

# THE MBUTI PYGMIES: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY

COLIN M. TURNBULL

VOLUME 50 : PART 3  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS OF  
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
NEW YORK : 1965







# THE MBUTI PYGMIES: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY

COLIN M. TURNBULL

*Assistant Curator of African Ethnology  
Department of Anthropology  
The American Museum of Natural History*

VOLUME 50: PART 3  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS OF  
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
NEW YORK : 1965







# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	145
SOURCE MATERIAL . . . . .	149
Historical Sources . . . . .	149
Contemporary Sources . . . . .	151
Schebesta . . . . .	155
Putnam . . . . .	157
ORIENTATION . . . . .	159
Location . . . . .	159
Tribal Groupings . . . . .	159
Language . . . . .	161
Origin and History . . . . .	162
Physical Anthropology . . . . .	163
ENVIRONMENT . . . . .	164
THE ARCHERS (AFTER SCHEBESTA) . . . . .	167
The Social Unit . . . . .	167
Habitations . . . . .	167
Furniture . . . . .	167
Utensils . . . . .	167
Dress and Ornamentation . . . . .	167
Body Decoration . . . . .	168
Care of Body . . . . .	169
Domestic Animals . . . . .	169
Technology . . . . .	169
Economic Life . . . . .	169
Hunting . . . . .	169
Gathering . . . . .	174
Honey Gathering . . . . .	174
Drinks, Narcotics, and Stimulants . . . . .	175
Food Restriction . . . . .	175
Trade . . . . .	176
Social Life . . . . .	176
Family Organization . . . . .	176
Daily Life . . . . .	177
Conception and Childbirth. . . . .	177
Twins . . . . .	178
Postnatal Care . . . . .	178
Adolescence . . . . .	179
Initiation . . . . .	179
Marriage . . . . .	180
Separation . . . . .	182
Widowhood . . . . .	182
Death, Funerals, and Mourning . . . . .	182
Social Organization . . . . .	183
Political Life . . . . .	184
Authority . . . . .	184
Relationship Between Bands . . . . .	185
Relationships Between Bands and Villagers . . . . .	185
Legal System. . . . .	186
Intellectual and Artistic Life . . . . .	186
Exact Knowledge . . . . .	186



Rationalization . . . . .	187
Art . . . . .	187
Religious Life . . . . .	188
The Chthonic God . . . . .	189
Cult Practices . . . . .	189
Death and Afterlife . . . . .	191
Totem and Taboo . . . . .	191
Magic . . . . .	192
The Godhead . . . . .	193
THE NET HUNTERS (AFTER PUTNAM) . . . . .	194
The Social Unit . . . . .	194
Habitations . . . . .	195
Furniture . . . . .	195
Utensils . . . . .	195
Dress and Ornamentation . . . . .	197
Body Decoration . . . . .	200
Care of Body . . . . .	201
Domestic Animals . . . . .	201
Technology . . . . .	201
Economic Life . . . . .	201
Hunting . . . . .	201
Gathering . . . . .	208
Honey Gathering . . . . .	210
Drinks, Narcotics, and Stimulants . . . . .	210
Food Restrictions. . . . .	211
Trade . . . . .	211
Social Life . . . . .	211
Family Organization . . . . .	211
Daily Life . . . . .	212
Conception and Childbirth. . . . .	213
Twins . . . . .	214
Postnatal Care and Adolescence . . . . .	214
Initiation: <i>elima</i> . . . . .	216
Initiation: <i>nkumbi</i> . . . . .	217
Marriage . . . . .	219
Divorce . . . . .	221
Widowhood . . . . .	222
Death, Funerals, and Mourning . . . . .	222
Social Organization . . . . .	223
Political Life . . . . .	228
Authority . . . . .	228
Relationships Between Bands . . . . .	228
Relationships Between Mbuti and Villagers . . . . .	229
Legal System. . . . .	229
Intellectual and Artistic Life . . . . .	231
Exact Knowledge . . . . .	231
Counting . . . . .	231
Medicine . . . . .	231
Rationalization . . . . .	232
Art . . . . .	233
Religious Life . . . . .	235
The Chthonic God . . . . .	236
Cult Practices . . . . .	237



Death and Afterlife . . . . .	238
Totem and Taboo . . . . .	239
Magic . . . . .	239
The Godhead . . . . .	241
EVALUATION . . . . .	242
Orientation . . . . .	242
Environment . . . . .	243
The Social Unit . . . . .	243
Economic Life . . . . .	244
Social Life . . . . .	245
Political Life . . . . .	246
Intellectual and Artistic Life . . . . .	248
Religious Life . . . . .	248
The Mbuti-Villager Relationship . . . . .	249
Material Culture . . . . .	249
Trade . . . . .	249
Magical Practice . . . . .	250
Dance and Festivity . . . . .	250
Intermarriage . . . . .	251
Ceremonial Attendant on Birth, Initiation, Marriage, and Death . . . . .	251
Mbuti Values as Seen in Legend . . . . .	259
1. Creation Myths: Legends of Origin and Tradition . . . . .	260
2. Legends Dealing with Social Relations . . . . .	263
3. Legends Dealing with Relationships to the Supernatural . . . . .	265
CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	273
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	277
CATALOGUE DATA FOR CERTAIN ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	281

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### PLATES

(AT END)

26. Pygmy physical types, Epulu District, Central Ituri
27. Pygmy physical types, Epulu District, Central Ituri
28. Pygmy physical types, Epulu District, Central Ituri
29. A hunting camp, Epulu District, Central Ituri
30. Hut building, Epulu District, Central Ituri
31. Manufacture of barkcloth, stripping, Epulu District, Central Ituri
32. Manufacture of barkcloth, hammering and decoration, Epulu District, Central Ituri
33. An Mbuti gatherer with her typical basket and tump line, Epulu District, Central Ituri
34. Net hunting, Epulu District, Central Ituri
35. Net hunting, Epulu District, Central Ituri
36. Collecting honey, Epulu District, Central Ituri
37. Musical bow, Epulu District, Central Ituri
38. Girls' hoop dance, Epulu District, Central Ituri

### TEXT FIGURES

1. Map showing extent of personal knowledge of Pygmy groups . . . . . 152
2. Map showing approximate distribution of Pygmy and Pygmoid groups in central Africa . . . . . 153
3. Map showing distribution of the Mbuti of the Ituri Forest . . . . . 154
4. Household utensils carved from wood, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . . 168
5. Household utensils made from clay, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . . 169
6. Hunting equipment, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri . . . . . 170
7. Hunting equipment of a western archer, Nduye District, Central Ituri . . . . . 171
8. Hunting equipment, archers, Oysha District, Central Ituri . . . . . 172
9. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri . . . . . 173
10. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri . . . . . 174
11. Fruit press, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri . . . . . 174
12. Meat-drying rack, archers, Central and East Ituri . . . . . 174
13. Adze, Bira villagers, rehafted by Mbuti archers, Central Ituri . . . . . 175
14. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . . 175
15. Miscellaneous items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . . 188
16. Plan of net-hunters' camp, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 194
17. Plan of net-hunters' polygynous or extended family dwellings, Epulu District, Central Ituri. . . . . 194
18. Broom, *edia*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 194
19. Chair, *ngbanga*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 195
20. Household furniture, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 196
21. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . . 196
22. Bark beater, *kolea*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 197
23. Types of grooving found on ivory bark-beater heads, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. . . . . 197
24. Block and scraper of wood, *nkula* (also *ngula*), net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 197
25. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 198
26. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 198
27. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 199
28. Belts, *mokaba*, for barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 199
29. Basketry hat, *ngala*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . . 200



30. Personal adornment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri, and Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . .	200
31. Miscellaneous items, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	201
32. Methods of stretching hides to dry, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	202
33. Prepared antelope hide, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	202
34. Hunting net, <i>kuya</i> , net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	203
35. Magic whistle, <i>mamambamamba</i> , net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	203
36. Details of knotting used in hunting net, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	203
37. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	204
38. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	205
39. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	206
40. Spear, <i>ekonga</i> , net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	207
41. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	208
42. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	209
43. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	210
44. Baby-carrying sling, <i>koko</i> , net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	214
45. Toys, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	215
46. Initiation whip, <i>mbaka</i> , Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . .	218
47. Initiation items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . .	219
48. Initiation masks, Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . .	220
49. Wood carvings, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	220
50. Headdresses, <i>salakuku</i> , net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	224
51. Magical paraphernalia, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	225
52. Split clappers, <i>banja</i> , net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri . . . . .	226
53. Fetish sticks, <i>amati a oni ganza</i> , Bira villagers, Central Ituri . . . . .	236



## INTRODUCTION

THE PRESENT SURVEY was originally written as a thesis for the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford University and submitted in 1956 for the degree of Bachelor of Letters (B. Litt.). It is difficult, having just completed for publication a monograph based on my own field work, to undertake the publication of a thesis written in student days, dealing with the same area but based on the work of others. It inevitably leads to self-conflict, for the new self does not always agree with the old. Further, the survey does not claim to be comprehensive. It is presented, however, as a first step in the gathering together of the earlier literature that can be best relied upon for information concerning the social structure of the Mbuti Pygmies of the Congo. It has two major objectives.

One, and the most important, is to set down in English a straightforward description of such ethnographic facts as are known about the Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri Forest, based on the published and unpublished material available up to 1956, with the addition of a few references up to 1960. For the Putnam material I am most indebted to Mrs. Anne Eisner Putnam, who made available all the notes left by her late husband, Patrick Tracy Lowell Putnam.

The other objective is an evaluation of the selected material, a consideration of the problems it raises, and an attempt to resolve some of the more evident contradictions.

Further reasons for publication of this survey, despite subsequent intensive field research, are, first, that my later field work (1957-1958) was concentrated primarily on making a detailed study of a single hunting band, so there is still no general structural study of the Ituri Pygmies. Also, the results of my more recent study will be better understood in the light of this survey, from which it drew its inspiration.

Second, despite the extreme importance of the Mbuti, one of the few remaining hunting and gathering peoples in the world, virtually all the published scientific material is in German, Dutch, or French, with the exception of Schebesta's three early travel books: "Among Congo Pygmies" (1933), "My Pygmy and Negro Hosts" (1936a), and "Revisiting my Pygmy Hosts" (1937). The only original work in English dealing with the Mbuti, up to 1961 in fact,

was Patrick Putnam's article in "Reader in Anthropology" (1948). For the reader of English, then, some guidance is necessary.

Third, the bulk of the available material is unsatisfactory and requires careful sifting if proper use is to be made of it. Fuller details are given in the section on Source Material (p. 149). Such a preliminary sifting has been attempted in this survey, drawing on my own limited field experience of 1951 and 1954.

Fourth, Schebesta's work in particular, our main source, is, for methodological reasons given in the course of the survey, unsatisfactory for certain types of analysis. This is an evaluation rather than a criticism, for Schebesta's objectives were definite and different from those of contemporary social anthropologists, and he presented his material accordingly. In his presentations it is sometimes difficult to be sure exactly which group of Mbuti he is discussing because he regards them all as a single cultural, sociological entity.<sup>1</sup> This does not by any means totally negate the value of his work, which should be consulted by any student of the area, but certain cautions are essential. In the present survey I have tried to make Schebesta's material more useful for analytical purposes by culling such information as can be taken specifically to refer to one or another *particular* group of Mbuti. The bulk of such pinpointed information in Schebesta's writings refers to the Efe archers of the southeastern Ituri. This group can then be contrasted with the other major group, the Sua net hunters, for which we have additional sources.

