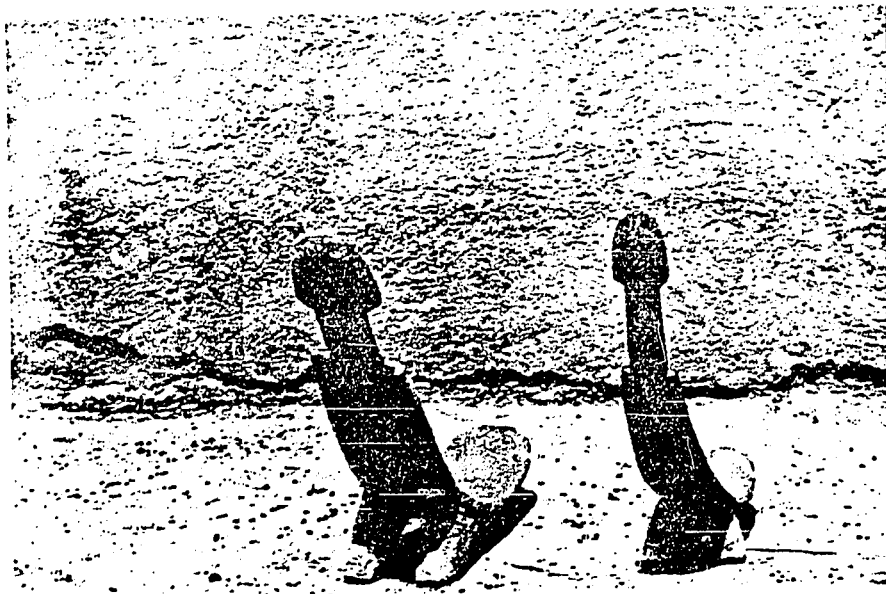


PLATE XX



PLATE XXI

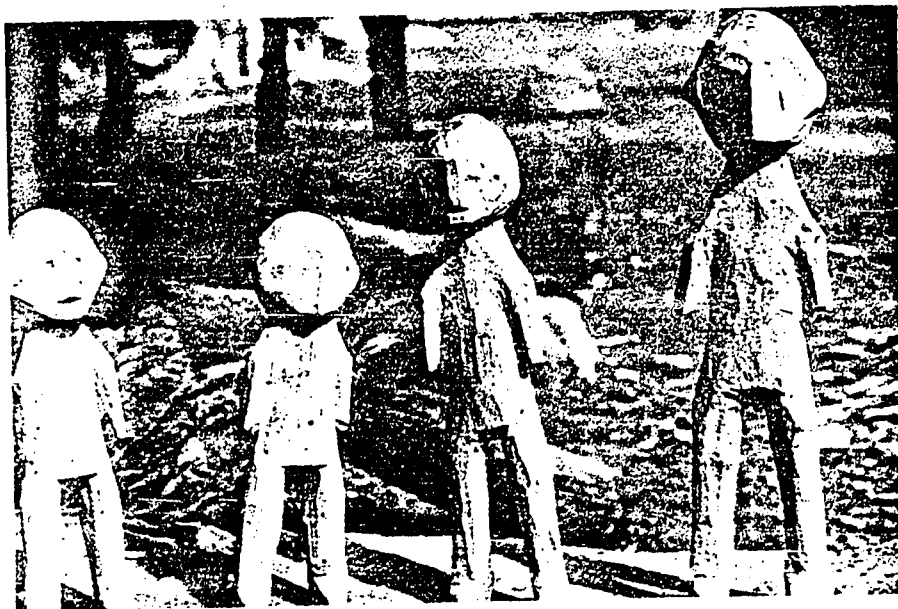


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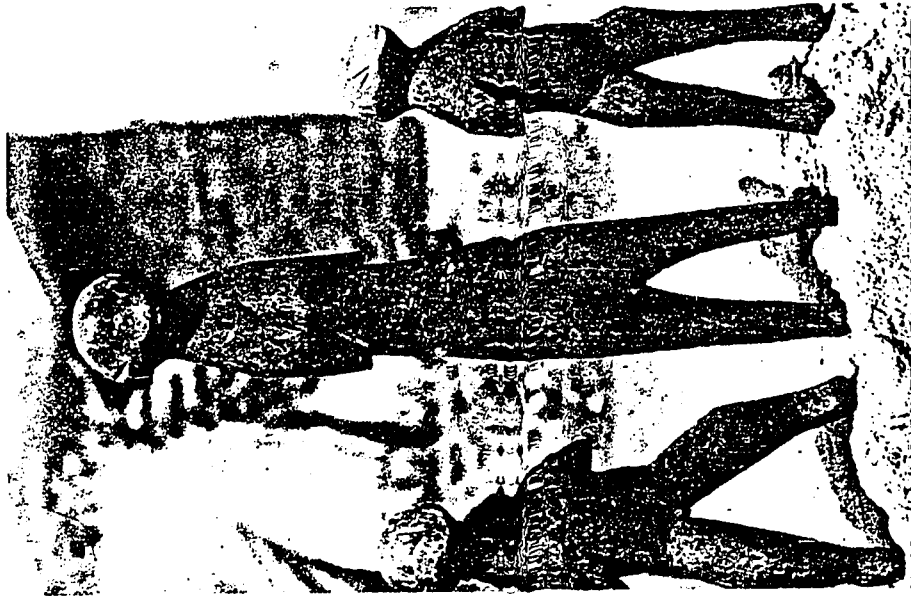


