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# **LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL**



**Edited by:**

**Svend E. Holsoe,  
University of Delaware**

**David M. Foley,  
University of Georgia**

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Cover photograph: Clay bowl. Collected in 1961 from the potter, a Mandingo female, at Vamata, Deigbo chiefdom. 4 1/2" high, 6" wide. Svend E. Holsoe Collection.

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## LIBERIAN PREHISTORY

John H. Atherton

In his address to the sixth Pan-African Congress on Prehistory in Dakar, Senegal in 1967, Leopold Senghor said "in Africa, prehistory is more important than history." Nowhere on the African continent is this more true than in Liberia, since written records for most of the country appear only in this century. Because of this, it is unfortunate that Liberia is the only country in the world for which there is so little information about its prehistoric past. Only a few systematic archeological excavations have been undertaken in the country. In general though, what is known is the result of a few pieces found or dug up by artifact collectors in various parts of the country. In addition, a short survey of Liberia was undertaken by the author in May, 1968.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this article is to present some information which is available and to describe the types of sites which would probably yield the most information about Liberia's historic past. It is hoped that this will be of some help as a guide for further research.

The article is divided into three sections, "Stone Age," "Iron Age" and "Proto-historic." The divisions are based on the following criteria: "Stone Age" refers to artifacts manufactured from stone for which there is no definite information that would allow them to be dated. "Iron Age" designates artifacts made from iron or other metals or associated finds, none of which can be dated. "Protohistoric" refers to finds for which there is some information concerning date of use and/or function. There is no chronological or developmental order necessarily implied by this division.

### STONE AGE

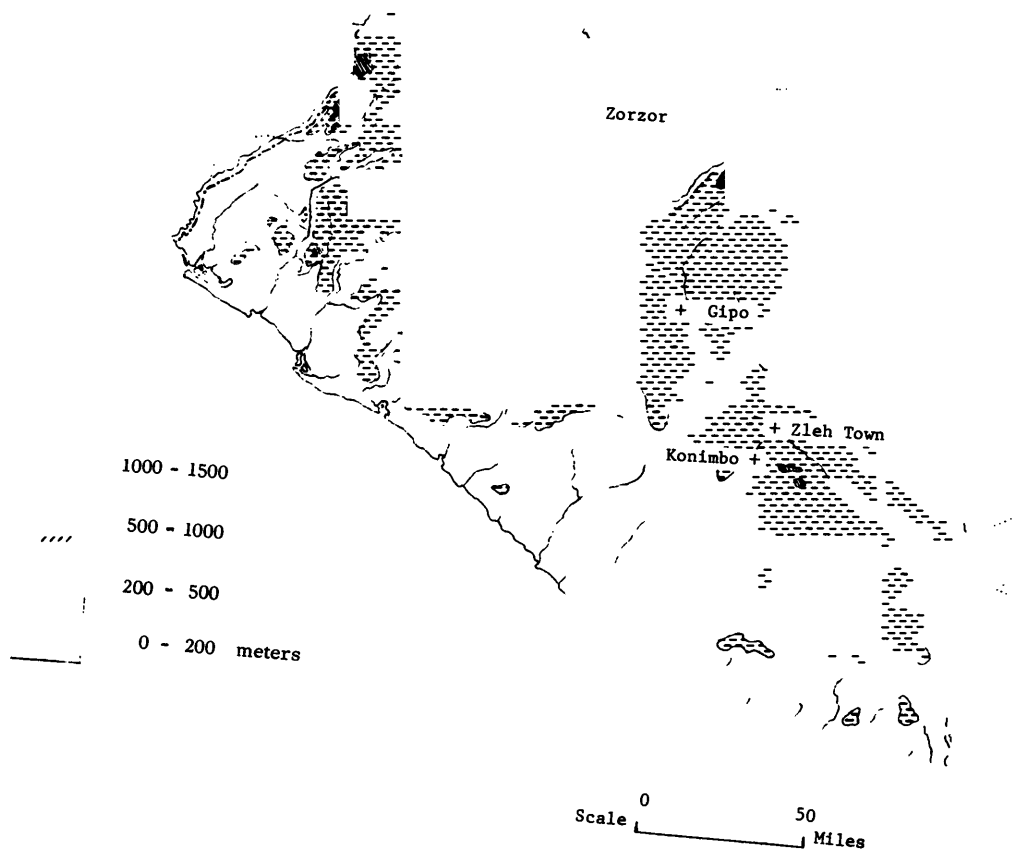
While changing a flat tire on a logging road about eleven miles west of Zleh Town,<sup>2</sup> Harry Gillmore, director of President Tubman's Zoo at Totota, found a piece of metamorphic quartzite<sup>3</sup> which he recognized as having been shaped by human action.<sup>4</sup> He

1. John H. Atherton, "Archaeology in Liberia: Problems and Possibilities," The West African Archaeological Newsletter, No. 11 (March, 1969), 19-21.

2. The site is three miles west of the village of Konimbo, which is approximately eight miles from Zleh Town.

3. All mineral identifications in this paper were made by Dr. Hawkes of the geology department at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

4. He has more recently found another similar piece (Gillmore to Atherton, August 23, 1968).



## LIBERIAN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES



sent this to the author, who was at the time engaged in archeological work in Sierra Leone. The site was visited in the company of James Riddell and some residents of Zleh Town and a surface collection was made over about two miles of the roadcut. The tools found are crudely worked and though heavily patinated do not seem to have been subjected to any extreme wear as is often the case with similar tools in West Africa. Thus the flake-scars are reasonably clear.

Some of the pieces found are illustrated here. Figure 1 is a bifacial tool apparently intended for chopping. Although the material is not homogeneous and, therefore, very difficult to shape since many of the flakes break off along the planes of the rock, the tool is very symmetrically shaped.

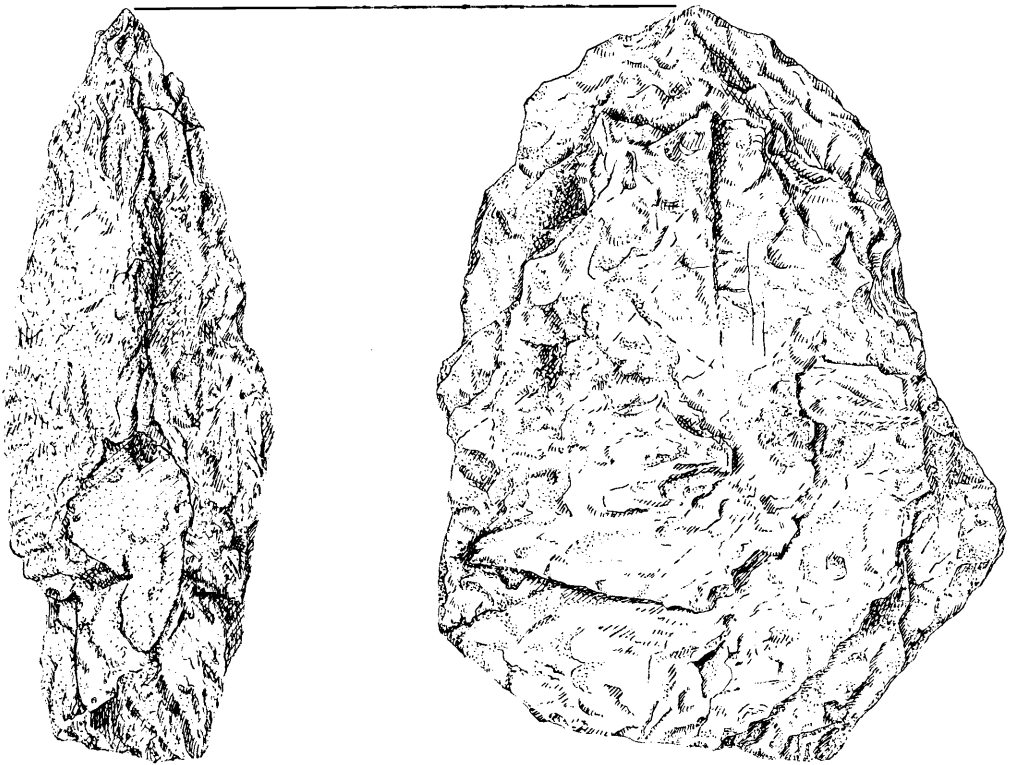


Figure 1

Scale : 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 inches

Figures 2 and 3 are "picks"; Figure 2 is of the same material as Figure 1, and Figure 3 is of vein quartz. The tool illustrated in Figure 2 appears to have been manufactured from a relatively flat piece of rock and formed by the striking of a few flakes from one face. Figure 3 has also been shaped by the removal of a few flakes; the end possibly was broken off some time after the tool was made.

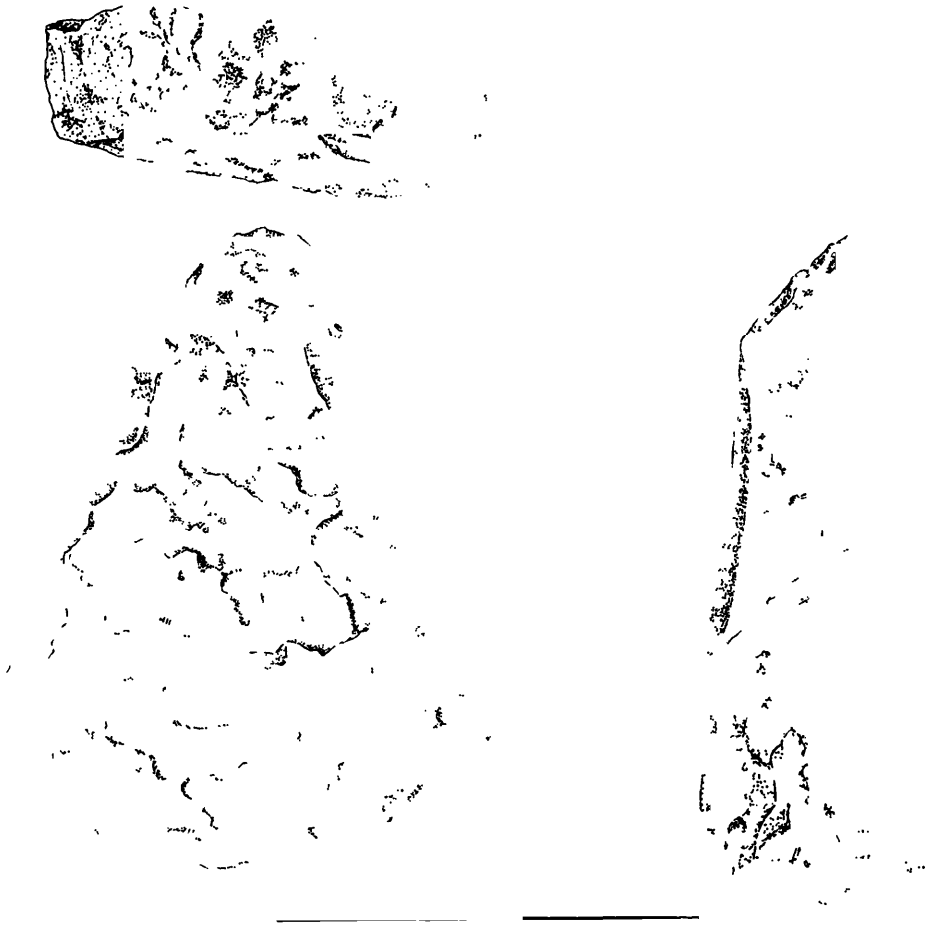


Figure 2\*

Scale: 0 1 inches

\* The shaded area represents recent breaks in the material.

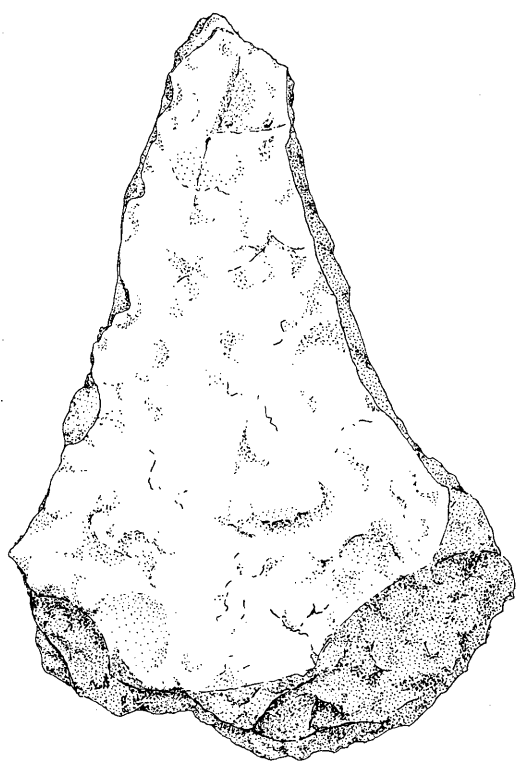


Figure 3

Scale : 0 1 inches

The bifacially worked core/chopper illustrated in Figure 4 is of quartzite. Although use-wear is difficult to discern on these pieces, at least one of the edges appears to have been damaged by heavy-duty utilization (such as chopping) shortly after manufacture of the tool.

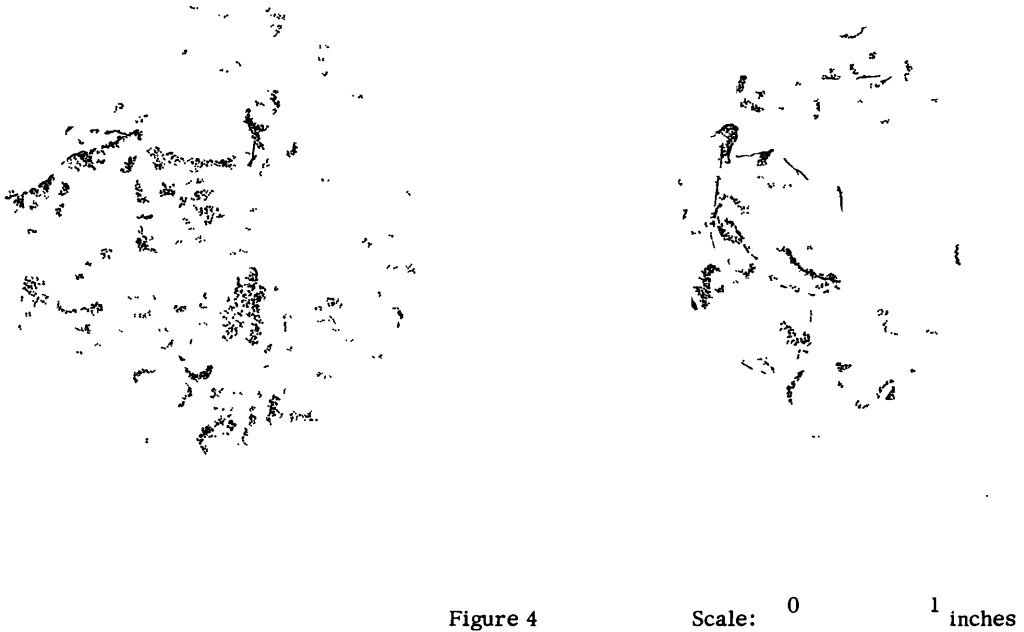


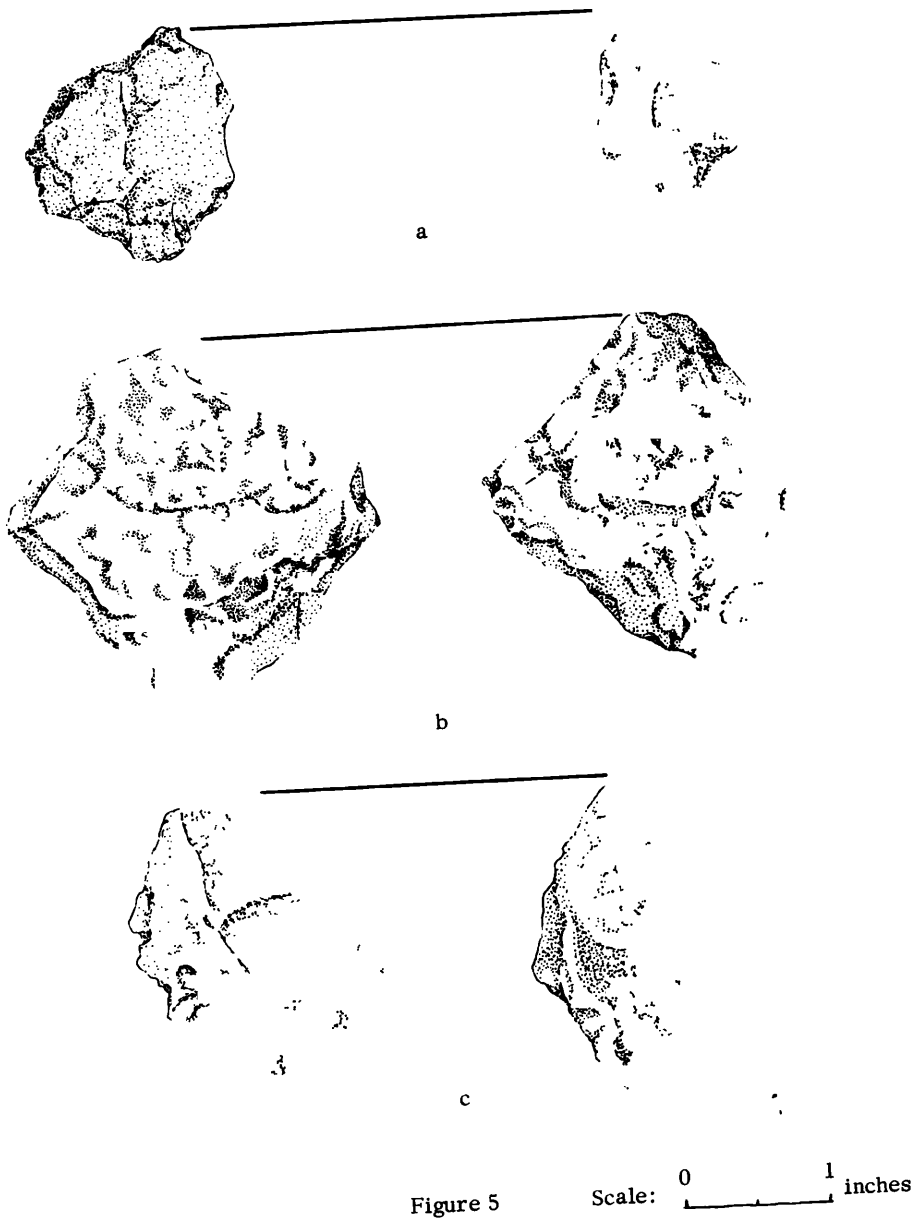
Figure 4

Scale: 0 1 inches

The polyhedral stone of vein quartz illustrated in Figure 5b is a very common element in many prehistoric assemblages in Africa. Many times these pieces are much more sphere-like and in some later assemblages are smoothed off to make stone balls, with no trace of flaking left.

Although nothing certain can be said about the above-mentioned artifacts since they were found in an unsealed, undated surface context, they would not be out of place in a Sangoan context or in one of the industries derived from it.

Also found at the Konimbo Road cut site were pieces of white vein quartz (Figure 5a, c; Figure 6) which resemble those found in Middle and Later Stone Age contexts



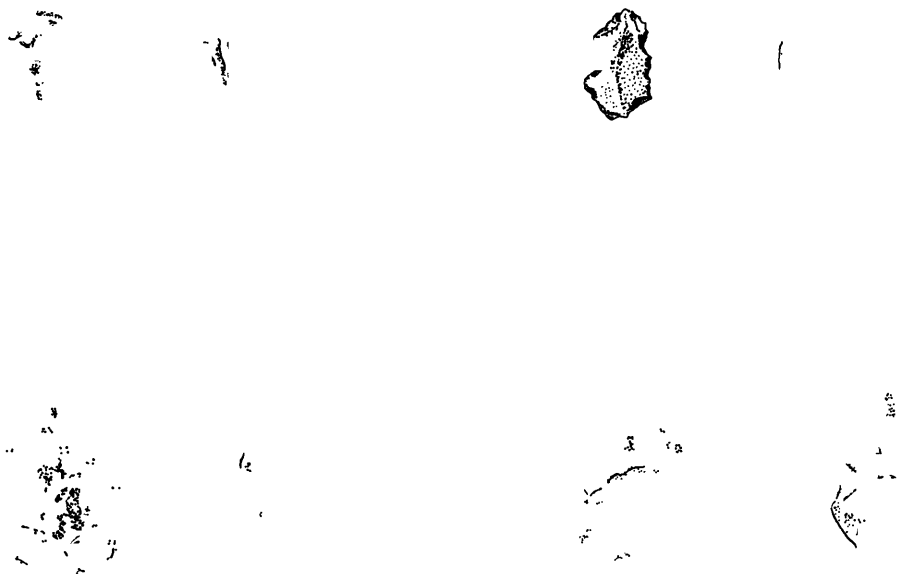


Figure 6

Scale : 0 1 inches

Sierra Leone<sup>5</sup> and in Guinea.<sup>6</sup> Because of the very general nature of these pieces and the great conservatism of the quartz industries in Africa, not much can be said of cultural affiliations or dating.<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to note that quartz crystals, which have been found in Later Stone Age contexts in Sierra Leone, are in Liberia "the white heart of all medicine, taken from running water symbol of fertility,"<sup>8</sup> and are

5. Carleton S. Coon, "Yengema Cave," *ibid.*, IX, No. 3 (1967), 15; Carleton S. Coon, Yengema Cave Report (Philadelphia, 1968), plates 3-9; John H. Atherton, "The Later Stone Age of Sierra Leone," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1969, 41-75; John H. Atherton, "Excavations at Kamabai and Yagala Rock Shelters, Sierra Leone," Journal of West African Archaeology, II, Figures 1-4 (in press).

6. A fairly complete bibliography of the archeological sites in Guinea can be found in Oliver Davies, West Africa Before the Europeans (London, 1967).

7. Quartz tools similar to those dating as late as A.D. 1360 ± 95 (I-3847) in Sierra Leone (Atherton, "Excavations") have been found in Uganda dating back to 14,925 ± 80 B.P. (GrN-5850) and even earlier in Zambia (F. Van Noten, "Wanner begon de Afrikaans Late Steentijd?: Nieuwe data uit Uganda," Africa-Tervuren, XVI (1970), 61-62).

8. George Schwab, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (Cambridge, 1947), 345.

sacred objects of the snake society.<sup>9</sup> Polished stone celts (probably adzes) have been used by peoples in Liberia and surrounding areas in recent times for ceremonial purposes.<sup>10</sup>

Also found in Liberia, primarily in the north, are stone figures (usually of steatite) which are called nomoli or pomdo. Although some guesses have been made about their dating,<sup>11</sup> none have been found in sealed archeological contexts and, therefore, their date remains unknown.<sup>12</sup> There seems to be definite relationships between these stone figures and the clay figures that are still being made in Northern Liberia and surrounding areas.<sup>13</sup> Many references have been made of stone figures<sup>14</sup> and "stone people"<sup>15</sup> in Liberia. A stone figure in the collections of the Cuttington College Museum is illustrated in plates 1 and 2. According to William Siegmann, former curator of the museum, the figure was originally covered with clay. Its provenience is not definitely known, but according to the trader from whom it was purchased, it came from the Freetown area.

The nomoli and pomdo figures are often found buried in the ground, where they are placed by the artist:

The small figurines are prepared as portraits of the dead, who have died sometime ago, and they are buried in the ground by the artist. Several days later the artist approaches the survivors and reports to them that the deceased has appeared to him in a dream and wants to come back to earth as a statue. If one weren't to do his bidding, he should become quite angry. The family now pummels the craftsman with questions as to the location where the figure can be found. The artist, after he has brought the figure to light by means

9. George Way Harley, Native African Medicine (London, 1970), 115.

10. Paul Germann, Die Völkerstämme im Norden von Liberia (Leipzig, 1933), 94; B. Holas, "Note complémentaire sur l'abri sous roche Blandè," Bulletin de l'IFAN, XIV-V (1952), 1344; Schwab, Tribes, Figure 93f.

11. Kunz Dittmer, "Bedeutung, Datierung und Kulturhistorische zusammenhänge der 'prähistorischen' steinfliguren aus Sierra Leone und Guinée," Baessler-Archiv, XV (1967); John H. Atherton and Milan Kalous, "Nomoli," Journal of African History, XI (1970).

12. These figures are being manufactured today for the tourist trade (Dittmer, "Bedeutung," 183), but apparently have been manufactured during this century for their presumed original purpose (Germann, Die Völkerstämme, 94).

13. German, Die Völkerstämme, 94); John Barbot, A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea (1746), 104; Pierre-Dominique Gaisseau, Forêt Sacrée: Magie et rites secrets des Toma (Paris, 1953), 21; Schwab, Tribes, Figure 96a.

14. Schwab, Tribes, 21, footnote 5, 275; Sidney de la Rue, The Land of the Pepper Bird (New York, 1930), 186.

15. Schwab, Tribes, 15; de la Rue, The Land, 116.

of various magical activities, reports the direction in which they should follow their quest and finally leads them to the hiding place where it has been buried, and there they find the ancestral figure. It is easily unearthed, after having been brought an offering, and is then placed in a special hut where it is worshipped.<sup>16</sup>

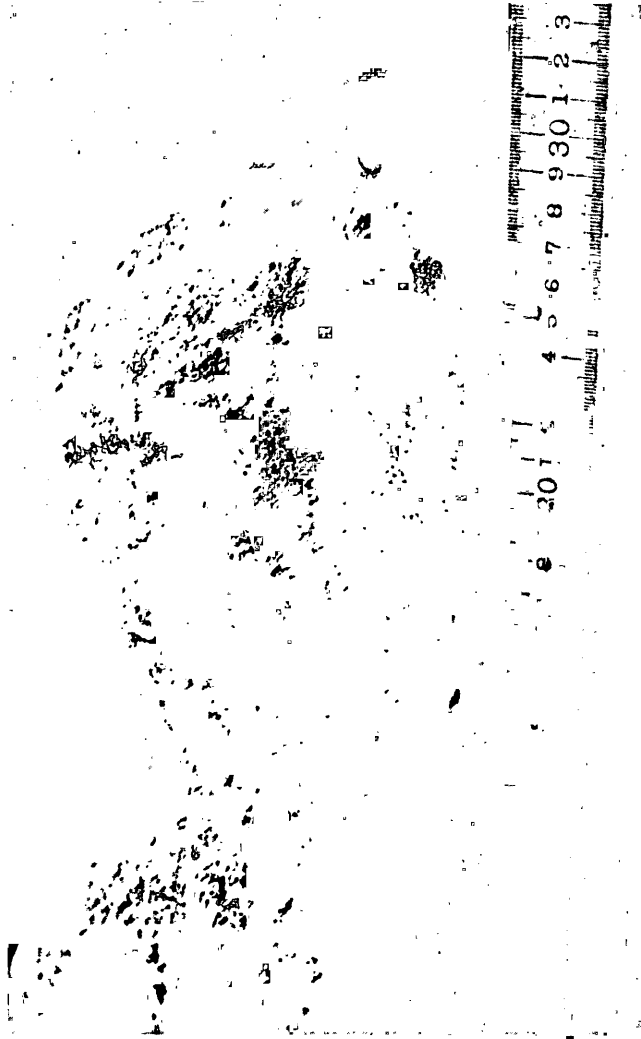


Plate 1

Scale in centimeters

16. Germann, *Die Völkerstämme*, 94. See also Leo Frobenius, "Tagebuch-Ethnographie IV - Zweite Reise," (Ms. from the Leo Frobenius Institute, Frankfurt/M), 66-67; Denise Paulme, *Les Gens du Riz* (Paris, 1954), 144-149.



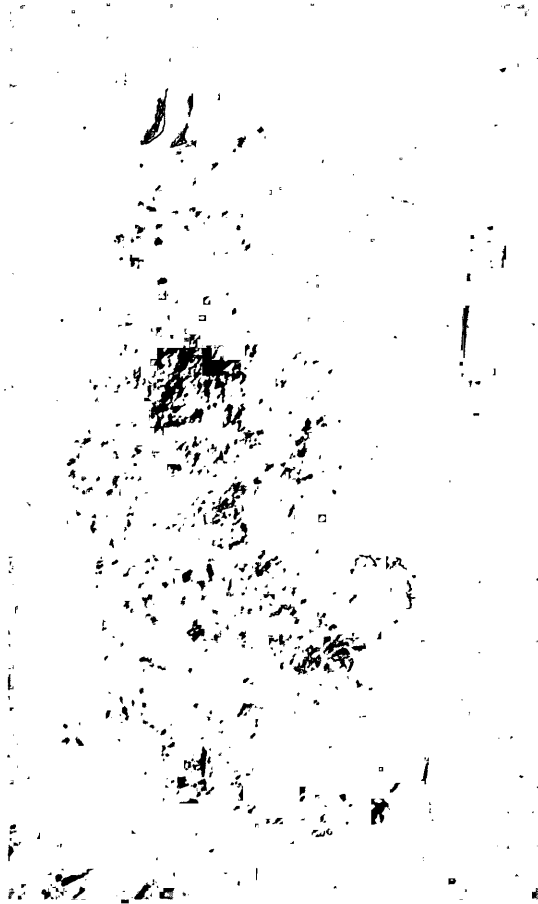


Plate 2

## IRON AGE

Most of the prehistoric sites found in Liberia have been of the "Iron Age" type: the artifacts are of metal or are associated with evidence of the use of metal. Most of these sites are long-deserted villages or burials (many of the latter have been found along the coast).<sup>17</sup> Many are apparently ritual burials made to celebrate the

17. Atherton, "Archaeology in Liberia," 21.

founding of a village. Such a site is located on a road cut thirteen miles north of Zorzor on the Zorzor-Voinjama road. The site had been dug by local residents, but a few sherds of pottery were found in the site by the author (figures 7-10).

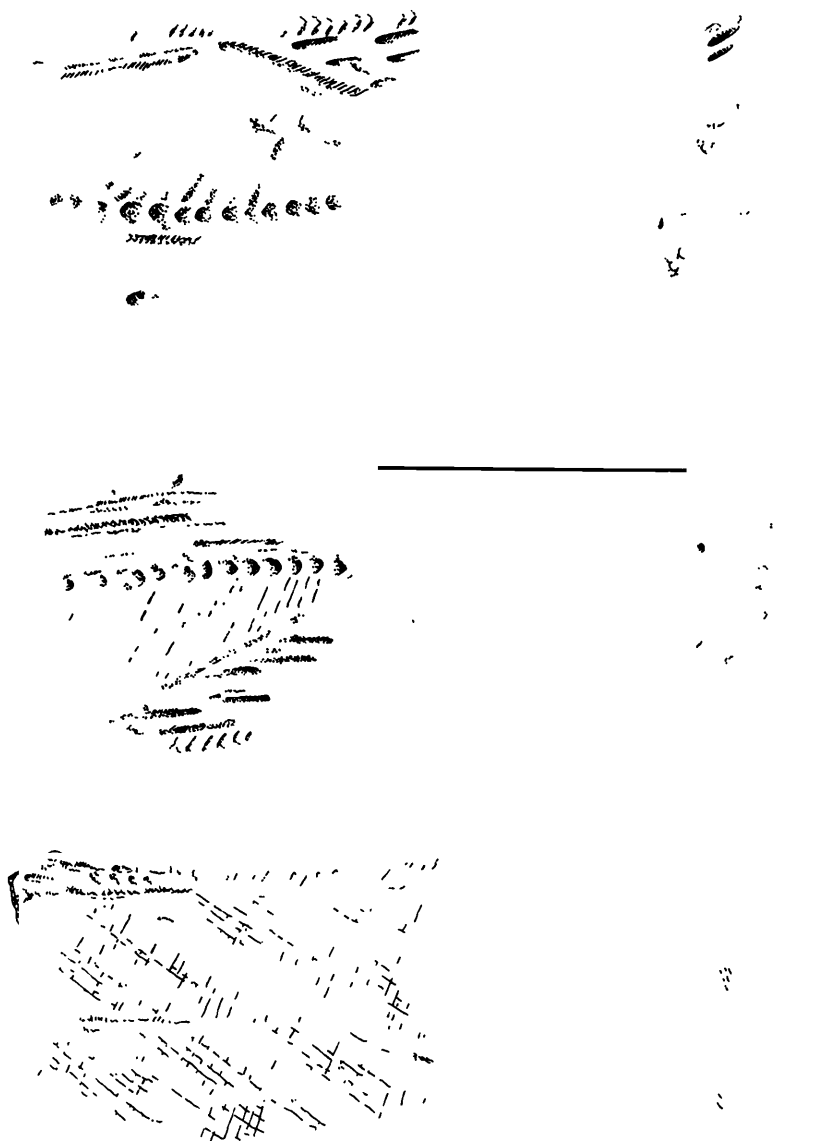


Figure 7      Scale : 0      1 inches

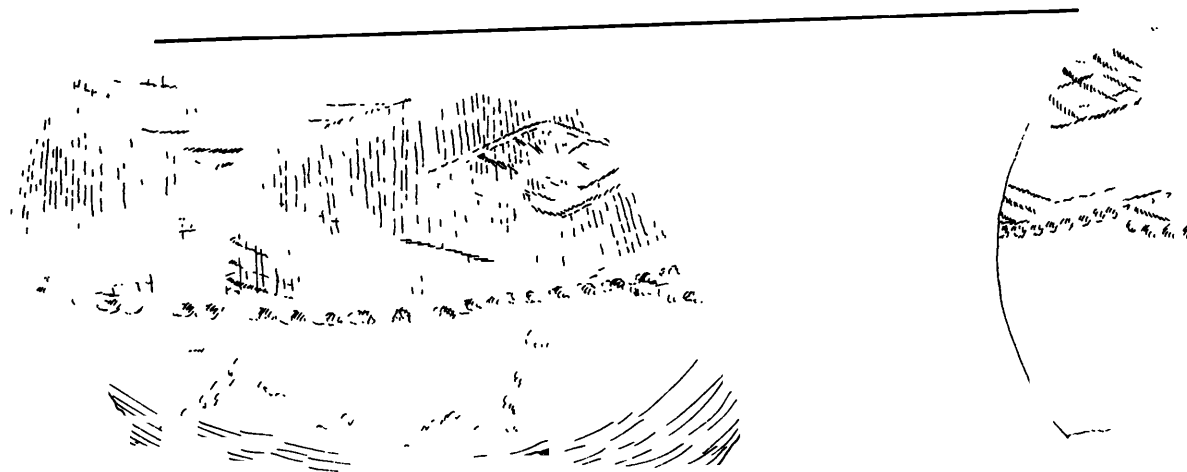


Figure 8

Scale : 0 1 inches

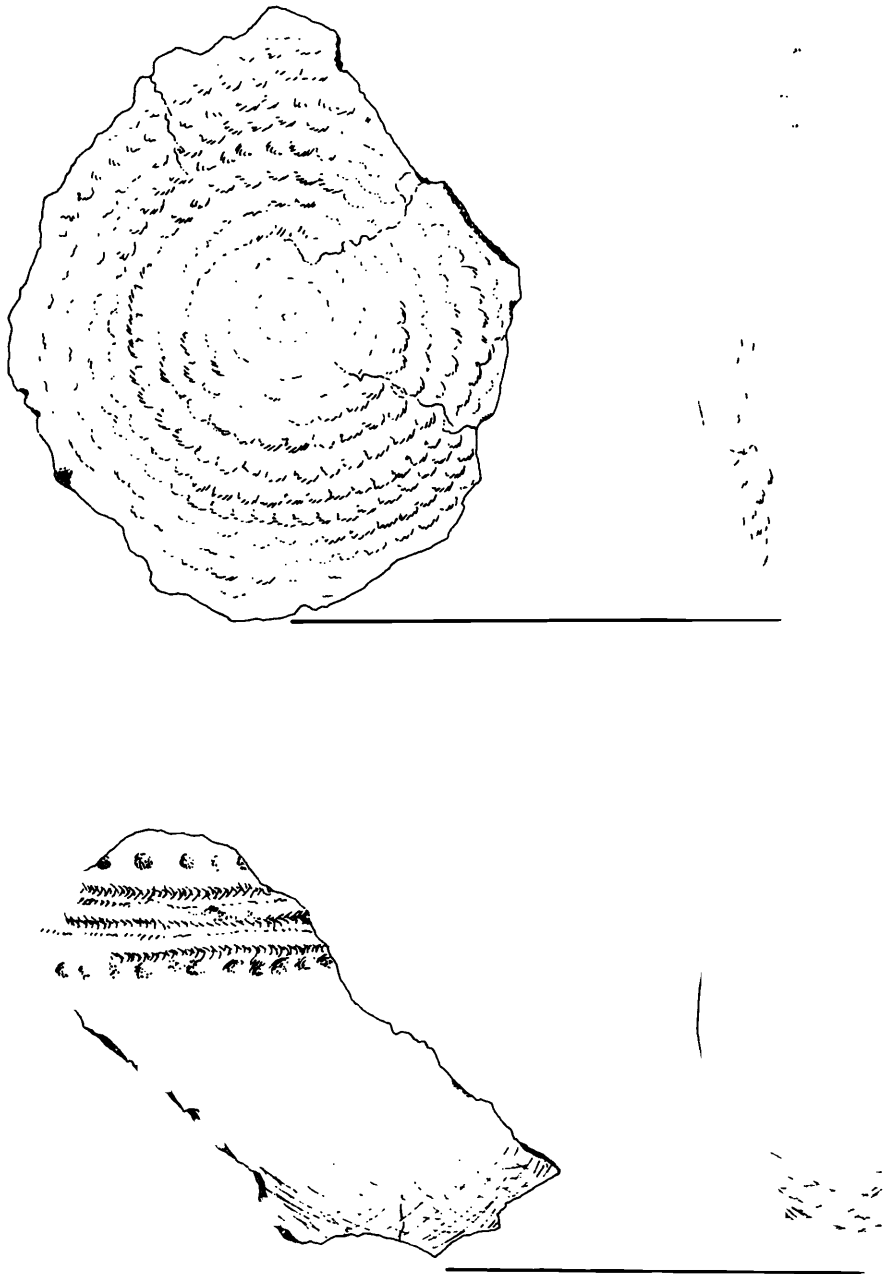


Figure 9      Scale: 0                      1 inches

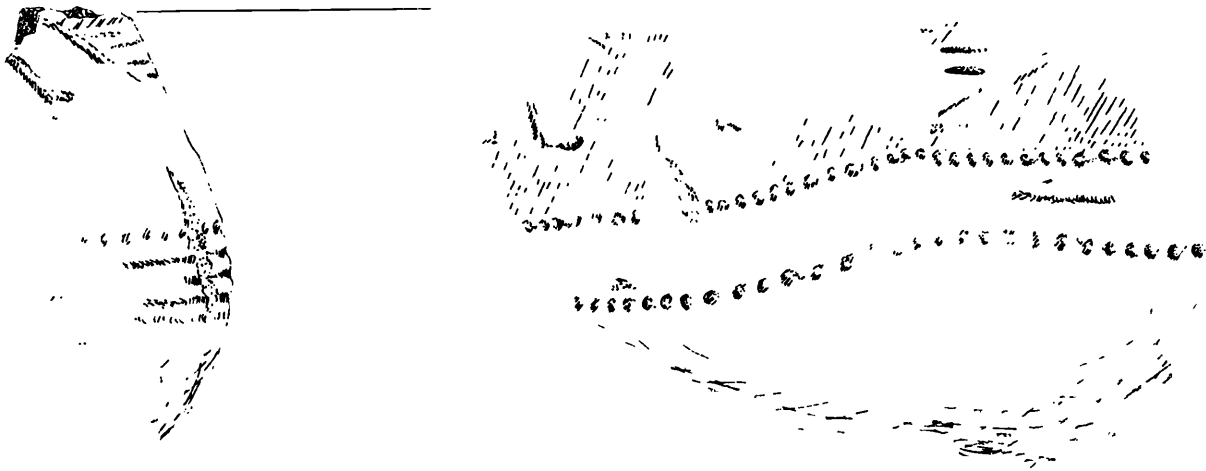


Figure 10

Scale : 0 1 inches

An earlier excavation by Charles and Chris Calley yielded a complete pot (figure 11). The pottery is very thin-walled and quite unlike the pottery made in Liberia today for domestic use (figures 12 and 13, plates 3 and 4).<sup>18</sup> The pottery was found associated with metal bracelets, according to the original excavators. A similar find was made in southern Sierra Leone at Bunumbu (figures 14 and 15). Because the walls are so thin this pottery was probably strictly for ritual use since it would not hold up in day-to-day use.