The result is inevitably somewhat disjointed and full of lamentable gaps. There is also the tiresome necessity of continually specifying "according to Schebesta, . . ." "Schebesta says, . . ." "in Schebesta's account, . . ." and I

<sup>1</sup> Such an approach is at least better than that of Gusinde, whom we must abandon altogether as a possible ethnographic source because he (1955, 12) holds that all African Pygmies and Pygmoids from the Gabon to Rwanda, and whom he groups together under the single unfortunate term "Twides," are essentially the same in their mode of living and cultural organization. It is difficult to see much similarity, I find, between his "Twides" in the Great Lakes region, whom he describes as sedentary grassland potters, and his Ituri "Twides" who are nomadic forest hunters and gatherers.



must confess to leaving out such references wherever it seemed plain that the whole passage referred to that one authority. The impression of inadequacy is heightened by the fact that almost the entire bulk of the material available is general and descriptive rather than specific and analytical. In trying to sift that which falls properly into the latter category, then, we necessarily must abandon the continuity and sense that existed in the original works. It is therefore not to be expected that the present survey will in any way offer a coherent ethnography of the Mbuti.

Fifth, in the course of the survey (pp. 194-241) I make similar use of the unpublished notes of Patrick and Anne Putnam and expand their account of the net hunters with a limited amount of material from my own field notes dating from 1951 and 1954-1955. My own interest during those two first visits to the Ituri were other than strictly anthropological but concerned certain aspects of social organization. As I was working in the same area as the Putnams, the material is valid and useful for the rounding out of their observations. In this way the survey points up the major differences and similarities between the two Mbuti groups (the archers and the net hunters) and opens the way both for more intensive limited studies and for comparative work.

Sixth and last, a survey such as this seems necessary in order to clear the ground of the confusion of contradictions and uncertainties in our present sources. The diversity of opinion, in itself important, proved to be of the utmost significance for my own later field work. Although it is somewhat begging the question, it might be said that only by accepting the contradictions as fact, then seeking a structural means of resolving those contradictions, can we begin to approach the truth of the situation. The survey, in this way, may be taken to point the direction in which further field work is needed. This is as true now, since my own field trip of 1957-1958, as it was then. That trip, concerned mainly with a localized band of net hunters, confirmed much of the general thesis of the present survey concerning the differences between archers and net hunters. However, detailed studies of other bands, both archer and net hunter, are vitally needed if we are to arrive at an understanding of the nature of Mbuti society as a whole and of its relationship with villager society.

The latter problem, that of the relationship between the two neighboring peoples, is of the greatest importance and has been subject to the greatest misunderstanding. It should be emphasized that the opinions cited here, including my own, are opinions and are to be accepted only as such. It should also be realized that the situation is by no means static. Not only has the relationship between the Mbuti and the villagers been changing even during the years since I have known them, but so, in all probability, has the internal structure of Mbuti society. It is quite possible that such change has long been a characteristic of the area, and it is almost certain that the Mbuti-villager relationship has never been static, which may account for some of the diversity of opinion, and a general historical perspective undoubtedly helps us to evaluate the rather sketchy material at our disposal.

We have, for instance, a steady regression in factual knowledge of the area from the time of our earliest Egyptian sources right up to the beginning of the present century, at the turn of which our ignorance of the African Pygmies was just about complete, even to disbelief in their very existence. It is not surprising that the reports of the late nineteenth-century explorers in central Africa should have excited the imagination of sociologists, and particularly of Schmidt (1910). The material available to him was most unsatisfactory. It dwelt mainly on the bizarre, stressed the physical appearance of the Pygmies, the peculiarities of their mode of life, and generally exaggerated normalities into abnormalities with lively imagination. Schmidt was well aware of all this but was nonetheless fascinated by the obvious differences between these people and their taller villager neighbors. His work, and that of his followers, including Schebesta, are colored by this initial interest.

There was a belief that the distinct physical appearance of the Pygmies connoted not only separateness from other races but also unity amongst themselves and anteriority; that is, that the Pygmy races of the world were basically one, anterior to, and "purer" than other races. Here, then, it was thought, one should look for the roots of man's religious belief; this is the second major supposition that determines the nature and format of the work of this school. If we bear this in mind, the work of Schebesta, who was responsible for the first and only complete over-all field survey of the area, is more un-

derstandable, more valuable, and more usable.

An examination of all the available source material indicates very clearly the necessity for immediately establishing a limited study of well-defined groups, uninfluenced by any theoretical preoccupations with questions of sociological unity, anteriority, or origin. The term "Pygmy" leads far too easily to meaningless generalization. It may well prove that even the term "Mbuti," by which is understood the Pygmy population of the Ituri Forest, is too broad. The breakdown in this survey between the different economic groups of Mbuti is only a tentative investigation to discover significant similarities and differences.

In view of the existence of Schebesta's (1938, 1941, 1948, 1950) major work, "Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri," with its special reference to archers, and my own field work and recent and forthcoming publications on the net hunters, the survey here has been kept to reasonable dimensions and does not pretend to give a complete picture. The accounts of Schebesta and Putnam are presented with as little speculation as possible. It will be readily seen that there is insufficient information, almost throughout, for any effective analysis to be made. But certain problems arise, and in the conclusions some attempt is made to outline these further, particularly the nature of the Pygmy-villager relationship.

The immediate need is for further field studies, for which there is considerable urgency. We have, in the Ituri Forest, a people who are still living one of the earliest forms of life lived by man: hunting and gathering. The extent to which the Mbuti live this life varies from one group to another, but we cannot expect to find a pure hunting and gathering economy among them much longer. For some thousands of years the Pygmy lived this life free from any outside influence. In historic times various village tribes invaded his forest, bringing different cultures and different economies with them. More recently the Pygmies have been in contact with European civilization, which has already driven one major road, and a number of secondary roads, right through the forest. Luckily, no effective attempt was made by the Belgians, until the last two years of their administration, to change the Mbuti way of life, and there is still ample forest to permit a hunting and gathering economy. What emerges from a study of this

particular contact situation is not only the remarkable adaptability of the Mbuti to the changing world around them, but also the superficiality of that adaptability, and their much more profound resistance to any influence that strikes into the heart of their forest world and forest life. This, however, is a matter for another work.

Physical anthropology has been entirely excluded from the survey because of its highly specialized nature. A number of such specialists have worked in the Ituri area, however, notably Gusinde (1942, 1948), Jadin (1936, 1938), and Julien (1934, 1954). Schebesta (1938) has also made a physiometrical study among the Mbuti.

The only changes that have been made in the original survey have been minor literary alterations, the addition of a few footnotes or inserted comments, the addition of one or two post-1956 references, and a revision of the terminology used. For "Efe" and "Sua," for instance, we now use the terms "archer" and "net hunter" respectively, and in place of "Negro" we use "villager," thus stressing throughout the significance of the economic rather than the linguistic or racial differential. It might be well to define how certain other terms are used.

**CAMP:** This term distinguishes the settlement of the Mbuti from that of the villagers. There may be hunting camps, those situated in the forest and from which hunting is conducted, or village camps, those occupied by the Mbuti when they are visiting their villager neighbors.

**BAND:** This refers to the total Mbuti hunting population, regardless of kinship, that recognizes and utilizes a common hunting territory. The band may occupy a single camp or split into several camps within the same territory.

**VILLAGE:** The settlement of the Bantu and Sudanic cultivators who have pressed into the forest. Such a village is likely to have a much more clear-cut kinship composition and political identity than an Mbuti band.

**VILLAGER:** This term, unless otherwise stated, may be taken to refer to any of the cultivators in the Ituri Forest, Bantu or Sudanic, with whom the Mbuti have contact. The use of the different tribal names, such as Bira, Ndaka, Lese, and so forth, would not only be unnecessarily cumbersome but suggest that the relationship varied significantly according to the structure of each individual villager tribe, whereas it seems, for the moment at least, that

the basis of the relationship is the fact that these tribes are village cultivators and not forest hunters.

**LINEAGE:** We adhere to the definition and usage suggested in "Notes and Queries on Anthropology" (1954, 88-89). The definition is given as follows: "A lineage consists of all the descendants in one line of a particular person through a determinate number of generations."

**CLAN:** Similarly, we use this term as suggested in "Notes and Queries" (1954, 89-90) whereby clan members may trace their unilineal relationship through one line or the other, i.e., we do not use it in the sense of a matriclan as opposed to a gens. Further, we here regard the lineage as a subdivision of the clan, lineage members being able to trace their membership to a known ancestor. A number of such lineages hold themselves to be related by the common descent of the lineage ancestors from a remote, possibly fictional or totemic ancestor.

**GROUP:** Whereas I have in the original sur-

vey, and elsewhere, used the term "group" as I now use the term "band," particularly when translating from the German (*Lokalgruppe*), I now use the term "band" as above, and use "group" only generally to distinguish, say, archers from net hunters, or Mbuti from villagers.

**THE BANTU PREFIX:** This has been dropped throughout whenever I refer to persons or objects. Thus we talk of the Bira, Ndaka, and Mbuti rather than the BaBira, BaNdaka, or BaMbuti. This change is in consonance with the current practice of the International African Institute. However, we retain the "Ki" prefix to indicate language—KiBira, KiNdaka, KiMbuti.

Indigenous terms, except for place, proper, or personal names, are italicized.

Illustrations have been added. These do not set out to represent the total material culture of the Mbuti, but were drawn from the collections of the American Museum by Mr. Nicholas Amorosi.



## SOURCE MATERIAL

### HISTORICAL SOURCES

ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING THINGS about a survey of ancient and early sources concerning the African Pygmies is the way it shows how, from the time these people first entered the recorded scene, in Egypt of the Sixth Dynasty, our knowledge of them decreased steadily until the late nineteenth century. To the ancient Egyptians the existence of Pygmies was a matter of fact. They are referred to as "Dancers of God" and as dwellers in the "land of trees" (Schebesta, 1933, 17; 1952, 11); they are placed on the southern borders of Sudan. A tomb of the Sixth Dynasty at Beni Hassan bears a painting of representatives of conquered nations, among which is a perfectly recognizable likeness of a Pygmy, designated Aka—a name by which the northernmost Pygmies are still known today. Yet, until the turn of the present century, the modern Western world believed the Pygmy to be a myth. From Beni Hassan the scene shifts to the Pompeian parietal paintings which depict typical Pygmy scenes, with a forest camp of beehive-shaped huts, and also a scene showing Pygmies along the Nile.

Herodotus (1866, vol. 2, sect. 32) in the fifth century B.C. reports an expedition of Nasamonians to discover the source of the Nile. They cross a vast desert and, while resting at an oasis, are captured by diminutive men, "under the middle height."

Homer (1864, vol. 3, 3-7) introduces an element of myth when he talks of fighting between the cranes and the "Pygmaean race" to the south, but Aristotle (1910, vol. 8, sect. 2) sees fit, for some reason, to assert quite categorically that Pygmies do in fact live in the land "from which flows the Nile"; he adds that they live in caves.

An isolated reference in the sixth century comes from the Emperor Justinian's ambassador who, on his way to Ethiopia, on an island off the east African coast, came across a tribe of Pygmies speaking an unknown language (unknown even to local inhabitants). That is about the last reference to Pygmies as human beings for some 10 centuries. In the fourteenth century the cartographer who drew up the Hereford Mappa Mundi still placed the Pygmies near the

source of the Nile, although in his secondary role as theologian he depicted them as monsters, with their faces in their breasts or their heads below their shoulders. He labels them as troglodytes.

Battel (1625, vol. 2, 983) refers to the existence of a nation of dwarfs and places them in the land of the Yobbi, north of the Sette River. He calls them "Dongo," and it is in this area where Du Chaillu (1867, 1890) discovered the "Obongo" Pygmies in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Other seventeenth-century reports by Portuguese explorers describe what seem to be relatively pure Pygmy races who apparently brought ivory down to the west coast traders. Unfortunately, these explorers had vivid imaginations and interspersed their descriptions with most unlikely information, such as the power of these little people to become invisible, the only explanation they could find for how the Pygmies could kill elephant. In this way belief in the existence of real Pygmy races in Africa was only further discredited; so much so that an anatomist named Tyson obtained a skeleton of one of these fabulous beings and, after careful examination, wrote a treatise (Tyson, 1699) showing that it was quite clear that "Pygmies" were, in fact, not human beings but apes. He had good grounds for this assertion, because the skeleton he examined, and which survived until recently at the British Museum (Natural History) in South Kensington, England, was that of a chimpanzee. He rounds off his discourse in the following general terms: "The most diligent enquiries of late into all parts of the inhabited world could never discover any such puny diminutive race of mankind." His explanation of the "fables" was that travelers had mistaken apes for men (Windle, 1894).