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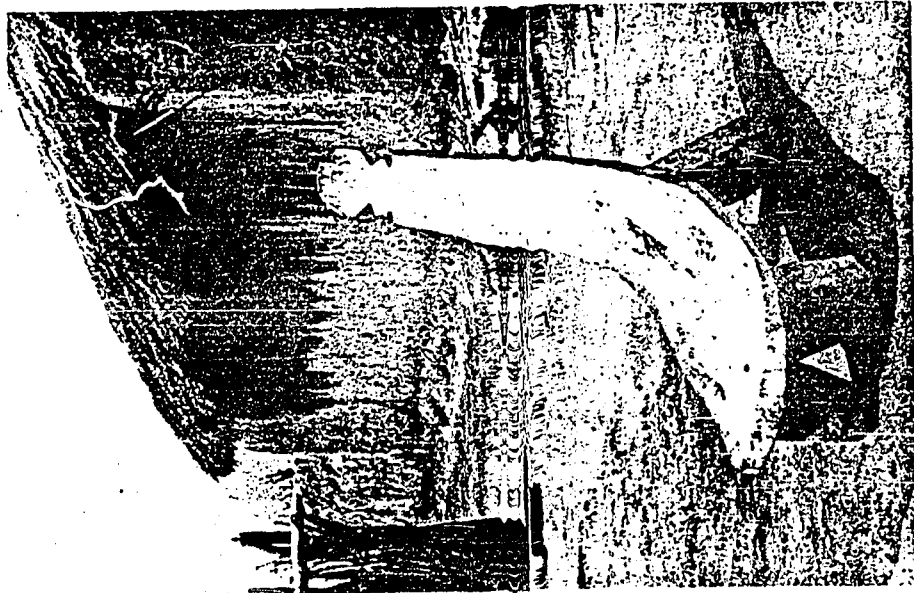


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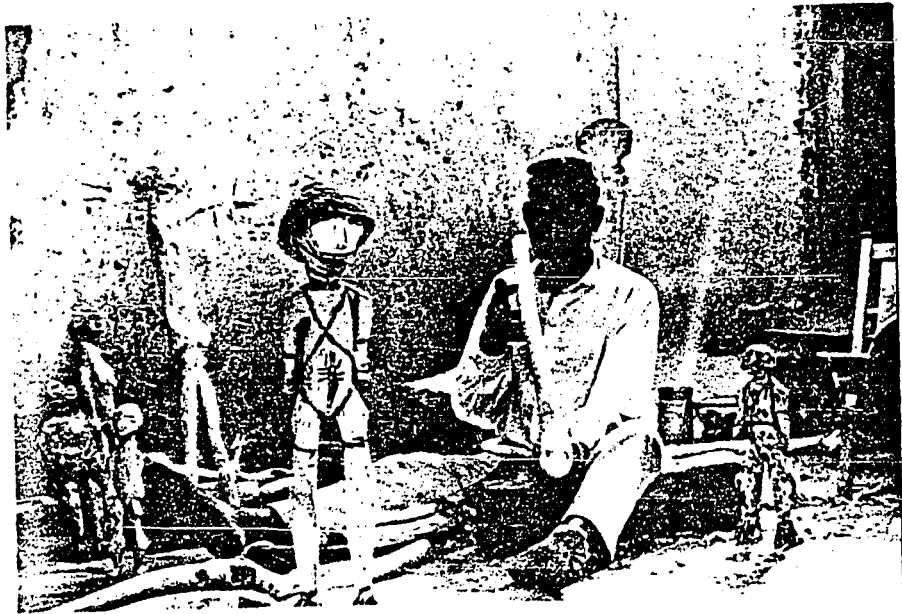


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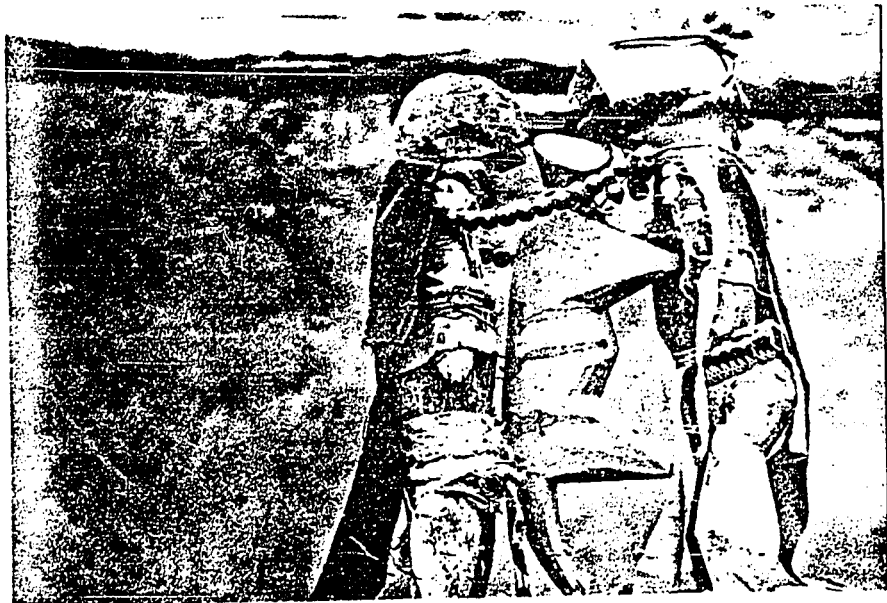


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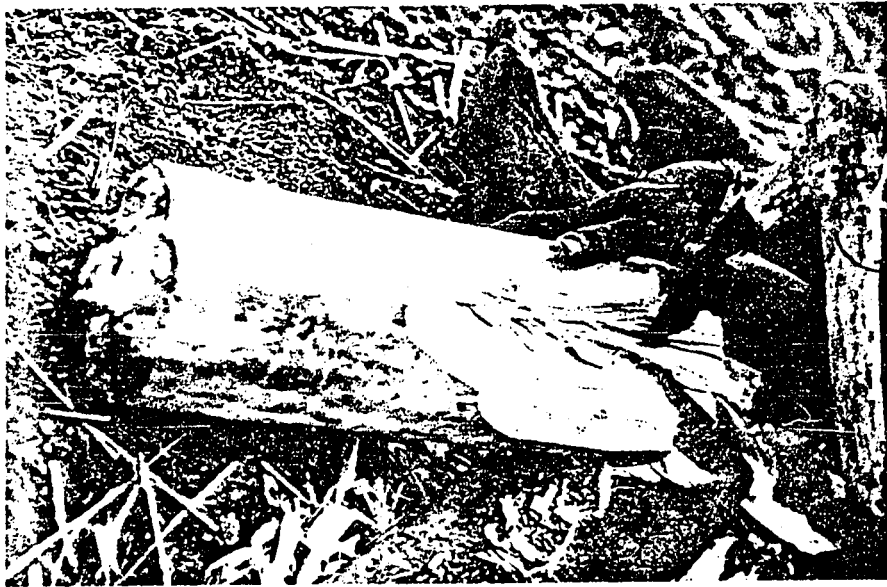