Pottery has also been reported on the surface in many isolated sites, deserted

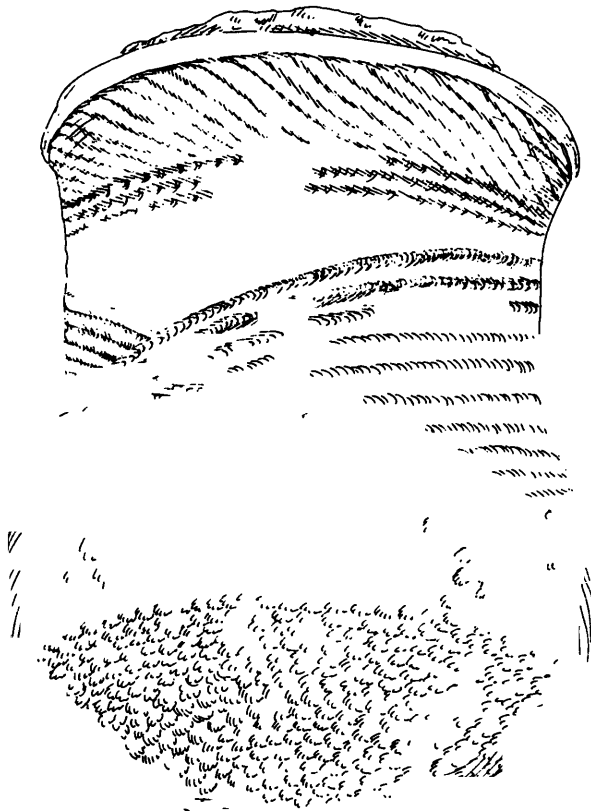


Figure 11

Scale : 0 1 2 inches

18. For descriptions of modern pottery making in Liberia, see Dietrich Drost, Töpferie in Afrika (Berlin, 1967), 111; Eberhard Fischer, "Die Töpferie bei den westlichen Dan," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, LXXXVIII (1963), 100-115; Atherton, "The Later Stone Age," 110-116; Schwab, Tribes, 131-136.

town sites and in caves. According to those who have seen this pottery, it is not the same sort as is being made today.<sup>19</sup>

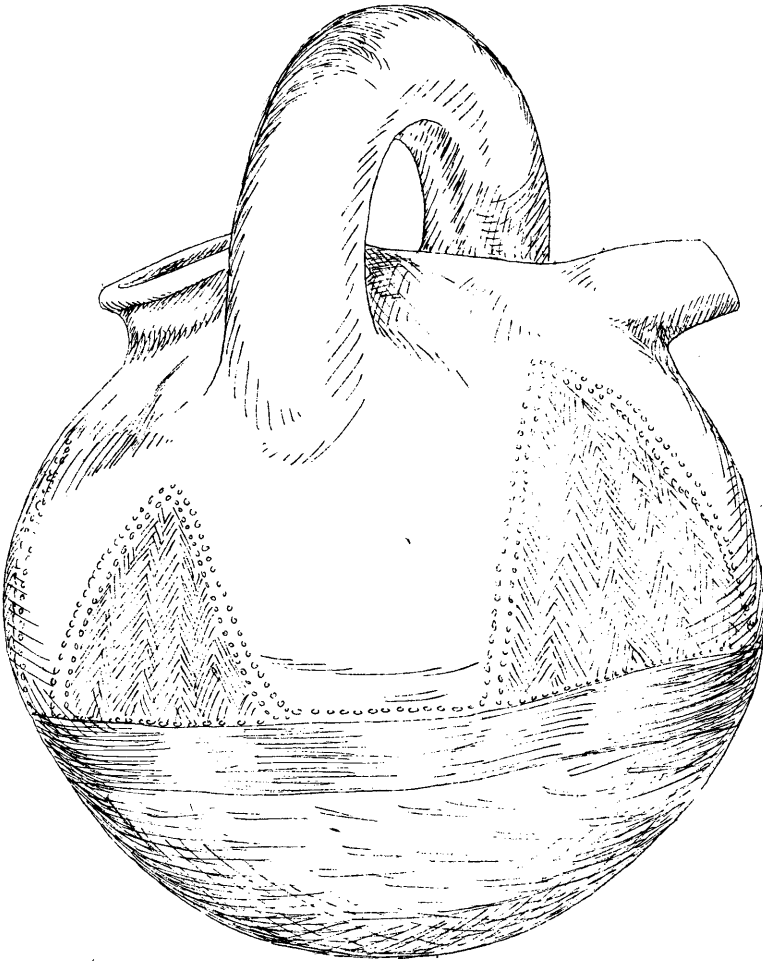


Figure 12      Scale : 0      1      2 inches

Pot from the Kpelle Country  
(Collection of Charles and Chris Calley)

19. Atherton, "Archaeology in Liberia," 20.

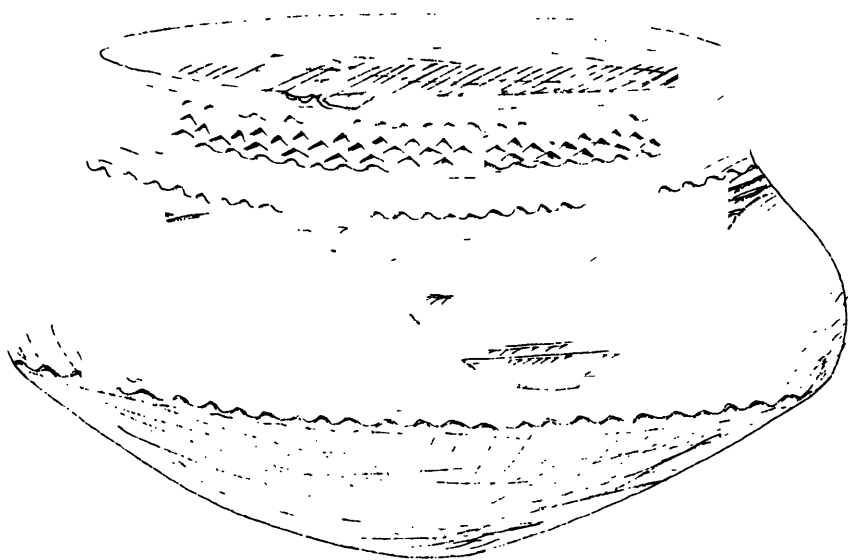


Figure 13      Scale : 0      2      4 inches

Pot from the Mano Country



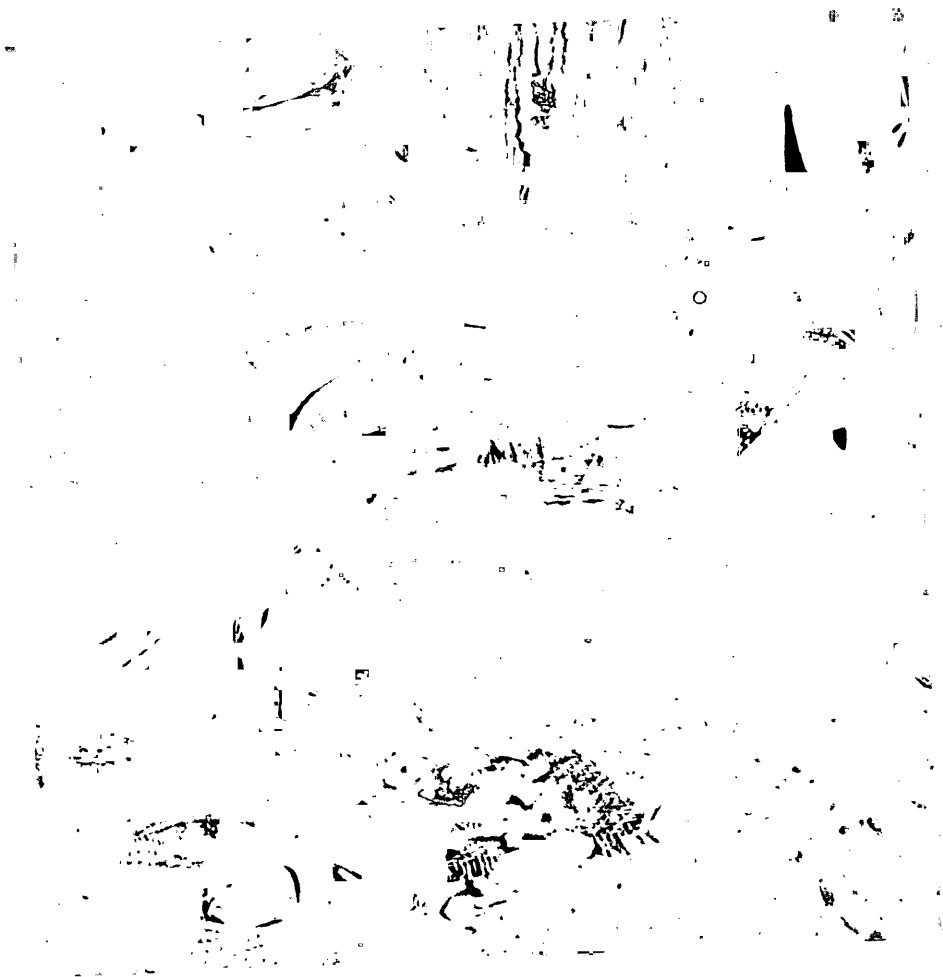


Plate 3

Pottery Making (Mano Country)

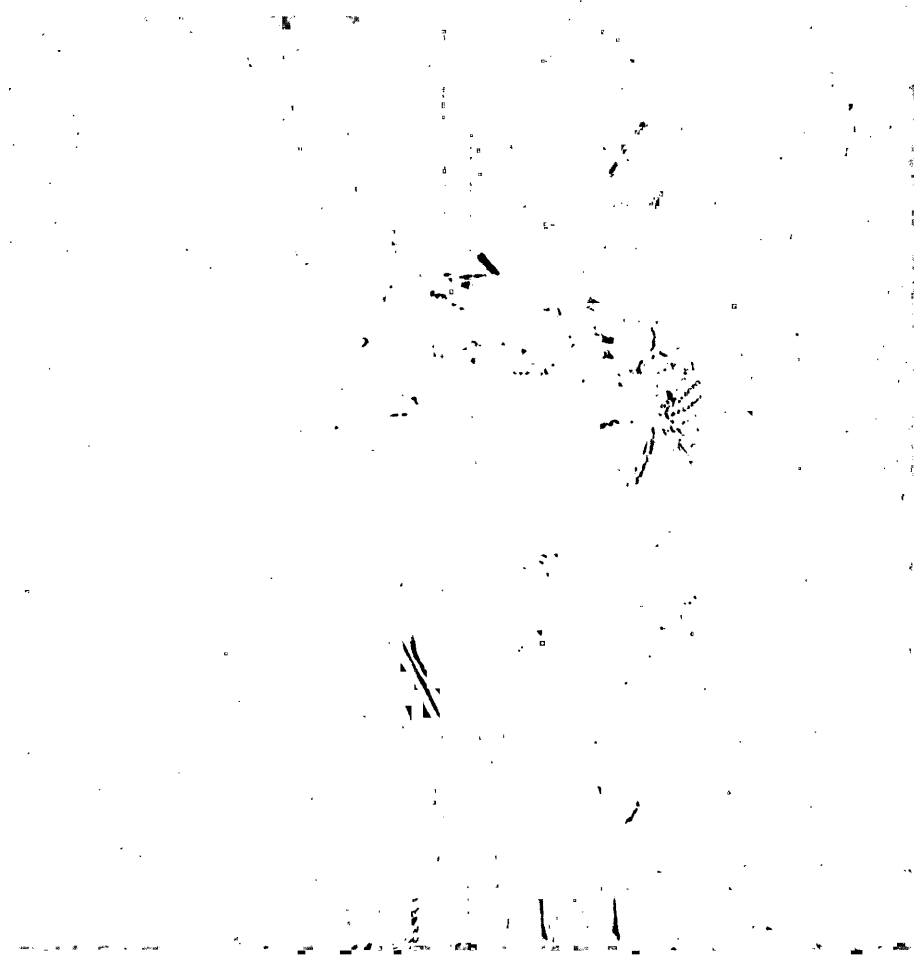


Plate 4

Pottery Making (Mano Country)

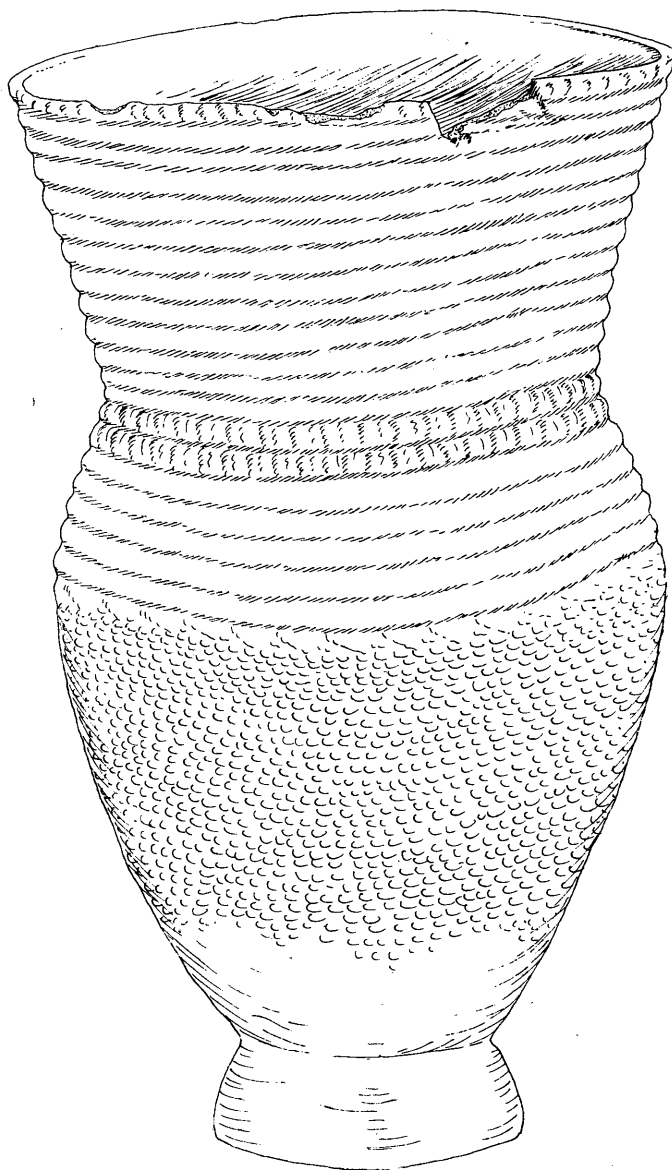


Figure 14

Scale : 0 1 2 inches

Pot from Excavation at Bunumbu, Sierra Leone  
(Collections of Sierra Leone Museum)

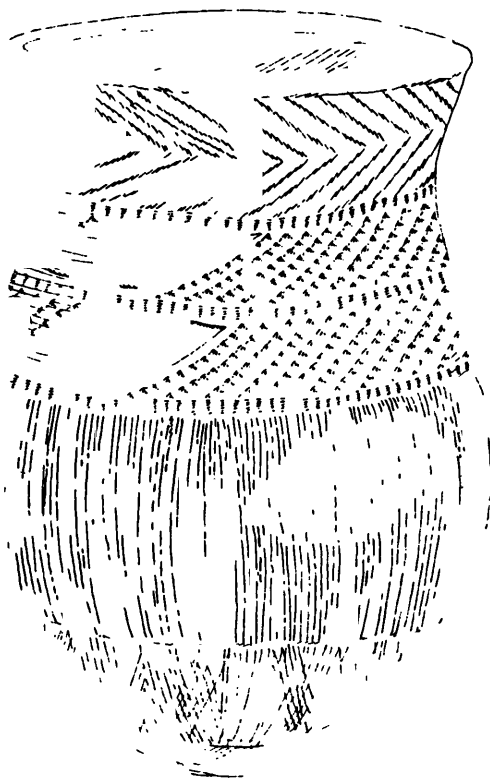


Figure 15      Scale :  $\begin{array}{c} 0 \qquad 1 \qquad 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$  inches

Pot from Excavation at Bunumbu, Sierra Leone  
(Collections of Sierra Leone Museum)

## PROTOHISTORIC

Probably the most noticeable evidence of past human activities in Liberia are the remains of stone or mud structures, some of which can still be seen today. The uses of most of these sites are directly known through oral tradition; the use of others can be accurately guessed by analogy to those whose function is known. There are three



Plate 5

Stone Covered Grave (Kpelle)

main types of structures: 1) "stone circles," 2) stone covered graves and 3) fortifications.

The first two are related in many cases, since the graves of important men (chiefs, etc.) are very often covered with stones (plate 5)<sup>20</sup> and sometimes also encircled by a ring of standing stones (plate 6).<sup>21</sup> Sites such as these have been found in many parts



Plate 6

Stone Covered Grave (Kpelle)

20. Schwab, *Tribes*, 32, 247, 256-257, 260-261, figure 87a, f.

21. Schwab, *Tribes*, 247, figure 37g, h; Walter Volz, *Reise durch das Hinterland von Liberia* (Bern, 1911), 104, 111; Johann Büttikofer, *Reisebilder aus Liberia* (Leiden, 1890), II, 322; Germann, *Die Völkerstämme*, plate 13.

of West Africa and are still found in modern villages in Liberia and neighboring areas.<sup>22</sup> These are usually important meeting places in the village and it is felt that the deceased leader is able to hear the discussions which take place and perhaps influence village affairs.<sup>23</sup>

In Gipo, in the Mano (or Ma) area of Liberia, the stone circle in the center of the village was and still is used for sacrifices (see plates 7 and 8). Many stone circles



Plate 7

Stone Circle in Gipo, Liberia (Mano)

22. Volz, Reise, 53.

23. Paulme, Les Gens, 151.

such as this are not associated with a burial<sup>24</sup> as were the ones discussed above.

Many other accumulations of stone can be accounted for by the use of stones for "medicine trees,"<sup>25</sup> "medicine places,"<sup>26</sup> hunters' graves,<sup>27</sup> blacksmith's

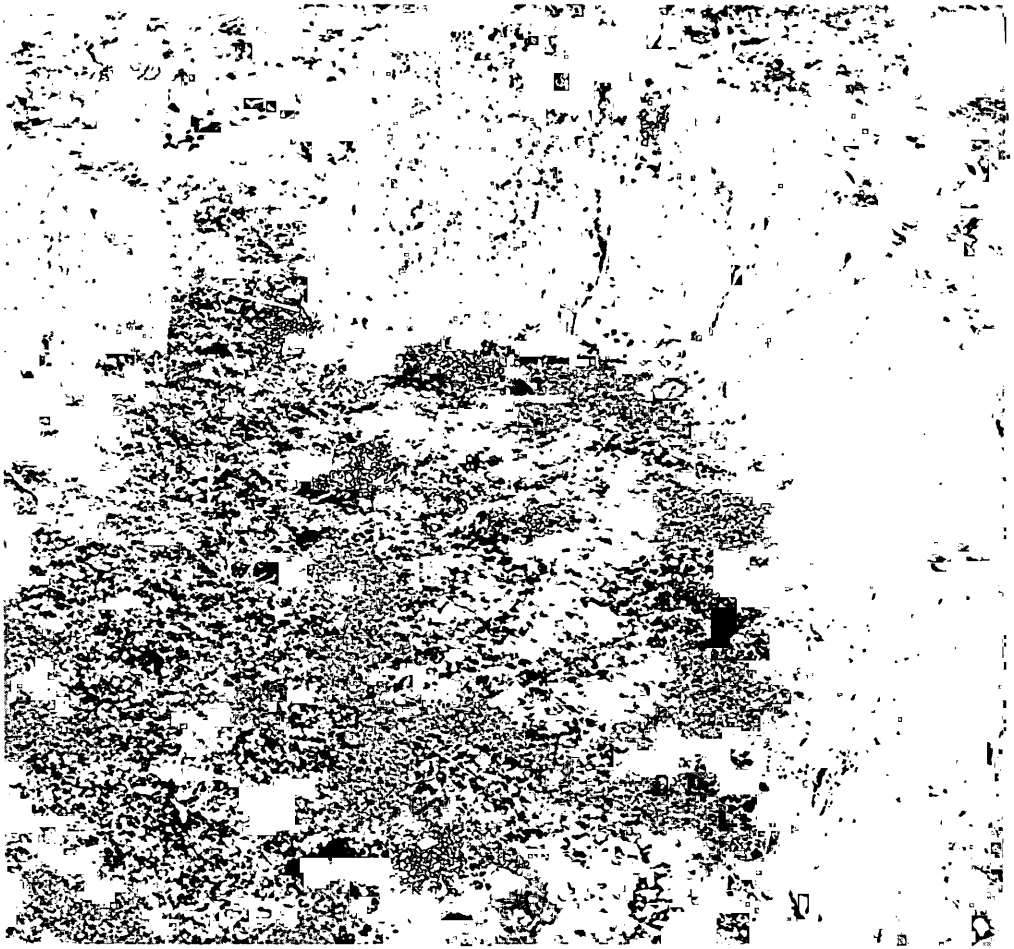


Plate 8

Stone Circle in Gipo, Liberia (Mano)

24. Schwab, Tribes, 264.

25. Ibid., 32, figure 35h.

26. Ibid., figure 36f, j, k, 37d, e.

27. Ibid., figure 36g.



anvils,<sup>28</sup> house foundations,<sup>29</sup> or animal traps.<sup>30</sup>

Remains of fortifications which used to surround many Liberian towns are also

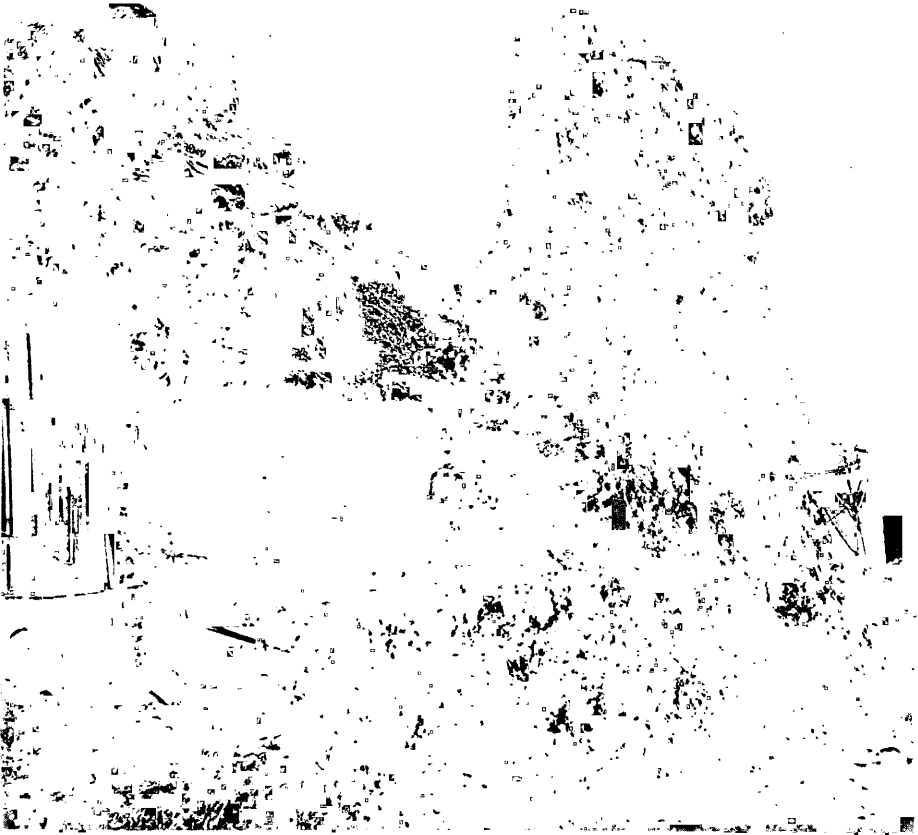


Plate 9

Remains of mud fortifications, Kpaiye, Liberia (Kpelle)

28. Harley, Native African Medicine, 173; Schwab, Tribes, figure 64h.

29. Auguste Chevalier, "Les Massifs Montagneux du Nord-ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire," La Géographie, XX (1909), 221.

30. Germann, Die Völkerstämme, 36-37.

still found occasionally, especially when these were made of mud.<sup>31</sup> Remains of a mud wall around the Kpelle town of Kpaiye are illustrated in plates 9-11. Also of interest in this context is de la Rue's mention of a "great stone wall" which might have been a tribal boundary mark.<sup>32</sup>



Plate 10

Remains of mud fortifications, Kpaiye, Liberia (Kpelle)

31. Büttikofer, Reisebilder, II, 196-199; Volz, Reise, 129.

32. de la Rue, The Land, 117-118.

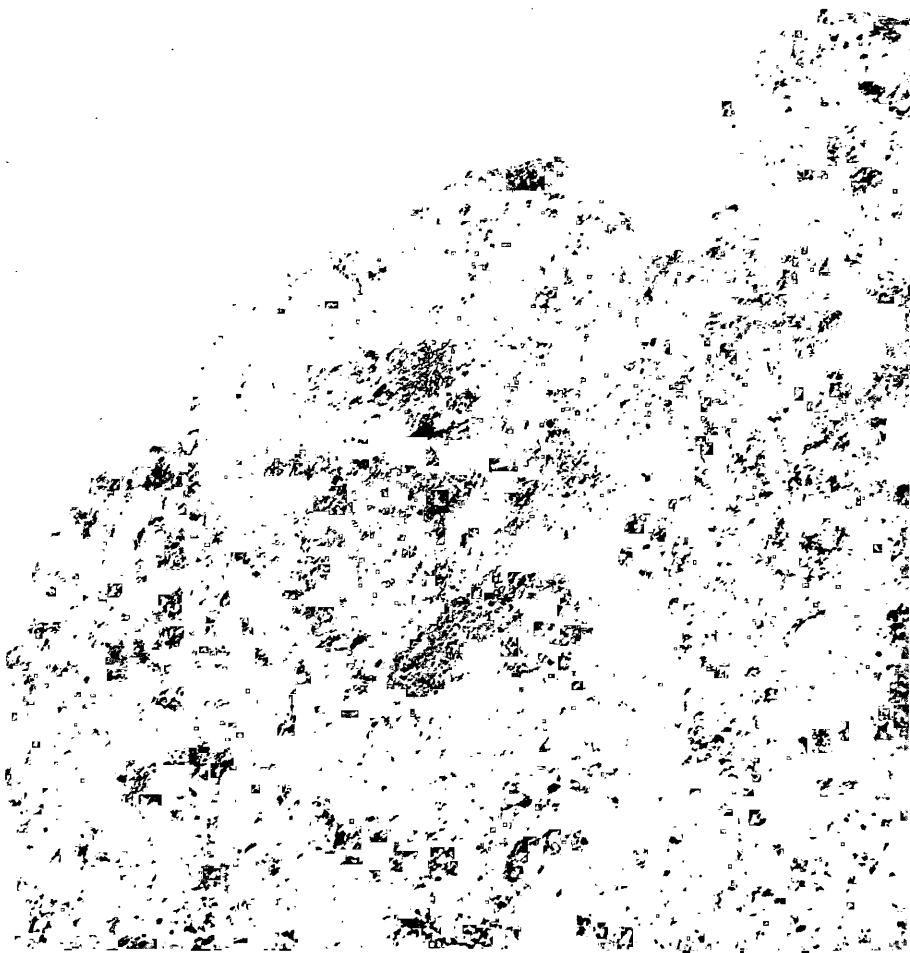


Plate 11

Remains of mud fortifications, Kpaiye, Liberia (Kpelle)



## EARLY IRON SMELTING AMONG THE NORTHERN KPELLE

Willi Schulze

"The metallurgy of iron smelting was an outstanding technical achievement of pre-colonial Africa." This statement of Werner Rutz<sup>1</sup> is confirmed by a great number of both older and more recent publications on the subject, dealing with the whole continent or with specific regions including West Africa.<sup>2</sup> Most instructive are the films which show the smelting process as well as the traditional rites and the social significance of this early technology.<sup>3</sup>

Liberia is rarely mentioned in hitherto published accounts, but the author's observations in the southeastern section of the republic clearly indicate that its inhabitants were deeply involved in metallurgy.<sup>4</sup> The paucity of information is primarily due to the inaccessibility of large areas until recently, the limited number of scholars working in the country, and the secrecy of a technique carried out by special guilds in the past.<sup>5</sup>

1. Werner Rutz, "Völkerkundliche Filmarbeit deutscher Ethnologen in Westafrika," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, LXXXVIII (1963), 338.

2. F. von Luschan, "Eisentechnik in Afrika," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, XLI (1909), 22-59; W. Cline, "Mining and Metallurgy in Negro Africa," General Series in Anthropology (Menasha, Wisc.), No. 5 (1937); R. Mauny, "Essai sur l'histoire des métaux en Afrique occidentale," Bulletin de l'IFAN, XIV (1952), 545-595; P. L. Shinnie, The African Iron Age (London, 1970).

3. "Verhüttung von Raseneisenstein," of the Senufo in Upper Volta, Encyclopaedia Cinematographica (Göttingen), Film No. E 197 (1955), and "Eisengewinnung und Opferkult bei den Kirdi" (Northern Cameroons), Institut für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht (Munich), Film No. FT 776 (1965). Both films show that the statement of William Bascom, "The smelting of iron has disappeared everywhere, I assume", is incorrect. "African Material Culture, Technology and Ecological Adaptation," Annals of the New York Academy of Science, XCVI (1962), 582.

4. Willi Schulze, "Early Iron Industry in the Putu Range in Liberia," University of Liberia Journal, IV, No. 2 (July, 1964), 29-35.

5. The secrecy embracing the craft was so strict that even the well-known ethnologist Etta Becker-Donner had no knowledge of it, although she knew southeast Liberia very well. In her paper, "Über zwei Kruvölkerstämme, Kran und Grebo," Koloniale Völkerkunde (Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik, VI), I (1944), 15, she writes that "metal production ("Erzgewinnung") is unknown to the Kran."

Research in Grand Gedeh County has raised a number of questions: What other centers of early iron smelting besides the Putu Range area existed in Liberia? How were the smelting furnaces constructed and shaped? In which way was iron ore smelting carried out in those furnaces. What was the layout of the site? Which traditional rites, taboos and social aspects were connected with iron ore smelting? When did iron smelting begin and when did it terminate in the country historically? What other individual smelting sites are known in Liberia? Which ethnic groups were specialized in iron metallurgy which groups ignored it? What similarities or differences in construction, smelting process and other aspects existed in different parts of the country and in comparison with the neighboring countries and/or other regions in West Africa? Where was the origin of Liberia's early iron metallurgy?

Of the many questions raised, only the first four can be discussed in this short study; discussion of the others is planned for another issue of the journal.

### THE KPELLE CENTER OF EARLY IRON SMELTING

Iron smelting furnaces are known to have existed in several sections of the country. Mounds of slag and other articles connected with the technique of iron production can still be found in many areas. Furnaces and slag are particularly frequent in northern Kpelle land where they can be seen at Fitua, Salayea, Palala<sup>6</sup> and other places. The whole centre extended from the Ya Creek in Mano country in the east to the Via River in the west over a distance of about fifty miles while the extension from south to north covered over thirty miles (figure 1).

Within this area of roughly one thousand square miles the greater part of ironworkings is located between the St. John and the St. Paul Rivers where they spread over twenty-seven miles, forming sub-centers at Palala and at Fitua. The interconnection of these sub-centers is indicated by slag found near Suakoko and by similarities in the construction and the operation of the furnaces. Towards the south, the relics of iron workings are reported from Duta near Palala, from Gunema and from Qualala near Zienzu. The place name Qualala (also Quelala) is said to be derived from Kolila. As *koli* means iron in Kpelle, there is some probability about the correctness of the information. Towards the north, the Fitua sub-center has an extension to Kolipalai.<sup>7</sup> This word means "iron dry" in Kpelle and is an indication of an early iron industry. This suggestion was confirmed by the fact that the author found the relics of two smelting furnaces there together with slag and other typical indications of this craft. Further to the northeast, slag and a well-preserved furnace are reported from Tuluna,

6. The author wants to thank Mr. Steve Keenan, a Peace Corps volunteer, for directing my attention to Palala and accompanying me in the field together with Mr. W. K. Imomo, Agricultural Extension Aide, Palala. I am much indebted to Mr. R. Natte, Peace Corps Inspector, who assisted me in research and provided transportation with the permission of Dr. Watson, Peace Corps Director in Liberia in 1964-65.

7. Kolipalai is an abandoned town site and is not to be found on maps. The place can best be reached by walking from Morris rubber farm (on the highway south of Belefuanai) to Foloblai and then towards the north for about two miles.

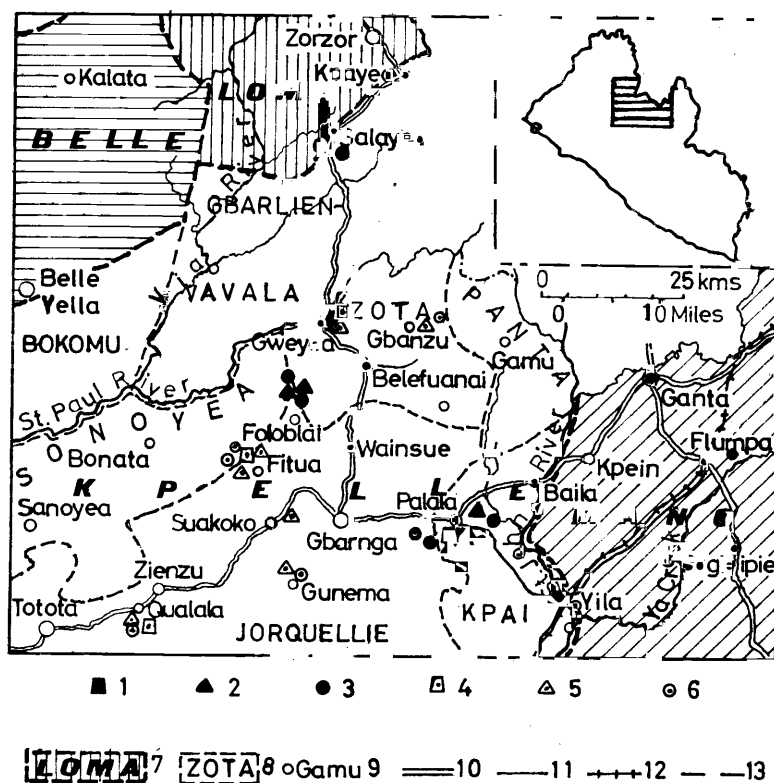


Figure 1. Iron Workings in Northern Kpelle Territory

- |                                    |   |                     |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 Smelting furnace intact          | } | inspected by author |
| 2 Remains of furnace               |   |                     |
| 3 Mounds of slag or pieces of slag |   |                     |
| 4 Smelting furnace intact          | } | reported to author  |
| 5 Remains of furnace               |   |                     |
| 6 Mounds of slag or pieces of slag |   |                     |
| 7 Liberian tribe ("people")        |   |                     |
| 8 Paramount chiefdom               |   |                     |
| 9 Settlement                       |   |                     |
| 10 Highway                         |   |                     |
| 11 Secondary road                  |   |                     |
| 12 LAMCO railroad                  |   |                     |
| 13 National boundary               |   |                     |

a former town site near Gweyea (Gbalatuah) northwest of Belefuanai in Zota chiefdom. Slag and other remains have been found near Gbanzu (Gbarnshu) some two miles east of Nama not very far from the Guinea border. All these finds support the assertion that Zota chiefdom has special traditions of iron smelting in northern Liberia. Whether a place named Gbeliebo woti<sup>8</sup> (between Wournar and Lebeleba) belongs to the same paramount chiefdom could not be found out as none of the three places is included in the maps available. In the northernmost Liberian Kpelle chiefdom of Gbarlien-Vavala, slag in small quantities could be identified about half a mile west of the present settlement of Salayea in the immediate neighborhood of the old town place where the rather impressive town wall, an earthen dam about ten feet high and several hundred yards long, is well preserved. Some slag was also observed at the foot of Mount Koliyaa ("iron hill" in Kpelle) about one mile and a half east of Salayea. Most impressive are the iron workings of Palala. Farther to the east, iron ore smelting apparently was less popular, at least in the neighboring Mano territory, where only a single piece of slag (from a blacksmith?) found within the Cocopa concession is known to the author.

The following table summarizes the present knowledge about the early iron smelting sites of the northern Kpelle.

#### EARLY IRON SMELTING SITES OF THE NORTHERN KPELLE

Place	Location	Furnaces <sup>a</sup>	Slag <sup>b</sup>
Palala	E of Gbarnga	4	4
Duta	Three miles SW of Palala	-	1
Gunema	Seven miles SW of Gbarnga	1	1
Suakoko	W of Gbarnga	-	1
Qualala	Three miles SW of Zienzu	2	1
Fitua	Six miles NW of Suakoko	3	2
Kolipalai	Two miles N of Foloblai	2	2
Tuluna	Near Gweyea	2	-
Gbanzu	Seven miles NE of Belefuanai	1	1
Salayea	Sixteen miles S of Zorzor	-	2

a. Whole furnaces or their ruins inspected or reported.

b. Number of places where mounds or pieces of slag were found or reported.