From the seventeenth century to the nineteenth there seems to have been a complete silence. Then follows a succession of explorers, travelers, administrators, and anthropologists who finally established the fact that Pygmies did exist and were, indeed, human. But that, and their approximate distribution, is about all they do tell us. Well into the twentieth century we get fanciful adventurers seriously observing

apes swinging about in the treetops and describing them as Pygmies.

The material provided by these nineteenth-century explorers is valuable, however, for an understanding of contemporary writings. Some of them, such as Speke (1864) and Stanley (1879, 1890), made little more than passing reference to the "dwarfs," as they were usually called. Schweinfurth (1874) is generally acknowledged as being the first to establish beyond a doubt that there was indeed a race of such people in central Africa and to give us some real information about them, particularly concerning the association of the Aka (northernmost) Pygmies, as mercenary soldiers, with the Mangbetu tribe. He was also among the first to throw in some of the many "red herrings" that have distracted even the most recent anthropologists from a strictly scientific study of the people, leading them into the speculative realms of origin, connection between Pygmies and the Bushmen of South Africa, and degree of originality of Pygmy culture.

Others, such as Casati (1891), Le Roy (1897), Burrows (1898), Johnston (1884, 1902, 1903, 1905, 1908), David (1904a, 1904b), Hutereau (1924), Powell-Cotton (1907), and Czekanowski (1922), to mention only a very few, give further details that are of interest but cover such a wide area as to make it impossible to gather any but the most superficial notion of a generalized "African Pygmy." When these sources provide us with factual observations, the facts are often not untainted with imagination. When they go beyond facts, additional "red herrings" are cast up, such as the silent trade between Pygmies and villagers, the lawlessness of Pygmy society, the Pygmies' complete lack of religion, and their ferocity and cannibalism. To add fuel to the fire, equally imaginative interpretations show them as having reciprocal and open trade relationships with the villagers, as living an ordered life according to their "natural instincts" for law and order, as following a monotheistic mystical religion, and as living a gentle and peaceful existence. According to this material, the "Pygmies" do have their own language and they do not, their way of life is totally different from that of their villager neighbors and it is a direct copy of villager life, they live in the heart of the forest and they live on the edge of the villages. These are just some of the contradictions that make it

impossible to form any single coherent picture.

When Schmidt wrote "*Die Stellung der Pygmäen-völker in der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschen*" in 1910, all these contradictions were his source material. Pygmies existed, but they still had tails and were flying about from treetop to treetop, or else they were crawling on their bellies like snakes to enter their diminutive houses. Quatrefages (1887) and Le Roy (1897) had, at the end of the nineteenth century, attempted to draw together what was known about Pygmies all over the world, but Schmidt's study is the first work of real importance. He confines himself mostly to the African Pygmies and Bushmen and pursues two lines of thought: first, the relationship of both to Asiatic Pygmies; and second, the place of the Pygmy, both racially and anthropologically, in the evolution of the human race. Was the Pygmy the original inhabitant of the equatorial forests of Africa, or was he a degeneration of present Bantu stock—a throwback? These "red herrings" are still being diligently pursued, while the Pygmies and their social structure have gone unstudied by any anthropologist except with reference to these problems. The one contemporary work of any real note, "*Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri*," is the result of research undertaken by Schebesta (1938, 1941, 1948, 1950), who was undoubtedly strongly influenced by the Schmidt school of thought, and was preoccupied with the problems of the origin and cultural unity of the Pygmies and of their racial and anthropological separateness from the villagers.

The problem of the relationship between the African and the Asian Pygmies, opened by Quatrefages in 1887, was followed up by Le Roy (1897), Schmidt (1910), Eickstedt (1934), Nippold (1936, 1937), Gusinde (1942), and Schebesta (1938, 1952). The problem itself does not concern us here, except in so far as preoccupation with it in these sources affects our evaluation of them and explains their tendency to generalize in terms of "Pygmy" or "Bambuti" culture and society.

We must ask ourselves what use can be made of all this material in a serious study of the African Pygmies, particularly as there is such a dearth of reliable contemporary material. At first sight we seem to be in possession of an abundant supply of raw material, even if we limit ourselves to the Pygmies of central

Africa. Until the early twentieth century there are some 30 sources that seem to contain reliable information concerning not only the Ituri Pygmies but those of equatorial Africa and the central Congo area. In each of these sources we are given information as to the alleged origin of these particular Pygmies, tribal groupings and distribution, migrations, and other data. We also get fairly full and reliable information as to economic activities, particularly various hunting techniques. Technology is moderately well dealt with; social and political life is presented in a series of categorical but conflicting assertions; and religious life is frequently mentioned, but usually in such vague terms that the information is useless.

From a consideration of the material as a whole, one thing emerges: while certain points of correspondence, mainly technological, can be found throughout, superficially evidencing some uniformity of culture, the contradictions of evidence found within any one area are far more striking. These contradictions are present in all fields—social, economic, political, and religious. If we were not dogged by this notion of the "Pygmies" as one people, supported by their undoubted racial homogeneity and territorial contiguity, we would certainly think we were dealing with a number of totally different social systems, if not different peoples.

The more unreliable and imaginative sources have already been rejected, and we must accept the remaining information as given, however much it contradicts itself. The only alternative is to reject this material *in toto*, and there is certainly no justification for so doing other than the convenience of avoiding the contradictions. It seems preferable to accept the contradictions without trying to unify the facts. That is to say, a thorough summary of these early sources indicates that we are by no means dealing with a single people, even within as limited an area as the Ituri Forest or, indeed, one section of it. This consideration has affected the format of the present work and its limitation to a specific section of the African Pygmies. Reference to facts to be found in the early sources are made only when it is certain that they apply to the particular Pygmies under discussion. This method seems to be the only valid way of utilizing the material. It reduces the bulk of ethnographic evidence considerably, as it is seldom made clear exactly which group of Pygmies is

under discussion, and the material nowhere deals with any one specific group fully.

Having spent some time examining a large body of literature, one is naturally loath to make so little use of it, but this demonstration of the need for detached localized studies rather than generalized studies concerned with or dominated by the notion of racial and cultural unity is in itself no small contribution. The extent to which one must localize sociological studies among the Ituri is as yet unknown, but some indication will appear in the following work.

It might be added that Schebesta, who made an exhaustive study of these same sources, also found himself unable to make a great deal of use of them. He (1948, 295) criticizes Hutereau, whom he regards as being one of the most important sources, for generalizing from one group to another (though Hutereau was mainly concerned with the Aka). He regards the others as even less reliable, and most of his references to them are accompanied by cautions as to their trustworthiness.

### CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

Having decided, for the purpose of the present survey, to reject the historical sources for the most part, we must determine the extent to which the survey will be limited and then give a brief account and evaluation of the contemporary sources from which it will be drawn.

It must be emphasized that we are not attempting to summarize all available material on the "Pygmies" in general. Ethnography itself can have meaning only when we know to what people our facts belong and when the facts are sufficiently comprehensive to appear in a system of relationships. We see above, in the review of historical sources, that facts that would otherwise be of considerable value are useless to us because with few exceptions we cannot relate them to any one specific group of people. Further, the facts are so few and so isolated that we have no way of relating them to one another in any kind of system. When we come to contemporary sources we are not much better off. We must first decide not to include Pygmoids, such as the Twa and Tswa, because of the very obvious sociological differences and the feeling that we should make the present survey as detailed and as apposite as possible. Once we have limited ourselves to true Pygmies, we find we

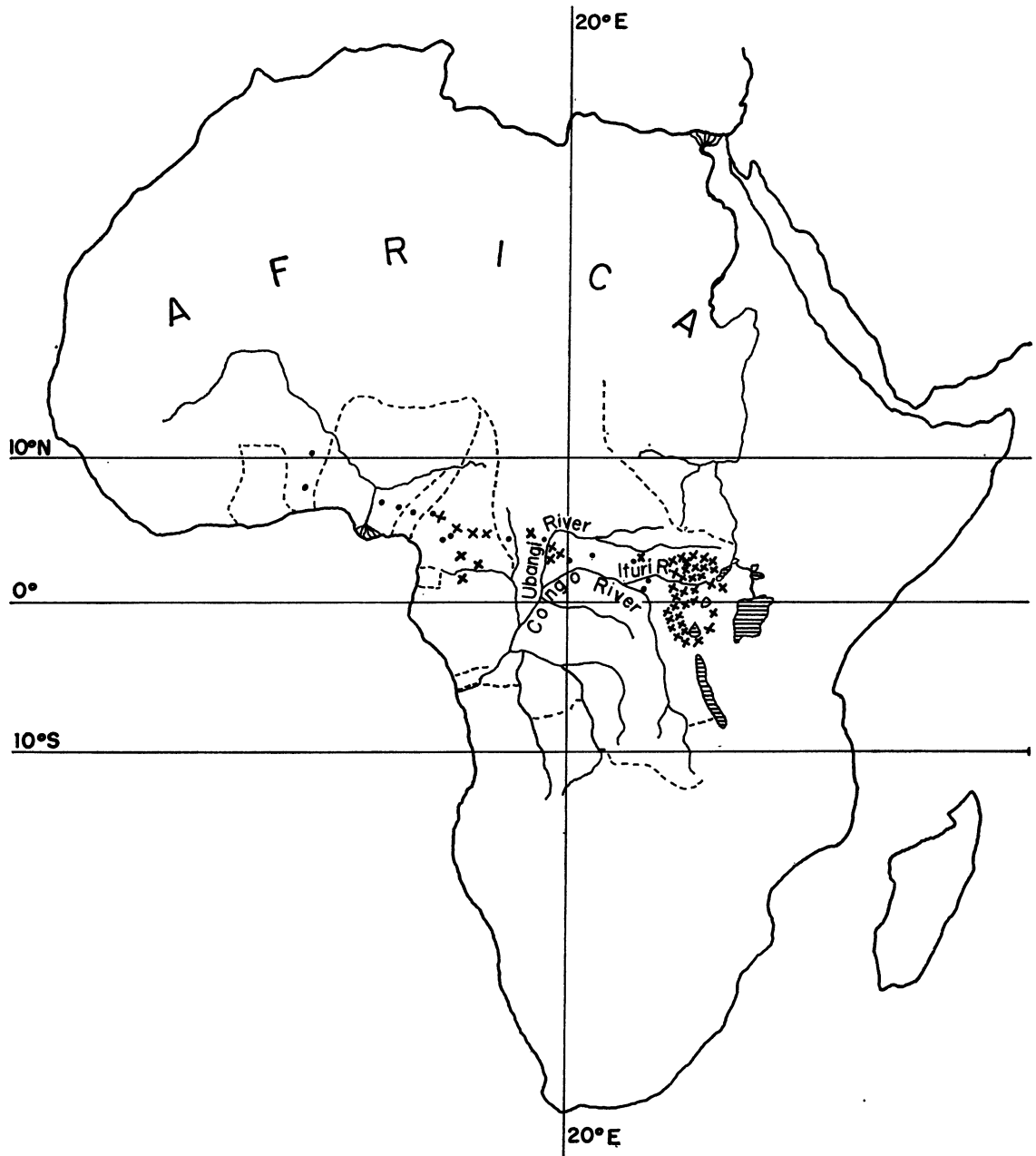


FIG. 1. Map showing extent of personal knowledge of Pygmy groups according to accounts heard *in situ* or through personal contact made during the author's 1957-1958 field trip, not covering the central and southern Congo. Circles indicate accounts of Pygmy or Pygmoid hunting bands; crosses, actual contact.

have a concentrated body of Mbuti Pygmies in the Ituri Forest and some apparently scattered Pygmy groups farther west and through the forests of equatorial Africa (Figs. 1-2). Of the

latter, unfortunately, too little is known for inclusion here.