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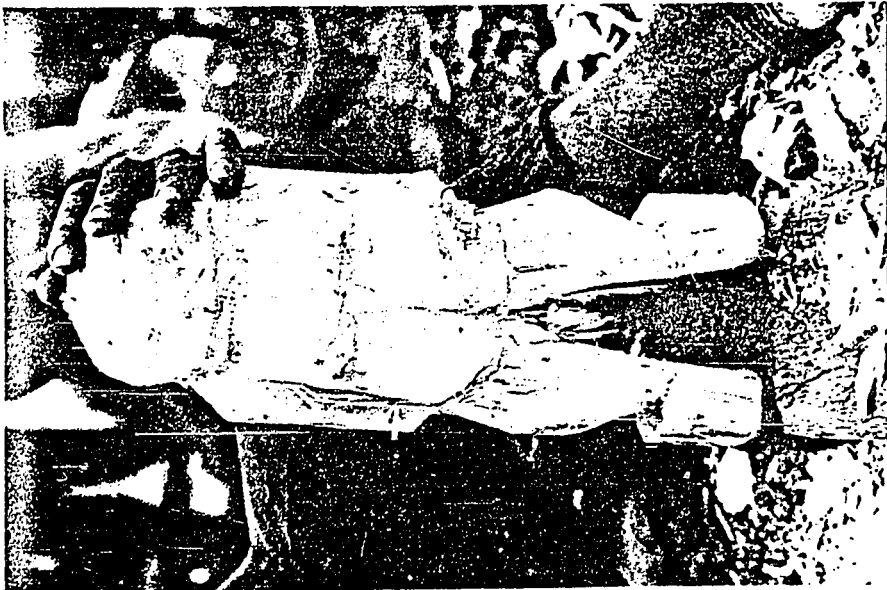