8. In Kpelle, the word means "billy goat manure rock," a name doubtless suggested by the small, rounded slag particles often found at smelting sites. In contrast, slag produced by blacksmiths is termed "dolo woti."



PALALA<sup>9</sup>

The iron workings near Palala are of particular interest since they extend over a relatively large area and consist of a number of separate sites, some of which preserve a rather impressive witness of traditional iron smelting activities. To the northeast of the village there is a large mound of slag which exceeds the places inspected in the Putu area by far. It is shaped like a kidney and extends from south to north over a distance of fifty-five yards. The convex side has a steep slope facing towards the east, while the flatter concave slope points to the west where the furnace was probably located.

No relics of the furnace, however, could be found. The maximum extension from west to east is fifteen yards, the height varies between ten and twenty feet. To the northeast of the mound is a large cotton tree. This is important because cotton trees are a typical and indispensable feature of smelting sites in Kpelle land so that in this case it can be concluded that the iron workings are much older than the present settlement.<sup>10</sup> To the south and the southwest of Palala in the immediate neighborhood of the village are several smaller heaps of slag and a number of trenches which must have been built when iron smelting operations were still going on as can be deduced from observations at the main furnace near Palala (plate 1). This furnace and the whole site contain a number of significant technical and other details which can be regarded as typical of the construction, layout and smelting technique among the northern Kpelle.

## CONSTRUCTION OF FURNACE AND LAYOUT OF SMELTING SITE

The construction of iron ore smelting furnaces in the northern Kpelle area differed considerably from the technique used in the Putu Range. While the Kran used to coat a cylindric bamboo mat with a layer of clay, the Kpelle preferred to apply several layers of clay to the lower part of the "trunk" of a banana (plantain) plant. This work was carried out by men only but boys were allowed to assist by fetching water and carrying clay and other materials. When the coat was thick enough it was allowed to dry for several days. After that the zo would cut out the relatively soft banana plant piece by piece so that a rather narrow cylindrical "chimmey" was formed which had a diameter of only twenty inches at the top but widened a little toward the bottom where a larger space was left for removing the slag and crude iron (see I in plate 1).

9. Palala lies thirteen miles east of Gbarnga and is the second largest "town" after Baila in the Waytuah Clan of Kpai chiefdom. The name means "place of much mud."

10. Palala is a rather modern settlement which was founded only about 1945 when the new road to Ganta was built. The first people came from Duta (about three miles southwest of Palala) and were directed by chief Juahdolo Gelekpo. The present site is reported to have been proposed by President Tubman who had said that "the cotton tree would make a good place for the town."



Plate 1. Iron Ore Smelting Furnace near Palala

The furnace with a height of seven foot has been built into the slope (S) of a minor elevation. Its cylindrical shape is hidden by the front wall (F) of clay and earth. The upper outlet of the "chimney" is near (O). The opening (I) at the bottom is for the removal of slag during the smelting process and for taking out the crude iron. The Kpelle man (with a shirt of country cloth) is standing in a trench leading to the furnace from the east (see also figure 2).

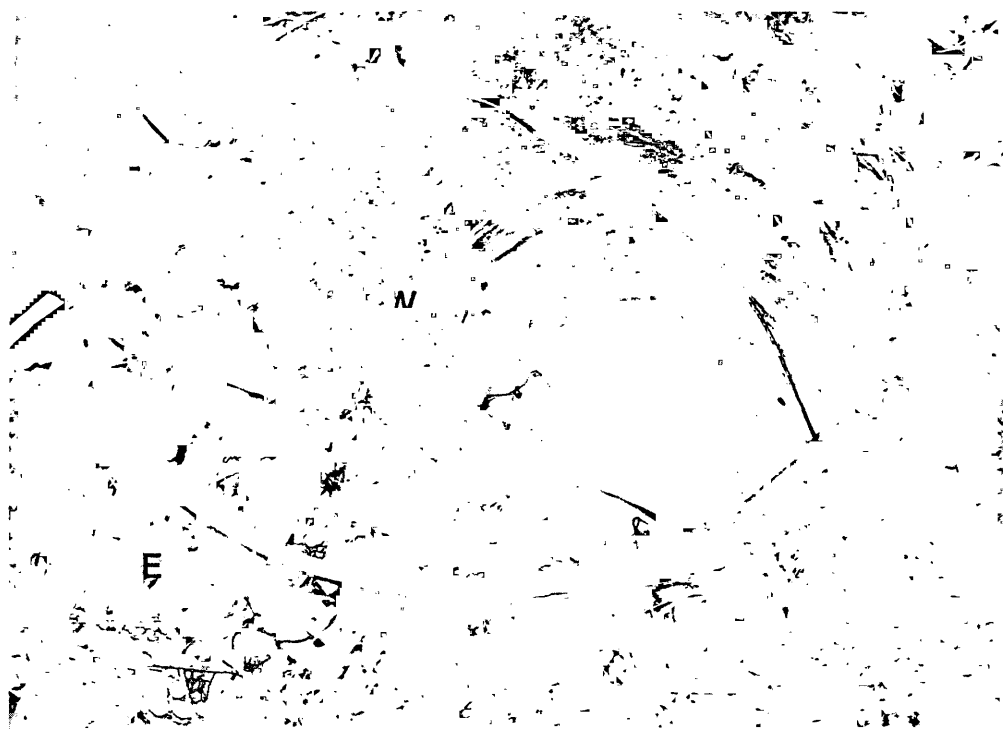


Plate 2. Top of the Smelting Furnace of plate 1

This flash photograph has been made from above into the cylindrical interior of the furnace. The irregularities resulting from the use of a "trunk" of a banana plant (plantain stalk according to G. Schwab, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 136) can be clearly seen. At (W) the wall consisting of several layers of clay can be seen. At (E) earthen material was added to the furnace whose front side is indicated by (F) on plates 1 and 2.

After the removal of the banana core, the clay was still moist inside and was smoothed by the zo, but still preserved some irregularities as shown on plate 2.

The inside walls were then rubbed with palm oil in order to prevent the cracking of the walls during the further drying process. Afterwards, the cylindrical furnace walls (W in plate 2) were covered with loose earthen material (E in plate 2) so that the final shape of the furnace was rather more square in a cross section than round. On plate 1, the front part of the furnace is shown (F) and the location of the outlet (plate 2) indicated by the letter O. Plate 1 also shows the situation of the construction at the end of a trench which was dug into the flat slope of a low elevation; directly near the furnace the trench is five feet deep. The slope (S in plate 2) rises behind the furnace so that the top of the latter can be reached from the sides without climbing up the hill. This section formerly was covered by the "furnace kitchen," i.e. a circular roof similar to that of the rural huts which was built to protect the furnace and also the people who worked the bellows at the side. For them, a deep hole was prepared on the northern side with a diameter of about eight feet and a depth of five feet. Its location can be seen on figure 2, which also shows the site of the cotton tree in north-easterly direction from the furnace (50°) while the trench leads from west to east (about 110° on the 360° circle). The height of the furnace is seven feet. The front opening (I in plate 1) measures 30 by 35 inches but was smaller during the smelting process.

#### THE KPELLE IRON SMELTING TECHNIQUE

The raw material used for the extraction of iron in the area of Palala apparently was lateritic rock which was brought by people who wanted crude iron, or was collected in the surroundings of the iron workings. The ore was roasted and the best pieces placed upon a thick layer of charcoal which filled about a third of the furnace. The ore was then covered with more charcoal, and finally with a layer of corkwood sufficiently thick to fill the furnace to the top. This method is different from the traditional technique of the Kran, where several alternating layers of charcoal, iron ore, and corkwood were prepared. Also different was the smelting technique. While the furnaces in the Putu Range have a number of openings with clay pipes at the bottom, the Kpelle ovens have only one large lateral opening which served for the introduction of two or four pairs of bellows as shown on figure 2 and on plates 3 & 4.

When the furnace was charged, it was fired from the bottom and the bellows were worked for several days up to two weeks. During all the time the slag floating on the liquid iron at the bottom was removed through the front hole which was only fifteen by twenty inches wide during the smelting process. From above, more charcoal and more iron ore was added according to the quantity of rock delivered or to the amount of crude iron required. The latter was removed at the end of the smelting process by breaking the bottom part of the furnace so that a large hole was formed as shown on plate 1.<sup>11</sup>

11. The notes on Kpelle iron smelting in Schwab's, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland, confirm most of the description, but differ in a number of details. Schwab mentions a hole near the top of the furnace left for charging it which was not observed by this author. According to Schwab, powdered ore mixed with charcoal was placed on top and when the iron was ready, the outlet was opened "and the molten metal ran into a small, V-shaped trench."

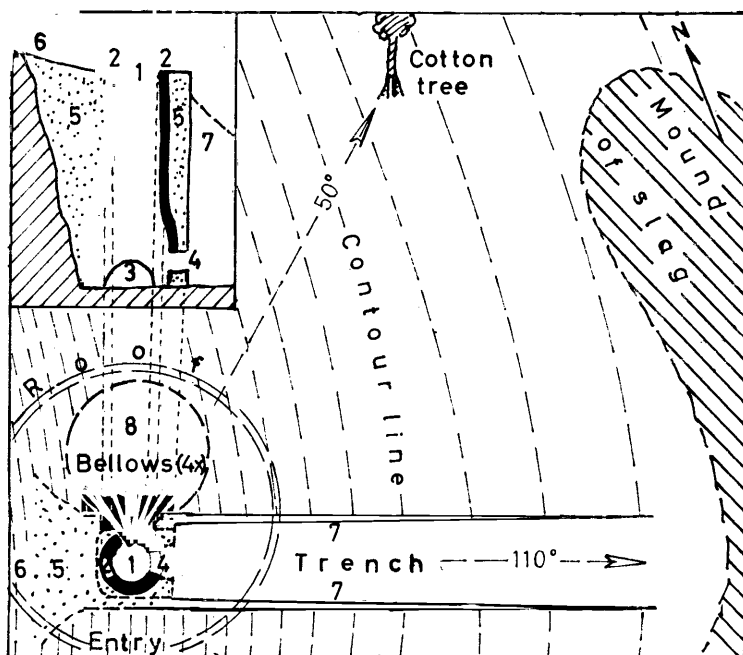


Figure 2 Iron Ore Smelting Site and Cross Section of a Furnace near Palala

- 1 Interior of the furnace
- 2 Clay walls of the furnace
- 3 Northern opening for the use of bellows
- 4 Front opening for the removal of slag and of crude iron
- 5 Earthen material heaped against the furnace
- 6 Mountain slope into which the furnace was inserted
- 7 Walls of the trench at the end of which the furnace is located
- 8 Hole with a diameter of about eight feet for the people working the bellows

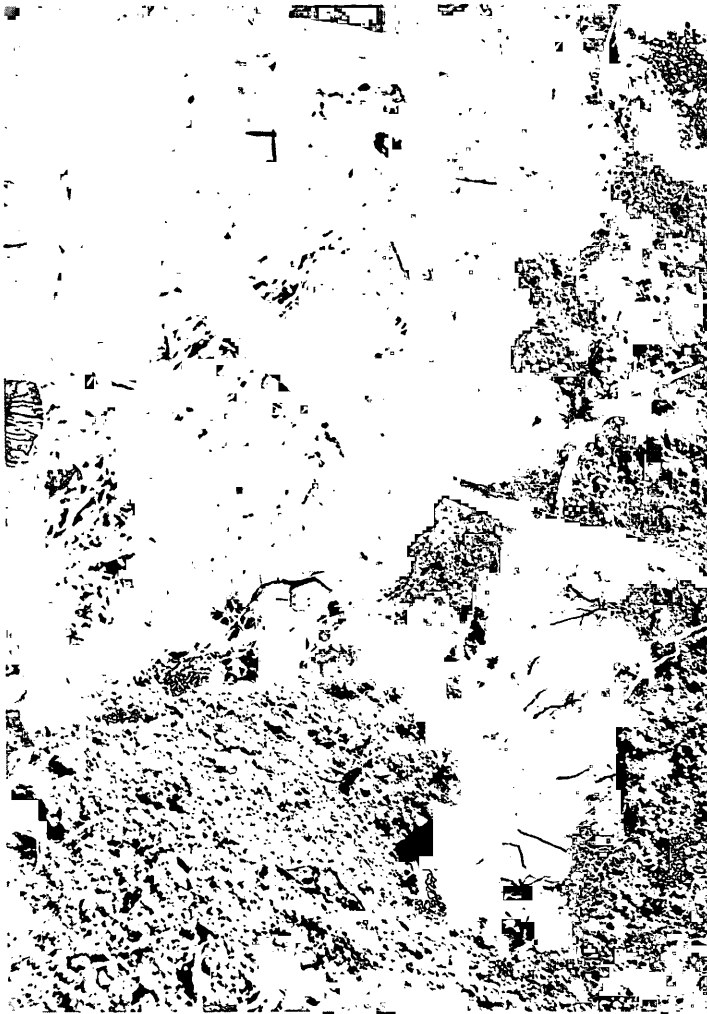


Plate 3 Remains of a Smelting Furnace near Palala

The author's informant is standing near the front section of the furnace. He is pointing in the direction where the people were working the bellows during the smelting process. The nozzles of the two or four pairs of bellows were introduced through the rounded opening at the bottom of the picture.



Plate 4 Remains of a Smelting Furnace near Palala

The ruler measures 30 cm.

According to my informant, ore was smelted throughout the year whenever crude iron was needed. This is in contrast to the usual West African practice of restricting the production of iron to the dry season.<sup>12</sup> The fact that the smelting site was covered by a roof which protected the furnace and the people working the bellows against the rains substantiates the information.

#### TRADITIONAL TRIBES, TABOOS AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF IRON ORE SMELTING

Most of the crafts which require particular skills, experiences or knowledge such as the construction of liana bridges ("monkey bridges" in Liberia) or the carving of masks are connected with special rites or taboos in Africa. This is also true for iron ore smelting, which could only be carried out successfully if a number of rules and restrictions were strictly observed.

As the smelting site, and especially the smelting process were endangered by bad spirits, a cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) was planted directly near the place, apparently usually in a north-easterly direction from the furnace (figure 2 and plate 5). The second function of the tree was to influence the quality of the iron produced so that good iron came out. The third idea was that the tree could purify a person who had broken one of the several taboos. The main taboo was the prohibition against sexual intercourse during a four day period before going to the smelting site. Should this prohibition be violated, the slag (the liquid iron?) would stop dropping to the bottom of the oven or something else would happen. In order to continue the smelting operations, the defiled person had to perform a particular dance, accompanied by a special song.<sup>13</sup> He had to undress and a rope or necklace with hoe handles and sticks was put around his neck. With this decoration, which probably was not very comfortable during a prolonged period of moving and bouncing, the person had to dance backward and finally rub his back at the cotton tree, which was termed *ouie* by my informant. After having carried out these ceremonies, the "bad look" would disappear and the "slag" would resume dropping. The Kpelle term for slag is *koli pu* meaning "iron waste." The smelting furnaces are called *sulung*.

Closely connected with the taboo mentioned was the rule that only boys or virgin girls were allowed to carry food to the men at the iron workings. Of great importance were medicines and sacrifices. Of the latter three types can be distinguished, (1) sacrifices made when the site was inaugurated or dedicated, when a goat and, in

12. K. Krieger, "Notizen zur Eisengewinnung der Hausa," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, LXXXVIII (1963), 324.

13. The dance was demonstrated to the author by the informant (plate 3), a man of about seventy years who assisted in smelting when a boy.





Plate 5 The Smelting Site of Furnace No. 2 (Plate 3)

Only the back part of the furnace (F) is seen. Important is the cotton tree to the northeast of the furnace. A flattened mound of slag is indicated by the black color of the ground near the palm tree.



## SOME PROPOSALS FOR LIBERIAN ARCHEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

Frederick D. McEvoy

At the Conference on Liberian Research and Scholarship held at Robertsport in 1967, it was emphasized in some discussions that there existed at that time "a serious lag" in the development of knowledge pertaining to the prehistory of the region of West Africa which is now included within the boundaries of the Republic of Liberia. The final report of the conference concluded that "no archeological work has been done in Liberia, and no Liberians have been or are being trained in this field."<sup>2</sup> Since the publication of that report, some archeological survey research as well as some limited excavation has been carried out in different areas of the country, and limited amounts of data have been published or otherwise made available to interested scholars and to the public.<sup>3</sup> Knowledge of Liberian prehistory and its relation-

1. This is a revised version of a short paper originally written in July, 1968, a few months after my return from ethnographic field research among the Sabo of southeastern Liberia. In revising it, the author has attempted wherever possible to refer by means of footnotes to various published and unpublished reports of archeological or ethno-historically related research. To document all such research would, however, have carried the paper beyond the limits intended.

The author is indebted to Professor Vernon R. Dorjahn, Professor of Anthropology, University of Oregon, who supervised the author's field research and read the earlier draft of this paper; Barry L. Isaac, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Cincinnati, who provided constructive criticism of the first draft; and Donald L. Brockington, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, who has critically read this draft.

The outline map of Liberia and its counties was adapted from W. R. Stanley, "Changing Patterns of Transportation Development in Liberia," Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1966, map 1.

2. Report of the Conference on Liberian Research and Scholarship (Robertsport: The Tubman Centre of African Culture, 1967), 31.

3. C. Delafield, "Recent Archaeological Investigation on the Liberian Coast: 1967-69," paper presented at the meeting of the Liberian Research Association, Bloomington, Indiana, May 1970. John Atherton has also published a paper pertaining to archeological problems and prospects in Liberia which the author has not read. J. Atherton, "Archeology in Liberia: Problems and Possibilities," West African Archaeological Newsletter, No. 11 (March 1969), 19-21.

ships with the prehistory of other areas of the African continent remains, however, sketchy at best, and it should be obvious to all that there remains much research and interpretation to be done beyond that reported in this issue of the Liberian Studies Journal. This paper suggests some of the reasons for taking needed steps to begin systematizing archeological, prehistoric, and ethnohistoric research in Liberia, and proposes and discusses a system for recording and coordinating information pertaining to sites of archeological or ethnohistoric importance.

### THE NEED FOR ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Among the many valid reasons for paying greater attention to archeological and ethnohistoric sites within the Republic of Liberia is one which pertains to the growing unification of the peoples of Liberia into a genuinely national population. At the present time, many of the late prehistoric, protohistoric, and ethnohistoric sites have cultural significance only for particular segments of modern-day Liberia's population: to the citizens of a certain tribe or chiefdom, or of a certain town or village, or in some cases, only to the members of a particular descent group or to the members of a particular religious sect. Other sites, however, have cultural or historical significance for the people of large groups of tribes, and still others to the descendants of the founders of the Republic. Although it is possible that some of the various kinds of sites of ethnohistoric or cultural significance may not, in fact, contain recoverable archeological remains because they are sites of mythical or legendary importance to the group concerned with them, it is nevertheless essential to record information about such locations. In a very real sense, such sites are "sacred relics" of the people, and are therefore worthy of preservation and protection, where possible, in the same way that Mount Vernon - in the United States - is preserved and protected "because the first president lived there." Although a particular section of relict high forest, or a certain mountain or high hill, such as Mount Gedeh in southeastern Liberia, may at present be sacred to or a part of the cultural heritage of a particular traditional tribe or group of tribes, such sites should and will become of greater importance in the inventory of genuinely national Liberian cultural heritage as the tribally organized peoples of Liberia are increasingly drawn into a national way of life.<sup>4</sup>

4. Bai T. Moore noted the location of the Webbo Sacred Forest, "Reconnaissance Report of Webbo Fundamental Education Project," (1955), 1. The cultural and historical significance of massifs to the many peoples in southeastern Liberia has been discussed by B. Holas, Mission dans l'Est Libérien (Dakar: IFAN, 1952), *passim*; by Ronald W. Davis, "Historical Outline of the Kru Coast, Liberia, 1500 to the Present," Ph. D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1968, *passim*; R. W. Davis, "A Note on Symbols at Grand Cess, Liberia," Liberian Studies Journal, II (1969), 65-75; and by G. Schröder and Andreas Massing, "A General Outline of Historical Developments within the Kru Cultural Province," paper presented at the meeting of the Liberian Research Association, Bloomington, Indiana, May 1970. The interpretations of these various reporters differ somewhat one from another. The author hopes in the near future to complete a manuscript detailing his own reasons for disagreeing with some or all of the interpretations thus far presented.

Another important reason for beginning now a relatively systematic program for recording information about and assessing the significance of the many ethnohistoric and archeological sites throughout Liberia has to do with the country's economic growth and development. With the passage of years, it may be expected that additional areas of the country will be affected by the development of mining and related industries, by a much more extensive development of commercially-oriented agriculture, and perhaps most of all, by road construction in all areas of the country in support of general modernization. Any or all of these kinds of development will benefit Liberia and its citizens. But by their very nature such developments will also destroy or alter many evidences of the country's historic and prehistoric past. Already, as Delafield's report of excavations along the coast indicates, industrial construction at Cape Palmas has disturbed burial sites which have considerable archeological significance as well as being of historic and religious significance to the Glebo peoples of that area.<sup>5</sup> The construction of water-storage facilities and hydro-electric dams, such as that recently completed in the Ivory Coast, likely would inundate or otherwise destroy historical or archeological remains of many types, including many locations of sacred or ethnohistoric significance to the peoples inhabiting the area of construction. Liberian and non-Liberian scholars alike should be prepared beforehand to execute a cooperative and scientifically conceived program of salvage archeology in any part of Liberia where economically or nationally important development construction threatens destruction of antiquities.

A third, though certainly not final, reason for systematizing archeological and ethnohistorical research in Liberia has to do with the very real importance of the area in understanding the prehistoric development of culture in the forested areas of West Africa. Survey and excavation of archeological sites in Liberia very probably would bring to light a great deal of historically and anthropologically important information bearing on, among other problems, the distribution of Early Stone Age peoples, the development of forest-adapted tool-making traditions of the Middle and Later Stone Ages, the development of microlithic tools, and later, of neolithic tools, and perhaps most importantly, the development of forest-adapted agriculture as a way of life, and the later emergence of historically known tribes and linguistic groups.<sup>6</sup>

It is in the interest, then, of all of us who are involved in Liberian research to cooperate in developing some means of systematizing and coordinating our research activities, whether these are in archeology, ethnhistory, cultural anthropology, or linguistics, whenever possible. It for this reason that a move to adopt now some agreed-upon system for recording information bearing on Liberian prehistory and ethnohistory is proposed. This paper offers one possibly useful system for consideration.

5. Delafield, "Recent Archaeological Investigations."

6. J. D. Clark, The Prehistory of Africa (New York, 1970), passim; J. Atherton, personal communication.

## A SYSTEM FOR RECORDING SITES

On many occasions during the course of the author's ethnographic field research among the Sabo (or Saõ), one of the small dakwe or tribes of the Grebo-speaking peoples of Webbo district in Grand Gedeh county, informants pointed out or mentioned sites of archeological or ethnohistoric interest. In all, there were at least twenty such locations within the modern-day boundaries of the Sabo chiefdom, which has only four modern villages. Many of the sites were "old towns" or villages (deswa) important in the history of the dako or its component villages. Many of these deswa, though not all of them, carry in Sabo oral traditions names identical or similar to the names of villages which are presently occupied. Other of the sites are remembered as the locations of possibly ancestral villages, and still others as the locations of villages occupied by peoples whom the Sabo claim lived in the area before the Sabo migrated into it. In order to record the location, characteristics, and significance of such sites, a site survey schedule which also provides a means for numbering a site with a coded designation was utilized. The form, and the system for numbering sites, were modified from a system which has been used with considerable success in North American archeology for many years.

For the designation of sites, this system uses a tripartite code which combines the use of numbers and alphabetic symbols in a manner which precludes the chance of two sites being assigned the same coded identification even though they might have quite similar or identical names in the oral traditions of the people in whose territory the sites are located. The system might be better understood by reference to its use in North America.

When the system was established, each state in the United States was assigned a numerical designator corresponding to its position in the alphabetical order of the contiguous states (Hawaii and Alaska were not then states). Thus the state of Alabama was assigned the number 1, Nebraska 25, and Wyoming 48, to give three examples. Within each of the states, each county or parish was assigned a two-letter designator which differed from those assigned the other counties in the state. The designation LN, for example, was assigned to Lincoln county in Nebraska. As historic or archeological sites in each county were discovered or recorded after attention had been brought to their existence, each site was (and is) assigned a site number in serial order. In each of the states, one or more agencies or institutions was given the responsibility for maintaining the files of site information. When properly coordinated, such a system facilitates research and comparison of recovered data, and precludes, as noted above, a great deal of confusion which might arise from similarity in vernacular designations for sites. An interested scholar, by examining the records pertaining to sites 25LN19 and 14NT10 might discover, for example, that although both sites are called "the Peterson" site, the former is located in Lincoln county, Nebraska, and the latter in Norton county, Kansas. The discussion of the necessity of such distinctions in recording site information will be resumed after a brief summary of how this kind of system could be modified to fit the Liberian situation.

On the accompanying map of Liberia (figure 1), numbers have been assigned to each of the nine counties. Additional numbers could be assigned to such other important political subdivisions as the Kru Coast territory if these were needed. These numbers would be utilized as the first part of the tripartite code designation for archeological or historical sites.

The second part of the site designator would consist of a two-letter alphabetic code referring to each of the several tribal chiefdoms, or townships where these have been

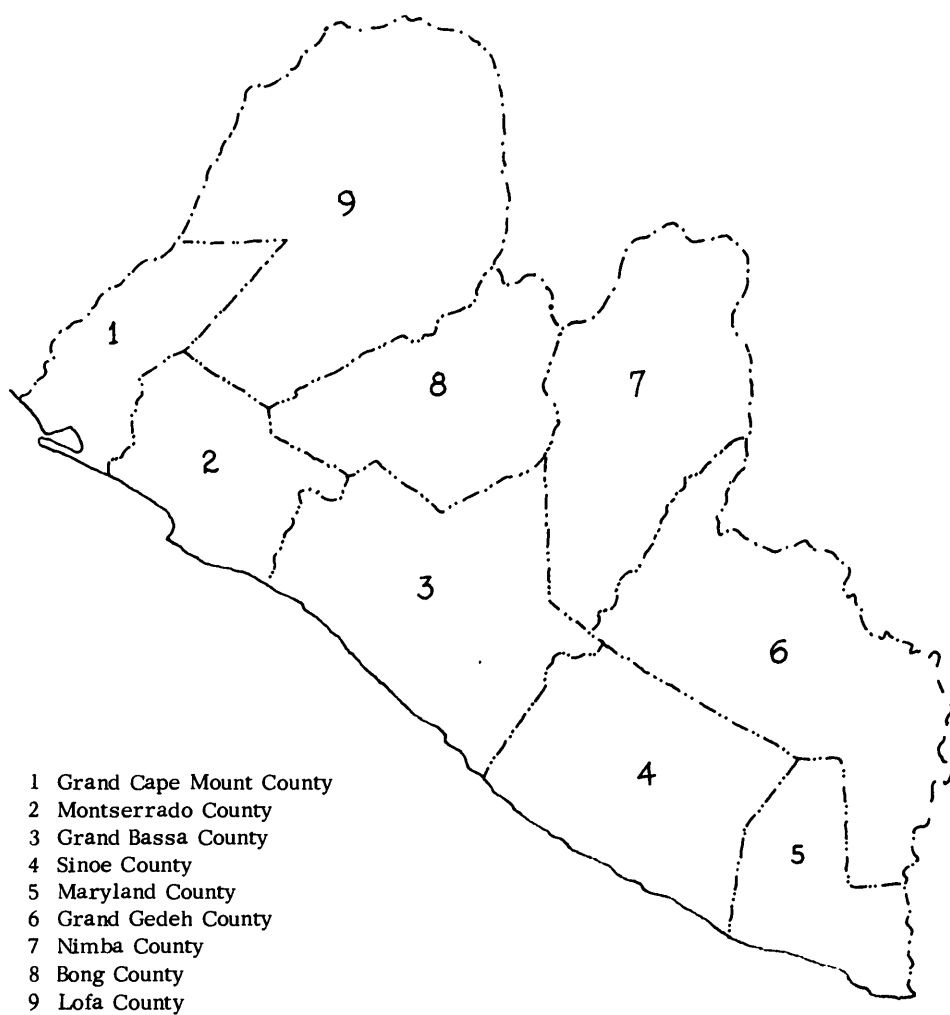


Figure 1

Counties of Liberia

established by the Liberian government. In recording information on sites within the Sabo chiefdom, the coded designation SA was utilized. Some possible combinations for other chiefdoms in Grand Gedeh county might be as follows: TU - Tuobo chiefdom, WB - Webbo chiefdom, KT - Ketibo chiefdom, GL - Glaro chiefdom, PP - Palipo chiefdom, and GP - Gbeapo chiefdom. Such code designators for all of the chiefdoms and townships in Liberia could be easily worked out, perhaps by a committee made up of representatives of the Liberian Research Association, the University of Liberia, and the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs of the Liberian government.

Finally, a serial number could be assigned to archeological or ethnohistoric sites within each chiefdom or township. Thus in the writer's records of Sabo chiefdom sites, the site number 6SA16 designates the old village (deswa) called Weadru as the sixteenth site for which some information was secured. The number is easily included in any discussion of the site, and its use would preclude confusing this Weadru with any other sites in the region having the same vernacular designation.

### RECORDING SITE INFORMATION

In figures 2 and 3 are reproduced both sides of a completed site survey form reporting pertinent information on the ancient village site of Weadru in the Sabo chiefdom (6SA16). The form has been modified from the site survey report used in the Missouri Basin Project of the River Basin Surveys salvage archeology program in the United States. A form of this type (or a similar type) should, ideally, be completed for each archeological or ethnohistoric site discovered by a researcher or pointed out by informants in the area. One need not be a professionally trained archeologist to record information collected from informants about "old towns" as well as possibly mythic or legendary ethnohistorical sites in the research area. The Liberian Research Association should encourage all researchers, whatever their professional specialization, to record and report sites which are of potential significance in carrying out further archeological or ethnohistorical research or interpreting the results of previously executed research.

Although much of the site survey form would seem self-explanatory, some comments on particular parts of it may be appropriate. Few maps of Liberia are sufficiently detailed to locate precisely a site so that it can be later identified by another researcher. It is therefore suggested that sites be "located" by reference to (a) the modern-day town or village nearest the site, (b) the compass direction of the site from that village or town, and (c) distance by miles, or where this is not possible, by approximate walking time. With such information and the assistance of local persons familiar with an area, subsequent investigators would have more assurance of relocating the site, a major problem for archeologists in all areas of the world. Remarks on the landmarks in the area would also be of great utility in this respect.

Some suggestions might also be made with respect to recording information of the type of site (item 2 on the form). This kind of information is, of course, tentative even under the best of circumstances prior to actual excavation and analysis of the archeological materials contained in the site. Although it is increasingly probable that sites attributable to the Middle Stone Age will be discovered in the forested areas of Liberia, those concerned with interpreting the Liberian past should attempt to avoid wherever possible the pitfalls of using terminology prematurely taken from other parts of Africa or the Indo-European area until the identification has been verified. To designate,



Archeological and Historic Site  
Survey Form

Country Liberia County Grand Gedeh Site No. 6-SA-16  
 District Webbo Chiefdom Sabo

1. Map Reference \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Type of Site Ceramic - "old town"
3. Cultural Affiliation (if known) Sabo ?
4. Location with respect to nearest town 1.6 Miles ENE of present-day Wufuke, then about 10 min. walk approx. NE from motor track which leads from Wufuke to Jike.
5. Owner & Address Tribal land, controlled by Truwaɔ descent group
6. Tenant & Address Kweju Kwei (Robert Dweh), of Wufuke
7. Informants Pokwi Koro, and Kweju Kwei
8. Vernacular Designations for site Weadru
9. Site Description "old town": hill-top site with extensive midden area on the NW slope of hill
10. Position of site & surroundings On hill between two small streams Approach to site swampy. Across stream north is site of Tatuke (6 SA 18)
11. Approximate area of occupation Difficult to estimate; ground cover
12. Depth & character of fill (if known) Depth unknown - fill in midden area a rocky clay containing cultural debris.
13. Present condition of site Partly in cocoa, partly in secondary bush; midden area a 1967 rice farm, being planted w/ plantains
14. Previous excavations? none known
15. Material collected Pottery (rim and body sherds) - no worked stone or iron tools found.
16. Material observed Fire-cracked rock, pottery sherds in midden area; some possible house platforms on hill crest
17. Material reported & owner \_\_\_\_\_
18. Historical or archeological significance Weadru said by Sabo oral historians to have been the first town built by the Sabo after their migration into this area from the "Pahn" region.
19. Recommendations for further work Warrants excavation, especially in midden area and house platforms.
20. Photographs Yes: midden 21. Maps of site see reverse

Recorded by F.D. McEvoy, Univ. Oregon Date XI-29-1967

Figure 2

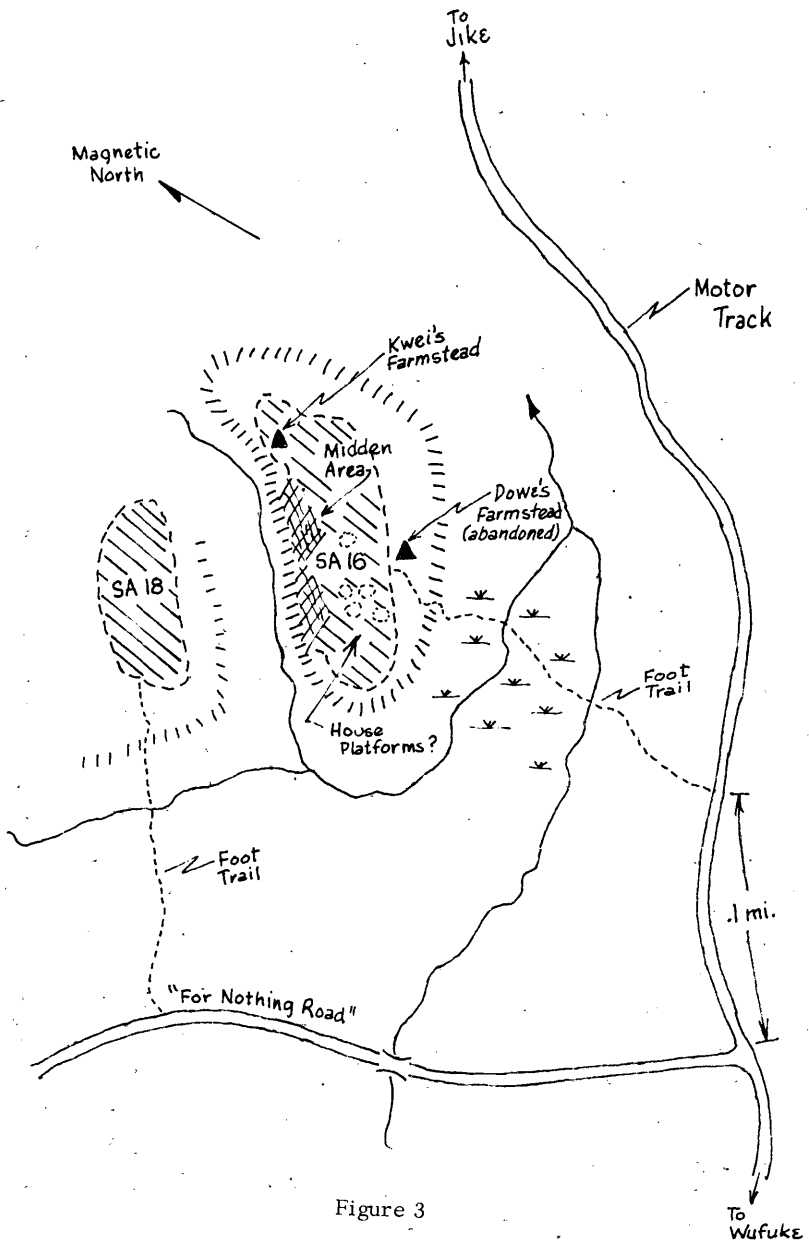


Figure 3

Sketch Map of Sites 6SA16 and 6SA18  
Sabo Chiefdom, Liberia

before excavation and analysis, a site with "hand-axes" as Acheulian, or Mousterian, or Sangoan would be, it is suggested, a comission of the fallacy of premature cultural classification. And as J. D. Clark has pointed out in his recent book, this kind of identification in the past has caused a great deal of confusion in interpreting the process of cultural development in African prehistory.<sup>7</sup> It would seem better to cautiously report such a site as "lithic," leaving for subsequent professional investigators the task of determining whether the cultural remains contained in the site are to be more finely classified as "Paleolithic," "Mesolithic," or "Neolithic."

Similarly the attribution of any given site as "historic" should be undertaken with caution unless the people living in the area of the site have oral traditions which indicate that the site was occupied in relatively recent times by their ancestors. The term "historic" should be limited to sites which can be determined with some certainty to have been occupied by a particular tribal group at a "certain" point in time (e.g., five or six genealogical generations in the past). Where possible, such knowledge of claimed occupation of the site might be confirmed by reference to documentary accounts. Confirmation would, of course, be more readily realized for some sites along the coast which may have been described by ships' captains and traders frequenting the coast prior to the nineteenth century. Trading forts, early colonial settlements, and similar remains would also be described as "historic sites." Sites at which ceramic remains such as pottery sherds and fired clay are in evidence should be cautiously recorded as "ceramic" without attributing the site to the "pre-historic," "protohistoric," or "historic" periods. The appellation "prehistoric" should be applied to those occupations clearly pre-dating written descriptions of coastal West Africa, and "protohistoric," to the period between that time and the mid-nineteenth century, by which time written records pertaining to the hinterland as well as the littoral zone began to be more abundant and sufficiently detailed to constitute "history" as commonly thought of.

In the initial stages of archeological research in any given region, the cultural affiliation of material remains found on the surface or in the excavations of an archeological site is very often uncertain. For this reason, some caution should be exercised in recording information for this section of the site survey form. Nonetheless, it is important to record the beliefs of the present-day inhabitants of the area as to which cultural groups the remains might be attributed. As ethnohistorically oriented research in southeastern Liberia, for example, proceeds, it is increasingly clear from a number of lines of evidence that peoples now residing on or near the coast migrated, at many different times in the past, from locations often deep in the hinterland, and that many of the hinterland peoples migrated in the past into the areas which they have occupied in recent generations.<sup>8</sup> The importance

7. Clark, Prehistory of Africa, 37ff. See also Creighton Gabel's paper, "Prehistoric Populations of Africa," Boston University Papers on Africa, II (1966), 1-37.