For the Ituri Mbuti one of our main sources is the four-volume work by Schebesta (1938,



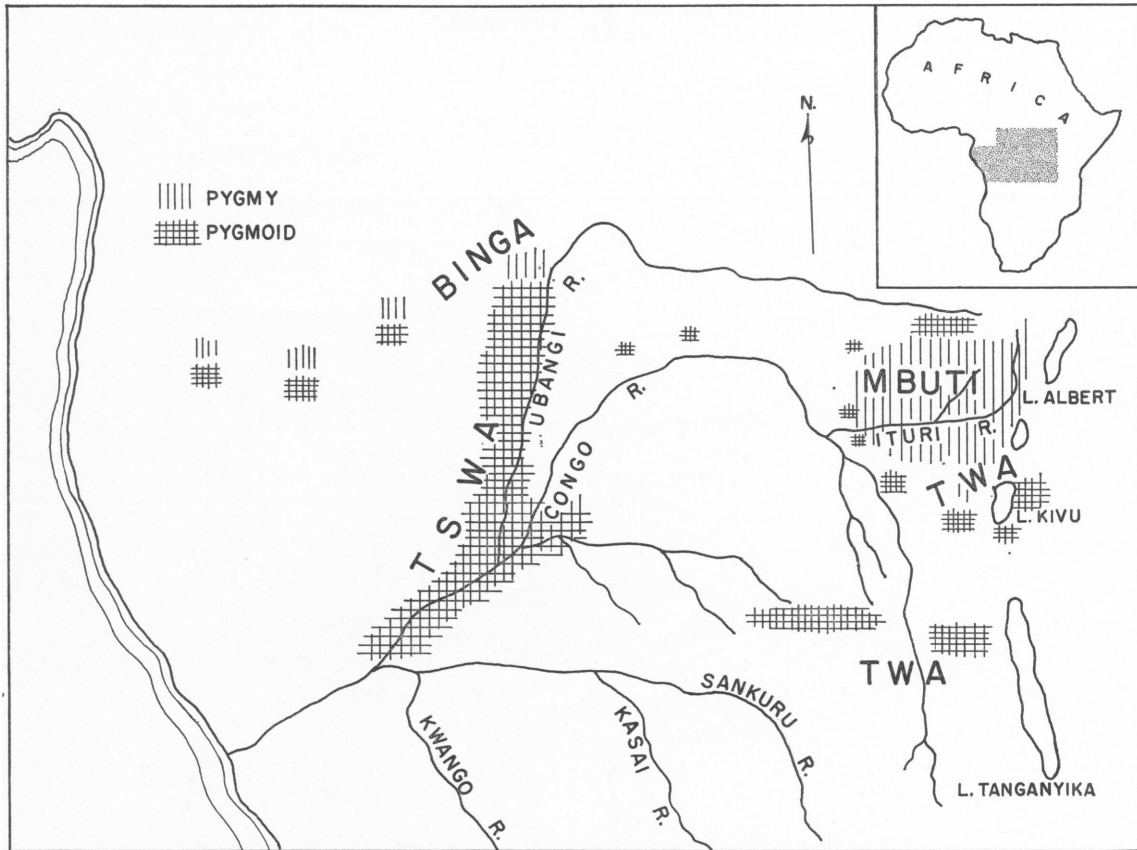


FIG. 2. Map showing approximate distribution of Pygmy and Pygmoid groups in central Africa.

1941, 1948, 1950). Schebesta divides the Mbuti (whom he calls "Bambuti") into three major groups: Aka in the north, Sua in the south, and Efe in the east (Fig. 3). His first trip to the Ituri was spent in an over-all coverage of the forest, during which he culled facts from all these groups but necessarily at a superficial level. Realizing this and desiring to make a more profound study, he returned and concentrated on the Efe in the triangle bounded by the roads joining Mambasa, Irumu, and Beni (Fig. 3). The bulk of his work concerns these Efe, who hunt primarily with bow and arrows, and as it is the only group of which he has detailed knowledge it is the only group that we present from his work with any degree of fullness. His references to the Kango in the west, the Aka, and the Sua, are too few to form a systematic account of these societies as such, and, as already mentioned, we see little value in isolated, unsystematic ethnographic data.

There is, however, another source on the Ituri Pygmies (mostly unpublished) in the form of the field notes of an American anthropologist, Patrick Putnam, who first went to the Ituri in 1928 and was resident there until his death at the end of 1953. His material is concerned with the Sua who, unlike the Efe, are net hunters. With this material are also the notes of his widow, Mrs. Anne Eisner Putnam, who lived in the Ituri for more than eight years, until 1954; and, finally, my own field notes covering my first two visits to the same area (Epulu District) in 1951 and 1954. I combine this material as a single source, indicating its exact origin in the text, partly because, in the main, it covers one definite area, and even one definite hunting band, and partly because both Anne Putnam and myself benefited by the immense knowledge of Patrick Putnam, without necessarily being in complete agreement.

Apart from these two main sources, and a

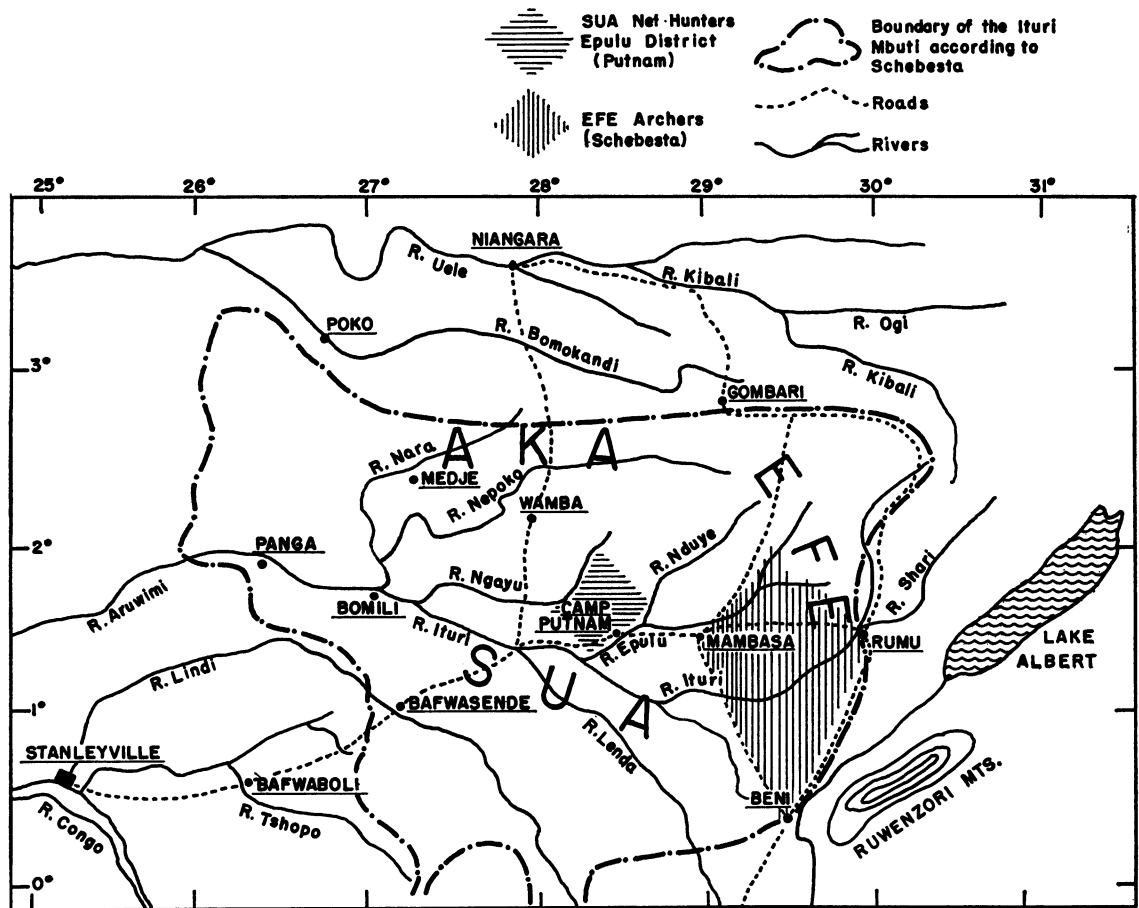


FIG. 3. Map showing distribution of the Mbuti of the Ituri Forest, Oriental Province, the Congo.

number of articles published in various anthropological journals, there is nothing that we can draw upon for the present work. We have, then, two distinct groups—Schebesta's Efe Mbuti and Putnam's Epulu (Sua) Mbuti, archers and net hunters, respectively.

A word should be said about classification. Schebesta's division of the Ituri Mbuti into Aka, Efe, and Sua is a linguistic classification and, at that, a division not according to Mbuti languages but to the villager linguistic groups—Mangbetu, Lese, and Bira, respectively. It thus corresponds to tribal groupings of villagers and does not seem to be particularly significant for the purposes of sociological analysis. (Schebesta is more concerned with problems of racial and cultural purity, and believes the Efe language to be of Pygmy origin; consequently, he considered the Efe Pygmies to be racially and cul-

turally the purest. This assumption, however, is open to question.) In the seeking of a more significant classification, and with every available source to hand, it has appeared that, as might be expected, there are certain differences in social structure related to differences in economic activity, notably hunting technique. It is fortunate that Schebesta's Efe are trackers and archers, while Putnam's Sua Mbuti are net hunters. Thus we have represented two groups not only linguistically and territorially distinct but also distinguished by hunting technique. The importance of this latter distinction appears in the course of the present study. While it is not claimed that such a classification is comprehensive or final, at least it is factual and more directly related to sociological differences than Schebesta's linguistic division. Consequently, we draw on sources in so far as they are

related to either of these economic groups of Mbuti—archers or net hunters. When sources cannot be related to our detailed study of these two types, we omit them, unless there is some special reason for their inclusion.

Now, before the survey itself, it is necessary to evaluate briefly our two main sources, as certain deficiencies in each should be understood. The more properly critical section follows the survey; here such criticism as is presented is offered so that we can estimate the true nature and value of the facts presented by each source.

#### SCHEBESTA

Schebesta, as a follower of Schmidt, is concerned with the over-all problem of "the pygmy races of the world" and their interrelationship. He began his study among the Semang Negroes in 1924. Then in 1929 he undertook the first of three trips to Africa on which he based his work "Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri." The first trip, lasting a year and a half, was spent traveling through the Ituri "*sur des pistes caravannières . . . dans toutes les directions*" (Schebesta, 1952, 16) in order to get an all-over picture of all the Mbuti and to "*établir leur unité de race et de structure sociale*" (Schebesta, 1952, 16). This admission, I think, is sufficient to indicate one of Schebesta's weaknesses, his obsession with this notion of cultural unity. To set out to establish a unity of social structure among a virtually unknown people scattered through thousands of square miles of forest is hardly commendable as scientific procedure. It results, as one might expect, in his loose usage throughout his works of the terms "Bambuti" and "Pygmy," thus always implying that there are no significant differences between the Mbuti of one part of the forest and those of another, or between Mbuti who utilize one form of hunt and those who follow another. Further, Schebesta is constantly concerned with differentiating the Pygmies from the villagers. He looks for original traits in Pygmy culture that will evidence their separateness from the villager as well as their unity among themselves. (Any similarities he then ascribes to assimilation.) Nowhere do we find Schebesta interested in a society as such; it must be related to his own problems of cultural unity and distinctness of race. He himself (1947, 181, footnote 1) writes, "The object of my explorations was to

stress [pick out?] that which was pygmy."<sup>1</sup>

Schebesta's division of the Ituri Pygmies into three linguistic groups is another result of his preoccupation with the problem of the separateness of the Pygmy and villager and the alleged anteriority of the former. He sets out to find an original Pygmy language and claims to have found it among the Efe archers. For this reason he regards them as the "purest" Mbuti. He also, of necessity, believes that their culture is the purest, being least affected by contact with the villagers. Yet from his account it is plain that the Pygmies he describes live in far closer association with neighboring villagers than do other Pygmy groups elsewhere in the Ituri Forest. This whole question of origin and anteriority is so highly speculative, resting, as it must, largely on conjecture, that again we prefer our own more factual basis of classification according to hunting technique, if only as a temporary measure, until we have sufficient information to make a classification according to structural principles.