PLATE XXVIII



PLATE XXIX

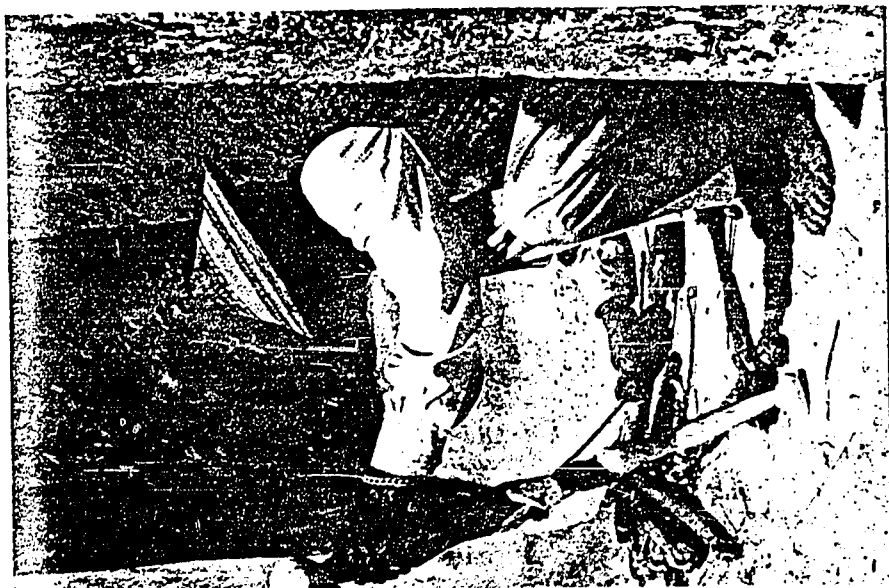


PLATE XXX

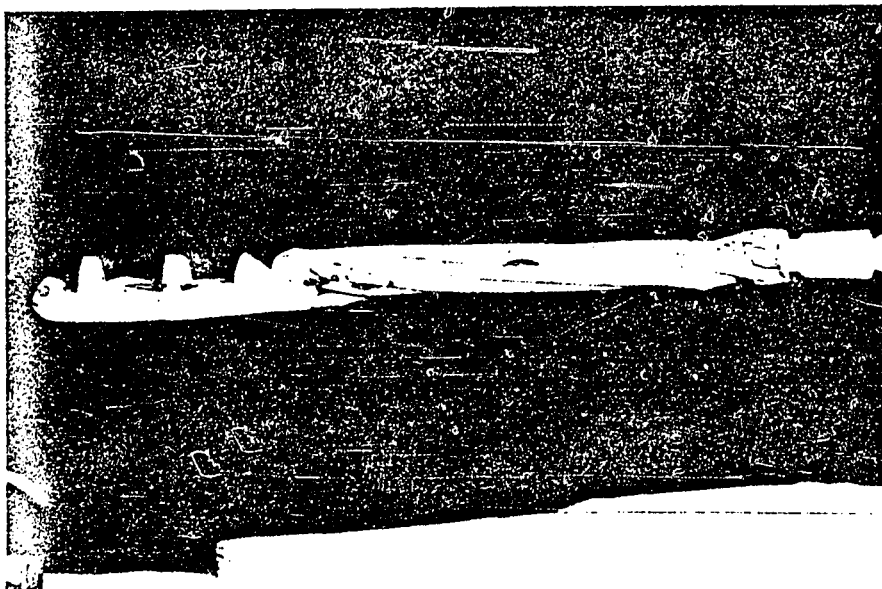


PLATE XXXI



PLATE XXXII

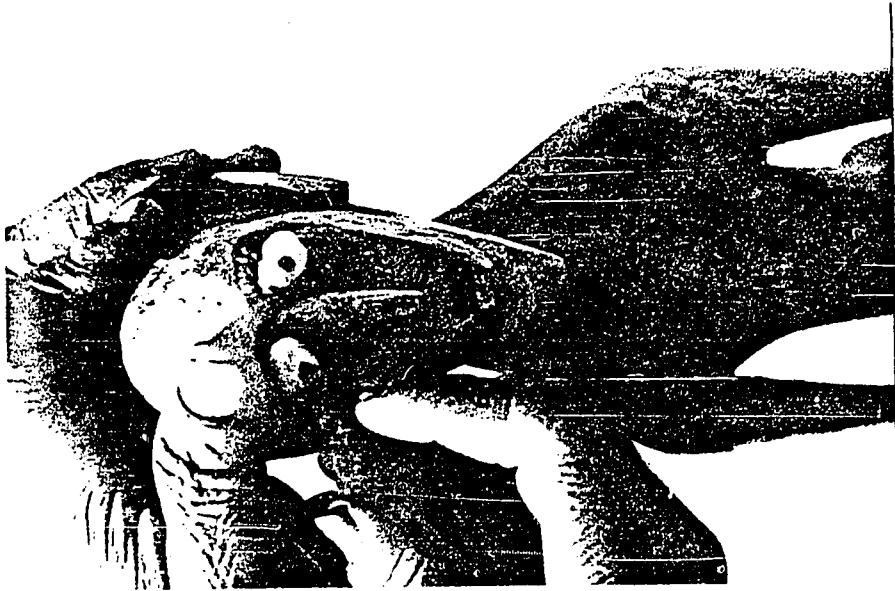


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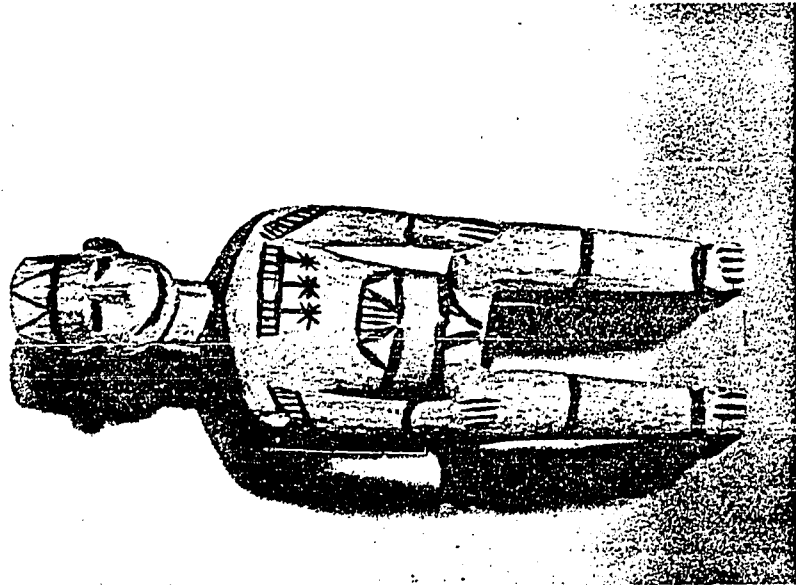


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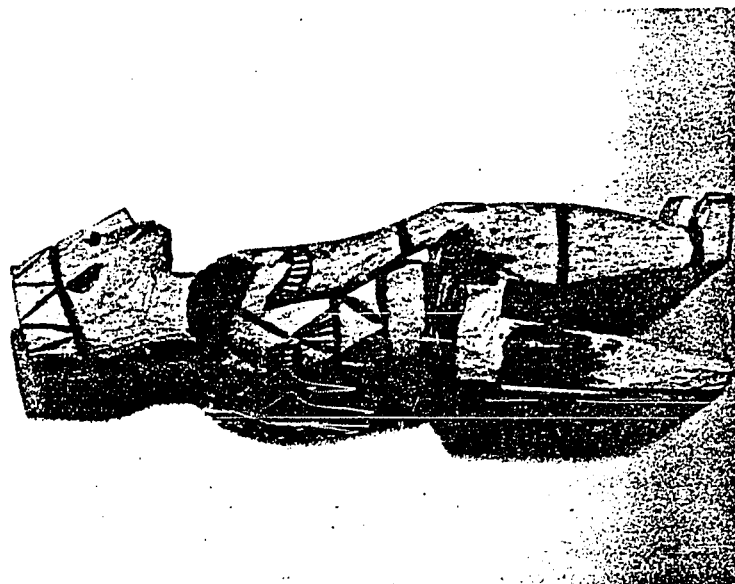


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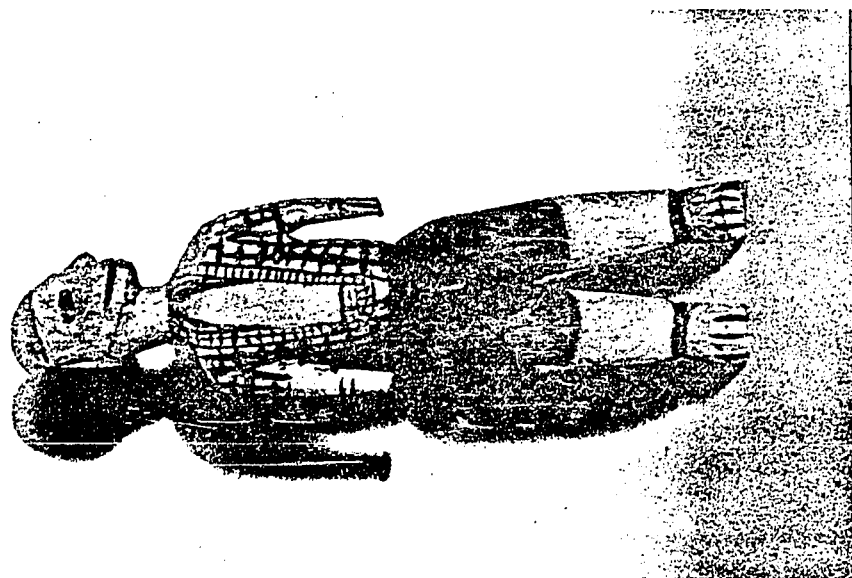