8. Holas, Mission, passim; S. J. M. Johnson, Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe (Monrovia, 1957), 1-19; M. Fraenkel, "Social Change on the Kru Coast of Liberia," Africa, XXXVI (1966), 154; Davis, "Historical Outline," passim; Davis, "A Note on Symbols," passim; Schröder & Massing, "A General Outline," passim; and F. D. McEvoy, "Sabo Labor Migration," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1971, Chapter IV.

of migrations in the oral traditions of almost all of the peoples of the southeast suggests that it is quite probable that many archeological and ethnohistoric sites ultimately attributable to the protohistoric or late prehistoric periods were occupied by populations whose descendants no longer inhabit the area immediately about the site in question.

Sabo oral traditions indicate that that they, like so many of the other dakwe in southeastern Liberia, once lived in an area which they refer to as Paāpeti or Paā and today identify vaguely as having been located "far" to the north of the area which they now occupy.<sup>9</sup> Sabo oral historians stated that the ancestors of the dako, or at least some of them, migrated from Paāpeti with their families during a period of war and conflict among its inhabitants. For a time they lived among the Glaro (or Graoro), but eventually migrated many generations ago into the area now called Saobli, which they now occupy. But Sabo oral traditions indicate that the ancestral Sabo migrants, as they moved into Saobli, found "towns" which had only recently been deserted or abandoned as well as rice farms which were ready for harvesting. The informants indicated that the Sabo moved into the deserted villages, harvested the rice, and in effect, settled in. These "old towns" are attributed by modern-day Sabo informants to an occupation of the area by people they now identify as the Jrao (or Jlao), whom the Sabo say are the Sasstown Kru peoples. Some informants stated that one or two of the patrilineal descent groups (tuas) in the dako are descended from the people who occupied the area prior to the Sabo.

Following their entrance into the area, the early Sabo immigrants, living together initially as a single village,<sup>10</sup> occupied a series of sites (deswa) before moving to the top of Mount Seri, an imposing massif located near present-day Sabo Jike, during a period of warfare with other Paā groups who were moving into or through the region. For a time the Nyitiabo (or Nyinao) lived with the Sabo atop Mount Seri but later joined with Tuobo peoples as they moved into the area. When the period of conflict was concluded, the Sabo are said to have decided that they had become too numerous to continue living together in a single village, and began to subdivide into smaller groups. The ancestors of the founders of the modern village of Sabo Jike were reported by informants as the first group to leave Seridru.<sup>11</sup> Somewhat later, the ancestors of the three other modern villages (Sweke, Siklike, and Wufuke) moved in a single group to another nearby massif, called Noya, where they lived for a time before further

9 In the report of the Hostains-d'Ollone expedition through the Cavalla river basin, one of the maps contains a location or people called Celipahons, which may perhaps be cognate to sedipaa, sometimes used by the Sabo in their discussions of oral history. Seridru, local sacred massif of the Sabo is also called seli, sedi, or as has been noted in this discussion, seri.

10. As the site survey report on Weadru (6SA16) indicates, this site was pointed out as the first village occupied by the Sabo after their migration into Saobli.

11. One informant stated that the ancient village on Seridru is still visible, as if the ancestors "still lived there." His statement is paralleled by the observation of a deserted village atop Mount Gedeh by two priests flying over the area some years ago, reported by Davis, "Historical Outline," 34f.

dividing into still smaller groups. Following their ultimate fission into four (?) groups, each village of the dako occupied a series of "old towns" (deswa) during the several generations which preceded the establishment of the modern-day Sabo villages in their present locations. Some of the sites occupied during the course of these local migrations were pointed out as also being the locations of ancient Jrao villages. Sabo oral traditions thus suggest that at least some of the archeological sites in the area may contain evidences of multiple occupations by dakwe not considered to be closely related at the present time. Whether or not evidence of stratified multiple occupations of these sites will be demonstrated by excavation, of course, remains to be determined. The ethnohistorical traditions of the area clearly imply, however, that archeological research may recover significant evidence bearing on trans-forest migrations by peoples now living on the coast as well as upon the nature of local migrations.

Similarly, it is essential that investigators record various vernacular designations for archeologically or ethnohistorically important sites known to the population of the area. Like the oral traditions relating to cultural affiliations of particular sites, vernacular designations may constitute an important body of data for ethnographic or linguistic analysis. In sections of Liberia where descent group organization is especially strong, as among the Sabo and other dakwe of the southeast, some of the "old towns" are designated by names which recall noteworthy episodes in tribal history or political relations: a particular deswa, for example, may have been founded by the head of a certain tua (patrilineal sib or lineage) driven from another village as the result of a dispute. One informant stated that Sweke, one of the modern villages, refers to a place (ke) abounding in swe, a large porcupine. Similarly, Wufuke refers to a place (ke) abundant in oil palms (wufi). It is probably significant that there are at least two "old towns" called "old Wufuke" (Wufiswa), two called Sikliswa ("old Siklike"), and one called Sweswa ("old Sweke"). Such names as these encapsulate and symbolize notable historical and socio-political processes significant to the understanding of modern-day tribal organization as well as the prehistory of the area.

Oral traditions pertaining to archeological sites may also provide clues to the kinds of archeological remains which might be revealed by excavation of the site.<sup>12</sup> Sabo traditions, for example, indicate that the "old town" of Tooke (6SA12), a site occupied by the Jrao and later re-occupied in the nineteenth century by one or two Sabo lineage groups, was burned by Barobo raiders just before its abandonment in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Similarly, Wufiswa II (6SA10), which had been occupied by the Sabo prior to their occupation of Tooke, was reported to have been attacked and per-

12. Bishop Payne, quoted in G. T. Fox, A Memoir of the Rev. C. Colden Hoffman, Missionary to Cape Palmas, West Africa (New York, 1868), 195, reported that "in a tribe forty miles above Cape Palmas, closely related to the Greboes, the dead are buried under the floor of the houses in which they lived." It is the author's impression that early historical accounts of the area, like the oral traditions of the people, are relatively abundant in archeological clues. It is probable, moreover, that hilltop sites representing "old towns" may be attributed to periods of conflict, and that "old towns" located in less defensible positions were built in times of relative peace.

haps partially burned by a raiding party. Such information pertaining to the historical significance of a site, when combined with evidence collected through scientific excavation and analysis, will provide the Liberian lay public as well as professional scholars a more substantial basis for understanding and appreciating the Liberian past.

## CONCLUSIONS

As suggested earlier in this paper, a system of site designation and recording such as the one suggested here can work only if it is maintained and cooperated in by institutions and individuals conducting, or proposing to conduct, archeological or ethno-historical research in Liberia. The implementation of such a systematic program of coordinated research would require, as prerequisite, the following: (a) the formation of a committee to establish the coding system and to collect and organize data bearing on sites already reported or excavated; (b) arrangement for facilities needed for maintaining site record catalogues; (c) the active encouragement of scientific archeological and ethnohistoric research in Liberia; and (d) the passage of antiquities laws and the creation of a board or committee which would be responsible for reviewing (and approving or rejecting) applications for excavation permits. The first of these has been discussed in the body of this paper, but with regard to the remaining points some additional discussion is appropriate.

The responsibility for organizing and maintaining a central catalogue of archeological remains might be delegated, as suggested earlier, to a committee or board representing the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, the University of Liberia (especially those departments or divisions of the University most immediately concerned with these kinds of problems), The Tubman Centre of African Culture, and perhaps, the Liberian Research Association. Whatever its composition, this committee or board should have the responsibility for being aware of various economic developments within the country and for calling immediate professional attention to any sites which might be destroyed by construction activities. Site record catalogs should be maintained in locations which facilitate access to them by both Liberian and non-Liberian researchers, as well as by students of anthropology, history, and folklore in Liberian colleges and universities. Duplicate files in several institutions might be considered in this connection.

Stringent antiquities laws are needed in order to ensure that "plunder and pillage" archeology is prohibited. These laws should provide for the establishment of a board which would review and approve (or disapprove) applications for excavation permits. The law should provide stringent penalties for unlicensed excavation, as well as for illegal exportation of Liberian antiquities. Such laws are essential if the Republic of Liberia is to maintain any control over an increasingly significant part of its cultural heritage. Provision should be made, however, for the release (and return) of study collections. Although these are not all of the issues involved in the establishment of antiquities laws, this summary may provide a basis for further discussion of issues.<sup>13</sup>

13. Professor Donald Brockington suggests that the antiquities and related laws of the Republic of Mexico might be a suitable model for such laws.

Finally, it may be appropriate to comment in this paper on the recruitment of Liberians into the disciplines which concern themselves with the historical, social, or cultural interpretation of the past, a problem discussed at the 1967 Robertspport conference. The problem of recruiting Liberian prehistorians is one which will solve itself if qualified archeologists and historians are encouraged strongly to use Liberian assistants while conducting reserach in the country.

Any successful program of archeological or ethnohistorical research may be said with considerable truth "to feed upon itself." The increasing amount of information about Liberian peoples and their ethnohistories which has been collected in the past decade attests to the mushrooming growth of knowledge which has stimulated research in all areas of the country. The massive program of archeological salvage research carried out in the two decades following World War II in the many river basins in the United States is another example of this kind of success. The River Basins programs was developed in order to carry out systematic research in archeology and history in areas which were threatened with inundation and destruction by the many water-control dams. In that program many students began their "studies" in prehistory by working as laborers under the supervision of professional archeologists, and were drawn into prehistoric research and related fields by the stimuli of discoveries made in their presence. Upon completing their academic and formal professional training, these former "laborers" extended the frontiers of archeological knowledge, and in many cases elaborated, clarified, and most often, modified the cultural and historical interpretations of their predecessors and teachers. In turn, the discoveries made by this new generation of archeologists attracted still other students whose intellectual appetites has been whetted by the very real excitement which attends archeological or historical discovery. The River Basins program thus directly contributed to the development of a corps of highly professional archeologists. More importantly, it contributed to a very significant growth in our knowledge of the prehistoric peoples of North America. Such could be the case in Liberia. As the numerous scholars now concerned with the Liberian past continue to "extend the frontier" of archeological and ethnohistorical knowledge, an increasing number of Liberian students will develop professional as well as personal interests in the study of both Liberian and African prehistory, particularly if non-Liberian researchers are strongly encouraged to assist in training Liberian students in the methods of the disciplines involved.

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# THE TRIBAL ENTREPRENEUR IN THE EMERGING LIBERIAN ECONOMY

David F. Ross

## INTRODUCTION: THE ENTREPRENEUR IN ECONOMIC THEORY

The entrepreneur has long occupied a shadowy place in economic theory. He has been discussed, under one or another of his aliases, by Richard Cantillon, Jean-Baptiste Say, Leon Walras, Karl Marx, J. S. Mill, Alfred Marshall, J. B. Clarke, F. H. Knight, Joseph Schumpeter, Edward Chamberlin, and J. M. Keynes,<sup>1</sup> to name only the leading figures; but none of these has really made enterprise a factor in his formal analysis. Perhaps the best explanation for this omission is that which was given by Walras, who concluded that enterprise was a peculiarly dynamic factor, which had no place in static analysis. As Chamberlin rather plaintively expresses it, the activity of the entrepreneur "cannot be measured along an axis and displayed in a single diagram."<sup>2</sup> In Schumpeter's words, the role of the entrepreneur is "the setting up of a new production function."<sup>3</sup> Since virtually all economic analysis until the last twenty years was static analysis, the omission of the entrepreneur was valid and logically defensible.

Since the Second World War, however, the inherently dynamic process of economic development has come to occupy the place of major interest among economic problems. This has coincided with the gestation of dynamic economic analysis, beginning with R. F. Harrod's 1946 lectures, later published under the title Towards A Dynamic Economics.<sup>4</sup> With these two developments, the rationale for the omission of

1. William Letwin, The Origins of Scientific Economics, (Garden City, New York, 1964), 238; Joseph A. Schumpeter, History of Economic Analysis (New York, 1954), 492; Jean Baptiste Say, A Treatise on Political Economy; or The Production, Distribution, and Consumption of Wealth, trans. by C. R. Princep (Boston, 1821); Leon Walras, Elements D'Economie Politique Pure (Paris and Lausanne, 1926); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, trans. by Samuel Moore (New York, 1932); John Stuart Mill, Principles of Political Economy (London, 1915); Alfred Marshall, Principles of Economics (New York, 1948); John Bates Clark, The Distribution of Wealth (New York, 1899); Frank H. Knight, Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit (Boston, 1921); Joseph A. Schumpeter, The Theory of Economic Development, trans. by Redvers Opie (Cambridge, 1934); and Business Cycles: A Theoretical, Historical, and Statistical Analysis of the Capitalist Process (New York, 1939); Edward H. Chamberlin, The Theory of Monopolistic Competition (Cambridge, 1958); John Maynard Keynes, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (New York, 1936).

2. Chamberlin, Monopolistic Competition, 78

3. Schumpeter, Business Cycles, 87-88.

4. R. F. Harrod, Towards a Dynamic Economics (London, 1949).

enterprise from economic analysis has ceased to apply. A theory which seeks to explain, for example, how a subsistence economy is converted into a commercial economy cannot overlook the factor whose function is, again in Schumpeter's words, "to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production."<sup>5</sup> Long established habits, however, are difficult to break. Dynamic growth models which omit the entrepreneurial function have, in fact, been published by, among others, Harrod, Domar, Smithies, Duesenberry, Joan Robinson, Solow, Samuelson, Kaldor, Hicks, and Goodwin.<sup>6</sup> Only a few tentative efforts have so far been made to develop dynamic growth models which do incorporate the factor of enterprise. Arrow,<sup>7</sup> and Kaldor and Mirrlees<sup>8</sup> have published models in which innovation is a function of past investment: their hypothesis is, in effect, that innovation is learned by experience. Joan Robinson<sup>9</sup> has published a model in which innovation is stimulated by factor shortages, an economic application of Toynbee's doctrine of challenge and response. With these exceptions, the entrepreneur remains today as much a stranger to economic theory as ever.

There is perhaps one advantage that can be gained from the delayed entry of this neglected factor. The other characters in the economic drama all learned their roles in the 19th century, when the approved method of economic research was armchair introspection. If John Stuart Mill wanted to know how labor or capital would react to a given change, he leaned back in his chair and thought about how he would react in the same situation. This method is still widely used; but developments in the collection of economic data in the past hundred years have been perhaps even more revolutionary

5. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York, 1950), 132.

6. R. F. Harrod, "An Essay in Dynamic Theory," *Economic Journal*, XLIX (March, 1939); and *Towards a Dynamic Economics*; E. D. Domar, "Capital Expansion, Rate of Growth and Employment," *Econometrica*, XIV (April, 1946); and "Expansion and Employment," *American Economic Review*, XXXVII (March, 1947); Arthur Smithies, "Economic Fluctuations and Growth," *Econometrica* XXV (January, 1957); James S. Duesenberry, *Business Cycles and Economic Growth* (New York, 1958); Joan Robinson, *The Accumulation of Capital* (London, 1956); and *Essays in the Theory of Economic Growth* (London, 1962); R. M. Solow, "A Contribution to the Theory of Economic Growth," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* LXX (February, 1956); Paul A. Samuelson, "Parable and Realism in Capital Theory: the Surrogate Production Function," *Review of Economic Studies*, XXIX (June, 1962); N. Kaldor, "A Model of Economic Growth," *Economic Journal*, LXVII (December, 1957); J. R. Hicks, *A Contribution to the Theory of the Trade Cycle* (Oxford, 1950); Richard M. Goodwin, "The Problem of Trend and Cycle," *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research*, V (August, 1953); and "A Model of Cyclical Growth," *Business Cycles in the Postwar World*, Proceedings of an International Economic Association Conference (London, 1955).

7. K. J. Arrow, "The Economic Implications of Learning by Doing," *Review of Economic Studies*, XXIX (June, 1962).

8. N. Kaldor and J. A. Mirrlees, "A New Model of Economic Growth," *Review of Economic Studies*, XXIX (June, 1962).

9. Joan Robinson, "Findlay's Robinsonian Model of Accumulation: a Comment," *Economica*, XXX (November, 1963).

than those in economic theory. Today, when a similar question arises, it is frequently possible to go out into the world and find out how labor or capital in fact do react in similar or related situations. If the character of the entrepreneur is developed now, in this more empirical climate, it may be hoped that he will be a more substantial and warm-blooded figure than the various stereotyped forms of economic man who labor, invest, consume, save, hoard, own natural resources, and otherwise function mechanically in the two-dimensional world of static economics.

It was in an attempt to discover something about the nature of the entrepreneurial factor in a developing economy that the study was undertaken which is reported on in this paper. In an effort to avoid the fixing of preconceived errors that sometimes result from the more usual approach, as nearly as possible a purely inductive method was used. The research assistants were directed to go out and find entrepreneurs, and gather as much information as possible about them. The resulting case studies were then analyzed for common elements. No comprehensive theory of enterprise emerged from the results, but one common element was found to be present in a strikingly high percentage of the cases studies: virtually all of the entrepreneurs found were in some manner outcasts from their own society.

The following report includes: a brief description of the Liberian economy, in which the study was undertaken; an exposition of the methodology of the study; a report of the results; and some tentative conclusions.

#### THE LIBERIAN ECONOMY IN THE MID-1960'S<sup>10</sup>

Liberia is a small country, population slightly over one million, which became a republic 120 years ago under the leadership of freed American slaves, returned to Africa under the auspices of a private philanthropic group called the American Colonization Society. Lacking the financial and military resources of the European colonial powers, these American Negro immigrants and their descendents were able to consolidate their authority only in the coastal cities of Cape Palmas, Greenville, Buchanan, Monrovia, and Robertsport, and in the immediately surrounding rural areas. The rest of the country remained for a century after the establishment of the republic and largely unexplored and unexploited hinterland, governed in the traditional fashion by the indigenous tribes. The economic system of this hinterland was basically shifting subsistence rice agriculture, organized by villages. Each village possessed rights to a well-defined area of "bush" (tropical rain forest) surrounding it. Each year, the heads of households in the village would stake out claims to particular plots, burn off the cover, and plant rice. Once the crop was harvested, the plot would be allowed to revert to bush for a number of years until its fertility was restored. Specialists existed for the weaving of cloth, blacksmithing, the practice of medicine, etc., and some primitive forms of money were used for occasional transactions, but essentially it was a subsistence economy in the sense that each family provided for its own needs and exchange played only a minor role.

10. The most recent full-scale economic survey of Liberia is Robert W. Clower et al, Growth Without Development (Evanston, Illinois, 1966); see also Moeen A. Qureshi, Yoshio Mizoe, and Francis d'A. Collings, "The Liberian Economy," I. M. F. Staff Papers, XI, no. 2 (July, 1964), 285-324.

In the past forty years a succession of events has tended to break up this traditional hinterland economy, and start it on the way to becoming a commercial exchange economy, integrated with that of the coastal cities. These events were: the advent of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in 1926; World War II, which brought the American armed forces and the construction of military highways through the interior; the discovery of several rich lodes of iron ore after the war; and the various programs of aid to underdeveloped countries, including particularly USAID and the Peace Corps. The rubber plantations and mines, and, temporarily, the war, brought opportunities for commercial agriculture, as well as Lebanese merchants with goods for consumption. USAID and the Peace Corps brought schools and teachers to even the remotest villages, with, for better or worse, education in western manners and standards. Transistor radios are doing their part as well in the same direction. Today, although the overwhelming majority of families still grow their own rice and other minor crops, there are few that do not have at least one wage earner or former wage earner among their members, and few that do not buy commercial print cloth, cooking ware, matches, kerosene, soap, canned fish, patent medicines, flashlight batteries, and other western luxuries.

In such a rapidly changing situation, many opportunities exist for the establishment of small-scale commercial enterprises, both in the new communities which have grown up around the mines and rubber plantations and in the older villages. Particularly in view of Liberia's cherished tradition as a refuge for the Negro from the commercial exploitation of the European races, it is striking how large a proportion of these opportunities have been taken up by whites. Liberian law denies citizenship to all but Negroes, and limits the privilege of land ownership to citizens. It also restricts the ownership of commercial transportation facilities to Liberian citizens. Except for those industries which are affected by these restrictions, the monetary sector of the Liberian economy is overwhelmingly dominated by foreigners. The banks, import-export companies, hotels and restaurants, and retail stores, even in Monrovia, and even down to the lowest levels of management, are in English, Dutch, French, German, Spanish, American, Indian, Syrian, or Lebanese hands. In the emerging hinterland, even the smallest hole-in-the-wall stores are normally presided over by Lebanese. Some of the families established by the immigrant Liberians of the last century have achieved wealth, and some of them have invested it in commercial enterprises; but to the Liberian of tribal background, wage-earning and subsistence agriculture appear to be the only economic alternatives. A few exceptions do exist, however; and it was to determine the characteristics of these rare individuals that the present study was undertaken.

#### THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, five economics students at Cuttington College in Liberia were given eight weeks of vacation employment during January and February, 1965, to gather case studies of persons from tribal backgrounds, resident in Liberia, who had become entrepreneurs. For the purposes of this study, an entrepreneur was defined as someone who had started a business that was not a traditional business for a member of his tribe or family. This may be thought of as a subjective variant of the Schumpeterian definition of the entrepreneur as an innovator: the qualifying economic activity is innovational from the point of view of the subject, not necessarily from that of the economy. The resulting group consists, not surprisingly,

of what Brozen,<sup>11</sup> following Danhof,<sup>12</sup> has called "imitating entrepreneurs," "characterized by readiness to adopt successful innovations inaugurated by" innovating entrepreneurs.

The field workers were instructed to make an initial determination of tribal background by asking the subject his tribe at the outset of the interview. If he named a tribe, the interview was continued. It was thought that subsequent analysis of the case histories might result in the elimination of some cases on the ground that the subject was not from a tribal background in the sense of having been born into a family which still practiced the traditional tribal ways, but in fact such culling did not prove necessary, and the initial determinations were all retained.

As was previously indicated, there was no detailed framework provided for the interviews. The field workers were instructed to collect biographies of the subjects, histories of their businesses, and as much information as possible about the nature, size, success, problems, and prospects of the businesses. Two of the field workers spent the entire eight weeks in the town of Bomi Hills, the oldest of the mining communities, and selected their cases by a door-to-door business census. The other three by the same method, selected cases from the villages in the vicinity of Gbarnga, an interior town without major industry. A few cases were also drawn from outside these two areas, as a result of following up suggestions made by interested persons not otherwise connected with the study.

At the completion of the field work, the case studies were read over by each of the field workers, by other economics students at Cuttington College who had not participated in the research, and by the present writer, for the purpose of finding common elements, patterns, tendencies, problems, etc. The following is a report of the findings.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS<sup>13</sup>

A total of forty-four case studies was collected, of which four were subsequently eliminated as not fitting the definition of "entrepreneur." Of the remainder, thirteen were from the Bomi Hills area, fourteen from the Gbarnga area, and thirteen from widely scattered other areas. The forty firms included in this report correspond to forty-one entrepreneurs, as one firm is a partnership.

The largest number of businesses were primarily engaged in retail trade: general stores, bars, etc. Next most numerous were service enterprises: photographers, tailors, barbers and beauty operators, taxi and bus operators, and radio and television repairers. There were five small-scale manufacturers, of soap, cement blocks, baked

11. Yale Brozen, "Determinants of Entrepreneurial Ability," Social Research, XXI (Autumn, 1954).

12. Clarence Danhof, "Observations on Entrepreneurship in Agriculture," Change and the Entrepreneur (Cambridge, 1949).

13. Some of the following data are presented in greater detail in tabular form at the end of this paper.

goods, and silver and gold forgings. Three of the businesses were too diversified to be classified by industry, the largest involving rubber and sugarcane, electric power production, rum distilling, building contracting, and a bar. Only one was primarily an agricultural venture, although many of the others combined farming with their primary activities.

Although the survey was conducted primarily in the area of the Gola tribe (Bomi Hills) and the Kpelle tribe (Gbarnga), only four Golas and two Kpelles were found among the forty-one entrepreneurs. The small number of Kpelles is particularly striking, as this is the most numerous tribe in Liberia. There were seven Mandingo and six Bassa; no other single tribe (except the Gola) accounted for more than three of the subjects. Seven were from tribes not native to Liberia.

The group studied was remarkably youthful. Eighty-five percent of them were under fifty years of age, fifty-nine percent under forty, and forty-one percent under thirty-five. In terms of possibly significant historical events, this means that all but a handful were still children or yet unborn when Firestone began operations in Liberia, and that about half were still children when World War II brought its great economic benefits to the country.

Financial records were not kept by more than three or four of the businesses surveyed, and most of the entrepreneurs have quite uncertain memories regarding financial matters. From observation, it is unlikely that more than five of them involve total capital in excess of \$5,000; probably more than half involve less than \$1,000 of capital, and perhaps half a dozen involve less than \$100. Twenty-five have no employees other than unpaid family members; five others have only one or two employees; none has more than twenty employees. Of the ten with more than two employees, seven involve subsidiary rubber farms which account for most of the labor.

The problems most commonly complained of were competition from the Lebanese and inability to find trustworthy and competent employees. Two or three of the storekeepers had entered into competition with the Lebanese on the latter's terms and succeeded. There is no evidence that an African consumer prefers to do business with a Lebanese merchant; but the Lebanese stores generally are better stocked and charge lower prices. In a number of cases studies, the tribal entrepreneur purchased his stock from nearby Lebanese stores at retail prices and then added his own mark-up. Reasons given for this practice were: inability to handle case lots; necessity of closing the store and traveling to Monrovia to purchase wholesale; lack of credit facilities except with the local retailer. The problem of finding trustworthy employees or associates appears to be a real and serious one, particularly with successful businesses. One case, a government employee, started a small shop for his wife to operate in 1954; by 1957 it had grown to the point where his wife could no longer handle it alone, and his brother-in-law was taken into the business; by 1961 the brother-in-law had allegedly stolen enough to reduce the capital to about half of what the business had been started with in 1954. Another has two buses but operates only one because he cannot find a reliable driver. These are typical. The problem is evidently not insoluble, because there are exceptions: the operator of a successful photography studio has established branches in two other communities that are managed by employees, for example. But storekeepers who must close the shop any time they are off the premises are the normal rule.

Probably the most common problem not commented on by the subjects, but observed by the interviewers, was lack of ordinary business skills and know-how. As has already been noted, most entrepreneurs did not even keep records. One subject, questioned about his volume of business, could only say "The money comes in and goes out--who knows how much it is?" A cement block manufacturer told of "Making and selling and

making and selling" for the first few months he was in business, all the while wondering why he kept getting poorer and poorer. Then he sat down and figured, and found that he was selling his blocks at three cents less than his production cost. Few have ever been inside a bank, or done business by mail, or entered into a written contract of any kind.

By far the most nearly universal characteristic revealed in the survey, however, was separation from the subjects' own tribal and family backgrounds. Only two of the forty-one entrepreneur's were doing business in their home communities. This would not seem unusual in the United States, but in Liberia it violates the normal expectation. Growing up in the tribal village does not mean becoming independent of the family, but rather assuming a fuller share of the family responsibilities. The subjects of this survey, however, had not only (with the two exceptions noted) left their villages; almost all of them had even left their tribal areas. Although one of the centers of the survey was in Gola country, and four Gola entrepreneurs were found, three of the four were found in other parts of the country.

Few if any of these uprooted entrepreneurs had left their villages for the purpose of going into business. Most of them had left as children or youths, and then years later had become entrepreneurs. Some, coming from upward-mobile families in communities without schools, had been sent away to missionary boarding schools; some were orphans; some had been "given away" to more prosperous urban families; some had been recruited for military service or for labor at the Firestone plantation, which in former years was dependent upon forced labor. One, an orphan, was sent by his grandmother at age fifteen to live with a distant relative in the interior to escape recruitment as forced labor for the Spanish island of Fernando Po; one, born in Guinea, was sold as a child bride to a Liberian husband; one ran away from home at thirteen because his father made him work too hard; another ran away from home at twelve because her mother died and her father's other wife disliked her. Some left home through good fortune and some through misfortune; but one way or another, virtually all of them lived for a few years outside the traditions and away from the security of their tribal backgrounds. Ashton,<sup>14</sup> Redlich,<sup>15</sup> and other economic historians have pointed out that even such a drastic structural economic change as the industrial revolution was characterized by innovators who for the most part made changes in what they were already doing; peasants who used their farm wagons for transporting goods and eventually became merchants; weavers of homespun who became the founders of textile mills; laborers who developed labor-saving devices. By contrast, the tribal entrepreneur in Liberia seems characteristically to be someone who has made the sharpest possible break with his past. The possible significance of this observation will be discussed tentatively in the concluding section of this paper.

14. T. S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1948), 2.

15. Fritz Redlich, "Entrepreneurship in the Initial Stages of Industrialization," *Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth* (Cambridge, 1954), 7-9.

## CONCLUSION

The best that can be hoped for from an inductive study such as this is that an hypothesis will emerge which is suitable for testing through further research. In the present case, two hypotheses seem possible. One is that entrepreneurs tend generally to be misfits, outcasts, uprooted people, etc. The other is that the culture of the Liberian tribal village is hostile to enterprise.

The first of these hypotheses seems at first glance to derive a good deal of support from history. The Jews of Europe, the Chinese of the East Indies, the Lebanese of West Africa, the Pilgrim Fathers of America, and many other such groups of displaced persons have initiated waves of innovation, taking advantage of economic opportunities which had not been perceived or acted upon by the settled populations of those areas. Perhaps the displaced tribal Liberians of the present study constitute an equivalent group.

On closer examination, however, the correspondence seems not particularly close. The effect on a young Renaissance Jew of knowing that his forefathers were driven from Jerusalem in the 1st Century A.D. can hardly be the equivalent of the effect on a young tribal African of becoming an orphan. The cases in the present study, moreover, are uprooted individuals, while those cited for comparison are groups of people who took their cultures with them and transplanted them in new soil. It has already been noted that the typical innovator is a man who develops his original occupation along new lines, not a man who makes a complete break with his past, as our tribal entrepreneurs have done. The first hypothesis, therefore, seems on balance not particularly promising.

Much less evidence from independent sources can be mustered for the evaluation of the second hypothesis, that the tribal culture of Liberia is hostile to enterprise.<sup>16</sup> A general observation which would be widely accepted is that tribal culture is highly traditional, placing a high value on doing things the way they have "always" been done.<sup>17</sup> This is, after all, the opposite of innovation.

Brozen, in an article on cultural determinants of entrepreneurial ability,<sup>18</sup> has listed some fifteen factors that appear to constitute almost an exact description in reverse of Liberian tribal culture. In his view, for example, the development of entrepreneurship depends on the extent to which society "expects choices to be made on the basis of reasoning, and in terms of attaining a maximum of an avowed end."<sup>19</sup> This factor in itself denies traditionalism. Another factor is the extent to which society's criteria for membership in its various organizations "are germane to the

16. See, however, Theodore Geiger and Winifred Armstrong, The Development of African Private Enterprise (Washington, 1964), especially 138-148. The evidence in case studies reported therein is consistent with the conclusions of the present paper. For a report on primitive and transitional commercial practices in general in Africa, see Paul Bohannon and George Dalton (eds.), Markets in Africa (Garden City, 1965).

17. cf. James L. Gibbs, Jr., (ed), Peoples of Africa (New York, 1965), 73-77, 231-232, 312-313, 433-437, and 577-579.

18. Brozen, "Entrepreneurial Ability."

19. *Ibid.*, 341.



purpose for which selection is made"<sup>20</sup> (i. e. , the extent to which an individual's role is determined by his abilities rather than by such factors as his caste or family). The village blacksmith in Liberia is the son of the previous village blacksmith. Another of Brozen's factors is the extent to which relationships are defined as functionally specific<sup>21</sup> (e. g. , the extent to which a business relationship is "strictly business"). In the tribal village, business, friendship, family, tabu, religion, and custom are all inextricably intertwined.

If this second and more promising hypothesis is in fact supported by further research, it would seem that the greatest hope for rapid development in the Liberian economy lies in the destruction of the tribal village culture that appears to be rapidly under way. The roads, the Peace Corps, the employment opportunities, and many other factors are bringing about changes which it is doubtful that so integrated a culture can survive. If it is indeed the case that economic progress in Liberia can be achieved only through the destruction of the principal source of security of the majority of its people, it may still be desired, or, whether desired or not, inevitable. At least, however, a significant additional cost will have been taken into account in the calculus of costs and benefits.

20. Ibid., 341-342

21. Ibid., 342-343

TABLE 1  
TYPE OF ENTERPRISE BY TRIBE

Tribe	Retail Trade	Manufacture	Service	Farming	Combination	Total
Bassa		1	4		1	6
Bele	1					1
Gbandi	1					1
Gola	2		1	1		4
Grebo	1		1			2
Kisi	2	1				3
Kpelle			2			2
Kran		1	1			2
Kru	2					2
Loma					1	1
Mandingo	3	2	2			7
Vai	3					3
Foreign	4		2		1	7
TOTAL	19	5	13	1	3	41

TABLE 2  
TYPE OF ENTERPRISE BY REASON FOR LEAVING TRIBAL VILLAGE

Reason for Leaving	Retail Trade	Manufacturing	Service	Farming	Combination	Total
Orphaned	2		1			3
Given away	3	1	1	1		6
Sent away to school	4	1	5			10
Army or Firestone	4	1				5
Parents migrated	2	1				3
Trouble with law	1		2			3
Runaway			1		1	2
Other and Unknown	3	1	2		1	7
Did not leave			1		1	2
TOTAL	19	5	13	1	3	41

TABLE 3  
REASON FOR LEAVING TRIBAL VILLAGE BY TRIBE

Tribe	Orphaned	Given Away	Sent Away to School	Army or Fire- stone	Parents Migra- ted	Trouble with law	Run- away	Other and Un- known	Did not leave	Total
Bassa	1		1			1	2	1		6
Bele								1		1
Gbandi				1						1
Gola		3						1		4
Grebo			2							2
Kisi	1			2						3
Kpelle			1						1	2
Kran			1		1					2
Kru			2							2
Loma									1	1
Mandingo	1	2	2					2		7
Vai				2	1					3
Foreign		1	1		1	2		2		7
TOTAL	3	6	10	5	3	3	2	7	2	41

THE PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT  
IN LIBERIA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR  
FOR THE 1970'S<sup>1</sup>

Mark L. Gardner

For centuries the indigenous peoples of West Africa have obtained their livelihood from agricultural activities defined in the broadest sense of the term to include fishing, hunting, farming, and handicrafts. The original inhabitants of Liberia consist of 23 distinguishable tribal groups.<sup>2</sup> The ruling class in Liberia has been the Americo-Liberians or the freed slaves who resettled the area in the early 1800's under the auspices of the American Colonization Society and established the Republic of Liberia in 1847. Under President William V. S. Tubman, who took office in 1944, the country has taken great strides toward unification and economic improvement. Nevertheless, in 1970 at least three-fourths of the population lived in rural areas and engaged in primarily agricultural pursuits.<sup>3</sup>

Liberia entered the 1970's with a growing proportion of its income originating in the mining and trade sectors of the economy. In 1966 nearly one-third of the Gross Domestic Product originated in iron ore mining.<sup>4</sup> Only five percent of the GDP came from manufacturing. The tertiary sector including trade, services, and construction contributed about 30 percent. The agricultural sector, including subsistence activities,<sup>5</sup> accounted for about 25 percent of GDP while occupying about

1. The research for this paper was conducted by the author while he was teaching at Cuttington College in Liberia from August 1968 to March 1970. The author is grateful for advice and comments offered by Craig M. Stroh and Lawrence W. Bates of Eastern Illinois University in the preparation of the manuscript. Any errors or shortcomings in the paper are the author's sole responsibility.

2. George Schwab and edited with additional material by George W. Harley, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Peabody Museum, 1947), 19. Another study has been conducted by the Tubman Center of African Culture, Robertsport, Liberia, under the direction of Dr. Kjell Zetterstrom. Studies on the Bassa and Kru tribal groups have been published, and studies on the Krahn and Grebo are expected shortly.

3. Conference on Development Strategy and Objectives, University of Liberia, October 27-29, 1969, sponsored by the Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, R. L.

4. Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, National Income of Liberia (Monrovia, Liberia, April, 1968), 24. GDP is preferred to GNP because it is larger. It includes net factor payments to abroad, which sometimes make up to one-fourth of the total.

5. Ibid., 15-17 & 25-27, and "Quarterly Statistical Report," Journal of Commerce and Industry (Monrovia: Department of Commerce and Industry), IV, 3-4 (July-December, 1969), 19, Table 5.1.

75 percent of the labor force. Unfortunately, very little is known about the composition of the non-wage Liberian labor force which is concentrated primarily in the agricultural sector. However, a considerable migration of workers and families from rural areas to concession sites and the larger towns and cities has been taking place in recent years.

Liberia is a very sparsely populated country with an average of less than thirty people per square mile covering its 43,000 square miles, and a total population of 1.1 million.<sup>6</sup> A notable exception is Monrovia, the capital and economic hub, which harbors about ten percent of the population. The coastal plain of Liberia extends about five miles inland and consists mainly of sandy, grassy lowland.<sup>7</sup> The interior of the country consists mainly of low and high rain forest. The low "bush" usually has been farmed at some time and regrown, while the high "bush" has never been farmed. There is a constant battle between the farmer and the "bush," a battle which often forces the poorly equipped, unskilled, and unprotected farmer to look elsewhere for a livelihood. It is estimated that less than ten percent of the Liberian population is literate.<sup>8</sup> The land is not hostile to life as wild fruits and small game still abound in most parts of the interior.

The climate and the terrain make it difficult for the Liberian farmer to eke out much more than a subsistence living from the soil (using his fairly primitive techniques). There are two distinguishable seasons in Liberia - the rainy season, roughly from May to October, and the dry season, from November to April. The temperature varies little during the year (60 to 90° F), and the humidity is usually above 90 percent the year round. In some years as much as 200 inches of rain falls along the coast (less inland), but much of the water is carried back to the sea or seeps deep into the ground. The major type of rock formation is lateritic, which is porous and crumbly with a high ferric content. The nutrients of the soil are therefore easily washed away or absorbed by a process known as leeching. During the dry season, the soil becomes very dry and dusty with little organic matter present. In the early part of the year, the bush is traditionally cut and burned to replenish some of the nutrients in the soil. The surface is scratched with a short-handled hoe, and seeds are scattered by hand. Commercial fertilizers are not available in most cases. This method may cause serious erosion, but may be the only one available at present to provide phosphates and potash.<sup>9</sup>

Until the mid-1960's Liberia was heavily dependent on rubber exports as the main source of export revenue. Iron ore production had passed rubber production in value terms by 1964.<sup>10</sup> During the 1960's the absolute value of food imports increased but

6. Statistics and Reports Division, Agency for International Development, Selected Economic Data for the Less Developed Countries (Washington, D. C., June, 1969), 6.