But there is a further and even more important criticism to be made of Schebesta's work, especially his field-work technique. His first trip was avowedly to make an all-over survey and to map the delimitations of Pygmy territory in the Ituri. He can then be excused the superficiality of his observations on social structure as published (Schebesta, 1933) in an English version and a German edition (Schebesta, 1932). He himself recognized the need for a more detailed and localized study, and his second trip, in 1934, was undertaken with this object in view. In his account of this trip (Schebesta, 1936b, 1937) in another work designed for the general public but nonetheless revealing, he tells quite plainly how he sets about making this study. The only way to get to know Pygmy life thoroughly, Schebesta (1937, 30) says is to live right in a Pygmy camp: ". . . the urgent problems to be solved forthwith, and as often as it was necessary to seek a new camp, were: a. Where would I find pygmies *in sufficient numbers*; b. Where would I find a suitable camping ground; c. What would I do to win the confidence of *my little hosts?* [*italics mine*]."

Evidently then the camps in which Sche-

<sup>1</sup> "Relever ce qui est propre aux pygmées, tel fut le but de mes explorations."

besta worked are quite artificial, in that they grew up around him on a site of his own choosing. Further, he relies on neighboring villagers to send in "their" Pygmies to create "sufficient numbers." There is no certainty that the members of any of these camps even come from the same hunting band. He certainly gives us no comprehensive genealogies throughout his entire work, so we really have no idea of even the kind of kin groups he is dealing with. Further, while he moves about within a limited area, he combines all his material in such a way that, again, we lose sight of any particular society and find ourselves dealing only with an abstract model of "Efe" society.

One further criticism should be made of Schebesta's field-work technique, which considerably decreases its value from the point of view of the anthropologist. He not only establishes and works in the artificial camps already mentioned, but even within those camps he seems to have been unable to establish the kind of relationships needed for efficient anthropological documentation. This fact does not emerge in his academic writings but is evident throughout his writings for the more general public. He interferes in matters of magico-religious importance with an insensitivity that is not likely to encourage confidence. To give a few examples from "Among Congo Pygmies" (Schebesta, 1933): He enters an old woman's hut, sees a charm lying concealed among the leaves, so seizes it and beats a retreat despite her protests. It is not surprising that "I barely managed to get out into the open with my spoil before all the women of the camp surrounded me with loud wails" (Schebesta, 1933, 77). Again he seems surprised that there should be some trouble because he went around the camp taking hair clippings (Schebesta, 1933, 229), and he quite proudly tells how he planned to rob a grave by building his hut over it (Schebesta, 1933, 222). It is hardly probable that this kind of attitude would have inspired the trust and confidence necessary to secure reliable information.

Schebesta also, not content with having a camp built to suit his convenience, is unwilling to let camp life go its normal (Pygmy) way. In "Revisiting my Pygmy Hosts" (Schebesta, 1937, 211-212), he is obliged to put an end to non-stop gambling by confiscating "not only the beans, but even arrows." He is also unable

to allow quarrels to run their natural course: When his night's rest is disturbed by matrimonial disagreements he "snatches up his gun" to restore peace and quiet (Schebesta, 1933, 96). Sometimes his methods are even cruder: a fight starts over a hen he had accepted without payment, though he intended to pay later. So Schebesta enters the dispute, and "my rattan cudgel crashed among the brown bodies" (Schebesta, 1933, 113). When a villager is reluctant to allow him to stay in his village, Schebesta calmly describes half-choking him with his bare hands (Schebesta, 1933, 118), and when there is trouble in one of his camps on yet another occasion, we find the most basic rules of good field work again being somewhat overlooked (Schebesta, 1933, 89): "At last I deemed it discreet to step forward in the interests of peace and come to his aid. My well meant advice was, however, utterly disregarded; in fact the women became more bloodthirsty and more voluble. At last I lost my temper and charged into the howling mob, knocking them in all directions. I even had to threaten to give one of the amazons a good hiding. This ended the squabble and a sullen silence fell upon the panting mob."

Finally, there is reason to suspect that some of the facts presented with the certainty of an eyewitness account are actually the result either of only casual observation or even of information given by single informants. When dealing with totemism, Schebesta (1937, 143) states that Pygmies do not eat from a vessel that has touched their totem; he then reveals that this statement was based on information from a single informant, which even Schebesta himself thought to be unreliable. In "Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri" (Schebesta, 1948, 475), when dealing with the *nkumbi* initiation, he admits: "*Ich habe persönlich nur Ausschnitte vom Nkumbi gesehen*"—that he has seen only parts of the *nkumbi* and those only among the Ngwana at Bafwasende, the Byeru, Bali, and the Forest Bira. "These fleeting glimpses [*Diese nur flüchtigen Einblicke*];" Schebesta, 1948, 475], however, sufficed to confirm to me the information I had gathered from negroes and Bambuti."

Boelaert (1936a) makes the same criticism, as does Costermans (1938). Among others, Ivor Evans (1937, vi, 15, 16, 50, 153, 177) has similar criticisms of Schebesta's field work in Malaya.

All this amounts not to a criticism of Schebesta's work as such, but rather to an evaluation of it from the point of view of a social anthropologist. In his work, as in his presentation of the facts, Schebesta was motivated by quite other considerations than those of a social anthropologist, and accordingly we must use his material with care. His facts we can accept with some caution, bearing in mind the remarks just quoted. His theories we cannot accept at all, unless it is with the greatest reserve, in view of the motivation of his work and his admitted preconceived notions as to the racial and cultural autonomy of the Pygmies.

#### PUTNAM

We must also exercise caution with regard to the Putnam material. All that is published is an article dictated by Patrick Putnam to Carleton S. Coon, who published a condensed version of it (Patrick Putnam, 1948). I myself met Putnam during my first visit to the Congo in 1951. He died just before my return visit in 1954, but later I had an opportunity of spending a summer working on all his personal papers. These, for the most part, consisted of manuscript notes written during his first years in the Ituri Forest, from 1928 onward. They cover northern and eastern stretches of the forest, as well as the central (Efulu) district which came to be his home. The notes were materially in bad condition, having been attacked by both damp and termites. Intrinsically their worth is not so great as might have been hoped, though there are valuable references to conversations with old Pygmies whose memories reached back another generation, giving some historical perspective. More valuable are his notes on the Mbuti relationship with villagers, and notes on these tribes themselves, particularly the Mamvu, Mbolu, Bali, Rumbi, and Mangbetu.

Isolated notes and jottings concerning the particular hunting band in whose area Putnam made his permanent headquarters, near the junction of the Efulu and Nduye rivers, prove to be of particular value in giving some idea of the composition of this band over two decades, changes in leadership, and other matters. Also useful in this respect are medical notes which he kept of all the Pygmies he treated and on which he wrote down such kinship information as he could elicit.

Unfortunately, the bulk of Putnam's notes,

with more detailed and systematic studies of the various hunting bands known to him, were lost when his canoe overturned. He would not be persuaded to write again but cooperated with his wife, Anne Putnam, and helped her to systematize her own observations during her eight years in the Efulu District. During his latter years he was crippled, and trained Anne Putnam to observe as an anthropologist. Some of these observations appear in a book compiled from her letters and some of her notes (Anne Putnam, 1954). Although Anne Putnam makes no claim to being an anthropologist, she became an acute and accurate observer and, under her husband's guidance, took some particularly valuable notes regarding the activities of the women's religious association, the initiation of Pygmy boys, marriage customs and ceremonies, and certain activities of the men's religious association. In addition she translated and wrote down some 200 legends as told to her by four members of the hunting group. Her notes also cover other aspects of the social, economic, and political life of this same band, but in less detail. All her work has the indisputable advantage of being a factual record of personal observation of a single hunting band over a period of eight consecutive years. That she is not an anthropologist is to a great extent mitigated by the fact that her record confines itself to her observations, and by the training she received from her husband. Nonetheless this factor should be taken into consideration, particularly as her previous training was as an artist. This accounts in part for the detailed and accurate descriptions of what she saw, but it also accounts for her sometimes highly imaginative presentation of the facts. For instance, when she hears the *molimo* horn at night, she (1954, 84) writes: "Where the Esamba roamed, there went death. Its eerie, lowing voice was the voice of evil." In fact this, as well as being a statement of her own interpretation of the *molimo*, is also an accurate picture of the villager interpretation. It is also significant that she uses specifically village terms, such as "Esamba" (for the more correct *lusumba* or *esumba*). Living as she did among the villagers as well as among the Pygmies, Mrs. Putnam was influenced by many of their notions and not infrequently used the villagers as informants, though she always states when the latter is the case. We must then assume that



some of the "facts" she observes, she presents much as the local villagers would.

With regard to my own early material, which I add to our sources on the Epulu net hunters, I must also add a caution. My first trip, in 1951, lasting about four months, was primarily concerned with the music of the Mbuti. I was, during almost the entire time, among this same hunting band at the Epulu. My second trip, in 1954, took me through west and equatorial Africa and the Ubangi district of the Congo, so I was able to see Pygmies other than those of the Ituri, but again I concentrated most of my time at the Epulu. I use my own field notes mainly to fill in gaps in the Putnam material and to add two detailed sections on initiation and the men's religious association, here called the *molimo*.<sup>1</sup> I was particularly fortunate in obtaining the material I did, and I include it because it helps to fill out the most detailed body of facts available on any single Pygmy hunting band. The fact that all this material does deal with a single band (or is used only in so far as it does) perhaps excuses the somewhat haphazard way in which it has been amassed. Obviously a single field study by one trained anthropologist would be preferable, but it is not available. Inclusion here of the notes on my 1957-1958 field trip would create an imbalance. As it is, the material is used only in the presentation of facts, and there is no reason to doubt their authenticity. If there is any fault in this joint source on the Epulu Mbuti, it is this possible fault of omission rather than any of commission.

The area that this band of Pygmies hunts lies to the north of the Epulu River and west of

the River Nduye (Fig. 3). The band is a relatively large one and shows some interesting tendencies toward fission. It did not always move as a single hunting unit. Sometimes a part of the band would be several days' journey off in the forest, while the rest remained at the village named Camp Putnam. Mrs. Putnam frequently visited the hunting band at its various camps, when of latter years Patrick Putnam was more or less entirely confined by his illness to the village.

Linguistically the band falls into Schebesta's Sua category, using KiBira for the most part as their camp language. They also use a great many KiLese words, however, and the local Bira affirm that they frequently cannot understand what they call "KiMbuti," though they recognize it to be basically KiBira. Like the Bira villagers, these Pygmies also speak some KiNgwana, the *lingua franca* of the territory. With regard to their "purity," it is difficult to say much, particularly as it seems more satisfactory to study them for what they are without reference to their supposed origin. They stand to the villager, however, in the general, apparent client-patron relationship found among most Mbuti throughout the Ituri, though this varies in detail from one area to another. It would seem that they are a great deal less closely attached to their village patrons than the archers described by Schebesta, and spend far less time in the vicinity of the village. At the same time they themselves, and the villagers, report other bands whose association with village settlements is still less regular. The material to hand, however, does reveal some new facts concerning this relationship, and, although interpretation of these facts can be made only with regard to this particular band (the disadvantage of such a small-scale study), at least it is more certain for that specific instance and may indicate similar possibilities elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> Much confusion arises through common and loose usage of the term *lusumba* among all villagers of the area. The *lusumba*, also *esumba*, seems to originate as an Ngwana magical ceremony. This is distinct from both the Bira *molimo* and the *molimo* of the Mbuti, although the terms are often used interchangeably by villagers.