PLATE XXXVI

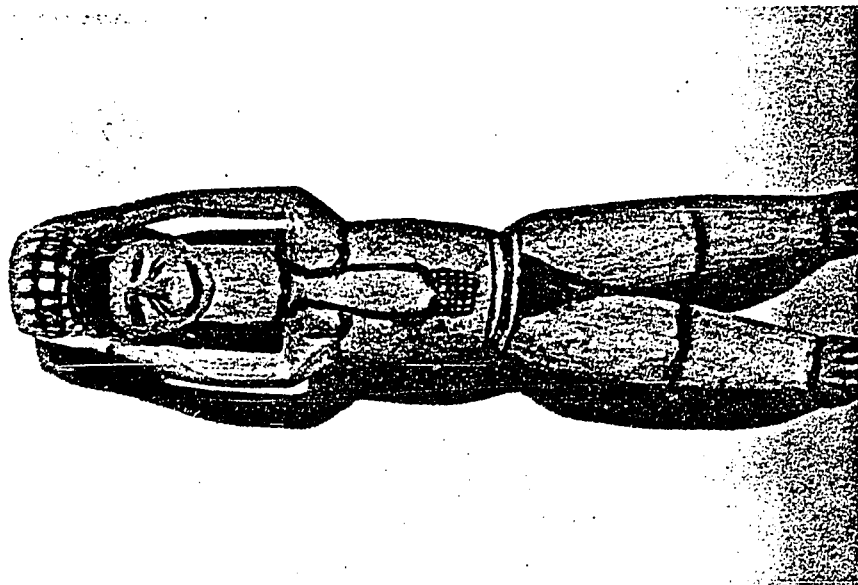


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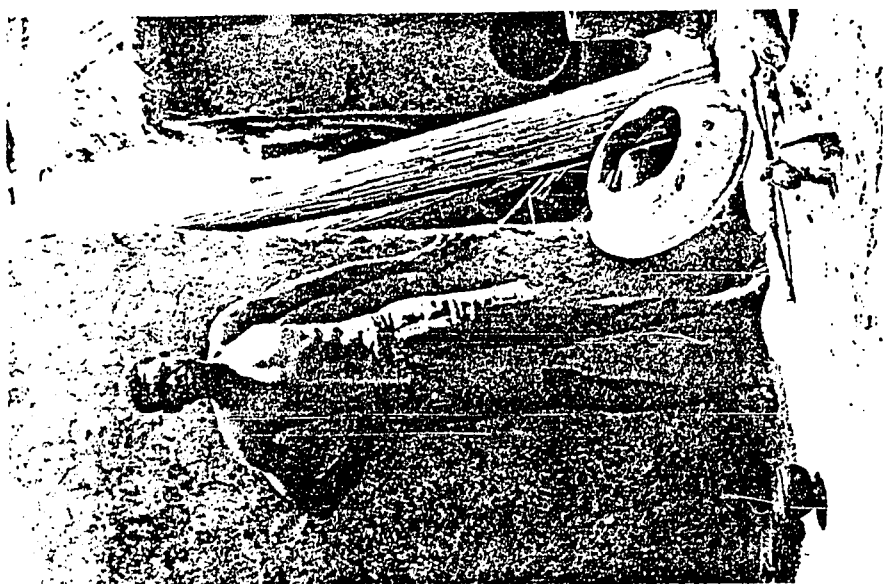