7. U. S. Army Area Handbook for Liberia (Washington, D. C., July, 1964), 276.

8. A. I. D., Selected Economic Data, 7.

9. The "slash-and burn" method is ably described in W. D. McCourtie's pioneering study, Traditional Farming in Liberia: A Preliminary Enquiry, (Monrovia: College of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Liberia, September, 1968), 10-13. Also see U. S. Army Handbook, 278-80.

10. Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 65, Table VI (1) and 34, Table V (4).

held steady at roughly ten percent of total imports which also increased during the period.<sup>11</sup> It is probable that as more Liberians enter the monetary sector of the economy, a certain portion of their earnings will be spent on imported foodstuffs. The present level of agricultural imports, primarily food, is no cause for alarm. On the contrary, the standard of living has probably been enhanced considerably. Notwithstanding, a closer examination of import statistics would have to be made to adjust for price changes or a shift in preference toward high-priced food imports. Since Liberia uses the U. S. dollar both internally and externally, the balance of payments is adjusted automatically. There is no central bank to regulate the money supply. Export sales and foreign investment are the major sources of U. S. dollars. In the event of a chronic net dollar outflow, however, the Liberian economy could be hurt by a reduction in the money supply.

### INDICATORS OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Economists have developed several criteria for determining whether a sector is growing or not. First, it is important to note that there are several conventional ways of dividing an economy into sectors according to national income accounting procedures. Most development economists divide economic activities into primary (agriculture and mining), secondary (manufacturing), and tertiary (service and trade). Government spending is usually included in the tertiary sector under a separate heading.

Quantitative measures of development may be expressed in one of two ways. The first is a microeconomic measure which expresses the value of output per worker in the sector and compares this ratio with productivity in other sectors of the economy. A second measure is more concerned with the contributions of the various sectors to an increase in the national income. For example, in a three sector macroeconomic approach, an increase in national income of \$45 million could be divided as follows: \$30 million to primary activities, \$5 million to secondary activities, and \$10 million to tertiary activities. During the 1960's primary activities (agriculture and mining) made the largest absolute contribution to the increase in Liberia's national income. Subtle distinctions between contributions and welfare may, however, be in order. If the increase in income originating in primary activities is offset by an increase in population, then per capita income in the sector may actually decline. The economist is then truly faced with a dilemma of trying to encourage economic activities which will increase the per capita income in all sectors of the economy.

In a country such as Liberia the prospect of rapid population growth does not pose any immediate threat to growth in per capita income. Liberia is sparsely populated and the latest growth statistics indicate only a 1.7 percent increase per year.<sup>12</sup> In many developing countries, the rate of increase is greater than two percent per year. In fact, an increase in aggregate demand for basic commodities, which accompanies

11. U. S. Army Handbook, 328; Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 124.

12. A.I.D. Selected Economic Data, 6-7.

population growth, may, other things equal, stimulate the growth of national income. The problem then becomes one of sustaining the growth of national income at a rate which is the maximum attainable.

For sustained growth to occur, economists have stipulated that certain qualitative or "structural"<sup>13</sup> changes must take place in the economy. Albert Hirschman, of Yale University has suggested that linkages must be used among various industries in the economy. By exploiting the complex system of interrelationships within and among the sectors, greater degrees of specialization can be attained, and greater productivity achieved, or so the argument contends. Unfortunately, Hirschman believes that the agricultural sector has very few linkages and therefore does not provide very fertile ground for investment.<sup>14</sup>

A similar approach emphasizes the desirability of diversification in the output of the entire economy to avoid too much dependence on one or two products. The argument, first suggested by Raul Prebisch, asserts that developing countries face "adverse terms of trade"<sup>15</sup> for their exports which contribute substantially to national income and consist mainly of primary products. It is well known that the prices of raw materials and agricultural products have fluctuated greatly and adversely affected the national income of some nations; but, on the other hand, the trend in recent years for some products has been toward higher prices.<sup>16</sup> Since the escalation of the Vietnam war and the subsequent destruction of some Far Eastern rubber plantations, the prices paid to Liberian farmers for raw latex have increased nearly 50 percent from the 1968 low. This phenomenon, however, may be shortlived. One possible solution to the problem would entail the establishment of new industries within the agricultural sector. Prebisch, however, has suggested that developing countries pursue a policy of industrialization which is not based in agriculture.

While both of these qualitative approaches to the phenomenon of development emphasize the maturing of the economy to supply its own inputs and the ability to withstand external shocks, they are not necessarily complementary. The first proposal usually implies capital-deepening in one or two lines of production, and the second usually involves capital-broadening in several different areas. It seems that the economist only compounds his problem when he moves from the relatively elementary realm of per capita incomes to the more subtle and complex areas of development strategies. The question that is always lurking in the background is whether any universally applicable prescriptions can be made for agricultural development or whether each case should be diagnosed and attacked on its own merits. It will be assumed that the case of Liberia is unique and deserves special attention. The well-being of three-quarters of the population involved in agriculture is our concern. A general description of the diet of the Liberians will yield some clues for a possible development strategy.

13. The word "structural" has several meanings in economics, as Fritz Machlup points out in Essays in Economic Semantics (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1967), 73-96.

14. Albert Hirschman, The Strategy of Economic Development (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1958), 109.

15. Raul Prebisch, The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems (Lake Success, New York: United Nations, 1950).

16. "Quarterly Statistical Report," 39-41, Tables 15.1-15.2 & 16.1.



## FOOD CROPS - STAPLES, PROTEIN, AND VEGETABLES

Starches provide the staple nourishment in the Liberian diet. They include rice, the single most important cereal grain, tuberose plants such as cassava and yams, bananas and plantain. Rice is grown in nearly all parts of Liberia because most Liberians prefer it to any other main dish. Even so, a large amount of the rice consumed annually in Liberia is imported, especially in Monrovia where country rice is regarded as dirty. Imports will probably continue to increase as population grows and shifts to urban and suburban centers and as the relatively capital-intensive irrigated method of rice cultivation slowly replaces the extensive "slash and burn" method.<sup>17</sup> The cassava and yam culture is also found in Liberia, especially in the eastern regions bordering on the Ivory Coast. Cassava is generally regarded as a substitute for rice when rice is not readily available. Bananas and plantain are usually prepared as a side dish either by boiling or frying in oil. The rice is eaten from a communal bowl in the middle of the day with some meat, fish, vegetable and oil gravy known as "soup." Persons living in large towns and cities convenient to Lebanese stores often supplement their diets with imported foods.

Protein in the Liberian diet comes from two main sources - chicken products and fish. A limited amount of fresh-killed beef, pork, and goat meat is also available. There are several poultry farms in Liberia, which supply the country with fresh eggs, and fresh-killed or frozen chickens.<sup>18</sup> The feed for chickens and other equipment involved in production is almost exclusively imported. Both fresh and frozen fish are available for purchase. Fanti and Kru fishermen sell a considerable amount of fresh fish in markets along the coast.<sup>19</sup> The Mesurado Fishing Company has a monopoly in the frozen fish market with several agents in the major inland towns. The women of the villages weave their own nets and catch small fresh water fish in many streams and rivers which flow in Liberia.

Since there is no commercial beef or milk-producing enterprise in Liberia, much of the beef is imported on the hoof from the savanna region to the north and slaughtered at local markets or at the packing house in Monrovia. Several independent farmers raise hogs, but their activities can be considered a sideline which at present has little economic importance. Goats and chickens are found in most towns, but they are allowed to run wild. Careful breeding and animal husbandry are not widely known or practiced.

17. The population shift to urban areas has not been thoroughly documented but is usually concomitant with development. A very useful unpublished report discusses some of the factors contributing to urbanization in Liberia, Dominic Tarpeh and James V. Mueller, "A Study of Liberia's Traditional and Modern Land Tenure Systems," prepared for USAID/Liberia, January 9, 1970, Part II, 12.

18. Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 50.

19. Ibid., 64.

Some hunting for game is still done in the villages away from built-up areas. Large game such as elephant is no longer found in Liberia, but occasionally one hears that a "bush cow" has been trapped. There are small black deer, especially in the eastern counties, which bring a good price in Monrovia. Monkeys and dogs are sometimes used for meat, but the number of monkeys is decreasing. Small game birds such as pigeons and guinea hens and the ever-present weaver birds are also a target for Liberians with shotguns.

Vegetable and fruit production is based on the smallest unit of production - the household. The supply of fruits and vegetables varies with the season, but most are available the year round at higher prices during the off season. The main citrus crops are oranges and grapefruits, which are especially plentiful at the end of the rainy season. The main vegetables are greens and peppers. Most kinds are readily available the year round. They are used in making "soup" in combination with oil and meat or fish. Rice and "soup" is the national favorite. Pineapples are also plentiful during the dry season, and tomatoes are grown in the northern part of the country because nematods have made production in the south impossible without pesticides.<sup>20</sup>

### CASH CROPS

The next group of agricultural products - cash crops - is a rather arbitrary classification. In general, cash crops are produced strictly for sale and not for consumption by the household. They include coffee beans, cocoa beans, and sugar cane. Coffee and cocoa beans are sold to agents of the Liberian Produce Marketing Corporation, which is a concession for exporting agricultural produce. Sugar cane is usually transformed into "cane juice," a strong form of rum. The stills are required by law to be licensed, but enforcement of this regulation is difficult. The sugar cane farmer usually sells the "CJ" to a local bar or Lebanese merchant. A great deal of cane juice is consumed in Liberia, often to the detriment of the citizenry.

Much of the agricultural output which is exported from Liberia is actually a re-export from Guinea or Ivory Coast.<sup>21</sup> This is especially true of the cash crops: coffee, cocoa, and to a certain extent, palm nuts. These crops have only recently been harvested on a commercial basis, since the founding of the Liberian Produce Marketing Corporation in the early 1960's. Many Liberian farmers in Lofa, Nimba, and Bong Counties are starting to plant small coffee and cocoa farms.<sup>22</sup>

20. In a personal conversation with the director of the Cuttington College Farm, Suakoko, Liberia, Mr. Bibi Roberts, the author learned that nematods have spread throughout most of southern Liberia killing young tomato plants. It is still possible to grow tomatoes in the north without spraying.

21. Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 43.

22. The scale of operations for most farmers is limited by their cash incomes which are usually very small. The only town with a cooperative is Massambolahun, a Mandingo-Bandi town in Lofa County.

## COMMERCIAL CROPS

Commercial crops such as rubber, timber, and palm oil are usually produced on plantations, or in the case of timber, on national forest reserves. Major concessions have been granted in rubber production - the largest and oldest being the Firestone Company with plantations at Harbel and Cavalla.<sup>23</sup> More recent concessions have been granted to the B. F. Goodrich Company and the Alan Grant Company and other smaller firms. There is an association of independent rubber growers that sells its rubber to the concessions for export. Many government officials belong to this association.

Several timber concessions have been opened in the 1960's in the eastern part of Liberia. Many types of valuable hardwoods are found on these large government-regulated concessions.<sup>24</sup> At the present time prime individual trees are being felled, but efforts are being made to harvest the trees systematically and to encourage reforestation. The trees are carried on trucks to the ports of Harper and Greenville for export. There are several Liberian-owned sawmills which do a fair amount of business.

A relatively new development in Liberia is the planting of palm oil trees. The maturation process takes about twenty years, and therefore very little oil has been harvested for commercial or export purposes. The palm oil consumed in Liberia today is prepared from palm nuts which are gathered wild. Moreover, the bulk of Liberia's cooking oil needs are still imported. Some households have enough surplus oil to sell it in the market, but few households have the manpower or skill to prepare large quantities of oil.

## THE RELATIVE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The value of subsistence activities, which involve growing and gathering for the use of households, was estimated to be \$30 million in 1966 as opposed to \$31 million in 1965 and 1964.<sup>25</sup> This estimate includes all food, handicrafts, and construction which takes place for the benefit of the household without any exchange of money. The relative stability of the figure probably indicates that it is a very rough estimate. Since nearly three-quarters of the Liberian population live in rural areas and probably engage in some type of subsistence activity, an estimate of \$30 million would imply that subsistence activity would be valued at less than \$40 per head per year in most of rural Liberia. According to this estimate, productivity in the rural agricultural sector seems abysmally low and hardly sufficient to support life. Since nine-tenths of

23. Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 38.

24. Ibid., 57.

25. Ibid., 25.

the Liberian people are not in wage or salaried employment, it is difficult to imagine how they can survive. It is the author's contention that the value of subsistence activities as broadly defined above is considerably greater than \$30 million per year and that cash incomes to supplement subsistence activities in rural areas are increasing.

Subsistence activities as defined yield no cash income. To earn money rural household members must sell their labor services to the Government, at rubber plantations and iron ore concessions, or become traders. There are several ways to earn "pocket change" by selling anything from surplus fruits and vegetables to soft goods purchased in bulk from Lebanese merchants.<sup>26</sup> Some farmers sell rice to the Lebanese after the harvest in November. The Lebanese hold the rice until August or September of the following year, when farmers' stocks are exhausted, resell the rice at often twice the price they paid for it, and make a handsome profit. Another source of cash income in the rural areas is the sale of cash crops. The Lebanese are also active in this field as the agents for LMPC. The idea of cash crop farming was just beginning to become popular toward the end of the 1960's. Few tribal farmers, however, have the funds to clear, buy, and plant large tracts of land with tree crops or sugar cane.<sup>27</sup> As of the end of 1969, there was only one private cooperative for the sale of coffee and cocoa in Liberia - that established by Mr. Jordan Holtram of the Peace Corps staff in the town of Massambolahun, Lofa County. Cash crop income amounted to less than \$5 million in 1966 or to less than 2 percent of GDP. Agricultural activities excluding subsistence activities contributed less than 15 percent of GDP in 1968.<sup>28</sup> If cash crops are going to become a steady reliable income for residents of the rural sector, then considerable investment in cooperatives, credit facilities, and land improvement will have to take place. It is the author's opinion that the Government of Liberia should concentrate its development efforts on two or three cash crops by establishing nurseries and cooperatives at strategic points around the country. The selection of these crops and locations should be done with the aid of an agronomist.

Two general but not always complementary goals can be set for agricultural production in a developing country such as Liberia, *viz.*, import substitution and export promotion. In some cases import substitution is neither possible nor profitable regardless of the desire to become selfsufficient. Production for export, on the other hand, should take account of the world demand conditions and the comparative costs of production. In Liberia there are several areas in which import substitution is possible and favored by climate and natural endowments. These areas include rice, sugar products, timber products, rubber products, and palm products. All of Liberia's sugar needs are now imported. The feasibility of establishing a sugar refinery should be investigated. Nearly all of Liberia's paper, furniture, packaging, and construction materials are imported. The Japanese have investigated the possibility of establishing a wood pulp industry, and the Government of Liberia should pursue this idea further. Some recapping of tires is now done in Monrovia, but new tires are imported from Europe and Japan. In Liberia there are thousands of taxicabs that use the same size tires, which is the beginning of a market. The establishment of a tire

26. The term "Lebanese" is used to refer to white Arabic-speaking traders regardless of their national origin, e.g., Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, and others.

27. Tarpeh and Mueller, "Liberia's Traditional and Modern Land Tenure Systems." This paper contains a discussion of the procedures for purchasing land in Liberia.

28. Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 44-46 and "Quarterly Statistical Report," 12, Table 1.2.

industry, however, would probably have to await the enlargement of the market through trade agreements.

Production for export can be encouraged in the following areas: coffee, cocoa, crude rubber, and timber. In another decade palm products may be added to the list. The international demand for agricultural products is fairly strong as the 1970's begin; therefore, Liberia should make every effort to enter into international agreements with the Common Market and other bodies.<sup>29</sup> Since Liberia is a small producer, she will probably be given a larger quota than she can meet at first. The Government may then find it in its interest to encourage production once it can be fairly certain of the prices it will face in the international market.

### SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

The agricultural sector of the Liberian economy as it enters the 1970's is at the same time growing and contracting. Farmers no longer find it necessary to take part in subsistence activities, because cash incomes in the rural areas now make it possible to purchase part of the household's food, clothing, and shelter requirements. Families are beginning to specialize in different lines of productive activities, but by and large traditional techniques are still used.

Rubber production still generates the largest income in the agricultural sector and employs the largest number of workers in a wage-earning capacity.<sup>30</sup> Cash crop farming is conducted on a small scale except for the estates of public officials where larger investment is possible. The production of poultry is well-advanced in comparison with meat production and animal husbandry. Fish, however, provide most of the protein in the Liberian diet.

Subsistence activities, including construction, handicrafts, and food production for household use, still constitute more than one-third of the value of goods and services produced in the agricultural sector. The difference between rural areas and agricultural areas is becoming more difficult to determine. Many of the large road towns are indeed centers of agricultural activities, but they can no longer be called rural. The problem, as far as the economist is concerned in this case, seems to be one of semantics. Since most of the industrial development of Liberia has taken place along the coast and especially around Monrovia, it is acceptable to speak of the interior as primarily rural with the exception of the major road towns such as Kakata, Gbarnga, Ganta, and Saniquellie.

Some economists believe that a good way to stimulate output in the rural areas is to increase the accessibility of rural producers to urban markets by building roads.<sup>31</sup> If the cost of transporting goods produced in rural areas is low enough, then the effective demand of urban markets and international markets will be felt in rural areas. In addition, farmers will be exposed to manufactured goods that they can purchase

29. Suggested by Undersecretary of Planning, Franklin Neal in his paper on foreign trade at the Conference on Development Strategies and Objectives.

30. "Quarterly Statistical Report," 19, Table 5.1.

31. See, William R. Stanley, "Transport Expansion in Liberia," The Geographical Review, LX (1970), 537-40.

with their cash incomes. Roads, then, become the arteries by which commerce is conducted and over which ideas travel.

Investment in roads does, however, place a drain on a nation's resources over a long period of time. An example of this occurred in Ghana during the Nkrumah era. The Nkrumah government was obsessed with the construction of public works projects which require huge initial investments but yield very small annual returns. For example, the paved road from Cape Coast to Kumasi even today does not carry much traffic with the exception of passenger vehicles and timber trucks. An important consideration, however, is that the construction of the black top road has not appreciably affected the methods of production in the area traversed. Cocoa farmers have not made any startling innovations as a result of the new accessibility provided by the road. No new industries have been built along the road. Certainly, the country is more unified in a political sense, but at the cost of inflation, an out migration of young people, and increased demand for imports. Some dislocation and distortions are bound to arise as an economy changes. For this reason a detailed description of activities in each sector of the economy, however defined, is a useful place to begin policy proposals.

In the case of Liberia, economic growth during the 1960's was very rapid and remarkably steady when compared with other African nations. From 1957 to 1966 the GDP of Liberia rose from \$113 million to \$266 million at market prices, which is greater than thirteen percent per year including price increases, depreciation, and net factor payments to abroad, all of which increased substantially during this period.<sup>32</sup> In real terms this amounted to an annual increase of between three and four percent in per capita National Income. Most of the impetus for the gain originated with iron ore mining exports and commercial rubber plantation exports. The remainder of the agricultural sector played a minor role in the increase. Since there are so many possible courses of action open and since the agricultural sector affects the welfare of such a large percentage of the Liberian population, we have outlined a strategy for agricultural development in the 1970's.

The prospects for agricultural development in the 1970's are not bright. The Government of Liberia has no "Open-Door Policy" which applies especially to agriculture. This does not mean that foreign investors and foreign governments have not tried their hand in the agricultural sector. President Tubman's "Operation Production" was launched with considerable fanfare in 1955. The Gbedin Project, a pilot project in the program, (swamp rice) became stagnant, and in 1962 experts from Taiwan were called in. The African Fruit Company, a German concession, was forced to close down banana production because of blight.<sup>33</sup> LPMC (Liberian Produce Marketing Corporation), a Danish concession, the sole authorized agent for dealing in cash crops has met with limited success and is continuing to expand operations into such areas as palm oil production, tree crops and swamp rice. On the other end of the spectrum is the Club Brewery, a Swiss concession, which reportedly imports ninety-five percent of the ingredients for its beer including the water and packaging.<sup>34</sup> The "backward" linkage effects of processed foods and beverages are practically nonexistent, whereas the "forward" effects are visible in the many road-

32. Department of Planning, National Income of Liberia, 24, 159.

33. Stanley, "Transport Expansion," 534.

34. Statement by Honorable Charles D. Sherman at the Conference of Development Strategies.

side bars springing up around the country. Because of liberal trade policies, however, imported beers are allowed to enter Liberia and compete with Club after paying an import duty.

There is no pressing reason that the Government of Liberia should make improvements in the agricultural sector. Iron ore exports are continuing to increase and President Tubman is as popular in the hinterland as in the urban areas. However, the halycon days may be upset by unanticipated events in the developed world that could reduce the demand for the type of iron ore Liberia produces. Only 10,000 Liberians are employed by mining concerns, and the prospects for increased hiring in this capital-intensive, extractive industry are limited.<sup>35</sup> The majority of Liberians still depend on agricultural pursuits for a livelihood.

Considerable opportunities present themselves to the Government of Liberia to aid the majority of its citizens. It is sufficient to outline briefly a few suggestions. Basic and applied research activities in the country should be coordinated. Firestone has developed its own high-yield rubber trees. The FAO and Taiwan-supported activities have developed several hardy strains of rice suited to Liberia. The knowledge and efforts of various private, public, foreign, and international agencies should be pooled at a nonpartisan center for agricultural research. A regional or national center, however, will be useful only if knowledge can be disseminated among Liberian farmers.

The present system of agricultural extension agents is inadequate for several reasons. The agents are essentially political appointees who have little or no expertise in a field of agriculture. They are not well-trained, well-equipped, or well-paid. The amount of aid which they can impart in either knowledge or material terms is severely limited. Improvements in the system could be realized by putting agents through a rigorous training program of classroom and field instruction such as that developed by the UN advisers at the University of Liberia Farm in Johnsonville. The national high school exam could serve as a basis for selection of the agents. Excellent training, however, will be wasted if the Government of Liberia fails to provide fertilizer, seeds, and implements to the agents and their clients. Compensation for the job should be sufficient to discourage outside employment of the agent, which often becomes the agent's primary concern under the present system.

Additional comments could be made about reform of the educational curriculum and the establishment of credit and marketing institutions. The expansion of cash crop production for export seems to be the most logical course of action for this richly endowed nation. Timber, coffee, cocoa, and palm products as well as the traditional rubber offer the most immediate areas for exploitation. Basically, these are areas for capital-widening activities such as an increase in the number of acres planted with tree crops. The means of exploitation will be decided primarily by the Government of Liberia. Through its encouragement, the welfare of the majority of Liberia's citizens will be positively affected. Through its neglect, the costs of social, economic and possibly political disorganization could continue unabated.

35. "Quarterly Statistical Report," 19, Table 5.1.





## NOTES ON KAILUNDU'S CAMPAIGN INTO LIBERIA IN 1889

Kenneth C. Wylie

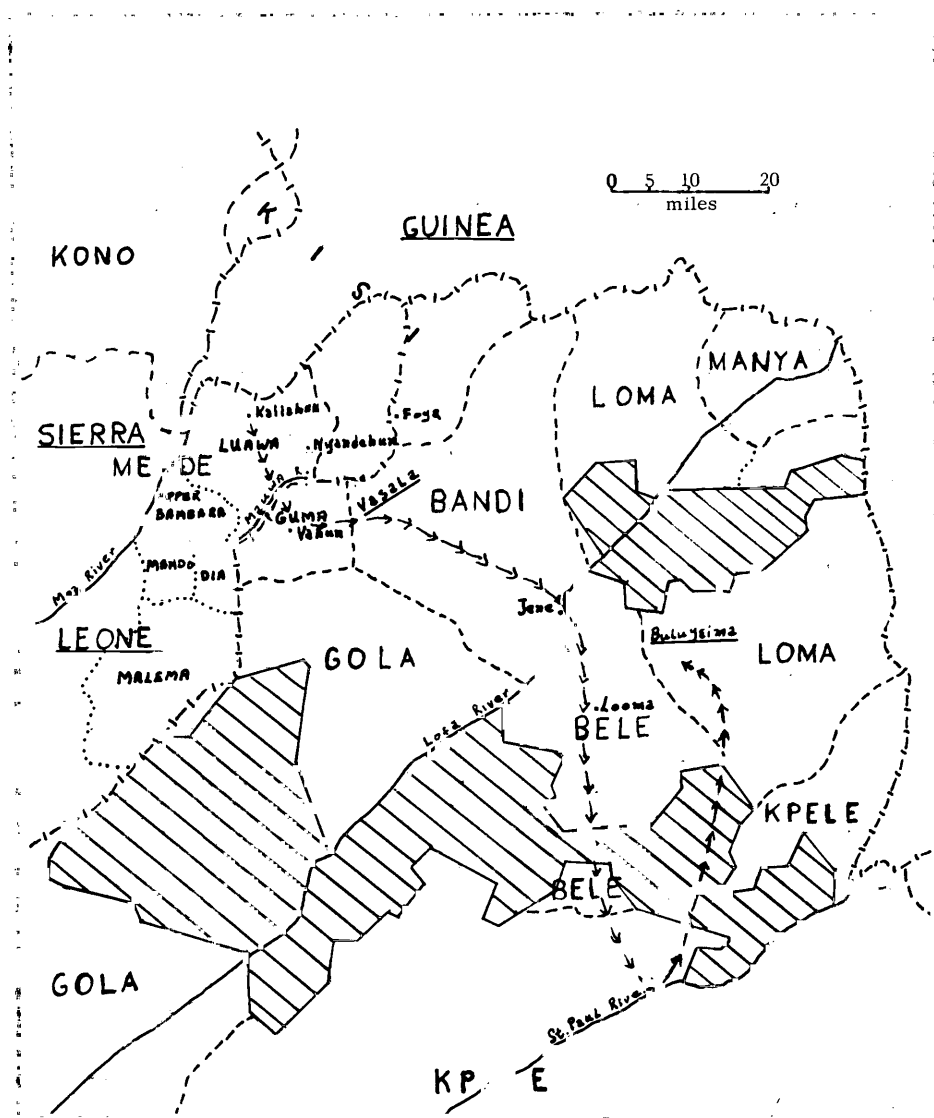
In 1889 the great war-chief Kailundu of Luawa led an expedition from his capital town Kailahun deep into Liberian territory in pursuit of a renegade chief named Bawurume. This raid, which soon became a search for booty and slaves as well as a "punitive" campaign is said by oral tradition to have gone at least as far east as the St. Paul river. It is also a testimony to the organizational skills and military power of a remarkable Mende leader and to his resources and determination.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this article to briefly examine this expedition which was remarkable both for its extent and for its success.

In order to understand the reasons for this raid, which was different in degree and in kind from most of the petty war-raids of that era in Sierra Leone and in the Liberian hinterland, it is necessary to look briefly at some important historical developments in "Upper-Mendeland" and their consequences.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the chiefdoms of Upper-Mendeland were beginning to organize rudimentary central authority as a direct response to invasion and war. For some decades the relative stability which had characterized village life for centuries had been increasingly disturbed for hundreds of miles around. By 1880 certain of these disturbed "chiefdoms," located in the salient formed by the Liberia-Guinea border, were rapidly moving towards a more institutionalized and organized political system, and one of the consequences of these changes was that military efficiency increased in almost direct proportion.<sup>2</sup> Kinship and lineage groupings with their more direct if not more simple forms slowly gave way to more arbitrary systems of "government." The exposure of Upper-Mendeland to invasion particularly from the north and east, brought largely by peoples who were often themselves escaping the

1. Kailundu is described in some detail by T. J. Alldridge, The Sherbro and Its Hinterland (London, 1901), 190. Alldridge first visited the Luawa Chiefdom in 1891, which according to tradition was two years after the raid into Liberia, which would place the event in 1889. Kailundu is also the most often mentioned Mende hero in the oral traditions of Luawa and the surrounding area. Most of the sources used here are taken from testimonies collected in the field during 1965-1966.

2. J. M. Malcolm, "Mende Warfare," Sierra Leone Studies, XXX (January, 1939), 47.



## Boundaries

- - - - - International
- - - - - Ethnic
- ..... Chiefdom
- → → → Kailundu's probable route

## LEGEND

## Names

**GUINEA**

Country

**GOLA**

Ethnic

**MANDO**

Chiefdom

**Vahun**

Town

**Vassala**

Clan



Forest

pressures of the expansionist movement led by Samory, initiated a period of gradual but intensive military and political adaptation.<sup>3</sup> Oral tradition often refers to chiefs like Kpakpaso of Dia and Kailundu of Luawa who established new towns, introduced new defensive measures, military innovations and reforms, and extended the areas under their control. Kailundu began with one town and a handful of adjacent villages and expanded his chiefdom to include several others. This was done partly by outright conquest and partly by the consent of the outlying towns which welcomed the protection of strong leadership.<sup>4</sup>

The innovations which developed in Luawa, as a result of the challenge of increased marauding warfare and new economic pressures, represented a fundamental change in the nature of Mende chieftaincy and in the relations between ruler and ruled. The earlier autonomous village groups depending on kinship and Poro for social control,<sup>5</sup> gave way to larger organized units with many tributary towns and villages. Local headmen became vassals to powerful war-chiefs or emerged as leaders themselves. Village units in some instances became incipient city-states with rudimentary bureaucracies, and the traditional chief was on his way to becoming a ruler waited on by slaves, and with almost despotic power within his subject lands.

In 1880, after his famous struggle with Dawa,<sup>6</sup> Kailundu was made chief of all Luawa and its loose confederation of smaller chiefdoms and villages. Having defeated the invading Mende army led by Dawa, he immediately settled one of Dawa's lieutenants named Bawurume in a town called Geihun Tumago on the eastern marches of Luawa. In addition, Kailundu claimed and got the three Kissi chiefdoms now within Sierra Leone, and Wunde, Mofessor and Kaamo in present-day Guinea, and Kissi Tengia in Liberia. He then proceeded to organize his new territories into sub-sections and picked Sakambu as the site of his new capital, where he built a strong new town named Kailahun, after himself. He established an elaborate network of

3. For a study of the process of political innovation in Luawa see, Kenneth C. Wylie, "Innovation and Change in Mende Chieftaincy 1880-1896," Journal of African History, X (1969), 11-22. Also for a discussion of the definitions given the term "government" among African systems see, Lucy Mair, Primitive Government (Baltimore, 1964), 16-17; and M. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems (London, 1964), 1-123. On Samory see, Martin Legassick, "Firearms, Horses and Samorian Army Organization, 1870-1898," Journal of African History, VII (1966), 96.

4. Field Notes, Luawa, Jombu Belu, 1966. Jombu Belu was the only surviving son of Kailundu. He served in the army from 1913 to 1920 and saw action in German East Africa in the First World War. He was a chiefdom councillor and a policeman from 1921 to 1940 when he retired.

5. Sources on Poro are rare and not very helpful. H. G. Warren, "Secret Societies," Sierra Leone Studies, III (1920), 8, attempts to discuss Poro, as do Christopher Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone (Oxford, 1962); Kenneth Little, The Mende of Sierra Leone (London, 1951). All these are superficial accounts and none have been able to show that Poro ever exercised a "state-building" function of any sort. Oral tradition does not attribute any such influence to Poro or to other secret societies. Its influence was primarily cultural and religious.

6. N. C. Hollins, "A Short History of Luawa Chiefdom," Sierra Leone Studies, XIV (June, 1929), 12-15.

defenses, strategic towns such as Geihun, immediately to the south, were enlarged, and Baoma was built as a buffer to the east. He began creating the foundation of a governmental system far enough advanced in its visible trappings that when the Sierra Leone Protectorate was declared, the British erroneously believed it to be a viable political system with a traditional background of fixed traditions.<sup>7</sup> The years between 1880 and Kailundu's death in 1895 were a period of military consolidation paralleled by political change, both of which are well attested in oral tradition. Kailundu extended his territory far into Kono country, and even briefly into French territory beyond the Moa, though he did not annex these latter areas. Perhaps this prudence was fortunate, for had he done so, he would most likely have brought the French down upon him and the "Kailahun salient" might have become French.<sup>8</sup>

It was at this point, while returning through Mofindo in 1889 from the raid into French Guinea, that Kailundu heard news of an uprising led by Bawurume, the former lieutenant of Dawa. Bawurume, taking advantage of Kailundu's absence in Guinea, had begun to raid and loot in Luawa itself, and had taken the town of Nyandehun beneath Mount Mamba, killing Bundu, the man who had offered Kailundu rule over all Luawa in 1880.

At this point tradition differs slightly as to the course of events, but it is certain that Kailundu reacted swiftly and decisively. Several separate informants, recounting the story, have him saying, "Bundu is he who granted me Luawa," and moving immediately in pursuit of Bawurume.<sup>9</sup> Gathering his forces, with reinforcements called from Kailahun, Kailundu marched through Baoma<sup>10</sup> to Gondoma on the Mauwa River (at the point where the present Liberian-Sierra Leonean boundary projects directly south). There he stopped briefly to send messengers to ascertain whether or not the chiefs of Malema, Dia, Mando and Upper-Bambara were allied with Bawurume. They replied that they were not and Chiefs Pambu of Malema and Gevau of Jojoima joined him at Gondoma, swelling his army to twice its size. Together they crossed the Mauwa and took Geihun Tumago and burned it. But, Bawurume escaped, and though hard-pressed by Kailundu, fled to Vahun in the Guma Chiefdom

7. Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 541-545.

8. Jombu Belu, 1966; also Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 488-489.

9. Hollins, "Short History of Luawa," 8, has him saying, "Bundu is he who gave me the country." Hollins gathered his information from the late Paramount Chief Momo Banya and other elders of Luawa in 1929 and earlier. He nowhere records his method of interviewing, nor does he cite the names of informants other than the Chief. However, most of the testimony gathered by this writer in Luawa in 1965-66 agrees in fundamental detail with Mr. Hollins' account. Hollins had the great advantage of doing his work while most of Kailundu's friends and offspring were still alive. This writer was able to supplement tradition from Luawa with similar texts from Dia and Malema, some of which are cited below.

10. Hollins, "Short History of Luawa," 18, has Kailundu going through Boabu, though this writer was not able to find a town by that name on the road between Mofindo and Gondoma. Jombu Belu, 1966, says Kailundu went through Baoma.

and from there beyond to Vassa, which is in Bandi country in Liberia.<sup>11</sup>

Few of the traditional accounts explain why the Bandi sheltered Bawurume during his flight from Kailundu, and Hollins is silent on this point. Hospitality is of course a traditon in this part of Africa. It seems that a chief named Teye in the town of Kumolahun in Vassa gave the renegade protection for he refused to give Bawurume up and Kailundu attacked and conquered the town and looted the Vassa chiefdom.<sup>12</sup> From Kamolahun Kailundu apparently marched in pursuit of the rebel chief into the territory of Fobewuru of Jenne, in the heart of Bandi country. He was again refused when he asked for Bawurume. So, he attacked the town and his warriors killed Fobewuru in the bush. Looting the town and burying the chief, Kailundu set out again after Bawurume who had esceped once more, this time crossing the Lofa and finally the Langwa river in the center of Bele country.<sup>13</sup>

Another simpler version of the opening weeks of the campaign has Kailundu sending envoys to a Bandi chief called Gondo and requesting that he give Bawurume up, but the chief replied that since Bawurume had come to live with them, he could not give him up. Kailundu then threatened the Bandi with destruction and when they still refused, he marched first on Gondo and then "burned Bandi country."<sup>14</sup> Traditional accounts agree that Kailundu must have been very angry, and several repeat the words, "and so Kailundu burned four countries just to get one man back."<sup>15</sup>

11. Field notes, Luawa, Brimah Jonny, 1966, Brimah was once a section chief, but he was ill and was only interviewed a few times, though he was steeped in the traditions of Luawa. Vassa is an old name (probably a corruption), often found on old maps, for the people who today call themselves Vasala or Hassala.

12. Field notes, Luawa, Vandi Gbongwema, 1966. Vandi was a section chief, a Tribal Authority member and a policeman and medical aid in the twenties, thirties and forties. He was typical of retired former section chiefs, most of whom are noted for their knowledge of town and family history.

13. Vandi Gbongwema, 1966, and Jombu Belu, 1966. This river is not identifiable today; there is no river of that name in the vicinity. Since oral traditon states that that the river was in Bele country, it could be Tuma creek. If so this would mean that Kailundū must have turned south after defeating Fobewuru of Jene. We cannot be certain of the location of this river, since the traditions are not clear on the exact directions of Kailundu's movements.

14. *Ibid.*; also Field notes, Dia, Senesi Kpakpaso, 1965-1966, Senesi was a section chief in the early decades of this century. He has held many posts of importance in the Tribal Authority. This very old man was the best informed and perhaps the most effective of the informants used in the writer's field work.

15. Vandi Gbongwema, 1966, Brimah Jonny, 1966, Senesi Kpakpaso, 1965, and Jimmi Kokoma of Kissi Kama, 1965. This latter was a former chiefdom speaker in one of the three Kissi chiefdoms which eventually remained in Sierra Leone, and were once part of Kailundu's expanded "state." All the oral traditions gathered from these various chiefdoms around Luawa, agree substantially with those of Luawa as regards the raid into Liberia. Many chiefs of these lesser areas went along on the raid, as was mentioned above.

Whatever the exact details of Kailundu's chase through Bandi country, it is said that Bawurume, incredibly, fled on once more, through Belle country and into Gbeje (also Peje country?), where the people were reputed by tradition to be cannibals. Several versions say that Kailundu burned every town he encountered on his way, others only mention the last named "countries" as areas through which he passed in pursuit. Somewhere deep in Buluyiema country Bawurume disappeared, and Kailundu ended his long hunt.<sup>16</sup>

Returning homeward through central Bandi country, Kailundu received tribute and "fealty" from the towns along his route and made Fabana Fara the new sub-chief over Vassa.<sup>17</sup> He returned to Luawa through Foya (currently a customs post on the Liberian border with Sierra Leone) with a long train of loot, mostly slaves, cloth, cattle, and a brass carronade which is mounted today in front of the Native Administration Office in Kailahun.<sup>18</sup>

It is significant that Kailundu pushed this "war" far beyond any of his previous campaigns. He recognized rebellion as perhaps the greatest danger to his incipient state, and he punished it relentlessly, even going so far as to chase a single man through more than one hundred miles of the most difficult terrain in West Africa. This is even more remarkable when the same traditions record Kailundu as a just ruler, a kind man and not given to vengeful reprisal. Perhaps an underlying motive was Kailundu's desire to expand his precarious eastern borders and to create buffer zones in that area.

The meaning of this expedition in terms of the history of the peoples in Liberia through whom Kailundu marched, or whose towns he looted or burned, can hardly be determined from the sources used in this article. These testimonies were all collected in Sierra Leone. Further information about this interesting campaign must await study of oral tradition among the tribes of the Liberian hinterland.