## ORIENTATION

### LOCATION

THE PYGMY POPULATION of the world is divided into two main groups, Asiatic and African, commonly known as Negritos and Negrillos, respectively. These terms originated in what is probably the first serious attempt to study the Pygmies as a whole (Quatrefages, 1887), and the relationship between these two groups has been an issue ever since. It does not concern us here, as our study is confined to the African Pygmies, but reference to this wider issue may be found in Quatrefages (1887), Le Roy (1897), Schmidt (1910), Eickstedt (1934), and Gusinde (1942).

### TRIBAL GROUPINGS

We are concerned essentially with an ethnographic study of known Pygmy groups in Africa, but here again the field is generally considered in terms far too broad to be practical. If the Bushmen, whose relationship to the Pygmies is highly questionable, be left aside, there are three main groups of African Pygmies—the Mbuti of the Ituri Forest, the Tswa of the western Congo and western Africa, and the Twa between Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika. Of these, only the first group is truly “Pygmy” according to Schebesta (1952), being under 150 cm. in stature and relatively free from intermixture with neighboring tribes. Schebesta refers to the Twa and Tswa as “Pygmoids.” From all the available evidence it seems that the Ituri Mbuti alone preserve any semblance of their original nomadic life as hunters and gatherers, although little is known yet about the Pygmies of equatorial Africa.

Our earliest sources (the Sixth-Dynasty tomb at Beni Hassan, the Pompeian parietal paintings, Homer, Aristotle, and even the *Mappa Mundi*) all agree in placing a Pygmy population near the source of the Nile. Later sources enlarge little on this information, and the first real attempt to delimit the territory was made by Schebesta in 1929–1930.

The Ituri Mbuti inhabit the forested basins of the Lindi and Ituri rivers (Schebesta). The Bomokandi River forms the northern frontier. The Mbuti never move beyond the edge of the

forest to the east. Their southern limit is bounded by a line from the Ruwenzori, through Beni to Bafwasende. The western boundary runs north from Bafwasende to Panga and to the confluence of the Bomokandi and Uele. (See Fig. 3.) Apart from the Lindi and Ituri rivers, Schebesta says that Pygmies also inhabit the areas near the Epulu, Ngayu, Nepoko, and Poko rivers. Putnam makes no attempt to delimit Mbuti territory, but his notes show that he traveled throughout the area described by Schebesta, with the possible exception of the extreme south, and found Mbuti everywhere, away from the major rivers as well as along their banks.

Schebesta makes the threefold division already mentioned, of Twa, Tswa, and Mbuti, and further subdivides the Ituri Mbuti into three major groups: the Aka to the north; Sua to the south; and Efe to the east (Fig. 3). These are linguistic groups, speaking dialects of Mangbetu, Bira, and Lese, respectively. Schebesta believes the Efe dialect to be the remnant of the original Pygmy language, and for this reason he considers the Efe archers to be culturally the purest of the three Mbuti groups. Costermans (1937) disagrees as to both the originality of the Efe language and the purity of Schebesta's particular Efe Mbuti. He asserts that among the Watsa-Gombari Efe, who according to Schebesta were not “true Pygmies,” he found hundreds living in exactly the same manner as Schebesta's “true Pygmies.”

Jadin (1936) considers that of Schebesta's three groups the Efe and the Sua have remained most faithful to their old way of life and finds that, on grounds of blood groups, the purest Pygmies are those who live farthest from their village neighbors, from whom they are clearly distinguishable by their biochemical index.

The Aka live mostly to the north of the Nepoko River, along the length of the Ituri as far east as Gombari. Thence southward, to the east of the Nduye, the Efe archers are found. The Sua roam from the Nepoko to the south side of the Ituri River, from Bomili in the west, almost to Mambasa in the east. Detailed information on the Aka is not available, though they seem to make more use of the spear than

the other groups. Our main source on the Efe is Schebesta, whose major field work was carried out in the triangle bounded by the roads joining Irumu, Mambasa, and Beni. Source material on the Sua is almost entirely confined to a band in the area to the west of the Nduye and north of the Epulu, near the village of Camp Putnam (Fig. 3).

Thus the two groups available for study represent not only two of Schebesta's two linguistic groups but also the two major hunting techniques used by the Ituri Mbuti. The Efe are archers, while the Sua are primarily net hunters. It is probable that certain structural differences between the two groups can be accounted for by this difference in economic activity; all such differences are also related to the different degrees of symbiosis between the Pygmies and their village neighbors. What is said of these two groups should be taken to apply within these limited areas only, though it may be found that many of the facts have wider extension.

The term "Bambuti" was first applied by Schebesta (1933) to the Sua net hunters only, but after his second visit to the Ituri he widened his usage to include all the Ituri Pygmies (Schebesta, 1937). This is the sense in which it seems to be used by the Pygmies themselves and in which we use the term in this study. The threefold linguistic subdivision of the Mbuti is the only attempt that has yet been made to divide the Mbuti into separate groups, but it is not yet certain how far this division has any anthropological validity. It is impossible to speak of Mbuti tribes or subtribes, and, although a number of clan names are known, no material available enables us to trace any semblance of a clan system. The only certain units are the nuclear family and the economic association of a number of such families that form a hunting band. Schebesta (1948, 288 ff.) makes this point, using the terms "*Familie*" and "*Sippe*." He distinguishes "*Sippe*" from "*Grossfamilie*," the former being primarily an economic association of incidentally related families and the second laying the emphasis on common descent. The coalescence of several "*Grossfamilie*" into a clan is a concept of little significance to the Pygmy, and the clan, Schebesta writes, is in any case widely dispersed.

The size of these hunting bands varies,

among the archers from three to 37 huts,<sup>1</sup> but averages about six huts per hunting band (termed "*Lokalgruppe*" by Schebesta, 1948). The net-hunter bands are larger, averaging around 15 huts per hunting band. The particular Epulu band to be considered was an exceptionally large and fluid one, in itself varying from 10 to 30 huts. In practice it often became two hunting bands. Both Schebesta and Putnam agree that hunting bands do occasionally combine for some special hunting project, but that such alliances are temporary and rare. The Putnam material indicates that, even when such an association does take place, each band rigorously maintains its separate identity, building adjacent but separate camps.

Each single hunting band, among both archers and net hunters, has its own defined hunting area, but until more material is available it is impossible to learn in what other ways the forest is thought of as being divided.

Schebesta (1934) estimates the total population of the Ituri Mbuti to be more than 35,000, in an area of approximately 100,000 kilometers; Putnam's estimate was 40,000 within the same area. Lloyd (1899) gives the Pygmy population as fewer than 10,000, using information given to him by a Pygmy in the Central Ituri. According to this information the Pygmies inhabited the forest for a distance of seven days' march from east to west, and six days from north to south; and that there were 40 chiefs, each with from 40 to 200 followers, a few with as many as 500. There is no official count that can be drawn on, but Schebesta and Putnam both traveled extensively through the entire Ituri area, and the closeness of their estimates favors the acceptance of their figures as fair approximations. Lloyd's reference is interesting in that it gives some indication of what an individual Pygmy considers to be the extent of the Mbuti and their territory.

Reviewing his interpretation of demographic data collected on his first two visits to the Congo, as set out in "Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri," Schebesta (1952, 50-53) later says that among the Efe archers the average number of children born to each woman is three, of which two survive. He also finds that there is a

<sup>1</sup> Each hut represents a nuclear family—man, wife, and unmarried children.

slight excess of females in the composition of the population. He gives the following figures, evidently from a population of 411 adults.

	CHILDREN PER CENT	ADULTS PER CENT	TOTAL PER CENT
Male	48.0	48.9	48.4
Female	52.0	51.1	51.6
Infant mortality	(32.7 per cent)		
Average age	27-30		
9 widowers among 201 men			
9 widows among 210 women			
14 polygamous families	(3.1 per cent)		

Demographic data for the Sua net hunters is not available. Putnam kept detailed medical records for all members of the band for a decade, but many of these have been lost in the course of shipment to the United States, and the few that are available do not provide a representative picture. From such data as are available, there does not seem, however, to be any significant difference between the two groups.

There is no reliable detailed information as to population movement, though the general opinion is that the population has remained static for some time; nor are there data on the frequency of intermarriage between Mbuti and villagers. Jadin (1936) and Costermans (1937) confirm Schebesta's (1952, 47) opinion that miscegenation is a one-way movement. A village male may take a Pygmy wife, in which case the children will be brought up in the village, but a Pygmy male will never take a villager wife. This holds equally among archers and net hunters (Putnam, 1948, 325). Information for the Aka is, as usual, conflicting and unreliable. Schweinfurth (1874) asserts that there is intermarriage between the Aka and the Mangbetu; Burrows (1898) claims that there is no such intermarriage.

Information as to the attitude of Mbuti and villagers toward miscegenation is also lacking. Schebesta says that certain northern tribes of villagers aver horror at the idea of intermarriage, but that in spite of this it takes place and is nowhere unknown. Both the Lese and the Bira tribes, with which the archers and net hunters are most in contact, are considerably modified physically owing to the frequency of miscegenation (Schebesta, 1952; Geluwe, 1956),

but Schebesta estimates at only 5 per cent "the proportion of Negro blood passed to the Pygmies" (1938, 111). Costermans (1937), however, who made a detailed study of the Watsa-Gombari population, says that in most villages (in his area anyway) marriages of Lese or Mamvu with Pygmy women are rare.

## LANGUAGE

Contemporary linguists are divided as to the question of Pygmy language. Some take the view that a search for such a language is bound to be fruitless; others (Putnam) find traces of it only in personal names and a few place names and names of animals and plants. Schebesta (1952), however, believes that he has found the remnants of the original Pygmy tongue among the Efe archers. Efe and KiBira are the two main camp languages of the Mbuti, the former belonging to the Mamvu-Lese-Mvuba language group, and the latter to the semi-Bantu Bira. The Aka speak a Mangbetu dialect. Costermans (1937), who agrees with Putnam that the original Pygmy language has disappeared, even in the heart of the forest, states that everywhere the Pygmies use the language of the village population with which they live in symbiosis, though they retain their own accent. The Mamvu-Lese group, he says, are no exception to this rule.

Most Mbuti are polyglots, though Schebesta claims that the archers among whom he worked spoke only Efe, a fact that he takes to be additional evidence of the Pygmaean origin of this tongue, despite its obvious connection with KiLese. The Epulu Mbuti speak KiBira, KiLese, and KiNgwana. KiBira is used mainly as the camp language but in a dialectal form rendering it almost unintelligible to the Bira villagers. Whatever language the Mbuti are speaking there are certain similarities about the form it assumes, noticeably in the use of a hiatus (the "faucal gasp" noticed by Johnston, 1902, 1904, 532; see also Costermans, 1937) and of a curious singsong intonation. But for the present the question of originality in Mbuti language is still open, and we can state with certainty only that the Ituri Pygmies speak dialectal forms of the same Sudanic and semi-Bantu languages spoken by their village neighbors.

## ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Here again we are in a highly speculative field with very little data to work on. The present distribution of the African Pygmies and Pygmoids tells us little. Early sources, reports of nineteenth-century travelers (Schweinfurth, 1874), tradition, and current distribution all seem to combine to indicate that the northeast Congo has at all times been inhabited by Pygmies who spread out through the entire forest area of equatorial Africa. Both Schebesta and Putnam subscribe to this view, but others, such as Kerken (1944), state that the Pygmies and Pygmoids of the equatorial forest are *not* the ancient inhabitants of that area. This school of thought prefers to regard the Pygmies as a degeneration of the basic Negro race, a view contradicted by contemporary physical anthropologists and geneticists (Jadin, 1936; Gusinde, 1948; Schebesta, 1938).