PLATE XXXVIII

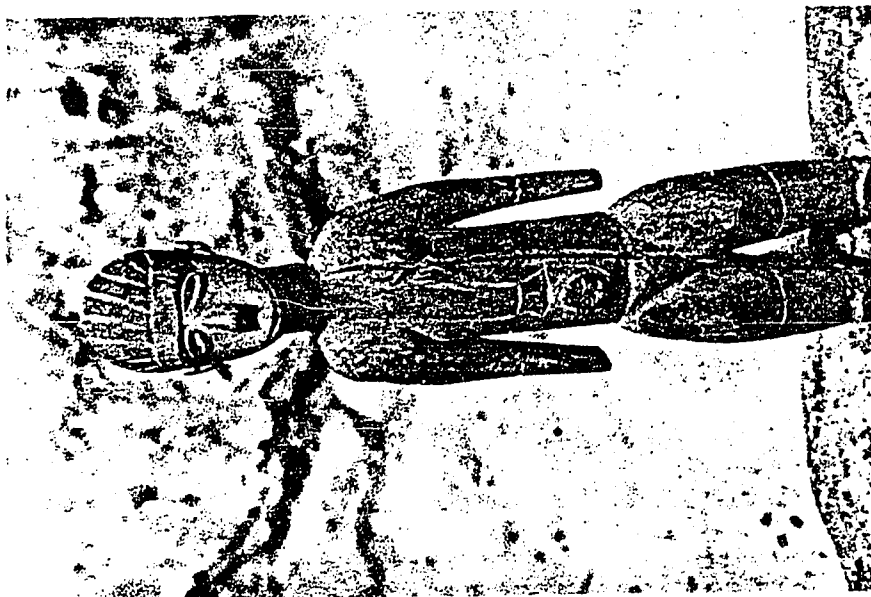


PLATE XXXIX

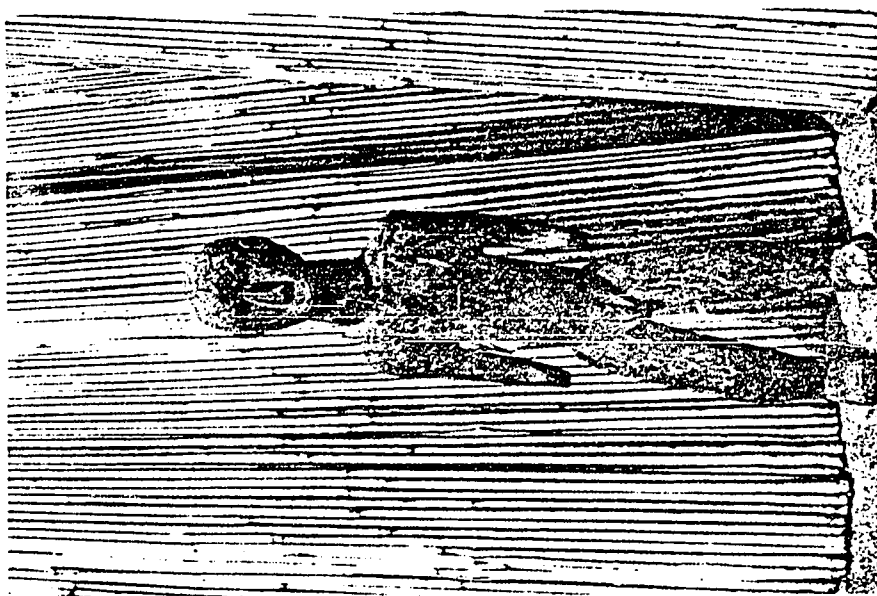


PLATE XL

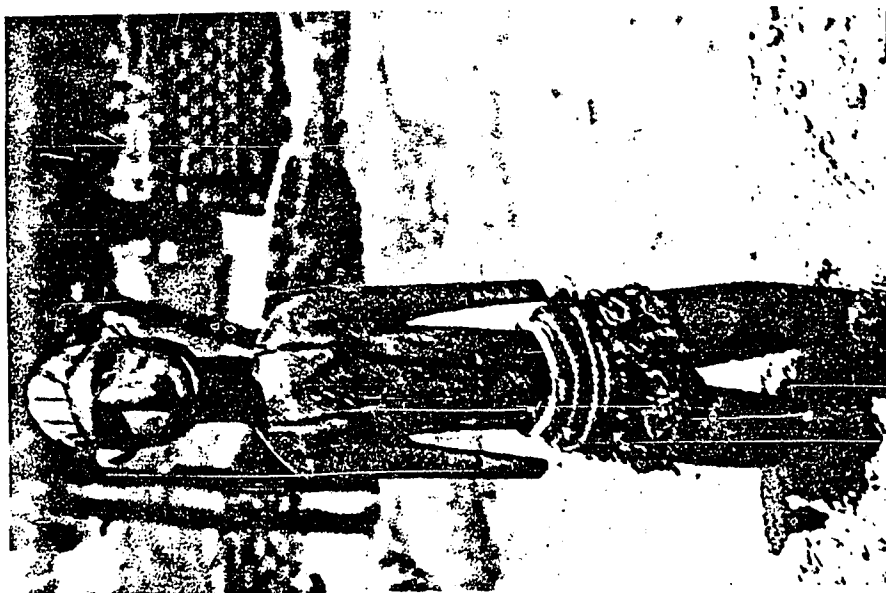


PLATE XLI

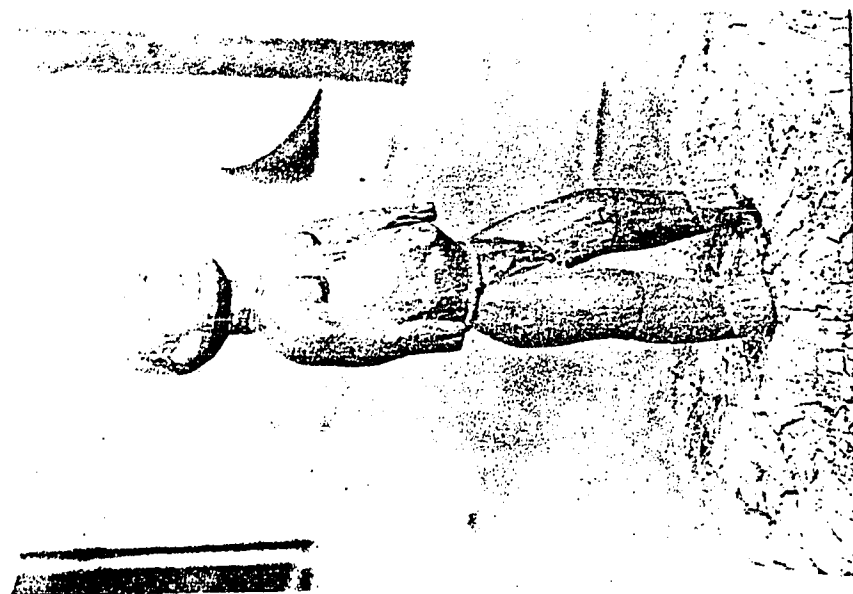


PLATE XLII

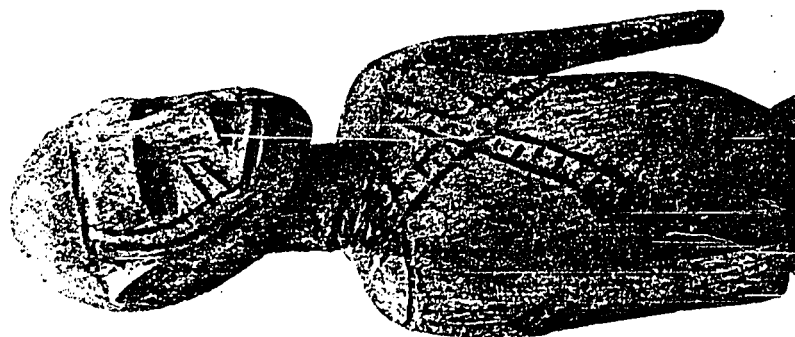


PLATE XLIII

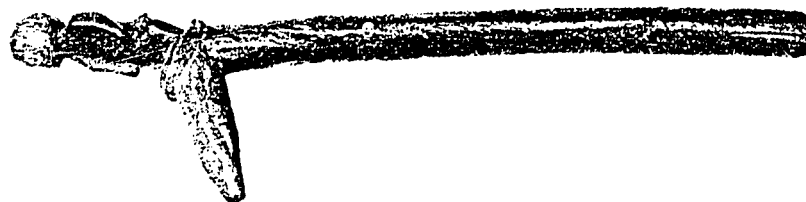


PLATE XLIV



PLATE XLV

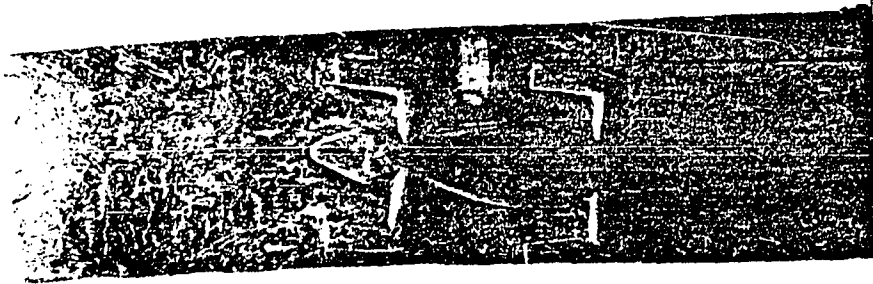


PLATE XLVI

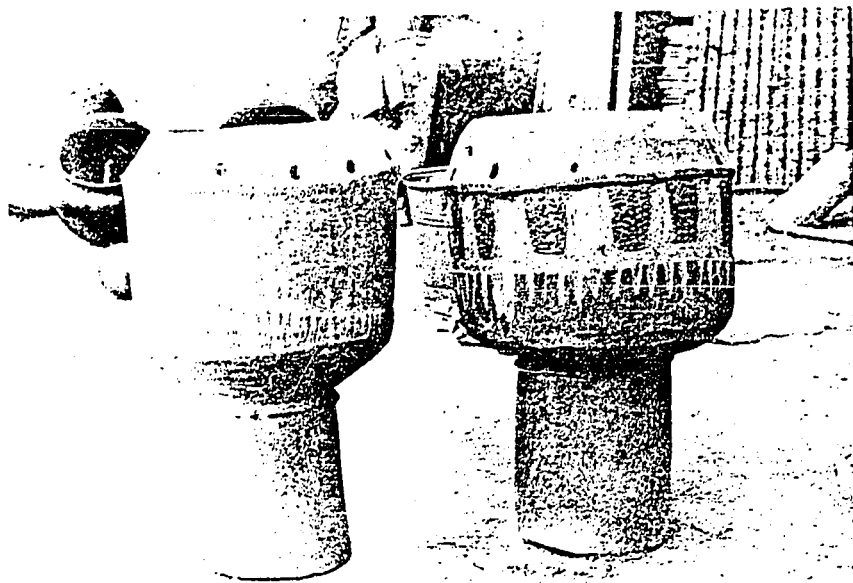


PLATE XLVII



PLATE XLVIII

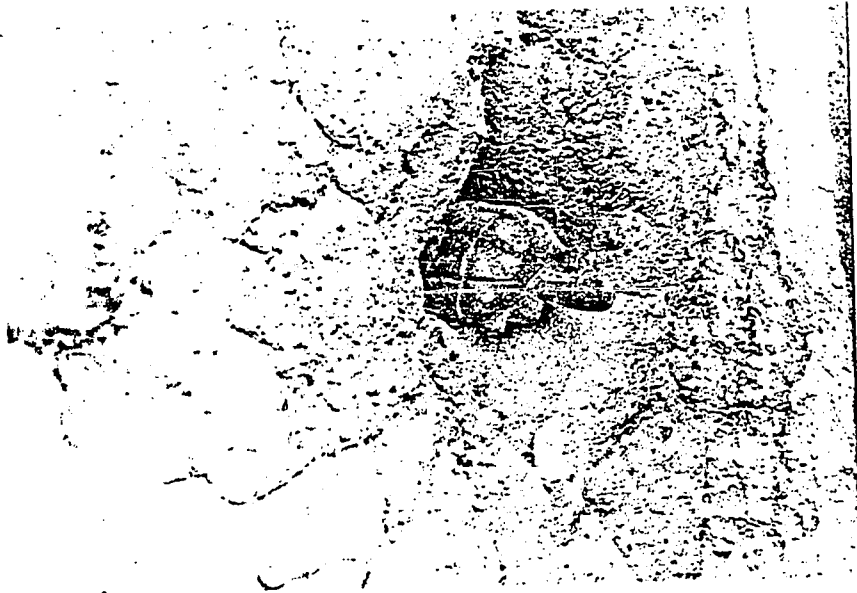


PLATE XLIX

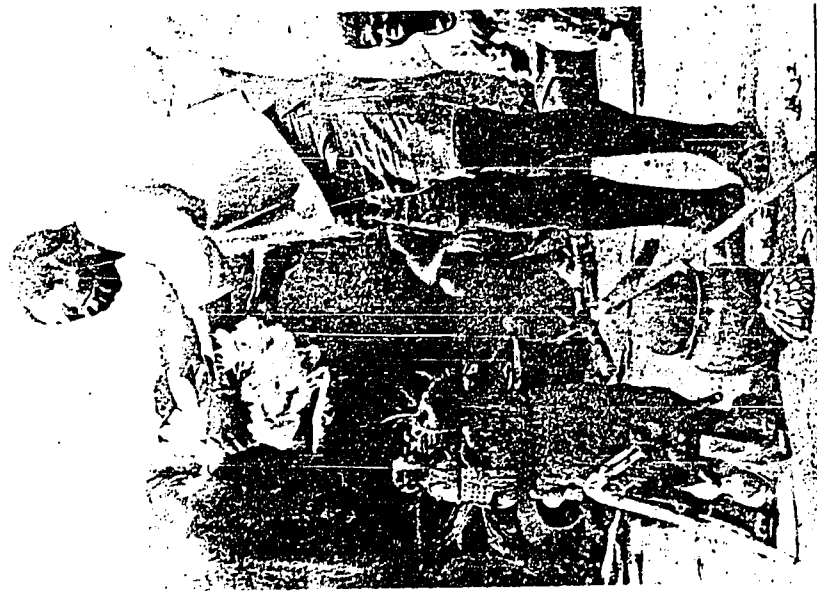


PLATE L

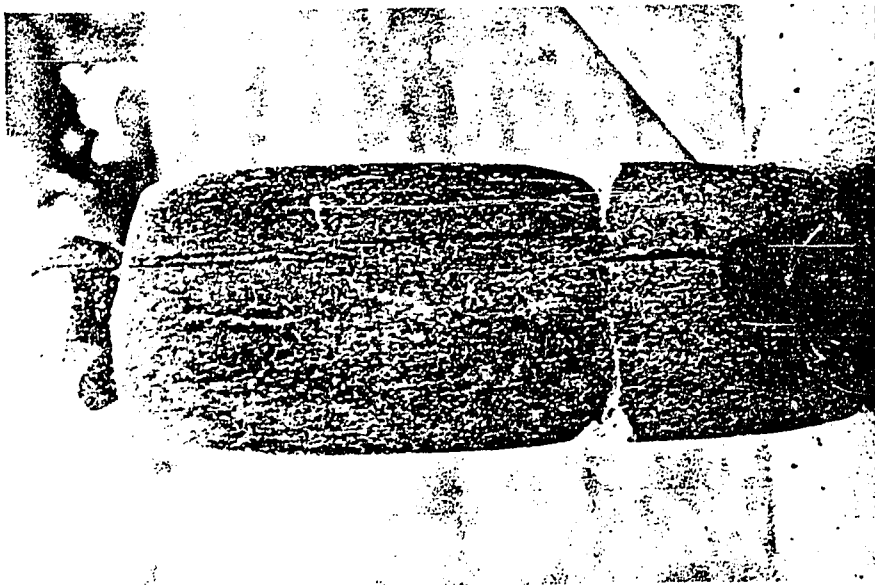