16. The people called "Gbeje" or "Peje" are not identifiable. They might be the Buluyiema, who presently live to the east of the Bele. Alternatively they could be the Kpelle who are culturally related to the Loma (who also reside eastwards of the Buluyiema and the Bele). The Kpelle also live along the St. Paul river to the southeast. It is likely that they were the Buluyiema, since it was in the latter's territory that Bawurume disappeared and Kailundu turned back. It is probably impossible to be certain about this. \*

17. Hollins, "Short History of Luawa," 19; Vandj Gbongwema, 1966, and Brimah Jonny, 1966.

18. *Ibid.*; Jombu Belu, 1966. Some might interpret this expedition as a raid for booty, with the chase of Bawurume as only an incidental excuse. The loot brought back to Kailahun would support this view, but the oral tradition never questions Kailundu's determination to punish a rebel who betrayed him when his back was turned.

\*Ed. 's note: Subsequent to editing a reference was located in which the Mende are said to call the Kpelle, Kpejesia. Cf., D. Westermann & M. A. Bryan, Handbook of African Languages, Part II. Languages of West Africa (Oxford, 1952), 37.

# MATERIALS FOR A HISTORY OF WESTERN LIBERIA:

## THE BELLE

Andreas Massing

This paper is both a summarization of present knowledge of Belle history and its relation to the histories of neighboring tribes during the past eighty years, and a presentation of new data regarding the origins of the Belle, who are linguistically a member of the Kru language group, although geographically separated from their constituent ethnic units.<sup>1</sup> The paper is based on field research undertaken in 1968-69 in the Belle chiefdom, but published materials have been utilized as noted.<sup>2</sup> The relative political independence of the Belle villages has been noted by treating their histories separately; but it is hoped that a common history of the tribe will emerge on the basis of independent evidence from each of its villages. The narrative style of the interviews, held collectively with the village elders, has been preserved, at least as far as translation by interpreter from the local languages - Belle and Bandi - into Liberian English permitted. This, it is hoped, will reveal how the Belle themselves conceive their history and how its tradition is structured.

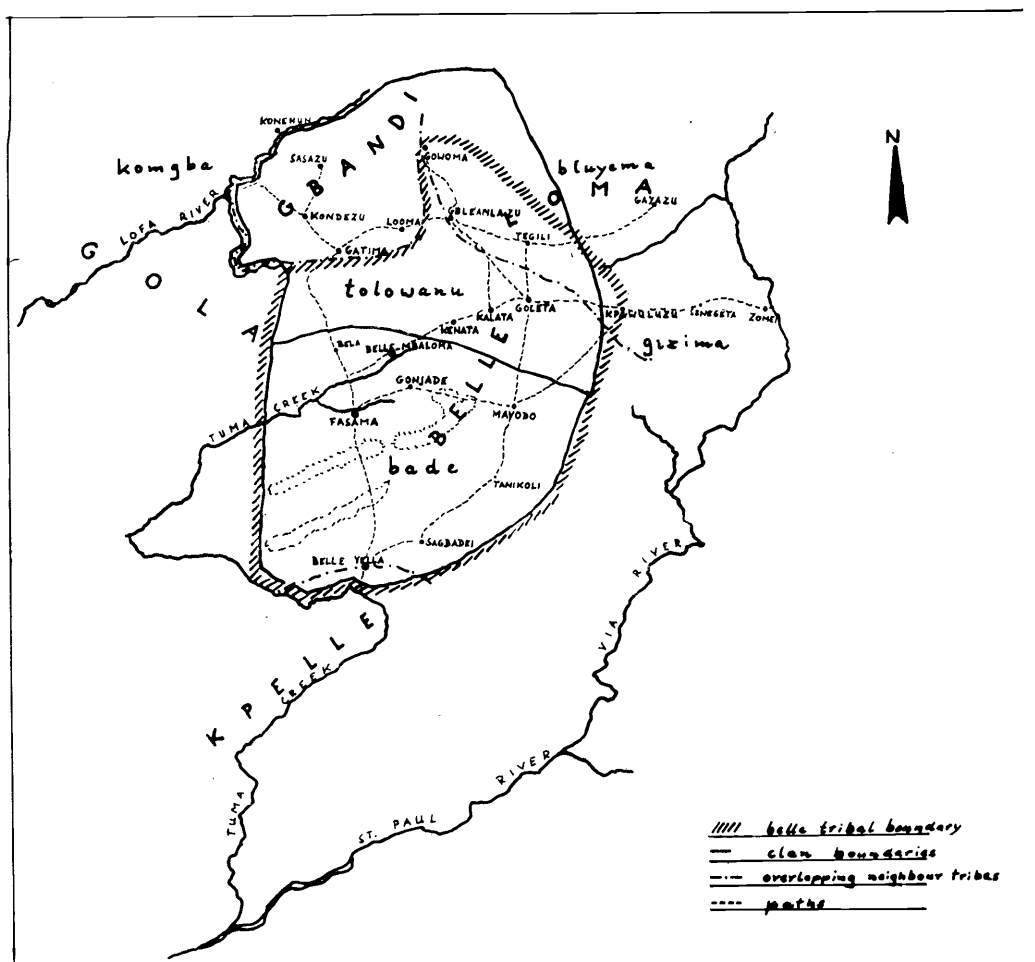
## BELLE ORIGINS

The presence of a tribe belonging to the Kru language group among tribes who are members of other language groups has quite naturally led to scholarly speculation about its origin.<sup>3</sup> The Belle themselves do not contribute much toward an explanation of their relation with the Kru, their historical material being rather vague and mythical and of no considerable depth. It would doubtless be impossible to arrive at even a tentative hypothesis regarding the relationship between the Belle and the Kru were it not for the oral accounts given by some members of the latter group.

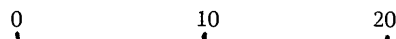
1. D. Westermann and M. A. Bryan, Languages of West Africa (London, 1952), 51. They are listed under Isolated Language Group: Kru, and called Kwaa, ~~belle~~ being the Kpelle term for this tribe.

2. W. Volz, "Reise durch das Hinterland Liberia im Winter 1906-07 (bearbeitet von R. Zeller)", Jahresbericht der Berner Geographischen Gesellschaft, XXII (1911), and S. M. J. Johnson, "Traditions, History and Folklore of the Belle Tribe," Liberian Studies Journal, I, 2 (1969), 45-73, are the primary published accounts that have been used. These accounts were not available to the author during his field work.

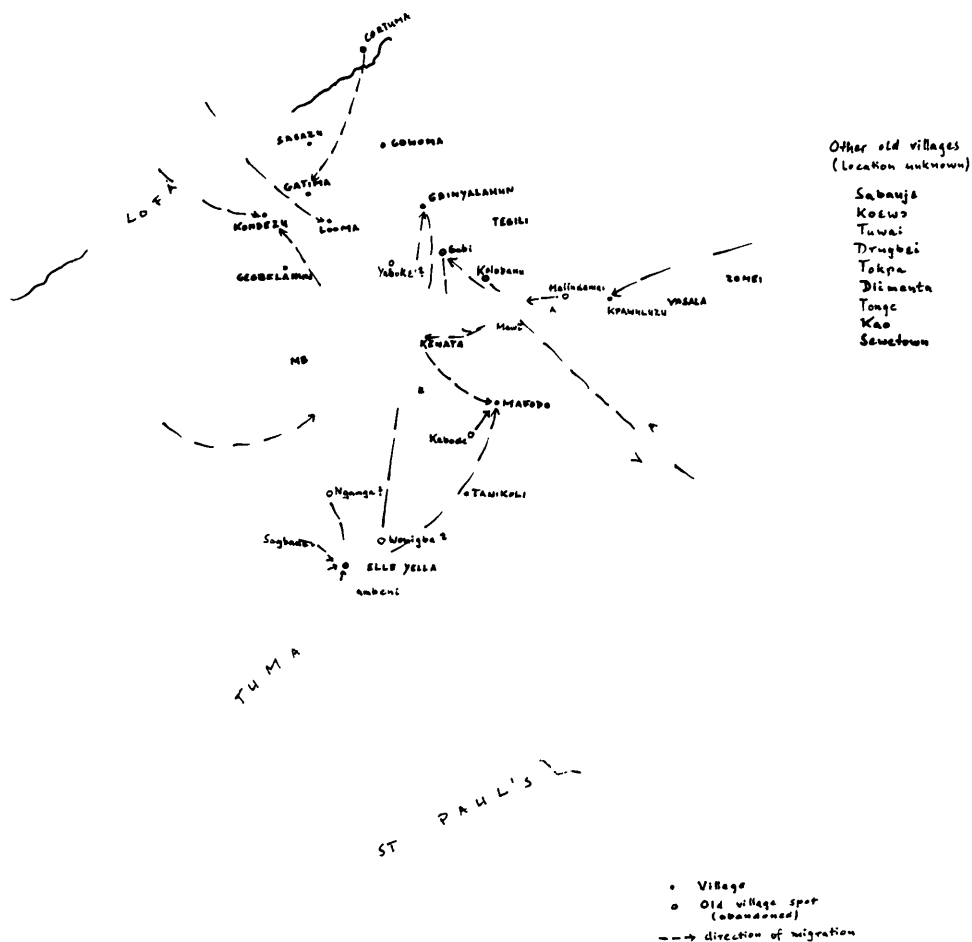
3. See, Y. Person, "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes de pierre dans le cadre de l'histoire Ouest-Africaine," Bulletin de l'IFAN, sér. B, XXIII (1961), 1-59.



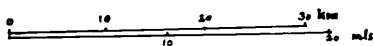
The Present-day Belle Area







BELLE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS



The myth of origin of the Belle relates their alleged Kru-origin to the foundation of Gonjade. It was told by Elder Gbagba from Belle Yella:

The forefathers of Gbagba came from Mandingo country driven by a big war. This war was in the north; when it was coming down southward two tribes moved down to see the country: Kru and Grebo.

They were two Kru men and one Grebo woman coming from there; the two men were brothers and the woman was married to one of them. After they had crossed the water, river Bosange, they came to a hill which they had to climb. When they reached on top of this hill one man said, 'Let us rest here, the sun is too hot.' Therefore, the hill was named after that (kru = sun, gba = big or hot) Krugba. Then they went down the hill and slept at its foot. The next day they continued until they reached a creek called Maũ. Here one of the men juked himself by a thorn. Since the woman was pregnant and about to deliver, her husband said, 'Since this man is hurt by the thorn, let us leave him here and go on.' They walked until they reached a big cotton tree. Here the husband said, 'Let us sleep here under the tree.' The woman delivered the same night and her husband, who had built a small kitchen for her, said, 'Let me go to my brother's place.' He went back to the place where his brother stayed, and which later was called Mavodo (Maũ = name of the creek, fodo = swamp). His brother's foot was all right, since the thorn had come out.

The man went back to his wife in the place they called Gɔɛnjade (gɔ = cotton tree, ɛnjade = under). The boy she had born was called Tɔlũgbá. When he was grown up, one day he went to the bush and reached a water where he saw many fish going up the water. He killed many of them until it got dark; then he made a dryer in the bush in order to dry the fish. The creek was named after him Tulugbanu; later the whole clan was named after this creek Tulugbanu (Belle) which is in Loma language Lobaizu. Later, Tulugba married his sister and both had a son who became the ancestor of the Tulugbanu people. They are therefore considered "nephews" (sister's children) of Gonjade, Tulugba's town, and settled north of it. The first village of the Tulugbanu clan was Wonigba.

The myth and the history of the foundation of Gonjade, however, are divergent as far as the founders and their tribal origin are concerned. While the myth maintains the Kru origin in the remote past, the village history ascribes the foundation to a Gola chief. This contradiction reflects the shallow genealogical depth of Belle kin groups; kin relations can hardly be established more than three generations back, the actual relations to some mythical ancestors remaining obscure.

From the Gborbo tribe in the Kran group, in Grand Gedeh County this account was obtained:<sup>4</sup>

4. From Old Man Zoe, founder and owner of Zoetown near Tuzon.

The Kru, Kran and Belle travelled together from Njaja<sup>5</sup> until they reached a river called Zoe. On the other side of the river, they made a farm on a hill called Bou. While staying in Njaja, the whole group was called Bouwu.<sup>6</sup>

Here the tribes divided themselves: the 'belle' group or family, two men and two women, went hunting and travelled to a far place where they built a kitchen<sup>7</sup> and remained. After one year the Kru and Grebo groups travelled farther down towards the sea.

While this account connects the Belle with a cluster of Kran groups, namely, the Gbou-cluster, another oral account suggests an origin from some Kru tribes. Nma speaks of a mythical ancestor of all Kru tribes, called Judu Kunto:

Judu Kunto's grandson, Kamgbi, had seven sons and seven daughters. While the names of the daughters are no longer remembered, the sons' names were, and the sons became leaders of their tribes and travelled along the St. John's river - (Kru) Jidani - downwards to the seacoast. When they came in contact with the Mani - (Kru) Bassa -, one of the sons, called Kamgbo Jiapo Saa, remained behind and became the ancestor of the Belle, while the others continued migrating and became the ancestors of the Gbeta-Kru and the so-called Five-Tribes.<sup>8</sup>

According to this account the course of migration must be placed much farther westward than that which is assumed in the previous account. It links the Belle with one of two major waves of migrations of the Kru tribes, namely, the migration along the St. John's river, rather than with the migration through southeast Liberia.<sup>9</sup> If the conclusions of the Ethnographic Survey are correct, the latter migration, which occurred later than that along the St. John's, did not take place before 1880. By this time, it seems, that the Belle were documented as inhabitants of their present territory.

5. See, G. Schröder and H. D. Seibel, The Ethnographic Survey of South-eastern Liberia: The Liberian Kran and the Sapo, unpublished ms., 22. Nyaya is the place of origin of several Kran tribes.

6. *Ibid.*, 13. The Gbou group includes the Gbao or Gbarbo, the Gbou or Gborbo, the Niao or Niabo, the Sela pã, and the Blao.

7. "Kitchen", in Liberian English, is the term for a farmstead or a shelter.

8. J. Nma, "History of the Gbeta-Tribe," unpublished ms.; see also, Johnson, "Traditions," 46.

9. For a more detailed account of these migration patterns see, Schröder and Seibel, "Ethnographic Survey," 20-65.

An account of late eighteenth century Liberia by a trader named Harrison<sup>10</sup> contains a list of 'countries' i. e. territories of several tribes through which he passed on his route into the hinterland: Mannah, Gurah, Candoh, Beysee, Plai, Boosee, Gisse, Jolissee and Mangro. If the actual distribution of tribes and the fact that Harrison started from Sierra Leone are considered, it may be assumed that he first travelled through Mende territory,<sup>11</sup> then passed the Gola, and later reached the chiefdom of Bopolu inhabited by Candoh.<sup>12</sup> From there he went north-eastward to the Beysee. These can be identified with Anderson's and Büttikofer's Pessy, the latter being the name given to the Kpelle in most 19th century reports and found even today.<sup>13</sup> Hair seems to be less certain about this possibility, though he admits that the Kpelle are sometimes known as Gbese, and that Beysee "might be an attempt to write this."<sup>14</sup>

If we consider, first, that the tribe presently called Kpelle was not known by this name before 1900,<sup>15</sup> and previously only as "Pessy" or something similar; second, that the old trading route from Cape Mount to the interior, the Belle Yella trail, followed a course toward the northeast passing through Bopolu; and thirdly, assume that Harrison followed this route; then, the Belle are the very tribe which is situated between the Kpelle and Loma in the order of "countries" through which he passed and identical with the "Plai". The "Boosee," whose country was reached immediately after that of the "Plai" can be easily identified as Loma or Toma.<sup>16</sup> If we take this as evidence of the existence of the tribe in its present location by the end of the 18th century, we may assume that the Belle are connected with the first wave of immigration of Kru groups and dismiss the implications of the oral tradition of the Gborbo and rather accept those of Nma's account. The time of the first wave of immigration of Kru peoples

10. P. E. H. Hair, "An Account of the Liberian Hinterland c. 1780," Sierra Leone Studies 16 (1962), 218-226.

11. The Mannah are identified with Mende on the basis that the present term of Bassa designating the Mende is Manau.

12. The Candoh are probably identical with Anderson's Condo and Büttikofer's Condon. See, B. Anderson, A Journey to Musardu (New York, 1870), map; J. Büttikofer, Reisebilder aus Liberia (Leiden, 1890), map and 237. See also, P. E. H. Hair, "An Ethnolinguistic Inventory of the Lower Guinea Coast before 1700, Part I," African Language Review, Vol. 7 (1968), 69, note 70.

13. See, Anderson, Journey to Musardu and Büttikofer, Reisebilder. For "Pessy" see, B. Anderson "The Barline Country," African Repository, XLVI (1870), 316; "Pessah", E. W. Blyden, "Barline Country," African Repository, XLVI (1870), 283; "Pessa", K. Zetterstrom, Ethnographic Survey of South-Eastern Liberia, Preliminary Report on the Kru (Robertson, Liberia, 1969), 3.

14. Hair, "An Account," 220.

15. See, M. Delafosse, "Un Etat Nègre: La République de Libéria," Recherches Coloniales, Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française, No. 9 (1900), 191. He gives their Manianka (Malinké) name, Gbéressé and cites another version, Kpêlé, as the term which the tribe applies to itself. According to my knowledge, he is the first to replace this inter-vocalic "s" by inter-vocalic "l".

16. Until recently, the Loma have been called "Bouzie" by English speaking authors, see, Anderson, Journey to Musardu, map; Büttikofer, Reisebilder, 237; G. Schwab, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (Cambridge, 1947). From there, Harrison's route obviously turned northwestward to the Kissi (Gisse). For the next two names, Jolissee and Mangro, we cannot offer a more sufficient explanation.

into the area concerned has not, however, been determined. A 16th century date is conceivable.

There is only one source earlier than Harrison's account which refers to the people in the hinterland of Cape Mount, but it does not contain a direct reference to the Belle.<sup>17</sup> The groups in this account who live in geographical proximity to the area under study are: the Gala or Golou, the Karou, the Folgia, the Gebbe-monou, Quaabe-monou, and the Hondo. The Gala are obviously identical with the actual Gola and lived north of Cape Mount separated from the Vey [Vai] by a mixed population, the so-called Gala-Vey.<sup>18</sup> The Karou and Folgia occupied a territory on the upper parts of rivers Junk and Arueredo (Farmington), an area today occupied by Gibi-Bassa and Nyafokole-Kpelle; the land of the Karou was said to be part of the Folgia country.<sup>19</sup> The Gebbe-monou occupied the area east of the St. Paul and might be identical with a section of the Bassa, either the Gibi or the Kaba.<sup>20</sup> The Quaabe-monou, whose name at least bears some resemblance to the indigenous name of the Belle - Kwa (kɔ́) - lived east of the Cestos river; they were obviously a population related to the actual Kru tribes. Farther in the interior, passing the Gala-Vey and the Gola on the opposite side of a large forest separating the latter from them, lived the Hondo-monou in the Hondo country of which Dogo was a special part.<sup>21</sup> Since the location is given by Dapper as northeast of the Gala-Vey, and a large uninhabited forest separates the actual southern Gola from the Bandi, Belle and the Komgba-Gola, "Dogoland" might be a reference to the Belle, at least as far as the location - approximately ninety miles north of Monrovia - is concerned. But there is no indication that this area was inhabited by a Kru-speaking group. Hair's assumption that the Belle might be identical with Dapper's Karrodoboe, located thirty to thirty-two leagues upstream on the upper part of the Gallinas (Moa) river, must be refuted since the upper part of the Gallinas is situated at least forty miles west of the Lofa river - probably the Menoch or Rio Aguado in Dapper's account.<sup>22</sup> The Lofa river, however, forms the western boundary of the Belle territory. A full discussion of the distribution of tribes as it can be reconstructed after Dapper must be left to another paper.

17. Olfert Dapper, Naukeurige Beschryvinghe der Afrikaensche gewesten, First edition (Utrecht, 1668), 384-430.

18. Ibid., 386.

19. Ibid., "het land Karou, wiens inwoonders den naem Karou-monou voeren, is een byzonder landschap in Folgia".

20. Ibid., "eweneens gelijk door de reviere van Sinte Paul het Vy-berkoma of Kquoja berkoma van het lant Gebbe gescheiden wort".

21. Ibid., "Het lant Hondo, wiens inwoonders Hondo-monou genoemd worden, leit aen d'overzijde van deze wildernis, te weten Noord-Osstelijker, dan Galavey. In dit Hondo leit een byzonder lantschap, genaemt Dogo".

22. Ibid., "De vierde reviere, Menoch, by de Portugezen genaemt beoosten de Kaep de Mont in zee stort". This is the actual confirmation that the Hondo country was situated somewhere along the Lofa river.

The oral traditions leave open the question of whether these Kru groups migrated together with the Bassa or encountered them in their present-day location; if the latter was the case, the Bassa could be established as the oldest population of the Kru language group in Liberia. It also would help to clarify the point of whether or not the Bassa must be considered the original neighbors of the Belle rather than the Kpelle,<sup>23</sup> who came later as Person suggests.<sup>24</sup> It is assumed here that the Belle were connected with these early immigrant groups and the tribe later emerged as a cluster of exogamous patrisibs in a similar way as the tribes of southeastern Liberia; that for some unknown reason they were cut off from the main wave of immigration, and were later separated from their Kru-speaking neighbors, the Bassa and De, by immigrant Mande-speaking groups. Frequent interethnic contacts such as wars and the slave and salt trade caused the dissolution of unilinear kin groups among the Belle, which are so characteristic of their relatives in southeastern Liberia, and the adaptation to the social structure and culture of the Mande speakers even though the language was retained.<sup>25</sup>

Some fictitious kinship links with Kru groups are still recognized; they are manifested in the institution of doodi-ships. Doodi is the Kran term for "sibling group" indicating common ancestry; a doodi-ship is established between whole groups rather than between individuals. It is forbidden to kill or do harm to one's doodi, and he enjoys certain privileges, e. g. may have sexual relations with his doodi's wife or take any of his property he likes. The Belle maintain that all Kran and Kru groups are considered doodi in recognition of their common ancestry. The same is not reported, however, about relations between the Belle and Bassa on the one hand, and the Belle and De on the other. Confirmation of original relations to the Kru groups is also given by Moore,<sup>26</sup> who states that the Belle originated from a powerful Kroo, i. e. Kru, chief. However, Moore states that this chief migrated from the coast into the interior, which reverses the order of migration hitherto assumed leading to the establishment of the Belle in their present territory.

That the Belle are remnants of an early immigration of Kru speakers has also been suggested by Becker-Donner, whose Grebo informant had worked among the Belle and had noticed the similarity between the Grebo and Belle languages:

23. The problem of immigration of Mande speakers into the forest belt, as well as the origin of the Kpelle, will be dealt with in a forthcoming paper.

24. See, Person, "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes," 47-51.

25. No implication is intended that no adaptation to the Mande languages has occurred, but only that the Belle adhered to a language of Kru stock rather than shifting to a Mande language.

26. Bai T. Moore, The Tribes of the Western Province and the Denwoin People (Monrovia, 1955), 27.

He heard from the Grebo that these [the Belle] when they once came from their former homeland, which was supposed to be somewhere in the east, had asked their medicine, a large, unhewn grey stone, for advice. This stone, which had been carried along on their way, functioned as their leader. It had dropped on the ground at exactly the place where they finally settled thus giving them a sign. There they built their village, but they did not enjoy their new home until after lengthy wars with the Kongba-Gola settled in this area.<sup>27</sup>

This also suggests a common migration with some Grebo and Kru groups, as well as indicating the similarity between the languages.

Another feature of great interest is the former practice of tribal jurisdiction among the Belle:

The Gown People: The judiciary functions of the tribe were placed in the hands of a group of elderly men and women selected from all the important towns. They were called the "Gown People" because they were uniformed in long dark gowns almost touching the ground. They wore caps that were specially designed to match the gowns and carried long staffs and cow tails to signify their office, which the tribe regarded with great reverence.

Membership of this group was hereditary. That is, if a member died, his place was filled by someone from his town and from his family. The members of this group did not move about singly. When it was necessary for any of them to go somewhere, the whole group moved with him. They always walked slowly and in unison. Their office did not permit them to lodge in any house. Upon entering any town, they went straight to the town shed and rested and slept until their business in that town was finished. Being the only group charged with the trial of criminal matters, their verdict in any case was final and their judgment irrevocable. Even the king had no right to interfere with decisions given by them. Because of the sacredness of their office, anyone who ran to the group for refuge during their assembly of deliberation was free from further attack by his pursuer, regardless of the nature of the crime.<sup>28</sup>

Independently information was obtained on this institution. The group was called demay<sup>3</sup> and consisted of eleven men and one woman; their permanent residence was the old village of Mawi near Goleta. Bishop Payne's account of the

27. Etta Becker-Donner, "Über zwei Kruvölkerstämme: Kran und Grebo," *Koloniale Völkerkunde I, Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, VI (1944) 59-60. The author's translation.

28. Johnson, "Traditions," 50.

Grebo<sup>29</sup> states that the Grebo are divided into twelve "families", each of which is headed by a patriarch living in a certain quarter of the village. Dr. Ronald Kurtz, who did field work among the Grebo in connection with the Ethnographic Survey, told the present writer that many of the coastal Grebo consider twelve the ideal number of lineages composing a tribe. This was confirmed in conversations with some Kru groups.

The institution of the Gown People could have been a cultural feature which has survived from the time when the Belle still had the same social structure as their linguistic relatives in southeastern Liberia. Ideally, this was twelve unilinear kin groups ruled by their respective elders. When this political structure gave way to the rule by dominant lineages under petty chiefs ruling over a larger area, as was characteristic among the neighboring Mande speakers, these elders only retained judicial functions, but these acted as a check on the power of the chief. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that the members of the group were selected from the important villages and that their office was hereditary. The kin groups each might have built separate villages, but each one was, through the principle of heredity, represented in the judicial council in the same manner as the patrisibs among the Kru and Grebo groups. No similar institution, or a similar significance in the number twelve, has been found among the neighboring Mande tribes. The institution seems to be a unique characteristic of the Belle.

There is, therefore, at least some cultural and mythical evidence, besides that of a linguistic nature,<sup>30</sup> for a relationship between the Belle and Kru. There is no certainty, however, about either the date of migration, or which of the tribes in the area originally inhabited it. Yves Person assumes that the Gola, Belle, and Kissi formed the oldest population group in this area, suggests a connection between Belle and Kissi and between Belle and Bassa, and supposes that they were separated from their original neighbors by immigrating Mande speakers such as the Bandi and Kpelle in the middle of the 16th century. On the basis of the fact that the Gola play a role of some importance in the early histories of the first villages, while the Kpelle, Loma and Bandi do so only in the north of Belle chiefdom (which is not considered a "pure" Belle area), it must be concluded that the Gola were the original inhabitants when the Belle moved into the area, and that the Mande speakers did not come until the Belle were settled. This first assumption is sometimes made explicit in oral material and also confirmed by Becker-Donner.<sup>31</sup> In addition, it has never been suggested that the Belle encountered the Kpelle, Loma or Bandi when moving to the area. As regards Person's assumption of a geographical connection between Belle and Bassa, or Belle and De, evidence is lacking although this may have occurred. This writer does not agree with Person in assuming an early relationship between Belle and Kissi, since historical tradition and toponymy testify to Gola presence in the very area which could have linked the two tribes and which is presently inhabited by the Bandi.<sup>31a</sup>

29. Becker-Donner, "Über zwei Kruvölkerstämme," 59.

30. A detailed linguistic analysis will hopefully be made in connection with the Ethnographic Survey on the basis of comparative material.

31. Becker-Donner, "Über zwei Kruvölkerstämme," 60.

31a. See, Paul Germann, Die Völkerstämme in Norden von Liberia (Leipzig, 1933), 11.



## VILLAGE HISTORIES

GONJADE<sup>32</sup>

The man who built the town was a Belle man, called Kanda Pele. He was the first town chief. He brought with him his wife Japu Sobo, his son, Gbana Sado, and his brother, Gbana Gbo, and many other people. After him, his younger brother Kɔi Pele took over the town, and the first quarter was named after him. At the time, when the town was large, Kɔi Pele went to a nearby place and built the town which today is called Belle Mbaloma.

Yasie Gbe from Gonjade built Fasama; later another man from Gonjade, Manau Gba, went to Fasama, too, where he built his quarter.

At the time when Kowula was the 'big man'<sup>33</sup> of the town, many people died from sickness. The quarter which remained was named after him.

Kanda Pele, the founder, named the town after the big cotton tree (bombax) under which it was built.<sup>34</sup>

Formerly, Gonjade had four quarters (kunū) Kanda Pele's quarter, Kena Wanle's quarter, Wamo's quarter, and Jagbo's quarter, Kena Wanle being Kanda Pele's sister's son, the other two being Kɔi Pele's brothers-in-law; presently the town is reduced to two quarters: Kɔi Pele's and Kowula's quarters.

Jandau Jagbo was a war chief in a war against the Loma; this war went back and forth, so that sometimes all the Belles were in Loma-country for fighting. The main leader of this war was Deɣula Weo.<sup>35</sup> Gonjade also joined the war against Doba.<sup>36</sup>

As the oldest town of the Belle, Gonjade is considered the religious and mythical center of the tribe, and it was never taken in any war. Under Liberian administration its inhabitants were free from obligations as porters and soldiers.

32. Informant: Elder Jegbou, the oldest man of the village.

33. "Big man", i.e., elder, or founder of the village.

34. gɔ (Belle): cotton tree; ɛnɔ (Belle) under; Gonjade "village under the cotton tree".

35. See, Gbinyalahun; I do not know whether this Deɣula is identical with the former chief of Gbinyalahun.

36. See, Kpawuluzu.

KENATA<sup>37</sup>

Fambala Wumbo and Sumbo Foole built this town, Wumbo then being the local war chief.

One chief from Gbinyalahun called Bona made his residence in Kenata and built up the town, because he was driven from Gbinyalahun by his brothers. Before coming to Kenata, he underwent treatment by some native doctors in Bagulazu. When he was healed, he came to Fambala Wumbo telling him: 'Since I am your nephew,<sup>38</sup> I want to settle close to you, in order that the town may not break.

Bona was elected paramount chief for the Belle chiefdom in 1933 (?), being the first chief elected by ballot. At this time Kenata had nine quarters, most of them abandoned today. Since Bona died at an early age and the cause of his death remained unknown, the Belle believe that no paramount chief from Kenata will enjoy his office for long.

GATIMA (Bandi), KPALAWU (Belle)<sup>39</sup>

The town was founded by Dewule Kandakai from Kortuma in Bandi territory; he built the first quarter, Dewule's quarter. Another man from Kortuma called Siwo Waama followed Kandakai and built the second quarter, Waama's quarter; it is today called Gawulo Koli's quarter after Waama's brother's son. Gawulo Koli is the present 'owner of town'.<sup>40</sup> Sele Bombo, Waama's brother and Gawulo's father, followed the two and brought his family to Gatima.

The town was named Kpalawu in war time when all the warriors came together to eat kafu, a war medicine prepared from cassava roots, under their spears. Kpalawu, meaning 'under the spear' was their password which they agreed upon in order to identify each other during raids at night. Gatima took part in a war between Gbinyalahun and Looma on the latter's side. The elder of Gatima, Siwo Waama, sent his war chief Yarngo to lead the troops. This war was stopped by President Daniel Howard (1912-1920) who sent a lieutenant to the Belle.

37. Information from Mr. Weefa, "owner of the town."

38. "Nephew" is the English term used among the Belle in reference to sister's son.

39. Information from collective interview with the elders and the town chief of Gatima.

40. "Owner of town" designates the founder of a village or the oldest man of the founding lineage, which holds ritual ownership of the farmland.

GBINYALAHUN (Bandi), GBLEÑE (Belle), GBLEÑLAZU (Loma)<sup>41</sup>

Two brothers, Gbleñ and Gbélé came from an old town called Wonigba near Belle Yella. Gbleñ, the younger brother, had proposed to leave Wonigba because it was not suitable for farm land. He had asked Mole Kane, a Mandingo man of the Kane family, to help him find a new place. Mole prepared a medicine called lazemu, consisting of a rope (i. e. a vine) with a hook fixed on its end. He told Gbleñ to look for a place by walking through the bush and to leave the rope wherever the hook would happen to stick.

After Gbleñ had walked through the bush for several hours, finally the hook got stuck; he returned and told this to the medicine man who answered, 'whether the place is good or not, you ought to build your new town there.' When the two brothers returned to the site, they found the hook sticking at the foot of a tree, which today is the center of town and considered as 'town medicine' (kafu). They brushed the bush, cleared the place for a farm, and built a 'kitchen'.<sup>42</sup> Afterwards they called their families from Wonigba. Gbélé died shortly afterwards, and he was buried under the cotton tree on the road to Looma.

Johnson gives a more detailed account of the foundation of Gbinyalahun, to which the reader is referred.<sup>43</sup> According to his account, the Mandingo demanded that the two brothers sacrifice a virgin in order to prevent the village from misfortune and retain the rule over the tribe in their lineage.

In fact, the lineage of the two brothers produced a number of tribal rulers during the last eighty years, who were petty chiefs over the Belle. Gbleñ and Daa Koli were chiefs before the Belle had any contact with the Liberians of the coast. Nyatan Wanwela was officially recognized as a paramount chief by the administration of President G. W. Gibson (1900-1904). Deṽula led a delegation to Monrovia and placed himself under the protection of the central government. Bona was the first paramount chief appointed definitely by the hinterland administration, and after him succeeded Weiso and Momo Sewe.<sup>44</sup> Deṽula was one of the most important leaders, whose status was equivalent to a present day paramount chief. During his chieftainship two important events concerning the tribe occurred: first, the arrival of Mbawulume from the Mende; second, the establishment of first relations with the Liberian government.

41. Information from Momo Sewe, Koli Massaquoi, Moluba Foole, quarter elders.

42. It was maintained in the village that one of the poles of this first "kitchen" is still left in the center of the village.

43. See, Johnson, "Traditions," 58-61.

44. See genealogy and list of paramount chiefs in Appendix.

Elder Koli Massaquoi said that at the time of his father De<sub>y</sub>ula, Mbawulum<sub>e</sub>, the Mende chief, had to leave his country as a result of tribal wars. He and his people first stopped in Yawiyahun<sup>45</sup> to rest on their flight. De<sub>y</sub>ula then visited chief Fobe of Yawiyahun where he met Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> and invited him to come to Gbinyalahun because his enemies were pursuing him into Bandi territory. When Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> came, De<sub>y</sub>ula advised him to build his own village for the many people he had brought with him and offered him land; he also gave him a girl from Gbinyalahun as a wife. At the distance of two hours walk from Gbinyalahun, Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> found a suitable place for the village which he named Looma - "resting place" (Loma) and the land was transferred to him by De<sub>y</sub>ula. According to Johnson, Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> arrived during the chieftaincy of Nyatan Wanwələ Koli, De<sub>y</sub>ula's older brother, who accepted the Mende warrior as a welcome protector against neighboring chiefs. Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> formally accepted this by placing himself under the ritual superiority of the landholding lineage of Gbinyalahun.<sup>46</sup> At the time of Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> and De<sub>y</sub>ula, their villages were allied in wars. These wars were fought against Loma chiefs and also against Belle villages of the southern section. Thus two wars against the Loma are reported:

Another incident in which Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> proved his skill and bravery in warfare was the capture of Bima, a great Loma warrior of the town of Woize in the Ziema section. The people of Ziema were at war with the people of Gizima. Finding Bima too strong for them, the Gizima people appealed to the Belle for assistance. De<sub>y</sub>ula, the ruler of the Belle at the time, sent no one else but Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> who within a few hours of his arrival at Woize, captured Bima in his own house without any struggle and took him to Belle along with many others.<sup>47</sup>

Independent evidence of hostilities between the Belle and the Loma is given by Delafosse, which might refer to this war. He tells about hostilities between a Loma chief, Bima, however, of Zolou, and the Gbele chief, Doubougala; the latter name might refer to De<sub>y</sub>ula.<sup>48</sup>

Another war against the Buluyema section occurred at Gbleã's time:

In the Bluyema section of the Loma section, there lived a king by the name of Geleguye. This man was a very powerful and wicked warrior. He was a bitter enemy to the Belles and hated their language to no limit. He gave orders to all his people to cut off the head of any man

45. Yawiyahun (Tahamba-Bandi, according to Svend Holsoe), Yawiazu (Loma). It was formerly the center of a chiefdom of the Bandi, and its main town was probably Jenne at the Lofa river.

46. Johnson, "Traditions," 58.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Delafosse, "Etat Nègre," 192.

they heard uttering the work 'aklo' which is the morning salutation in Belle.

Thus the Belle were in constant trouble in the hands of their great wicked neighbour. At one time he attacked them and destroyed all of their towns but two. King Gbelenya had grown old and feeble and before his death, he had placed one Godolo in control of the tribe. In order to bring peace between them, Godolo and his people sent a delegation to Geleguye, comprising three of their leading men: Nyango, Kotu and Kpawulu Kpala, with a white fowl, a white cloth, and ten kola nuts in a white plate to sue for peace.

Geleguye refused to listen to their entreaty and to show that he had no good intentions towards the Belle, he caught their three representatives and slew them.

The news of this wicked disregard and flagrant violation of tribal custom infuriated Godolo beyond bounds. With the assistance of Gunuzele of Yauyahun, he immediately mobilized an army composed of Belle and Gbandi, and placed it under the command of his son, Degula, with instructions that he should bring Geleguye, alive or dead.

There was in Belle at that time an old lady named Klubo, who was an extraordinary character in African science. Before Degula left for Bluyema, this old lady requested Godolo and Gunuzele to permit her to facilitate and accelerate the capture of Geleguye. Her request having been granted, she placed her hand on the shoulder of King Godolo while he gave his last instruction to his son, Degula. 'You are going for Geleguye,' said the King to his son, 'and I want you to bear in mind that you will be the only one to attack this wicked man. Something will happen to you on your side, but it will be nothing much and you will conquer.' Raising his hand from Degula's shoulder, he bade him to go for the 'trouble-maker'.

And so Degula led his army to Bluyema to fetch Geleguye. Upon entering the town of Wuomai where Geleguye lived, he went straight to the royal house and finding it closed, he assayed to make his way into it through the roof. The people of the town seeing this set the house on fire to clear the enemy. The fire affected the side of Degula a bit, but it was nothing serious. He succeeded in capturing about a hundred of the Loma. Meanwhile, Geleguye himself was caught and beheaded by one of Degula's subordinates, and that ended the fight. The head of the bitterest enemy of the Belle was taken to Godolo and treated as such.