Archeological sources tell us nothing concerning the origin or history of the African Pygmies. Putnam reports that neolithic axheads are frequently found throughout the Ituri, often revealed when a tree is split by lightning. The Mbuti, however, do not appear to recognize their origin or use, and refer to them as "turds of lightning" (Patrick Putnam, 1948, 339). Haene (1949) reports the finding of round stones with holes, which might have been currency, in the Ituri Forest, and appeals for engineers and others concerned in exploitation of the forest to be made aware of the possibility of such finds. Soors (1950a, 59), commenting on this appeal, writes that he met an engineer who, in the course of excavation in the Rega Forest, had found a large flat stone bearing hieroglyphic inscriptions. Asked what had become of it, the engineer replied: "*Nous l'avons cassée en mille morceaux—nous ne tenons pas d'être dérangés dans nos travaux par des amateurs d'antiquités.*"

Recorded history is, of course, nil, so any reliable historical reconstruction is ruled out for the moment and must remain so until there is much more physiological, demographic, or archeological evidence. Even the date and direction of migrations among the various village tribes are uncertain, though a considerable amount of research has been done in this direction (Moeller, 1934, 1936). We have merely traditions of origin and history, and even this material is scanty and unenlightening.

For one thing it is often difficult to tell whether a particular legend is of villager or Pygmy origin. Even from the remoter groups of Pygmoids in the central Congo, legends of origin among both villager and Pygmy agree that the Pygmies are the original "people of the forest." Verner (1902) refers to legends from the Wissman Falls area, told by both peoples, that give a purely practical account of how the Pygmies were driven before villager tribes invading their country, and how some retreated farther into the forest and others were captured and brought with their captors. Torday (1925b) gives a Luba legend attributing the origin of the Pygmies to Woto, Father of the Luba, who brought them out from the trees of the forest by singing. Torday (1925b) also mentions an interesting custom on the accession of a Luba king, the ceremonial for which requires the Pygmies of the kingdom to come to the capital to act as bodyguard for the new king. Such isolated references indicate a long-established association between the two peoples, and that the original nature of the association was a military one. Casati (1891), Burrows (1898), Ward (1910), Schweinfurth (1874), and others, write of the employment of the Pygmies by the villagers as spies, scouts, mercenary soldiers, and guides. Putnam in his earlier notes mentions frequently coming across references among the older Pygmies to this relationship, which of course came to an end when the Belgian authorities stopped intertribal warfare.

Legends from the Epulu area (Turnbull, 1959) show scant interest in the questions of origin and history, but that here also both Pygmy and villager agree that the Pygmy is the original inhabitant of the forest and is, to a certain extent, feared and respected as such by the villager. No legends from this area of the Ituri or from any other so far reported (Schebesta, 1936b, 340; Joset, 1948, 25–56, 137–157) show that the Pygmies or villagers have any concept of the Pygmies' originating elsewhere than in this northeast corner of the Congo, nor do they reveal any doubt in the minds of these people that the Pygmies were the original inhabitants of that forest.

Socio-cultural change has been taking place ever since the first villager invasions, several hundred years ago, but most rapidly in the past half century. The progress of this change can be

studied both from the material available and by further field work and should make an interesting contribution to the study of acculturation and plural society problems. This change, still taking place, is likely to increase in depth and speed as the Ituri Forest is further exploited by a central government. The Pygmies have constantly been thrown into closer contact with the villagers, and both have been brought into more immediate contact with the European. As the Pygmy becomes more and more economically dependent on these alien groups, the last remnants of his earlier social system will become modified and finally disappear. Up to the moment of Congo independence, the Mbuti were not subject to taxation, a fact that did not meet with their uncritical approval. The "pros and

cons" were not infrequently discussed around the campfires; the decision, however, was generally in favor of maintaining the *status quo*.

#### PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Physical anthropology is not treated here, partly because it is a highly specialized field and partly because, again, there is not sufficient material. The work of Schebesta (1938), Jadin (1936), and Gusinde (1948) is notable but still has produced no conclusive results other than to point out the undoubted genetic difference between the Mbuti and their village neighbors.

There is no published study of nutrition among the Mbuti, and nothing in the existing anthropological studies from which one can draw any conclusions on this subject.

## ENVIRONMENT

BOTH SCHEBESTA AND PUTNAM AGREE on the profound importance of the environment, which is the same throughout the Ituri, in determining to a great extent the life and thought of these forest people. In the primary rain forest there is little seasonal change. Different species of fruits, edible fungus, nuts, roots, and vegetables may flourish more abundantly at one time than another, but there is ample food of this kind at all times. The game is not migratory, except within very small areas, and is always plentiful. The combination of warmth and humidity that produces this lush environment, with its plentiful supply of food for the Mbuti hunters and gatherers, also adds directly to their material comfort. In the absence of climatic extremes the Pygmy is little troubled by problems of clothing or shelter. All his basic needs are attended to for him by his environment, a fact that, writes Schebesta (1952, 42) does not favor "cultural evolution," but the hallmark of hunting and gathering communities is in any case one of "*la primitivité conservatrice*." Schebesta (1952, 42-43) also believes that the forest environment induces fear, suspicion, and guile, and limits the intellectual horizon of the Mbuti. Putnam is not entirely in agreement with this view. He regards Schebesta's archers as a particularly stagnant group, witnessed by the fact that they speak only one language, whereas nearly all other Mbuti speak several (Schebesta, as mentioned above, regards this factor as an indication of their purity), and also by their inadequate individual hunting technique, which, as Schebesta himself states (1933, 28; 1952, 100-101) contributes a bare third of their food and, he writes, renders them dependent on the villagers for plantation products. These remarks are not quite consistent with his statement that the exuberance of the vegetation assures these bands of gatherers a far more stable and sufficient diet than does the environment outside the forest (Schebesta, 1936b, 79; 1952, 42).

Putnam associates the lack of seasonal change with a general ignorance among the Pygmies of cyclical activities. For instance, the Mbuti, who observe every detail in their forest home, "are unaware that the aquatic larvae which they eat turn into mosquitoes, nor do they know

that the caterpillar turns into a butterfly."

The forest throughout is interlaced with rivers and streams, and the terrain is gently undulating. These rivers, and the larger of the streams, seem to form effective natural boundaries and may well influence migratory tendencies, as the Pygmy both dislikes large expanses of water and lacks the knowledge of how to bridge them. Reports of journalists and others of Pygmy bridge-building activities (Cotlow, 1956) probably result from recent attempts, by both villagers and European movie makers, to teach the Pygmies how to build swing bridges. Putnam (1948, 325) asserts that the Pygmy probably never has to go more than 100 yards to find water. Temperatures throughout the year vary only between a low of 70° F. at night and a possible high of 80° F. during the day. The forest varies with respect to underbrush but on the whole is unimpeded virgin growth, with a carpet of leaf mold between the trees. Where villagers have made a clearing, however, there is thickly tangled undergrowth.

The environment that so favors a hunting and gathering economy also allows the adapted form of cultivation practiced by the villagers who now live in the forest. These village tribes, generally highly segmented and living in relatively isolated communities, cut large clearings and make plantations, the main products of which are plantains, manioc, peanuts, corn, rice, beans, and various kinds of squash. Plantains seem to be the staple food throughout. But the cutting of large clearings opens these villages to the intense heat of direct sunlight, from which the Mbuti never suffer in the uncut forest.

The Ituri is full of all kinds of game, the most important of which for the Mbuti are elephant, various kinds of antelope, forest pig, and monkey. The okapi is also hunted occasionally, though the Pygmies know that to do so is prohibited by game laws. It is in any case a difficult animal to catch and is pursued only if an easy opportunity offers. Danger comes in the form of forest buffalo, leopard, and a number of poisonous snakes such as the Gaboon viper and the horned viper.

There is a profusion of wild flowers and or-



chids and many different kinds of vine. The Mbuti make great use of various species of *Ficus* for the manufacture of barkcloth, and certain vines are used to make string and hunting nets. There are also trees that give a sap which, if taken from one part of the tree, can be used as a cooking oil and, if taken from another, can be used either as an adhesive or as fuel for a torchlight. The Mbuti have a knowledge of effective medicines prepared from plants and roots, and also of poisons.

Schebesta (1952, 95-147), in response to persons who hold that the Mbuti have no culture of their own (e.g., Kerken, 1944), points to their remarkable adaptation to the forest environment. The level of their culture may not be high, but, even though primitive and "conservative," it is distinctly a forest culture and distinctly Pygmy. Their needs are few, and raw material is abundant. The striking thing is the minimal extent to which they utilize this material. Both Schebesta (1952, 98) and Putnam attribute this to the super-sufficiency of the environment itself which, making minimal demands, is accorded a minimal response. Materials which could well be made use of, such as skin, bone, and shell, are hardly used at all. Putnam claims that they are not used in his area, although he writes that sometimes the Pygmies wear horn charms borrowed or stolen from the villagers. Virtually no use other than magical is made of bone, horn, or shell, as far as one can tell from reports from any part of the Ituri. Among the archers there are few of the skin quivers and bow covers mentioned by Schebesta (1952, 124). Putnam (MS) further states that he has never known these Pygmies to skin game; they cook and eat the skin as well as the flesh.

Schebesta (1952, 124), however, writes that hide quivers are plentiful, particularly in the western part of the forest, less so among the archers in the east, where arrows are always carried in a bundle held in the left hand. Schebesta (1952, 124) also mentions the wrist protector, made of monkey skin, used by archers. He makes other reference to the use of skin as belts and for adornment and, occasionally, the use of the skin of a *Colobus* monkey to cover the back, but he does not specify to which Mbuti his remarks apply. We assume that, unless he specifies otherwise, he refers to the archers among whom he worked on his second trip.

Among Putnam's net hunters, a more frequent use of skin, of late, has been in the form of a sling for carrying babies, but this is still rare.

Clay and stone are likewise ignored as possible raw materials, nor are there any reports that the Mbuti worked metal at any time. Apart from an exceptional case among the net hunters, quoted by Schebesta (1933), such metal as they require for knife and ax blades, and for arrow and spearheads, they obtain already worked from the villagers.

If the villager supplies the handle as well as the triangular blade, Putnam (1948, 326) writes that the invariable method of hafting is to burn a hole through the wood to take the narrow end of the blade. If the blade alone is supplied, the Pygmy takes a thin sapling or a light branch, splits it, and, without removing the bark, lashes the blade in place with twine or rattan. If a Pygmy is using an ax up in a tree, he will always choose one of his own hafting, because it is lighter. Both men and women use these axes. Putnam (1948, 326) writes that they never use adzes, which are the chief tools of the village woodworkers.

Also, according to Putnam (MS), the Pygmy never cuts a piece of wood larger than an inch in diameter. He cuts wood to make his bows, arrows, spear shafts, and ax hafts. The women use saplings of no greater size to construct the frames of the huts.

The material used by the Mbuti throughout the forest is vegetable fiber. From this they make the barkcloth that is their only clothing; the twisted vine that makes their hunting nets; the strings for their bows; carrying baskets and tumplines; and the basketry caps mentioned by Schebesta (1952, 173) who writes (1952, 125) that he has also seen basketry quivers.

The Mbuti everywhere use the large *phrynium* leaves that abound in the forest for roofing their huts, though when near a village plantation they may use plantain leaves. *Phrynium* leaves are also used in default of villager-manufactured or trade utensils, for carrying water, as cups, and pipe bowls. They use the juices of certain plants and barks for dyes for decoration of body and of barkcloth.

Mbuti exploitation of the forest has no adverse repercussions, as they move camp frequently. Among the net hunters every month or two is Putnam's estimate (1948, 335, 336).

From Schebesta (1952, 148-149), it would seem that archer camps are very much more variable both in size and duration. Although their time is fully occupied by the requirements of their hunting and gathering existence, the Mbuti never have any fear of shortage and consequently have no need to store. Theirs is a strictly diurnal economy. This fact, and the abundant way in which the forest satisfies their basic needs, not only directly affect their material culture (and indirectly their social structure) but also, to some extent, their social behavior and their religious thought.