PLATE LI



PLATE LII



PLATE LIII



PLATE LIV

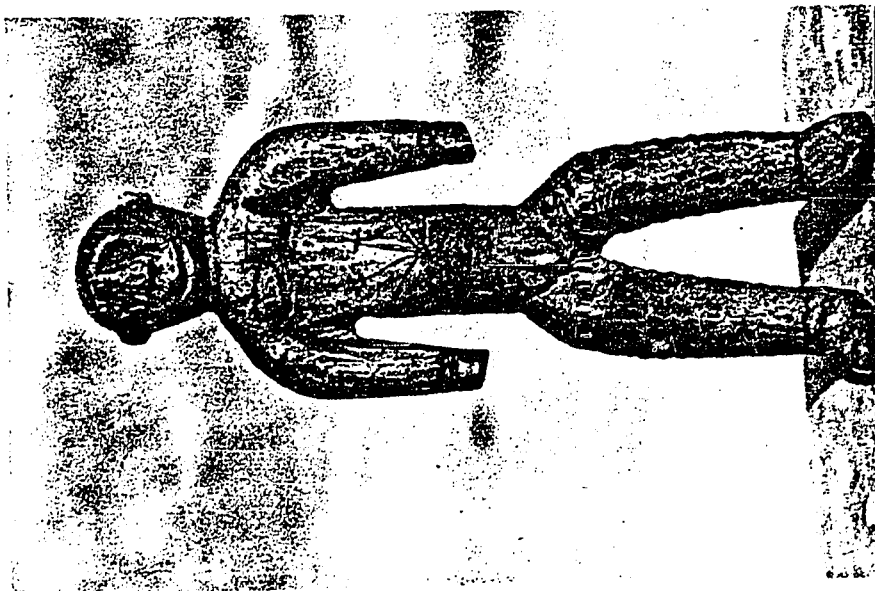


PLATE LV

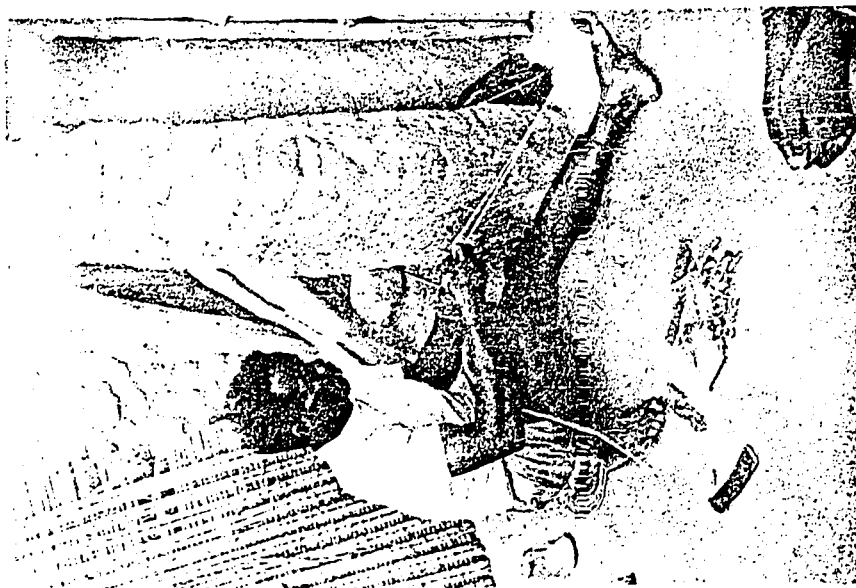


PLATE LVI



PLATE LVII

CURRICULUM VITAE

John W. Nunley
 Assistant Professor
 Art History

Personal

Born: Charleston, South Carolina, June 12, 1945
 Parents: John Lee and Dorothy Jean Nunley

Education

1963-65 Clark College, Vancouver, Washington
 1965-67 University of Washington, B.A. (History)
 1967-68 Portland State University, Art
 1969-72 University of Washington, M.A. (Fine Arts)
 1970,71 Indiana University (Summer Language Programs)
 1972-76 University of Washington, Ph.D. (Art History)

Employment Record

1971 Edmonds Community College, Lynwood, Washington
 1972-72 University of Washington, Teaching Assistant
 1974- University of Illinois, Chicago, Assistant
 Professor, History of Architecture and Art
 Department

Awards

1969 Research Assistantship, University of Washington
 Under the direction of Professor Rene A.
 Bravmann
 1970 (Summer) NDFL Language Grant in Mande, Indiana
 University
 1971 (Summer) Kress Foundation Language Grant
 1970-71 Kress Foundation Fellowship, University of
 Washington
 1971-72 Teaching Assistantship, University of Washington