With the capture of their king, the Loma suggested peace, and the Belle agreeing, the peace oath was taken between the two tribes under

two cotton trees in the Bluyema town of Bagulazu. This was the first important incident of Godolo's reign.<sup>49</sup>

After Mbawulume's death, however, hostilities broke out between Looma and Gbinyalahun, and the alliance was ended. Two accounts concerning wars between the two villages have been collected; it is not certain, however, whether they refer to the same war.

Yungbo Wengēle, chief of Mayodo, carried a report to Mbawulume's son, Blaima Sangawulo, that De<sub>γ</sub>ula had attacked and burnt a village called Yabogizima - Yaboke(Belle). As a result of this message, Blaima declared war on De<sub>γ</sub>ula. In this war the whole of Bati-Clan fought on Blaima's side while all Lobaizu people joined De<sub>γ</sub>ula.

Finally President Arthur Barclay sent Commissioner Jaa Mali from Suehn together with Zuana Dagbai to stop the war. The tribal parties and the government representatives met each other on the road between Tegili and Gbleanlazu, and De<sub>γ</sub>ula and Blaima negotiated a peace treaty as confirmation of which they killed a cow.<sup>50</sup>

The other account<sup>51</sup> relates that Mbawulume's son declared war on Gbinyalahun after his father's death claiming the whole territory for the Mende population. This claim was supported by Momolu Massaquoi, then commissioner for the hinterland due to his sympathies with the Mende tribe, among which he had been raised. President Arthur Barclay (1904-1912) finally decided that the area south of the Lofa river and north of the Tuma creek belonged to Belle territory. Another account referring to a war between Looma and Gbinyalahun came from Gatima:<sup>52</sup>

Once two women from Gatima went on the road to Gbinyalahun to make palm oil. The people of Gbinyalahun captured them and held them back when their families in Looma requested them. Instead, Gbinyalahun attacked Looma, and its head warrior caught a big zoo<sup>53</sup> in his village. In a counter-attack the army of Looma burnt a small village called Tuwai which belonged to Gbinyalahun. Thereafter, the army proceeded towards Gbinyalahun. In the meantime, Gatima under its war chief Yarngo and Kondezu under Wuni Sewe had joined Looma, whose warriors were led by Jojai. In order to stop this war, President Daniel E. Howard had to send soldiers.

The last two accounts seemingly refer to two different wars, since in the first the allies of Looma are all villages of the Bati section whereas in the second, Kondezu and Gatima, villages of Lobaizu, assisted Looma against Gbinyalahun. If the names of the presidents who intervened are correct the first war should have occurred between 1904 and 1912, the second between 1912 and 1920. It

49. Johnson, Traditions, " 56-57.

50. Informant Elder Koli Massaquoi from Gbinyalahun.

51. From the same informant

52. Informant Elder Segawulo Koli from Gatima.

53. Zoo: medicine man and official of the secret society.

seems that under President Howard's administration the Belle came definitively under government control.

The first contacts were established, as was mentioned above, by the chiefs in order to secure their position against neighboring rivals. Thus D<sub>u</sub> ula as well as Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> sent delegations to Monrovia to pledge their loyalty to the government and to obtain arms and soldiers which would help them in their quarrels with rival chiefs. Johnson refers to D<sub>e</sub> y ula's delegation sent during President G. W. Gibson's administration (1897-1904), as a result of which three emissaries were sent to the Belle to formally take possession of their territory for the Liberians. These emissaries were John B. McGill, Willie Lomax and George Wright, called Kpaku Tenge by the tribal population.<sup>54</sup> Lomax was a lieutenant in the Liberian Frontier Force, while the others were probably traders well acquainted with the situation in the hinterland. On their return from the Belle, they were attacked by a Kpelle chief, but with the assistance of the Belle they repelled him; and the delegation returned safely to Monrovia.<sup>55</sup>

Several times, however, the Liberians sent army contingents into the area, the last time during President Charles D. King's administration (1920-30), but these only intervened in intra-tribal disputes. We have no reports about hostilities between the Belle and the Liberians, and it seems that the tribe was loyal to Monrovia from the time the first contacts were established. This is also the position stated by our informants. Several delegations made their way from Monrovia, and at a later date a military camp was established in Belle Yella. One of the emissaries of Monrovia was a man called Da Madai by the Belle; it is uncertain whether he is identical with the above-mentioned Commissioner Jaa Mali or Myer, a Gola from Suehn.<sup>56</sup>

#### LOOMA

As already reported, Looma was founded by the Mende chief Mbawulum<sub>e</sub> around 1900. One of the early explorers of western Liberia, Dr. W. Volz, visited Looma in 1907 and stayed there for three weeks. He stated that the village had been founded about ten years earlier by the Mende chief Baurumeh.<sup>57</sup> Though he drew a sketch map of the village, he did not give an estimate of its size but only stated that it was large compared to the other villages he had passed on his way and that the houses were built wall to wall and therefore difficult to count. His map gives an illustration of the fortifications. Each of the three access ways to the village was sided by palisade walls and seven or eight times interrupted by a fortified gate at which guards had been placed. The whole village was surrounded by an earth wall

54. S. M. J. Johnson, "Traditional History of the Belle Tribe," unpublished manuscript, 25.

55. *Ibid.*

56. See Mavodo and Johnson, "Traditions," 53, where he speaks of the Interior Administration of Jeremiah J. Harris. Concerning Jaa Mali, see, S. P. l'Honoré Naber, *Op Expeditie met de Franschen* (Den Haag, 1910), 90 ff.

on top of which a palisade was constructed, and a trench. For the center of the village Volz indicated a spacious square in the middle of which a pole covered by an iron pot had been erected and surrounded by a palisade fence.<sup>58</sup>

In Mbawulumε's time the village was said to have consisted of more than five hundred houses. However, when G. Schwab passed Looma in May, 1928, he stated:

At the time we passed through it, fewer than a hundred half-dilapidated houses remained standing. The place has as neglected and dirty an aspect as any we had seen.<sup>59</sup>

Today, the number of houses hardly exceeds thirty-five, but the ruins of dilapidated huts indicate a much larger size in the past. As a consequence of tribal wars, and the relative importance of Looma in trade, it consists of four quarters, each inhabited by a different tribal group:

1. Mende quarter or Mbawulumε-guizu (Loma)
2. Bandi quarter or Demawε-guizu
3. Loma quarter or Yaseba-guizu
4. Mandingo quarter or Samoka-guizu.

It must be noted that none of these quarters indicates a Belle origin even though some Belle have settled in Looma at the present time.

Mbawulumε, the founder of Looma, mother's brother of the Mende paramount chief, Gombu Tenje, was engaged in a war against the successor of the late paramount chief Kai Lundu of upper Luawa chiefdom who had died in 1895. His speaker, Fabunde, who had been recognized by the Colonial Office in Freetown was threatened by Mbawulumε. As the Liberian government had permitted the British free play in the settlement of boundary conflicts, a party of the British Frontier Force crossed the boundary in 1896 and drove Mbawulumε away from Guma.<sup>60</sup> From there he fled to chief Fobe in Yawiyahun (Yawiazu-Bandi). Kai Lundu and Fobe are well-known persons of Bandi history as well. The foundation of Looma had been reported by Johnson;<sup>61</sup> compare also the report on Gbinyalahun.

The presence of Mbawulumε seems to have been a constant factor of disturbance which may be concluded from the many accounts on disputes in which he was involved. Besides the above-mentioned war against the Loma of Woize,<sup>62</sup> another one was mentioned by an informant from Bolahun, the headquarters of the Episcopal Mission of

58. *Ibid.*, sketch map. This map has been reprinted in Schwab, *Tribes*, 33.

59. *Ibid.*, 166.

60. Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London, 1962), 541

61. Johnson "Traditions," 58-61.

62. Woize is probably identical with Wogeze, the headquarters of the Lutheran Mission among the Loma, seven miles west of Fisebu.



the Order of the Holy Cross.<sup>63</sup> In this war Mbawulumε was the ally of Bombo Koli, a Bandi chief, against Saa Morlu, a powerful Mandingo chief.<sup>64</sup> During his stay in Bandi territory, Mbawulumε had to defend himself against some Mende parties the Bandi chiefs had called for assistance against him. One of the sons of the late paramount chief Fofi from Masambolahun, gave the following account:

In Kpangehemba there lived a handsome and rich chief named Dobo. Mbawulumε and Ketεgbεεε wanted to take over his wealth, for which reason they sent for him to come to Kolahun. When he came one afternoon and asked them for the purpose of the meeting, they told him 'you will see it tomorrow'. Thus they let him wait for three days. On the third day they told him that the matter was settled and that there was no need for him to deal with it. He was very surprised and started to go back.

But Mbawulumε and Ketεgbεεε had placed some warriors at the edge of town who jumped on Dobo when he passed and caught him. When he asked for the reason, they did not give an answer but killed him on the order of their chiefs.

As fast as possible, Dobo's messenger went back to Kpangehemba to inform the town. Dobo's family sent word to Kaegau, one of Dobo's sons who stayed in Kailahun at Kai Lundu's court.<sup>65</sup> Kai Lundu asked Kaegau for the reason why his father had been killed, but the young man did not know. Therefore, Kai Lundu sent his own messenger to Mbawulumε to find out the reason, but the messenger came back without a reply. Then, Kai sent out an army under his head warrior, Siafa Nyabalu, because Dobo had been one of his best friends. He gave Siafa the order to tell all the people 'those who kill somebody without reason, I, Siafa, will kill them in return.'

When his army went from Foya Kamaa to Kolahun all people joined his case and did not dare to resist him. When the Bandi chiefs heard of his arrival they came together and said, 'These Mende people have come to conquer us. Let us make a strong force against them.' So all of them met in Somalahun and sent their women and children to Bagehebuwuhun to be safe. But Siafa Nyabalu got word of this by his

63. Informant Joseph Morlu, worker at the mission station, former slave of Fofi.

64. He is probably identical with Samory, referred to as Samadu by the Vai, according to personal information from Svend Holsoe. I decided to retain the local spelling Saa Morlu since it reflects the local transformation of personal names, Saa being a frequent Kissi pre-name, Morlu a favorite second name in the area. The war here referred to was named "rolling war" (Kli kli ko (Bandi)), the name referring to the advances and retreats of Samory's war parties.

65. Our informant called him Kale Lundu, probably a reference to the former name of Kai Lundu's residence Kanre Lahun. See, Thomas Alldridge, The Sherbro and its Hinterland (London, 1961), map.

spies and, surprisingly, appeared in Bagehebuwuhun and caught all their women and children. Then he sent a messenger to Somalahun to inform the Bandi chiefs that he would carry their children and women to Sierra Leone and would pass Somalahun on his way. The Bandi chiefs felt secure in Somalahun because the town was surrounded by seven walls constructed of very soft wood - ngohongi (Bandi) - which absorbs bullets.

One of Siafa's spies, called Sangaba, went to Somalahun and tried to enter the town. He cut the ropes connecting the palisades near the ground and loosened them; then he got through all the seven walls, creeping through the holes he had cut into the palisade fences. When he had passed a wall, he placed the ropes and palisades in their former position so that nobody could see from outside that someone had made his way through the wall.

In town he knew a zoo-woman he had made love to and she kept him in her house. She had all the Sande-girls in her house at this time<sup>66</sup> and told them to prepare food for her stranger (i. e. 'guest'). Sangaba had got some white clay from a death spirit which he smeared all over his body; as a result of this, he became invisible for the Sande-girls. Each time they put a pan of food before him, it was emptied after ten minutes. This made the girls say, 'Our zoo-woman has contact with a very powerful spirit.' After staying in the zoo's house for one week, Sangaba went back and told Siafa that he had found a way into the town.

In Somalahun all men were prepared to fight and did not even go back to their houses at night time to sleep with their women. But nevertheless, Siafa's warriors made their way through the hidden entrance in the walls. They formed a line, one man creeping behind the other bent over his back, and entered the town. Their password was je nne (meaning 'from what side are you?' (Bandi)) and was answered by them 'Siafa Nyabalu' (meaning 'from Siafa Nyabalu's side'). In town the line of warriors spread out along the wall thus surrounding the whole town.

Old man Fofi, the later paramount chief, who was fighting with the Bandi, woke up this night and heard the warriors whisper je nne, je nne?. He jumped up from his bed and joined them unnoticed by them.

After his men had surrounded the town, Siafa Nyabalu sent six warriors to each house and declared the inhabitants slaves. Some of the townspeople seeing that the enemy had broken the town, opened the gates in the wall and ran away. Fofi, too, escaped during the fighting which had started in town.

66. After the seclusion period in the bush, the girls who have been recently circumcised and initiated into the Sande secret society still remain in the house of the female zoo for some time.

But nevertheless, after a short time, Siafa Nyabalu was in control of the town. He spend the rest of this night in town and left early in the morning. Those who had escaped had gathered their best hunters and warriors and placed them near the road in order to kill Siafa when he passed. But he had a powerful medicine against bullets, and no bullet could hurt him. However, he himself caught some of the warriors in the bush and beheaded them, the others running away. Now Siafa carried all Bandi prisoners, their wives and children included, to Kailahun. Mbawulumé who had escaped from the town now asked Kai Lundu for peace.<sup>67</sup>

Our informant even stated that some years later, Mbawulumé asked Kai Lundu to send Siafa Nyabalu with an army to assist him against the Belle. Siafa came and received a special present from Mbawulumé. It was said that Mbawulumé once also directed his warriors against the Liberians - this probably happened in connection with the Gola uprising of 1898, the so-called "Coleman war" or "Suehn war." The government sent Lieutenant Willie Lomax to negotiate a peace in Brewerville. After the peace treaty had been signed, Lomax also went into the hinterland and visited Looma. Our informants stated that this occurred during President Daniel Howard's administration (1912-1920), but by this time Mbawulumé was reportedly already dead since Volz stated that Mbawulumé had been dead for some years when he visited Looma in 1907.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, Lomax's visit to Looma may have rather occurred around 1905 when he was sent out with a commission in order to settle the frontier question with the British colonial administration of Sierra Leone.

Mbawulumé also participated in a war against the Komgba-Gola, an account of which was given in Mbaama.<sup>69</sup>

Before the Komgba-Gola came under definite government control, Bawo from Jawajei was the Gola chief for the whole area. He and Mbawulumé, a Mende man from Looma, were good friends. Once, Mbawulumé came to eat together with Bawo. He brought his rice with him and had it cooked for chop. But he said to Bawo, 'I don't carry any spoon with me; therefore I will divide the rice with my hands.' This brought confusion, since Bawo's son, Sengbe Sebo, refused to take the rice saying, 'You can't take the rice and put it in my hands as you do it with small boys; in my country you can't do like that.' This made Mbawulumé get up and leave for Looma where he gathered his warriors to fight Bawo. But when they approached Mbaama, they were repelled by the Gola. A second attack had even less success, since their head warrior was drowned in a pond near Mbaama.

67. Informant Fodi Kamara, former teacher at the mission at Bolahun.

68. Volz, "Reise," 217-18.

69. Informant Dua Jaa, owner of town; Mbaama is situated halfway between Zoi and Kondezu, at a distance of seven hours' walk from each village.

The war was finally stopped by Jaa Mali (the commissioner in Suehn?) and Kpaku Tenge, a civilized man. Both called the Gola and the Mende to arrange a peace. Both parties had to meet at the Lofa river, the common boundary of their territories. Each party carried meat, white cloth, rum and some cash money which were exchanged for confirmation of peace.

The war against Doba in which Mbawulum was said to have participated, too, is related under Kpawuluzu.

KONDEZU (Loma), LOWO (Belle?)

Kondezu should not be confused with the neighboring Konezu or Konehun (Bandi) at the Lofa river. Unlike Gatima and Looma, it was founded by the Belle, evidence for which may be seen in the widespread use of the Belle language among the older people. Its elder, Jasie Manau, gave the following story about the foundation:

Wanwələ Koli from Gonjade<sup>70</sup> came here and built the first house of this town which he names kondezu - 'snail' after the snails he found in the bush. The place actually belonged to a man named Gbəse, but Wanwələ Koli and his brother, Wune Sewe, were in power. The first quarter was named after Wuni Sewe. The second quarter was built by Wəiwo, a Gola man from Komgba. His father being a 'Gola by tribe'<sup>71</sup> had married a Belle girl from Gonjade; his sister, too, had married a Belle man, Toma Koko from Gatima. Their child was Wuni Sewe, that means that he was the 'nephew' of Wəiwo. Another 'uncle' i.e. mother's brother' of Wuni Sewe is the present 'owner of town', Damenduo. Under Wuni Sewe, Kondezu participated in a war against Gbinyalahun on the side of Looma, and another war against the Komgba and Goje-Gola.

The account of the foundation reflects a usual pattern of village formation among the Belle: The original quarters of a village are often built by a man and his "nephew". The meaning underlying this custom is connected with preferential matrilineal cross-cousin marriage. The mother's brother has the obligation to provide his "nephew" with a wife, either by giving him his own daughter or by paying his bride-price. In return, the "nephew" has the obligation to protect his uncle in war and otherwise, even at the risk of being killed or becoming enslaved. Because of certain rituals which only the "nephew" can perform, the Belle maintain that he and his "uncle" have to live preferably in the same village."

70. I am not certain if he is identical with the ruler of Gbinyalahun. See, genealogy in appendix.

71. This refers to patrilineal descent of tribal membership and means that his father was Gola.

BELLE MBALOMA<sup>72</sup>

The village was founded by six men from various Belle villages:

By Soba Koyō, Kondo Koyōwe, Benjei, Vanmanaa Garloo, Bau Wanwələ, all from Gonjade, and Bamuklau from Nivodo. They named their new village Mbaloma, meaning 'a place where you will feel well'.

The first quarter is named after a Gola chief, Koipele-kunu, who was driven from his country by war and had led a group of his warriors into Belle territory. The Belle had given him land to make a farm. He formerly had lived in Gonjade but later moved to Mbaloma, where he built his quarter which was named after him by his son. Benjei built the second quarter in which today is included Bamuklau's quarter; the third one is Garloo's quarter. There were formerly five quarters, two of them, however, have merged with the others.

Formerly, several Gola families had lived in the surroundings and in the village itself; the inhabitants maintain that some of the hills and creeks still bear Gola names while the population itself has disappeared.

Since the founders came from Gonjade, Mbaloma was under its influence for a long time. In wars, the warriors of Gonjade always called the men from Mbaloma for assistance. One of these wars was directed against Gbinyalahun. One of Bamuklau's daughters had been betrothed to Kloba Deγ ula.<sup>73</sup> One day Bamuklau sent a message to Deγ ula informing him that he wanted to see his daughter, but Deγ ula refused to send his wife to Mbaloma. Therefore, Bamuklau declared war on Deγ ula telling him that he would take back his daughter by force. Deγ ula answered, 'Before you carry your daughter, you have to carry my head.'

When fighting went on for some time, Deγ ula's nephew, Towi, said, 'Since I am your nephew, I have to settle this palaver between you and Bamuklau.' He took two white fowls and sent one to Bamuklau and one to his uncle. Thereafter, Deγ ula and Bamuklau met and had chop together and concluded peace. Chief warriors were Jandau Jagbo from Gonjade and Mbambo Kula from Nivodo, and Kloba Deγ ula on the other side.

72. Informants Doba Sale, owner of town, and Gevolo Sano, elder, both from Mbaloma.

73. The title Kloba, whose origin is unknown, bears an interesting resemblance to the office of the kloba, designating the secular ruler of the tribe among some coastal Kru groups, e. g. Siklio, Gbeta, Jiro, meaning "senior" from kulau gba - "big kulau".

KALATA<sup>74</sup> (Kpelle), KALAUJE (Belle), KAYALAHUN (Bandi)

The old town of Kalata was situated on a very steep and sloping hill named Keba, situated on the road between Gbinyalahun and the actual village of Kalata. The name of this first village was Gabi, and it had been founded by a man called Bōba. Bōbo had come from Gbali in Kpelle country - this name might refer to the Gbaaleŋ section of the Kpelle. The first quarter was named after his brother, Kolu Pli.

At the time when Deŋ ula was the main chief of the area, he received an order from the government to join three villages: Kenata, Gabi and Mawi, an old village on the road to Goleta. He told all the people of these villages to leave them and settle at Wā creek. But Kenata refused, and only the people of Mawi and Gabi left their villages and settled at the designated spot, the place of the actual Kalata. Kolu Pli led his people from the hill to the creek Wā. After him came his nephew, Yegbo Kawi, who succeeded him as owner of town, even before his older brother, Momolu Pene. The new village was named after the eagle living on a cotton tree near the village (Kaŋε - eagle (Bandi), je - village (Belle)). Presently, it has only two quarters, Kolupli-kunu and Mawi-kunu. Kalata was involved in a war against the Mende, called Sagazu by the Bandi (the Mende of Looma?) in which Bōbo, war chief of Gabi, was assisted by the warriors of Mawi. Dōba Kōyō was sent here to stop this war by Bodo, a Gizima chief.

GOLETA (Kpelle), KOLJE (Belle)<sup>75</sup>

The founder of the village was Koole, who came from the old village of Malindamai on the road to Kpawuluzu. The war which had raged between the Belle under Gbleā and the Buluyema-Loma<sup>76</sup> had driven him from his village. Since the Loma won the war (?), Kōle came here with his people and built the first quarter, kōbjekunu. Koole's nephew, Segbe, a warrior, brought his family from Kolobanu, an old village near the actual Goleta. It was reduced in size by an epidemic raging among its inhabitants. and the remaining people were seeking a healthier place. Therefore, they left Kolobanu and built two new quarters in Goleta, segbe-kunu and kolobanu-kunu.

Besides the above-mentioned war, smaller disputes occurred with other villages of the Bati section.

KPAWULUZU<sup>77</sup>

It is the first village in the Belle chiefdom coming from Zolowo in the east. Concerning linguistic affiliation and economic activities, it is more oriented towards the Loma than the Belle. One of the reasons might be that, after its destruction, it was rebuilt by refugees who had lived in Zolowo and Fisebu (Gizima Loma) for about twenty years.

74. Ta meaning "place, town" (Kpelle); the Kpelle-spelling is the one most frequently used for the village.

75. Informants Yasie Folomo, clan chief, and Samuel Jensen, his brother, both from Goleta.

76. See, Gbinyalahun.

77. Informant town chief Koi Koi, Kpawuluzu.

The following account was given about its foundation:

Bolobio from Fisebu, a Belle man who had lived in Gizima (section) for a long time, married a woman from Zomei and built Kpawuluzu on the actual spot. Their first son was Doba Koyō who became a powerful war leader and chief of the Belle. He was the ally of the Gizima Loma in their wars against the Buluyema Loma.

He finally had so many enemies that the whole of the Belle tribe was engaged in a war against him. His only ally was the Gizima town of Zolowo. Of this war the following account was given:<sup>78</sup>

Doba had a very good friend in Gbango, a powerful chief from Ngainga near Belle Yella.<sup>79</sup> Once he visited Gbango and saw one of his daughters which he found very lovely. He asked his friend to give him his daughter and obtained her as a wife. Though his people had warned him that the girl was very quarrelsome, he did not care and took her with him to Kpawuluzu. But the girl continually caused trouble with Doba's people, and they advised him to beat her in order to stop the 'trouble-maker'. He told some of his people to do so. Once when she started another palaver, one of his boys hit her neck in such a way that it caused her immediate death.

When Gbango received the message of his daughter's death, he sent to Doba to ask him why she had been killed. Doba replied, 'Because she was giving too much trouble.'<sup>80</sup> Gbango answered him, 'I will come and kill you,' and he sent a razor blade and a red kola nut symbolizing his intent to take revenge.

Doba sent him a message saying, 'Nobody in this area can fight me, not even you.' Then he told his people that war had been declared on him by Gbango. His nephew, Yangbayu, got up and said, 'I swear that I will die before they can catch you.' Then all the people stood up and ate kafu, swearing that anyone leaving Doba would never be allowed to come back to the town.

78. Informant Yakpawolo Barnie (Barnett), grand-nephew of Doba, present paramount chief of the Belle, born in Kpawuluzu, but residing in Belle Yela.

79. In Johnson, "Traditions," 52. Doba is referred to as the grandfather of Kpango; this makes the following conflict rather improbable. A village Ngainga, is mentioned by Volz, "Reise," 226. It was located, however, between Wetessu and Botossu among the Bonde. The Ngainga here referred to is said to have been situated south of the Kpo range.

80. According to informants in Mavodo, Doba had sent a messenger to Gbango with an excuse stating that he did not kill the girl intentionally. But the messenger who should have carried white kola took a red kola and a razor blade and presented them to Gbango. Then he told him, "Doba says that you should come and catch him if you are a man."

But Doba did not know that Gbango had persuaded all Belle towns to join his case even Mbawulume from Looma. One day Gbango's warriors left Mavodo and attacked Kpawuluzu at 5:30 in the morning. The fighting lasted from 6:00 a. m. to 6:00 p. m. and due to the brave defense of Yangbayu's warriors, the attack was not met by any success. Yangbayu himself wore a war shirt with a powerful medicine which made him bulletproof. He stood on the wall and killed anybody who attacked the town. In the evening Gbango's people said, ' This is a tough task; we have to play a trick.' They fetched an uncircumcised and uninitiated boy, loaded a gun and ordered him to fire at Yangbayu. This broke his medicine, and he was killed by the bullet. Then Gbango's warriors broke the town. Many of Doba's people were killed, the survivors ran away to Zolowo. Doba himself fought until he was overwhelmed and killed.<sup>81</sup>

This war reportedly happened during President Charles D. King's administration (1920-1930). However, if Mbawulume had participated, the date must be considerably antedated.

One of Doba's sons, Yasie Kpoko brought the refugees back from Zolowo after many years. Since the tribal wars were over they rebuilt the village on the old site. But, when many of the old people died, one shortly after the other, the new town was considered unfavorable and was left. Yasie led his people across the river where they built a new village. But every night they enquired from a zoo whether the new place was suitable; he finally told them to return to the first site where their ancestors dwelled. Therefore, the actual Kpawuluzu stands on the old spot and is divided into three quarters, Doba's quarter, Siwɔ's and Bude's quarters, the latter two having been built by two of Doba's nephews.

#### MAVODO<sup>82</sup>

The first village of Mavodo was built by Kɔɔ Kaa from Koewo, an old village on the road to Belle Yella, His uncle, Yungbo Wangle had told him to build a village between Belle Yella and Kpawuluzu, since there was no place to sleep on this road. This first village was not located at the present site and was later abandoned in tribal wars. Kɔɔ Kaa finally came to the present place which was owned by the people of Kebode, another old village. They gave him the right to settle, and he built Badekunu, the first quarter. Then he called

81. The informants of Mavodo give a slightly different version. Gbango had told Mbawulume to catch Doba. So Mbawulume and all the Belle people conquered the town, and Mbawulume himself caught Doba and presented him to the Belle. Doba told them that he had sent an excuse and begged them to accept it, and he excused again. But the Belle said, "If we let him go, he will become powerful again and start another war. Therefore, we will put him to death." After this verdict, he was taken and cremated. His descendants were distributed as slaves.

82. Informants Yasi Gbɔ, main elder, Doba Jalla, elder, Momo, quarter chief; all Mavodo.



one of his nephews, Vankoli Mərloo from Gōkpo<sup>83</sup> who built the next quarter, kunu gba, the "big quarter". Before he came to Mavodo, Vankoli and his brother, Falo, had lived in a place called Drugbei which could not be located by our informants. In Mavodo he called for his younger brother, Mawi Su, from Kenata who brought with him Mawi Jegbo and his people; both settled in kunū gba.

The third quarter is kebode-kunu, but the people of Kebode did not settle in Mavodo until after the war against Doba Kōyō in which they assisted Mavodo. Their head warrior was Sumo Kaso, owner of Kebode; the leader of Mavodo's warriors was Kōdō Ka'a who was killed before Kpawuluzu.

Earlier, the village had been involved in a war against Gbinyalahun.

Kōdoba Deγula and Yungbo Wəngəle, who were uncle and nephew, once fell in love with the same girl named Koba Nyando. Since she decided to live with Yungbo, Deγula said, 'This woman is between me and my nephew.' He sent a message to all his people and informed them that he would declare war against his nephew. Yungbo was then living in Yabokε (Belle), called Yabogizima in Loma; this village was raided by Deγula's army, and Yungbo had to flee to Looma and ask Mbawulume's son, Blaima Sangawulo, for assistance. All Bati villages assisted Looma and Mavodo against Deγula and some Lobaizu villages. The president (Arthur Barclay ?) had to send commissioner Jaa Mali from Suehn and Zuana Dagbai in order to stop the war. The two parties had to meet on the road between Gbinyalahun and Tegili, where they killed a cow and held a common meal.

#### BELLE YELLA (Jeila)<sup>84</sup>

The foundation goes back to one of the early tribal wars which had destroyed many villages and caused the death of many people. The remaining people were so few that they decided to settle in one joint village.

They said to one old man called Saba, 'You whose name is Saba, give us the place near your tobacco field at the water.' Saba agreed and people from four different villages came to settle in the new place. The villages were Sabauje, Tambeni, Sagbadei, and Ngaijuje.<sup>85</sup>

83. Gowoma, in the north of Belle chiefdom; gō-kpo - "the place where the cotton tree fell down" (Belle).

84. Informant Elder Gbagba, owner of town, and David Wheeler, former clan chief of Bati.

85. Otherwise called Ngainga.

They sat together and ate kafu in order to seal their agreement to defend their new town against any enemies. Then they built up the new village, the name of which means 'near the water' (Kpelle). Belle Yella has three quarters: Gbuaã-kunu, Jegbola-kunu, Bolat ei-kunu, the latter from Sagbadei.

#### OTHER VILLAGES

In Belle Yella we obtained an account on a common settlement of Belle and Gola situated near Gonjade which the Gola had built with permission of the people of Gonjade. It was called Nj nau i. e. "under the hill" (Gola?). It seems that the Gola were driven from this village as a result of an inter-tribal war on the occasion of a quarrel over a woman. We did not visit the villages of Sasahun (Sasazu), Gowoma (Gɔkpo), Tegli (Tɛikɛ) and Gegbelahun (Gbeila); in Fasama (Kpakonu) the officials were not cooperative and the collection of information was made impossible; besides, some of the important elders had died, others were absent. This is regrettable, especially since Fasama is the second largest town of the Belle and has played a key role in recent years.

Tegli has always had close relations with the neighboring Gbinyalahun; part of its population is of Gola origin and descended from town chief Vankoli who was installed by Wanwale Koli from Gbinyalahun on request of Tegli's inhabitants. The village received its name from a woodcarver - a zoo who had to carve Poro masks - who found at this place a certain stick tei (kɛ, a local variant of je - "town") and built a village near the Kpombolo creek. Though Vankoli's family became important, his son, Yarngo, later becoming paramount chief, it is considered as a "family of strangers," while the owners of the town belong to the Goi family and live in tɛikɛ-kunu; their "uncles" are

#### RECENT HISTORY OF THE BELLE A SUMMARY

From the above accounts it is possible to draw a more accurate outline of the history of the area than was hitherto possible. However, the events hardly antedate 1900. The first appearance of the Belle in the literature, besides Harrison's account,<sup>87</sup> occurs in Alldridge who met "a Beli or Beri chief with a long, grey beard" in Gahun, Malema Chiefdom, Sierra Leone, in March, 1891.<sup>88</sup> Delafosse equated the Belle with the Barlines on Anderson's and Büttikofer's maps,<sup>89</sup> but I have come to the conclusion that the Barlines are identical with the Gbaaleɲ\* Kpelle, the south-

86. Informant, Mr. Miller, Belle Yella.

87. See above, Footnote 10.

88. Alldridge, The Sherbro, 240.

89. See, Delafosse, "Un Etat Nègre," 192; Anderson, Journey to Musardu, map; Büttikofer, Reisebilder, map.

\* (Editors Note: See, S. Holsoe et al, "Chiefdom and Clan Maps of Western Liberia," Liberian Studies Journal, I, 2 (1969), 35 where name is spelled Gbalein.)

eastern neighbors of the Belle.<sup>90</sup> Volz's account remains most valuable for the early period since it makes the determination of the dates of certain events in our accounts possible. For example, the date of the foundation of Looma which occurred, according to Volz, ten years before his visit to Looma (1907) corresponds roughly with Mbawulum's flight from Vahun in 1896.<sup>91</sup>

The unrest of these years in the northwestern parts of Liberia and the north-east of Sierra Leone was, to a major extent caused by the marauding armies of the Sofa sent out by Samory and his subchiefs. Many of the local chiefs attempted to gain or retain political superiority by aligning themselves either with the Sofa or one of the colonial powers in the area or with the Liberians. The continuous warfare caused larger population movements into more secure areas where the enemy could not follow. The foundation of Looma is the result of such a larger population movement in which several tribes were involved. After he had been chased by the British Frontier Force, Mbawulum seemingly was ready to side with the Liberians in order to secure his new position in Looma. Before, he had managed to align himself with the two ruling lineages of the area, that of Yawiyahun and Gbinyalahun. Those two had previously formed military alliances which included Sambatahun, Kambahun and Wetessu.<sup>92</sup>

The Gola war reported above might be identical with that referred to by Volz. Seemingly, there were bitter hostilities between the Komgba Gola and Mbawulum's family which might reflect the suspicion of the northern Gola chiefdoms against the Mende whom they believed to be engaged in conspiracy with their enemies, either the Sofa or the Liberians. Mbawulum's arrival occurred in Deɣula's or Godolo's time, the latter being mentioned by Johnson as the second ruler of Gbinyalahun. Deɣula seemingly survived him by some years, since Volz tells us that during his stay Looma was prepared for a war against the Belle chief "Degra from Bourussu" in 1907. By this time Mbawulum had been dead for some years, though still not buried.<sup>93</sup> He probably died around 1905. However, Volz reported that Degra's village was Bourussu "about one day's journey northeast of Looma."<sup>94</sup> It seems justified that Bourussu be identified with Kpawuluzu from the pronunciation; but then, the direction given by Volz is still wrong, Kpawuluzu being four hours walk toward the southeast and Gbinyalahun, Deɣula's town, being two hours to the east of Looma.

The war between Deɣula and Blaima Sangawulo could be dated in 1907 if we can identify the government emissaries as commissioner Jaa Mali and Zuana Dagbai. Volz relates the events preceding the war of 1907 between Looma and Bourussu:

Some months ago, a Liberian commissioner [Jaa Mali from Suehn?] and a Mohammedan [Zuana Dagbai?] had entered the area as emissaries of the Liberian government. They had sent a white cloth to all chiefs

90. W. S. Anderson visited the Barline capital Palaka in 1870, which could be identical with Gbalakoita on Schwab's Tribes map or the present Gbakoita between St. Paul's and Via river. African Repository XLVI (Oct., 1870), 283, 316.

91. Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 541.

92. Volz, "Reise," 210.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., 209, translation by the author.

of the area as a sign of peace... Degra, the chief of Bourussu, about a day's journey north-east of Lo[o]ma, had agreed, for the time being, to set an end to the continuous wars. Thereupon Kutubu agreed with him on cleaning the road between Lo[o]ma and Bourussu as a sign of peace and the re-establishment of good relations, that means they wanted to clear the road from grass and broken trees each party working unto the place where formerly the town of Mavodo was situated, which was about half the distance. At a certain day each party ought to carry there two black chickens which were to be killed as a sign of peace. The people of Lo[o]ma were present on the appointed day but not so Degra and his people. The Commissioner hearing about this sent three messengers carrying a Liberian flag to Degra in order to call on him to keep peace. At once, Degra put these three into the block; about the flag he asserted that it was not even possible to buy a chicken with it. During five subsequent days he gathered his warriors, drew them up on the town square called the messengers in the block before him and said to them pointing on his warriors: 'the Liberians have power at the coast but not here. I, Degra, I am chief of this country and not your President. Go and tell him this.' Then they were freed from the block and dismissed while Degra went to Lo[o]ma. There, on January 14, 1907 the armies had an encounter the only result of which was the capture of three Belle who were carried to Lo[o]ma where they received a medicine on which they had to swear to fight on Lo[o]ma's side from now.<sup>95</sup>

Since Volz also mentioned that the rulers of Looma were Breimah and Kutubu, both nephews of Mbawulume, his account and the one cited above may well refer to one and the same war and the same persons, Blaima Sangawulo, Jaa Mali, and Zuana Dagbai, and Deγula. The account from Mavodo refers to the same war which might explain why the two parties were to meet, according to Volz's account, at the site of the former village of Mavodo (Mafondo by Volz) which may have been situated on the road between Tegili and Gbinyalahun.<sup>96</sup> At the time of Volz's visit, however, the war had not yet ended, since he himself had to write to President Arthur Barclay on behalf of the chiefs of Looma, yet we do not know about the effects of this letter. From the account from Mavodo we may at least conclude that Monrovia appreciated the loyalty of Looma and was ready to support its claim of superiority. At least the Belle themselves seem to have interpreted the diplomatic contacts of Looma with Monrovia as a real threat to their political and ritual superiority and suspected a secret agreement between Momolu Massaquoi and the Mende of Looma. But it was more a threat to the dominance of the ruling lineage of Gbinyalahun and distribution of power in the Bandi section of the Belle chiefdom, since the villages of Bati clan were frequent allies of Looma. The emergence of a new center of power other than Gbinyalahun made a challenge of the latter's dominance possible for these. The suspicions of

95. Volz, "Reise," 209-20, translated by the author.

96. Ibid. See, Gbinyalahun and Mavodo.

Looma's neighbors which included the Komgba Gola, were well-founded since Lt. Lomase (Lomax) had been commissioner in Looma during Mbawulumε's last years, probably between 1900 and 1905, and other officials made it their "resting place" during their efforts to bring the area under control. These probably were the political motives behind the dispute between the two villages which may have started from a private rivalry between Dεyula and Yungbo.

The political alliances of this time, however, were extremely short-lived and the Liberians could never be sure of their new friends who frequently re-aligned with other powers. Thus at Volz's time, Looma was confederated with some neighboring Bandi villages such as Buderissipa, Passolahun, Sambatahun, Kambahun,<sup>97</sup> and probably Gatima, Kondezu and Konezu, Sasazu and G woma. The allies of the Belle were the Bunde towns of Pandamai, described as the residence of Sofa by Alldridge in 1891, and Djajamai, as well as the Gizima towns of Zolowo and Fisebu, though we do not know the Belle villages on Degra's side. However, in the following war against Doba from Kpawuluzu reportedly all Belle villages were allied; but no information about the affiliation of the Lobaizu villages is available.

The line of political affiliation in the Belle chiefdom took a somewhat north-south direction after the establishment of Looma as a second center of power. The division into a northern and a southern political division does not seem to have come about until the establishment of administrative clans, though the linguistic division line ran west-east forming a Bandi section in the north and a "pure" Belle section in the south. Formerly the southern section never seems to have known a similar supra-local political unity as the Bandi villages did under the petty chieftaincy of Gbinyalahun. Only in recent times does the Bati section display a feeling of ethno-political unity enhanced by the consciousness of being the "pure" Belle who have preserved their language and cultural tradition. This is correlated with a shift in power from the north to the south, which can be most clearly seen from the succession of the chiefs and their origin or residence given in the following list worked out with our informants:

#### List of Paramount Chiefs

Name	Town or Origin (Residence)	Period or Reign
Nyatan Wanwεle Koli	Gbinyalahun	about 1900
(Godolo)	Gbinyalahun	?
Degula	Gbinyalahun (Bourussu?)	c. 1904-1910
Nyarngo	Tegili	c. 1910-?
Weiso	Gbinyalahun	?-?
Bona	Gbinyalahun (Kenata)	c. 1933-c. 1936
Nyorro	Gowoma	(?) 1936-?
Momolu Sewe	Gbinyalahun	(?) 1946-1948
Laki Togba	Belle Mbaloma	(?) 1948-1952
Willie Belle	Mavodo (Belle Yella)	(?) 1952-1962
Yakpawolo Barnett	Kpawuluzu (Belle Yella)	1962-

97. Volz confuses it consistently with Kamatahun, Hassala. Kambahun is probably identical with a Sofa war town mentioned by Alldridge, *The Sherbro*, as being seven miles from Vahun. On the most recent map of the area compiled by U. S. Geological Survey, there is a place named "Kambohun abandoned" approximately ten miles from Vahun and 2 miles from Kamatahun.

The above list shows the pre-eminence of Gbinyalahun as place of origin of the chiefs of the early time. The kin relations of the chiefs will be seen from the genealogies in the appendix. Of the few exceptions who did not reside in Gbinyalahun, Bona belonged to the ruling lineage as well, Nyarngo at least was under the influence of Gbinyalahun, only about Nyorro is there no information.

Johnson's list of "Rulers of the Tribe" also includes Kpango from Ngainga in Bati, Doba Konyaun from Kpawuluzu, Nwoni Sewe from Kondesu, Dewule Kandakai from Gatima, and Mbawulome and Kutubu from Looma. All of these were doubtless important local but not officially recognized chiefs for the whole area except Kutubu, who was clan chief until 1963, and Mbawulume who at least for some time, seems to have been a force to reckon with. Looma as the second center of power, from which government influence began to spread throughout the area, was later recognized as such by the appointment of Mbawulume's son, Kutubu, as clan chief of Lobaizu. Only the three last paramount chiefs came from the Bati section, and of them now one of them has been appointed senator of the county.

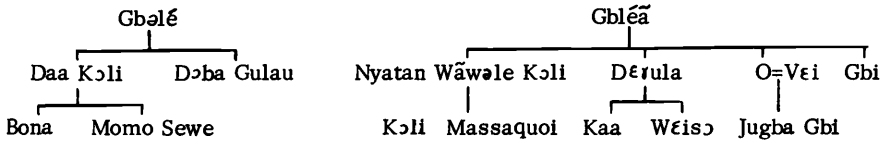
The decline of the north has to be regarded in economic terms: the main trading route to the hinterland leading through Looma and Gbinyalahun became unimportant after the opening of the all-weather-road Gbarnga-Voinjama-Kolahun on which most of the traffic and trade are carried out. Population movements and trade thus faded away in formerly large towns whose inhabitants, especially the young ones, went increasingly to the coastal towns to find employment. In addition, the military headquarters at Belle Yella and the new cultural center, Fasama, with its mission and school, both having air connection with Monrovia, soon gained increasing political and economic importance. The Mandingo merchants have mainly settled in these towns, some also in Belle Mbaloma where they carry on their businesses in exporting and importing retail wares and agricultural products. The villages in the north, with one exception, have no connection with the outward world by modern means of transportation while all villages of Bati clan have air strips. Thus a gradual shift in economic regional prominence has been accompanied by a comparable shift in political power.<sup>98</sup>

It remains to be said that the historical material covering the periods before 1900 and after 1907 is comparatively scarce and many points remain unclear, especially the end of tribal wars and the definite establishment of government control and its effect on the tribe.

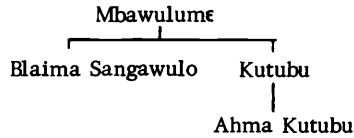
98. From Johnson, *Traditions*, 52 we learn that Doba Kɔyɔ was the grandfather of the former clan chief of Bati in Fasama; since he is also the father's uncle of the present paramount chief, this seems to indicate the emergence of a new influential lineage, however, with considerable affiliation to the Loma rather than the Belle; See also, Kpawuluzu.

## APPENDIX

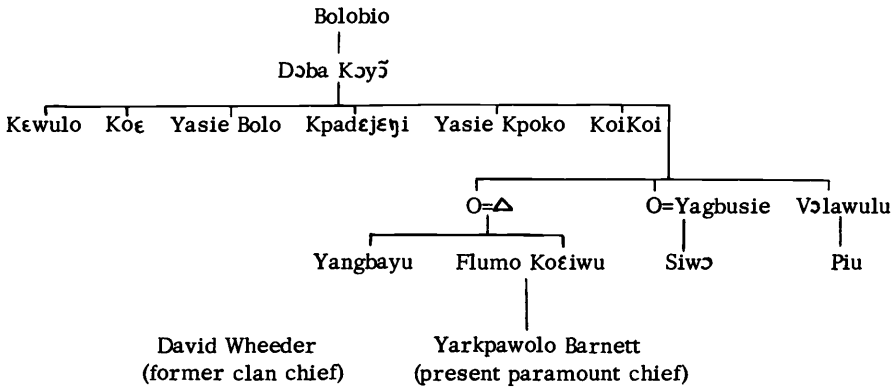
## GENEALOGY OF THE DOMINANT LINEAGE OF GBINYALAHUN



## GENEALOGY OF THE DOMINANT LINEAGE OF LOOMA



## GENEALOGY OF THE DOMINANT LINEAGE OF KPAWULUZU



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## SOME ASPECTS OF ENGLISH IN LIBERIA\*

Ian F. Hancock

Whether to publish original but incomplete material quickly, or to spend time - even years - amassing more complete data before presentation, is a familiar problem to those engaged upon linguistic research.

In the case of the volume under review this question is again brought to mind, the more so since it is itself an elaboration of an earlier work prepared in 1962 for the first Peace Corps project in Liberia.<sup>1</sup> During the eight intervening years the word list has been expanded from fifty to five hundred items although, as the compiler makes clear (p. i), the glossary is still "far from comprehensive."

The book is certainly useful as an introduction to the life and speech of urban Liberians, and is all that its title claims it to be; but as the first and only full-length study of the subject to have appeared to date, one regrets that it did not include more historical and sociolinguistic material. No distinction is made, for example, amongst the at least four varieties of English<sup>2</sup> spoken in Liberia, and while pages 65-74 are devoted to the phonology of the items dealt with, no attempt has been made to describe the structure of any variety of the language. These appear to comprise Standard Liberian English (SLE), Merico, Liberian Pidgin English (LPE) and Kru Pidgin English (KPE), each spoken by different groups within the country, and each exerting varying degrees of influence upon the other.

### STANDARD LIBERIAN ENGLISH

Standard Liberian English is employed in broadcasting and in other official capacities, and represents the only prestige form of English discussed here. It differs little from other varieties of Standard English spoken elsewhere in West Africa but has a distinctive phonology demonstrating considerable influence from American English. This has been briefly described by Smalley.<sup>3</sup>

\*Review/Discussion of Warren d'Azevedo, Some Terms from Liberian Speech, Second Edition, United States Peace Corps in Liberia, Monrovia, 1970, pp. iii + 76.

1. W. Welmers and W. d'Azevedo, Some Liberian English Usages, mentioned on p. ii.

2. This includes all varieties spoken in Liberia, including pidginized and creolized English. Not discussed here are expatriate forms of English such as British or American, or the Krio spoken by many Sierra Leonean residents in the country.

3. W. A. Smalley, Manual of Articulatory Phonetics (Tarrytown, New York, 1962), Part Two. Phonology of SLE, pp. 401-404.

## MÉRICO

Merico, or - less popularly - Americo-Liberian is also known as Brokes, Kwasai, Waterside or Water Street English. This is the first language of most Liberians of Settler<sup>4</sup> ancestry, although its use is largely restricted to home and informal situations. Many parents discourage their children from speaking Merico, regarding it as "bad" English and an obstacle to SLE acquisition. It represents in its modern form a partially decreolized offshoot of mid-nineteenth century southern U. S. Black English, and as such is of considerable importance vis-à-vis the study of Gullah, with which it is most closely identified.<sup>5</sup>

While no more than a cursory examination has been made of the structure of this speech, the following grammatical characteristics have been noted:

- a. Unmarked nominal plural: rak, "rock, rocks," or marked with post-nominal -dɛ: rak-dɛ, "rocks." This latter is possibly a feature from LPE or KPE.
- b. Adjectivals occurring with or without copula link: hi big, "he is big," dɛs gud, "that's good," ai sɔ tayə siti hyɔ, "I am tired of sitting here."
- c. Verbal stem without markers to indicate past action: ai si di mɛ, "I saw the man." Forms closer to SLE may also occur in Merico, hi gɔ, "he's gone."
- d. Use of the aspect marker də or lɛ<sup>6</sup> indicating action in progress: hi də spiɪsh, "he's talking at length," shi lɛ kræ, "she is crying." This appears

4. The Settlers or Americo-Liberians came to Liberia from the southern states of America from the time the colony was established, in 1816, until the late 1860's. At this time they numbered nearly 19,000. The earliest colonists were settled for some time in Freetown, Sierra Leone, while the American Colonization Society negotiated for land at Cape Mesurado, in Liberia, where Monrovia is now located.

5. On more than one occasion in the writer's experience, Krio-speaking Sierra Leoneans have thought that a recording of Gullah which was played to them was in fact Liberian English.

6. The form lɛ seems to be restricted to Liberia, although the similar li occurs in at least one variety of East Cameroun Pidgin English. If this derives from the English "live," it is paralleled by the Jamaican Creole form of the same item, viz. da, for which the Dictionary of Jamaican English suggests as a possible source Twi da, "...live, remain, rest." In Gullah and Krio, lib occurs as a locating verb, even with inanimates, e.g. Gullah di chiə bin ə lib iin di kɔndə, "the chair was in the corner." Grade gives me live for go for "I am going," and fairly consistently represents this aspect of the verb with live for throughout the article. P. Grade, "Bemerkungen über das Neger-Englisch an der Westküste von Afrika," Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen, LXXXIII (1889), 267. Conversation with a Kru, 271-272.

to be a variant form of the construction incorporating the suffix -i or -ĩ,<sup>7</sup> e.g. ai kāmĩ, "I am coming," yo jāəbĩ mi, "your're teasing me."

- e. The future tense marker is usually wu<sup>8</sup> as in wi wu kĩ, "we will come," although constructions with guə have been noted, regularly with bi: dəs guə bi ə big jab, "that's going to be a big job," yo guə kĩ tumorə?, "are you going to come tomorrow?"
- f. Use of the completive aspect marker dõ or nõ<sup>9</sup> e.g. de dõ go dædəwe, "they've gone that way," lilpiis nõ lɛf, "there's a small piece left."
- g. The copula verb sΛ,<sup>10</sup> as in hi sΛ mĩ, "he is a man," shi sΛ smo, "she is small." This may be optionally deleted in pre-nominal position as well as pre-adjectivally: dis mΛ hou (along-side dis sΛ mΛ hou), "this is my house," shi smo, "she is small."
- h. The widespread creole locating verb de also occurs in Merico, although in more anglicized varieties of the language it seems to be replaceable by sΛ: di gɛɛ de hyΛ, di gɛɛ sΛ hyΛ.
- i. The negating particle is ẽ or ẽ,<sup>11</sup> as in: ai ẽ əs di chæə, "I didn't ask the child," tẽ so, "it isn't so."
- j. The following pronominal forms have been recorded: Subject pronouns ai or a, yu, yo or yo, hi or i, shi, wi, and de or dẽ. Object pronouns include mi, yu, hi or hi, ho, wi or os, and dẽ. Possessive pronouns include mΛ or mi, yu, yo, hi or i, shi or ho, ou, and dẽ. No separate second person plural pronoun has been noted (Cf. Gullah une, Krio una). For "myself," both the pronunciations misɛf and mΛsɛf have been recorded. The former corresponds with the Krio form of the word, and may reflect LPE influence.

7. Stewart makes a distinction between the verb with lɛ, which he regards as the simple present, and the verb with suffixed -ĩ, which he treats as continuative; W. A. Stewart, "Foreign language teaching methods in quasi-foreign language situations," in, Non-standard Speech and the Teaching of English (Washington, 1964), 1-15. Discussion of LPE and/or Merico, 5.

8. Cf. Jamaican Creole wi as future-marker. Both are from English "will."

9. Probably from English "done," although convergence with Wolof (Senegal and The Gambia) doon, as past habitual tense marker, is possible. Cf. also Wolof di, as marker of present habitual action, with Liberian and Gullah də, Krio and Cameroon di/de.

10. Probably from is + the verbal auxiliary a- as in "he's a-coming." Ottley, in his Trinibagianese, Port-of-Spain, 1965-7, records the use of a similar word in Trinidad: you suh nuh fuh talk, "you shouldn't talk," she suh ain today story, "she's not today's story" (i.e. "she's old"). Note also Pitcairnese yu han sə bləd; ai sə dan, "your hand is bloody," "I am finished," and Norfolkese wi sə gləd; dəm sə slai, "we're glad," "they're unwilling (lit. 'sly')," as recorded in A. S. C. Ross and A. W. Moverley, The Pitcairnese Language (London, 1964).

11. From "ain't." Also Gullah and Caribbean.

## LIBERIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH

Liberian Pidgin English is mainly spoken in the interior by tribal Liberians of different linguistic backgrounds in their dealings with each other, and with Africans and Europeans from the coast. While having absorbed a great many Merico and SLE features, especially phonologically, LPE represents a separate branch of Atlantic Pidgin<sup>12</sup> being a variety of West African Pidgin English immediately related to other coastal dialects. It differs from Merico in its lack of gender distinction, use of no as negator, bi as copula verb, and fɔ (instead of Merico tə) as preverbal "to." LPE has been inadequately described both by Wilson and Büttikofer.<sup>13</sup>

## KRU PIDGIN ENGLISH

Kru Pidgin English, similar in many respects to Sierra Leone Krio, and employed as a second language by Kru fishermen, who seem to have been instrumental in carrying Pidgin features along the entire Guinea coast. KPE, while employed as a second language appears to be structurally a creole rather than a pidgin, and may well have been acquired as a discrete language from native speakers in Sierra Leone.<sup>14</sup> Short texts in Kru Pidgin English may be found in Crocker, Grade, and Zöllner.<sup>15</sup>

It would be wrong to compartmentalize these varieties of Liberian English too rigidly; there is considerable inter-influence amongst them, especially from LSE and among Merico, LPE and KPE, and with the exception of LSE, there is marked social pressure against the use of each variety in the wrong context.

Despite the fact that we are still awaiting a comprehensive description of Liberian English, a start, at least, has been made, and for this we must thank Professor d'Azevedo. Some Terms from Liberian Speech, apart from being of considerable

12. See I. F. Hancock, "A Provisional Comparison of the English-based Atlantic Creoles," African Lan a Review, VIII (1969), 7-72 for a discussion of this. Reference to Merico, with some examples, on page 23.

13. J. Büttikofer, Reisebilder aus Liberia (Leiden, 1890) 2 vols. On LPE see, II, 237-240; C. M. Wilson, Liberia (New York, 1947). LPE, 59-63.

14. This reflects the inadequacy of present terminology in creole linguistics. While a pidgin is by definition a second language, not every second language is a pidgin, even if that second language is a creole. In other words it is possible for a creole to be re-pidginized, but just as possible for non-native speakers to speak a creole perfectly. While there is some justification for retaining the term "pidgin," use of the term "creole" would appear to be unnecessary. Ideally each creole should have its own name, and be regarded no differently from other world languages.

15. W. R. Crocker, Nigeria, a Critique of British Colonial Administration (London, 1936). On pages 167-168 there is a story in KPE; Grade, "Bemerkungen über das Neger-Englische," 271-272; Hugo Zöllner, Das Togoland und die Sklavenküste (Berlin, 1885). Kru English, 242-243.

practical use to Peace Corps members and other expatriates in Liberia, also provides a useful source of lexical material for researchers into the field of Atlantic creole studies. If criticism has to be levelled in any particular direction, it should be at the creolists themselves, for having ignored a linguistic situation which may well prove more than any other to unravel much of the mystery still surrounding the internal relationships of the Atlantic creoles. It has taken an anthropologist to take the initial step in this direction, a step which one hopes, particularly, will stimulate further research into this fascinating and complex area of Black English studies.

The following comments apply to d'Azevedo's terms; those followed by (A) are from the addenda to the second edition.

Again [Still, yet, already]. Paralleled in all Caribbean and West African English creoles in this sense.

Ba [Namesake, friend]. Also occurs in Krio, Jamaican, Sranan, Gullah and Cameroon Pidgin. Cf. Vai bɔ, "friend, fellow companion" (Koelle), and Mandinka ba, "term of address to either sex."

Barbered [Hair cut]. The back-formation barb also occurs in Merico, as a verb.

Beard-beard [Reference to someone with a beard or moustache]. This appears to be Krio/Cameroon biabia, "beard."

Beat [Bested, failed]. Also Krio.

Belly [Pregnant]. The verb phrase get belly is a widespread creole calque on both sides of the Atlantic.

Benniseed [Sesame seed]. Ultimately from Wolof bene, or Mandinka bene.

Bite-and blow [Reference to rats gnawing the soles of the feet]. "Blow" here probably means "take a rest," its Krio/Caribbean meaning, rather than "blow" or "puff."

Book [To know book, literate]. A LPE usage.

Bugabug [termite sp.]. This item was first recorded in Moore's Travels (1738). The word has the Liberian form and meaning in the Gambia, but the pronunciation is unknown in Sierra Leone where it is pronounced boɓɓoɓ or gbɔɓɔɓ. Mandinka has bagabaga, and Susu boghbokhi, "termite," probably also the source of English "bug."

Buku [Plenty, much]. Also Krio and Cameroon/Nigerian Pidgin boku.

Carry [Take, convey]. In the sense of "accompany" this verb is widespread in West Africa, the Caribbean and the southeastern United States. Wright, in his English Dialect Dictionary (London, 1905), lists carry or kerrie (Cf. Krio keri) as occurring in Irish and Scottish dialects with the meaning "take, convey."

Chokla [Mixed up]. The same word as Krio chakra, Cameroon chakara or chakala, and Jamaican chakra or chachaka. Probably ultimately Ewe tsaka, "mix, be mixed."

Chunk [Throw]. Common in many U. S. dialects.

Civilized [Reference to knowledge of western religion and education]. This also means "duped" in Merico (and Krio).

Cold Water [Gift to soothe ruffled feelings]. Probably via Krio where kol-wata has the same meaning, and may even be extended to mean simply kind words. Cf. Krio kol-wata also meaning gin or rum, a calque from Yoruba omi-tutu. This is used to appease certain society spirits or totems such as the Hunting Society's Egun.

Come [I'm coming, I'm going]. This could have been better glossed as "I'm coming back," said on the point of departure. Liberian "I'm coming to go" means "I am about to leave" (Cf. Krio a de kam go), and is paralleled in several West African languages.

Company, komping [Informal mutual aid society]. Krio kompin and Cameroon kambi (as well as Sranan/Saramaccan kompe) mean "peer, companion." Mutual aid societies have various names in the creoles, e.g. Krio esusu (ex Yoruba), although nineteenth century sources list Freetown "compins" as being benefit and welfare organizations.

Corn row (A) [Hair style for women]. Krio has kon-rol, "corn roll," with the same meaning.

Dash [Tip, gift]. This item is probably African rather than Portuguese; Ewe has dase, "thank you" (Cf. China Coast Pidgin "cumshaw," a tip or gift, from Hokkien kam chia, "thank you"). However various other etyma are possible: Africans may have been rewarded with a "dash" of rum for services rendered. "Dash" has the meaning "make a show or display" in Scottish dialects, and "throw" or "fling" in Jamaican Creole.

Dear [Expensive]. British English. Cf. use of "cheap" for "inexpensive," in Liberia and other parts of West Africa.

Dollbaby [Figurine, stickdoll]. This term for "doll" is found in some U. S. dialects, and occurs in Krio.

Dumboy [Boiled cassava dough]. The word is found in Mende and Vai, with the same meaning. English (Yorkshire dialect) has dumboy as a kind of syrup-covered bread (Wright, EDD).

Ene [Is that so? Well!]. Merico term, cognate with Gullah and Krio enti, "really?", "indeed?", from Cornish dialect enti, "indeed" (Wright, EDD). Cf. also Twi enti, "that's why," and Cockney innit, "isn't it?"

Fresh cold [a cold]. Widespread in the Caribbean, and in Krio.

Gbo ye [Boiled egg]. Kra has nye, "egg."

Grona [urchin]. From Krio grona, gronatrit, i.e. "grew up in the street," a prostitute.

Ground pea [Peanut]. Krio has grampi, graumpi, probably Liberianisms. The more usual Krio name is granat.

Gwana (A) [Monitor lizard]. Gwana is the usual pronunciation of iguana in Krio, the Caribbean and Australia.

Helluva [Big, bad, mighty]. Krio has elaba with the same meaning.

Help [Do something specific]. This may also mean "do something on my behalf," thus "help me go shopping" will mean "go shopping for me."

Hobo [Prostitute]. d'Azevedo's etymology implied in his spelling is unlikely, although no satisfactory alternative has yet been found. Krio has obójó, "prostitute."

Humbug [Tease, bother, annoy]. In Krio, the Caribbean, Neo-Melanesian and Hawaiian Pidgin, humbug has the same meaning, suggesting the retention of an older English meaning of the word. Cf. U. S. Black English "humbug," meaning "fight."

I Say! [Listen!]. British equivalent of American "Say!".

Jale [Kitchen]. Cf. Krio gyali "kitchen" from "galley." The author notes that this word is used mainly by the Kru.

Jam [Press, force beset]. This has the meaning "be stalemated" in Krio. Cf. English "in a jam."

Jina [Spirits]. This is the indefinite Vai and Mende form. Krio jinai is probably via English "genii" rather than Mende, the definite form of which is jinei, not jinai.

Judas [Dummy dragged through the streets at Easter]. This custom is also observed on Good Friday in Freetown, accompanied by the refrain "Judas die done today, we go bur' am tumarra," (judas dai don tide, wi go ber am tumara).

Ko beya! [Cold beer]. This is the Merico pronunciation, ko bie.

Ko breya [Corn bread]. This is the Merico pronunciation, more correctly kō bree.

Ko wa! [Cold water]. This is the Merico pronunciation, ko woo.

Lappa [Cloth garment]. From English "wrapper."

Lasmo [Fetish or medicine packet]. From Susu lasmami "greegree," ult. Arabic la simam, "there is no poison." Krio has lasmami-wata, water which has been used to wash sacred Koranic writings, and which therefore has magical properties.

Mami Water [Water woman]. Compare Krio mami-wata, Sranan mama-watra, Caribbean French Creole mama-dlo, and Brazilian Negro Portuguese mãe de água, all meaning mermaid, water spirit. An African calque, cf. Yoruba iya-olodo (mother of the water), "mermaid."

Moli [Mohammedan, esp. a diviner]. Cf. Krio more-man, a Muslim diviner. Also English Moor, Manding moli, a Muslim.

N'mind ya [Don't worry]. Cf. Krio no men ya, "don't worry" (no + mind + y'hear).

No-way [impasse]. This expression is enjoying current vogue in the U. S. A.

Popo [Excrement]. Cf. Krio pupu.

Portugee [Portuguese]. Cf. Krio Podogi, Portuguese.

Roundneck [T-shirt]. Also Krio.

Runny-stomach [Diarrhoea]. Cf. Krio ron-bɛɛ, diarrhoea, Trinidad Running-belly, dysentery.

So-so [sort of, rather]. This would have been better glossed as "nothing but," Cf. Sranan, Caribbean, Krio soso, "just, nothing but." English so-so, Portuguese só, "only."

Sumangama [Incest]. Also occurs with this pronunciation in Krio. Cf. Mende simangama, "incest."

Torch [Flashlight]. British English. Cf. Krio torchlight.

Tote [Carry a burden]. There are at least three possible origins for this item: Old English totian, "lift, elevate," which may have given rise to later "tote" in Piers Ploughman then toted I into a tavern (Crede, Ed. 1553, BIII) or the name tote applied to the handle of a carpenter's plane; French tauter, to ease the moving of a large object by placing rollers beneath it - Cf. U. S. tote sled in particular; and Kikongo tota, "pick up." This also occurs in Gullah, Trinidad, Cameroon Pidgin and Krio.

Upstairs [Drink, drunk]. Cf. Krio (a) kpetesi, meaning a) "upstairs" or or a storey-house, and b) illicitly distilled spirit. From Yoruba, although ultimately English "upstairs." (Both Gã and Bini also have kpetesi, patesi, "upstairs; gin.")

Wayo Baby (A) [Prostitute]. From a popular highlife song. Wayo is via Krio, ultimately from Hausa wààyó, "trickery, deception, ingenuity."





## BOOKS ON LIBERIA FOR YOUNG READERS - A REVIEW ARTICLE

In recent years there has been an explosion of published materials covering all areas of interest designed to tap the growing market of young readers. As one result there are a number of new publications on Liberia written for children, six of which will be reviewed here. Three of these are books of general information with two designed specifically for use as school textbooks; for this reviewer, they are the least satisfactory and will be dealt with first.

James E. Rottsoik, *THE STORY OF LIBERIA*. Wichita, Kansas: McCormick-Mathers Publishing Co., Inc., 1967. 124 pp.

This book is part of the publisher's Global Culture Series - Know Your World, which appears designed for children from about ten to fourteen years of age. No explanatory material is given, but the attention to detail, and the inclusion of common Liberian terms, makes it appear that the book was intended for use in both Liberian and American schools.

The volume is divided into a series of study units, each of which deals with a different aspect of Liberian life; "Borbor's Village," "Borbor's School," "A Trip to Monrovia." Borbor, the central character, is the device utilized by the author to bring some degree of unity to his material. Such stock characters seem to be a favorite technique employed by textbook writers to make their material relevant to young readers and Borbor is about as successful and about as real as his American counterparts, Dick and Jane of the familiar grade school primers. Although Borbor is described as a boy of tribal background, and his village carefully located on a map of Liberia, his actual tribal identity is never given. This same omission occurs in each of the three informational books on Liberia and does not appear to be accidental. One can only speculate as to the reasons, but perhaps to introduce the concept of tribal identity would be to introduce a note of complexity into an otherwise one dimensional presentation.

The book suffers from trying to cover all aspects of Liberia and Liberian life in one hundred and twenty pages, but it is to the author's credit that he includes a great deal of specific and realistic detail within that general view. In the unit on village life, in addition to typical references to mud houses, snakes, and Bush Devils, there is a description of a Lebanese store. In the unit on Monrovia, there is detailed description of Waterside and of the sights one might actually encounter walking along Broad Street or Randall Street. Such careful attention to detail makes the inaccuracy about the Presidents Mansion stand out. On page 31 there is a photograph of the mansion which is described in the text as having been recently "rebuilt." On page 44 is another picture of the "President's house" which is a shot of the old mansion, the State Department building for some years now. It raises a question as to who checked the manuscript, not any Liberian, it would seem.

One whole unit is devoted to the Firestone operation, and another to LAMCO. Certainly both of these operations are important in Liberia, but it is hard for this reviewer to imagine that school children will find the detail particularly interesting. It makes one question the author's intent in giving them so much attention unless it serves to stress the positive changes brought about in an "underdeveloped" country by benevolent American business corporations. There is certainly no indication that foreign concessions have created anything except enlightenment and positive change in Liberian life.

Marion Gartler, Caryl Roman, and George L. Hall, *UNDERSTANDING LIBERIA*. River Forest, Illinois: Laidlaw Brothers, 1965. 64 pp.

This textbook is part of the Understand Your World Series, which the publishers describe as "a series of supplementary textbooks for use in developing understanding of nations, peoples, and their ways of living." The book appears designed for American students from about twelve to fifteen years of age. It is an expensive publication with a hard cover and a number of color photographs.

Like the textbook just reviewed, this one also presents an over-view of Liberia, its history and its people in one very short volume. However, the researchers for this book were exceedingly careless, and the text contains many inexcusable inaccuracies. Perhaps more distressing than the inaccuracies is the attitude of patronizing superiority which pervades the text. The following quote is an example of both points and occurs in the section entitled, "The Uphill Fight For Health," on page 36:

What little food the natives do have is stored and handled in an unsanitary manner. Rice, for example is piled on the bare earth, with no protection from bacteria that flourish in the heat and dampness of the soil.

In reference to various tribal peoples there is the following statement on pages 19 and 20:

The Krus, for example, are the waterfront, seafaring tribes-people of Liberia. They are skillful in boating and fishing. The Bassas are known for their easy-going hospitality and good house-keeping skills. Natives of the Kpelle and Belle tribes excel in agriculture. The Grebos, who live in the extreme southeastern tip of the country, learn to handle machinery easily, as do the people of the Buzi tribe."

To come upon such blatant stereotyping in a school textbook is shocking, but it does point up the fact that school children survive in spite of their educators.

The book further reaffirms the impression that Harvey Firestone is responsible for leading Liberia out of darkness, and that his good work is being carried forward by Republic Steel, LAMCO, and USAID.

Albert Craz, *GETTING TO KNOW LIBERIA*. Illustrated by Don Lambo. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1958. 64 pp.

In the years since the publication of this book it has already become dated in a good many areas. The author deserves credit for having had his manuscript checked by the Cultural Counselor of the Liberian Embassy in the United States prior to its publication; something which, unfortunately, the more recent writers and publishers seem to find unnecessary. However, in his eagerness to establish bonds of familiarity between Liberia and the United States, he overstresses the role of America and American aid, which tends to make Liberia appear almost as American as apple pie.

While it is heartening to know that publishers are concerned with widening the horizons of young people with regard to Liberia, these three books are rather dismal examples of their effort. Each presents a formal official view of Liberia which carries the strong stamp of the U. S. State Department; a view which reflects Liberian life about as accurately as USAID and USIS publications reflect American life; a propagandistic picture postcard in glossy color, not to be confused with reality. Moreover, they reflect a thoroughly American point of view with no reference to Liberian ideas and Liberian attitudes. Nor do they even suggest that there may be more than one Liberian point of view as there is more than one American viewpoint.

If understanding between ourselves and others is a crucial goal of our educational system then it would seem that what American children need are books about Liberia by Liberians, not more books by Americans which show America as the source of all good things for Liberia. Further, as a comment on the problems which now face the educational system in the United States, here are textbooks which, in the name of education, serve up information like a homogenized, sterilized, pre-digested gruel, to slide through the minds of the young without creating the smallest ripple of interest or curiosity. Why cannot young people be allowed to read direct sources? Why not Sir Harry Johnston, for example? Certainly he was a British imperialist and his biases are there in plain sight for all to see. His work is also nearly seventy years old, but he was a first-rate scholar with a genuine excitement, respect, and interest in Liberia. As a final advantage, he wrote magnificently.

Edythe Rance Haskett, *GRAINS OF PEPPER, Folk Tales from Liberia*. New York: The John Day Company, 1967. 120 pp.

This is a most attractive book with delightful color illustrations done by the author. Miss Haskett is a school teacher who spent two years teaching in the Episcopal High School in Robertsport. The folk tales in the volume are those collected by the author while she lived in Liberia. She has written an introduction to the book which gives a brief account of the founding of Liberia. As an American black woman, the author is particularly interested in the leadership roles carried out by American Negroes in the pioneering and the founding of an independent African nation. She points out that American children have much to learn and much to be proud of in the history of Liberia.

The stories themselves will be of interest to adults as well as to young people. The weakness of the book lies in the fact that there is almost no background information about the tales themselves nor about the circumstances under which the author collected them. Without some understanding of the cultural context which surrounds any folk tale, the reader's appreciation is severely limited.

The last two books are story books about Liberia. Both are extremely well done and are a pleasure to read. In each case the author had some firsthand experience with Liberian life that enabled him to write about his subject matter with drama, interest, and even a ring of authenticity.

G. Warren Schloat, Jr., *DUEE, A BOY OF LIBERIA*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962. 45 pp.

This book is a photographic study of village life. The author does not try to cover

all aspects of village life but focuses on the relationship between a people and the environment in which they live. He shows, for example, the wild palm tree and the many ways in which that tree is utilized by village people for their food, shelter, and cash crops. The result is a unified and satisfying study which shows the imaginative resourcefulness of the life style of a small Liberian village. The fact that his book shows many techniques that are rapidly dying out does not detract from the value of the work. The photographs of village people as they go about their daily tasks are beautifully done. It seems to me that young people from age six up to twelve years or even older would find this book both interesting and informative.

Lorenz Graham, I, MOMOLU. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966. 226 pp.

According to information in the back of the book, the author left college in his junior year to spend two years teaching in a mission school in the interior of Liberia. He made a second trip to Liberia prior to the publication of this novel. While in Liberia, Mr. Graham obviously became deeply interested in his Liberian students and their problems, and his writing reveals an empathetic understanding of their lives.

I, MOMOLU, is the story of a tribal boy caught in a generation conflict, a situation typical of many young Liberians. He is faced with the problem of working out a new identity for himself which will encompass widely divergent ways of life; on the one hand are his parents and the traditional tribal past, while on the other, he faces the demands of becoming a useful and productive citizen in a rapidly modernizing African nation. It seems to this reviewer that the story is told with sensitivity and with realism, so much so that it would appeal to both Liberian and American young people. As a further tribute to Mr. Graham's skill as a writer, he is able to capture the special quality of Liberian speech without writing in dialect. It is an excellent book, one which conveys genuine insight into another way of life.

Kathleen A. d'Azevedo

PUBLICATION APPEARS

Volume V, No. 2 (December, 1969) of the Liberian Law Journal has recently been published. Subscriptions are available at \$7.00 per annum from: The Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia.

CONFERENCE HELD

The semi-annual conference of the Liberian Research Association was held on April 17, 1971 at the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute. The following is a list of papers read at this conference.

Mrs. Ruth Fricke, "Expectations, Hopes and Desires of Young Liberians in a Changing World."

Toye C. Barnard (University of Liberia), "Dower's Right under Liberian Customary Law."

Henry B. Cole (Liberian Historical Society), "Research on the History of the Liberian Press."

James R. Stull (Phebe Hospital), "A Survey of Christian Medical Work in Liberia: A Summary and Evaluation of the Findings of the Survey Team of Christian Medical Commission, World Council of Churches."

- Campbell, Penelope. Ma land in Africa, The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1971. 264 p. \$7.95.
- Department of Information and Cultural Affairs. Liberia 1970. Monrovia, 1970. (not pagiated) \$4.00.
- Ferns, George W. & John W. Janson. Secondary Level Teachers: Supply and Demand in Liberia. With a report on a field survey by Igolima T. D. Amachree & S. Jabaru Carlon. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1970. 116 p. \$2.00.
- Holsoe, Svend E. A Bibliaph of Liberia. Part I. Books. Newark, Del.: Liberian Studies Association in America, Inc., 1971. 125 p. \$3.50.
- Holsoe, Svend E. "A Case of Stimulus Diffusion? (A Note on Possible Connections between the Vai and Cherokee Scripts)," Lan Sciences, No. 15 (April, 1971), 22-24.
- "Is Unity Possible among All Ethnic Groups?," The Watchtower, XCII, No. 4 (Feb. 15, 1971), 122-127. Liberia: 123-124.
- Liberian Mining (Quarterly), 1970-. Subscriptions available from: Subscription Department, Liberian Mining, 2 Tudor House, The Heath, Weybridge, Surrey, England. \$5.00/annually.
- Lynch, Hollis R., ed. Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of Edward W. Blyden. London: Frank Cass, 1971. £ 3/25.
- Meeker, B. Foley. "Competition, Westernization and Status," Human Relations, XXIII, No. 6 (1970), 533-548. [Kpelle]
- Riddell, James Coleman. "Labor Migration and Rural Agriculture among the Gbannah Mano of Liberia." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oregon (Anthropology), 1970. 143 p.
- The Role of Women in African Teacher Associations, Monrovia, Liberia, October 25-31, 1970. Sponsoring Organizations: World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, Federation of Women Teachers Association of Ontario, National Teachers Association of Liberia. Washington, D. C. : The WCOTP Secretariat - African Section, 1971. 92 p.
- Smyke, Raymond J. "Blyden Rediscovered," Africa Report (May-June, 1969), 36-38.
- Stull, James R. "From Illness to Health: An Assessment of the State of Health Care of the People of Liberia." In, Robert T. Parsons, ed., Windows on Africa. A Symposium. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971. 202 p. Gld. 38.00.
- Wilson, Thomasyne Lightfoote. "Different Patterns of Instruction in Liberia: Implications for Modernization." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University (International Development Education), 1970.

- Atherton, John H., article: "Liberian Prehistory," 83.  
Books on Liberia for Young Readers - A Review Article, see d'Azevedo, Kathleen A.  
Bowne, Elizabeth, Their Silent Message, reviewed by Kathleen A. d'Azevedo, 69.  
The Crossing Fee, by Esther Warner, reviewed by Kathleen d'Azevedo, 70.  
d'Azevedo, Kathleen A., review: "Books on Liberia for Young Readers - A Review Article," 215.  
d'Azevedo, Kathleen A., review of The Crossing Fee, by Esther Warner, 70.  
d'Azevedo, Kathleen A., review of Their Silent Message, by Elizabeth Bowne, 69.  
d'Azevedo, Warren L., article: "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism (Part 4)," 1.  
Early Iron Smelting among the Northern Kpelle, see Schulze, Willi.  
Gardner, Mark L., article: "The Prospects for Development in Liberia's Agricultural Sector for the 1970's," 155.  
God's Impatience in Liberia, by Joseph Conrad Wold, reviewed by Jane Martin, 73.  
Haliburton, Gordon, article: "The Prophet Harris and the Grebo Rising of 1910," 31.  
Hancock, Ian F., article: "Some Aspects of English in Liberia," 207.  
A History of Crozierville, see Holder, Burleigh.  
Holder, Burleigh, article: "A History of Crozierville," 21.  
Holsoe, Svend E., article: "A Portrait of a Black Midwestern Family during the Early Nineteenth Century: Edward James Royce and His Parents," 41.  
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Kory, William, article: "Liberia's Population Figures," 53.  
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Massing, Andreas, article: "Materials for a History of Western Liberia: The Belle," 173.  
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Notes on Kailundu's Campaign into Liberia in 1889, see Wylie, Kenneth C.  
A Portrait of a Black Midwestern Family during the Early Nineteenth Century, see Holsoe, Svend E.  
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