The present report is not the place to pursue the question of the effect of environment on personality and behavior, a study more properly in the field of psychology than social anthropology. But it is worth emphasizing the probable importance of the environment in this respect, as it becomes especially significant when we study the religious life of the Mbuti. It is also significant in considering the relative systems of values of the Mbuti and the villagers, in so far as it develops certain qualities in the Mbuti that further accentuate their physical difference from their village neighbors. Just as the forest itself stands out in sharp contrast to the plains, so the forest people stand out in contrast to the plains people—even those who have made a notable adaptation to a forest environment such as the Ituri village tribes. The value in emphasizing the importance of environmental considerations lies not in any causal explanation of material culture or social structure offered by such considerations, but in creating an awareness of this very fundamental opposition.

According to Mbuti opinion the villager is deficient in the senses of sight, smell, hearing, and touch. There is little doubt that the Pygmy is extra-sensitive in these respects, but no scientific investigation has been conducted as yet to determine the exact extent. But if the environment favors a certain type of physical development, it also favors a certain type of emotional development. We must think of the forest not only as a place of abundance, offering a sufficiency of food and shelter, relatively free from danger, but also as a closed world, very unlike the open world of the plains dwellers. Not only has the Pygmy little incentive to develop beyond his diurnal economy, each day taking care of itself, but also he has little to make him think except in terms of the present. The past and the future pale into insignificance when compared with the moment. To understand this isolated, self-sufficient Pygmy world of the moment is also to understand something about the Mbuti relationship with the villager living in a very different, expansive, and uncertain world of change.

It seems worth mentioning the environmental factor also because the Pygmy himself takes it into consideration. His myth and mime, both important mediums of expression of the Mbuti, accentuate the opposition between the forest and the outside world, and between their peoples. They show a constant effort on the part of the Mbuti to effect a satisfactory relationship with the forest world that dominates their lives with such certainty and inevitability. It is not necessary to consider the environment further, but we must go this far in order to begin to understand the people whose society we are studying.

## THE ARCHERS (AFTER SCHEBESTA)

### THE SOCIAL UNIT

THE MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL UNIT is formed by the economic association of individual families as hunting bands (*Lokalgruppen*; Schebesta, 1948, 304 ff.; 1952, 210) which vary in size. Schebesta (1952, 208) gives the range as between two and 12 huts, averaging six huts per band. They are said, in effect, to be patrilineages, but Schebesta stresses the importance of the economic rather than the lineal ties; in his German publications he uses the term "*Sippe*," in French "*Parentele*." In German, he distinguishes the *Sippe* from the *Grossfamilie*, the latter being more properly the lineage regarded in its kinship context. The elder, who occupies considerable prestige and has considerable personal authority over the *Grossfamilie*, is only *primus inter pares* for the *Sippe* (Schebesta, 1948, 290). The prerogative of the elder depends on age, and these *avi-tiri*, or old ones, according to Schebesta, are endowed with the authority and dignity of the ancestors. Their power is limited by custom and tradition.

A number of lineages are associated into clans, but these are widely dispersed and have neither political nor economic significance. Tribal sense, says Schebesta, is entirely foreign to the Mbuti.

The bands are generally found on the edges of small villages, but still in the shade of the forest, according to Schebesta. Jadin (1936) says that only some Efe archers make their camp near the villages. Schebesta (1941, 132-133) finds that the exact location of the camps depends on the food quest, and that the presence of water and shade is a major consideration.

### HABITATIONS

The huts are built in a circle around a clearing by the womenfolk of the individual families. Saplings are cut, bent, and twisted together to form a beehive-shaped frame, which is covered with large phrynium leaves. This is the kind of hut described by most sources. Schebesta also describes tunnel-shaped huts.

### FURNITURE

The furniture of an archer hut is limited to a crude bed of sticks and lianas, raised from the

ground on four short forked branches. More often the sticks, or simply leaves, are laid on the ground to make a bed. There may also be a wooden stool, given by or stolen from the villagers, or a rough chair made from stout saplings lashed together with vine. Meat-drying racks (Fig. 12) are built over smouldering fires to preserve meat for barter.

### UTENSILS

Cooking utensils, clay pots, and heavy wooden mortars are obtained from the villagers (Fig. 4). The first-mentioned are never made by the Mbuti, but Schebesta says that many archers now make mortars for themselves. There may also be wooden plates of village origin, baskets, and basketry winnowing trays. All metal knife and ax blades (Figs. 13-14) also come from the villagers, and, like the cooking utensils, these foreign importations are said to have become indispensable to the archers. There are different types of knives, some hafted, some unhafted, always worn in the belt by women and used for preparing food and for sharpening the pointed sticks used by them in both gathering activities and in cooking. Other items that might be found in or around an Efe archer hut include hunting equipment, such as a bow and quiver of arrows (Figs. 6-9), a dog bell (Fig. 7i), an ax for cutting small saplings and sometimes used in the search for honey, an ivory or wooden beater for barkcloth, clay pipe bowls (Fig. 5), hide slings for carrying children, and a few personal possessions such as hunting charms. Of exceptional interest, perhaps, is the basketry press (Fig. 11), used among the archers for extraction of juice from fruits.

### DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION

Clothing consists mainly of barkcloth worn tucked between the legs. The upper part of the body is rarely covered, and then only by a skin cape worn over the shoulders by old men. Basketry caps are worn by men, and sometimes fur bands which may also be worn on the arm. Schebesta also mentions bracelets of shredded bark. Both men and women may wear, around the upper arm or wrist, fiber cords to which small pieces of wood, teeth, and other charms are attached. Leaves, flowers, nuts, and feathers

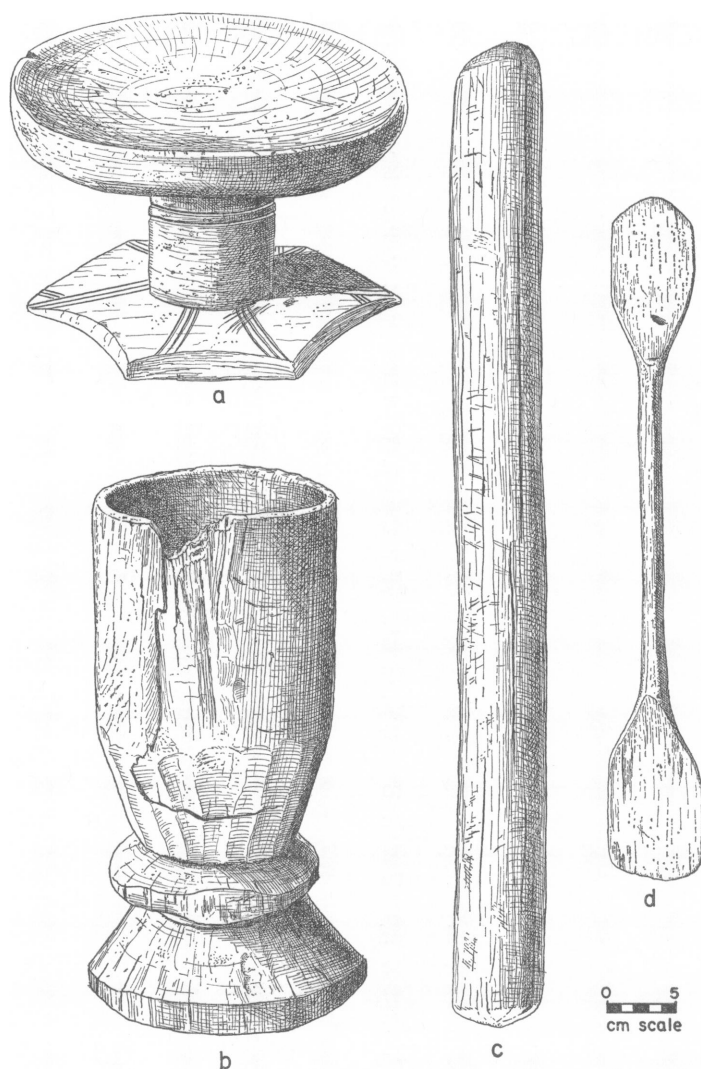


FIG. 4. Household utensils carved from wood, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Stool. b. Mortar. c. Pestle. d. Stirrer. Throughout the Ituri the Mbuti frequently borrow or steal wooden utensils from the villagers. These may be found in hunting camps close to villages.

are also used for adornment. Both men and women may wear combs in their hair. Sometimes the Mbuti make such combs themselves, more often they are borrowed or stolen from the villagers (Fig. 15a).

#### BODY DECORATION

Body mutilation is practiced occasionally in imitation of the villagers. Schebesta mentions as a peculiar "Bambuti" custom the plucking of

eyelashes, also the shaving of the head for esthetic effect. Men may tattoo their foreheads; women, their faces, stomachs, and backs. Teeth may be chipped, and sometimes women pierce their nasal septa, lips, and earlobes. Cicatrization is very rare. All Mbuti, says Schebesta, like to paint the body for esthetic effect as opposed to the magical significance of facial painting. White, red, and black are the colors used, the dyes being obtained from clay and certain

barks. The preparation of the dyes and the painting of the geometric designs are a woman's art.

#### CARE OF BODY

Schebesta says that bodily care is very much neglected among the Mbuti. He agrees with and quotes Stuhlmann (1894) who writes that the Pygmies are exceptionally dirty and are afraid of water. Schebesta also mentions the fondness of the Mbuti for rubbing oil into the skin.

#### DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The hunting dog (Efe: *ebó*) is the sole domestic animal. Schebesta says that all Mbuti maintain hunting dogs, bought from villagers or acquired by trade. These dogs are mute; hence the need for dog bells, made by the Pygmies themselves and hung around the dog's neck (Fig. 7i).

#### TECHNOLOGY

Archer technology uses only wood, fiber, and vegetable plants for raw material, with exceptional use of skin for quivers and baby slings, and fur for decoration of body and of the hunting bow.

Fire making is unknown, though the usage of fire itself is universal. Schebesta (1941) stresses its importance to the Mbuti, and says that embers are always carried about, even on the march. A new fire is lit by taking embers from an old one. Fire is further the only means of lighting, the wood *akata* giving the best light. When walking at night, the Mbuti always carry firebrands and light the path by scattering sparks in all directions. Fire is used, apart from purposes of cooking, giving warmth, and lighting, as the only adequate weapon against the black ants that not infrequently invade Mbuti camps in the middle of the night and force immediate withdrawal. Trilles (1932) and Le Roy (1897) both mention fire making by different techniques among the Pygmies in the then French Congo, but no reliable source has mentioned the practice of fire making among Ituri Pygmies. Many travelers and observers mention its absence.

As confirmed by all explorers except Burrows (1898) who spoke of the Aka, the Mbuti use poison on their arrows (Schebesta, 1941). They never, however, put poison on arrows tipped



FIG. 5. Household utensils made from clay, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Pipestem and clay bowl. b. Cooking vessel. The Mbuti obtain their major pottery artifacts, as luxuries, from their villager neighbors.

with metal points. Schebesta believes that a number of different poisons are used, apart from the poison described in detail by Parke (1891). The poisoned arrows are used against tree-dwelling animals, particularly monkeys, and hardly ever against antelopes or larger game. Schebesta contradicts, in the light of his own experience, Stanley's (1890) assertion that Mbuti hunt buffalo and elephant with poisoned arrows.

Mbuti use of antidotes is not known to Schebesta (1941, 65).

#### ECONOMIC LIFE

##### HUNTING

Schebesta (1941, 86 ff.) describes the various hunting techniques used throughout the Ituri. The Efe among whom he did his most detailed work are primarily archers. They do not know the net hunt and seldom practice the communal beat (Efe: *begbe*). Schebesta (1941, 86) ranks the ambush as most important. This method of hunting is used by the older men no longer able to track game successfully. They lie in wait and imitate the call of the game, attracting it until it is within range of their iron-tipped arrows.

The daily hunt, however, is the track hunt

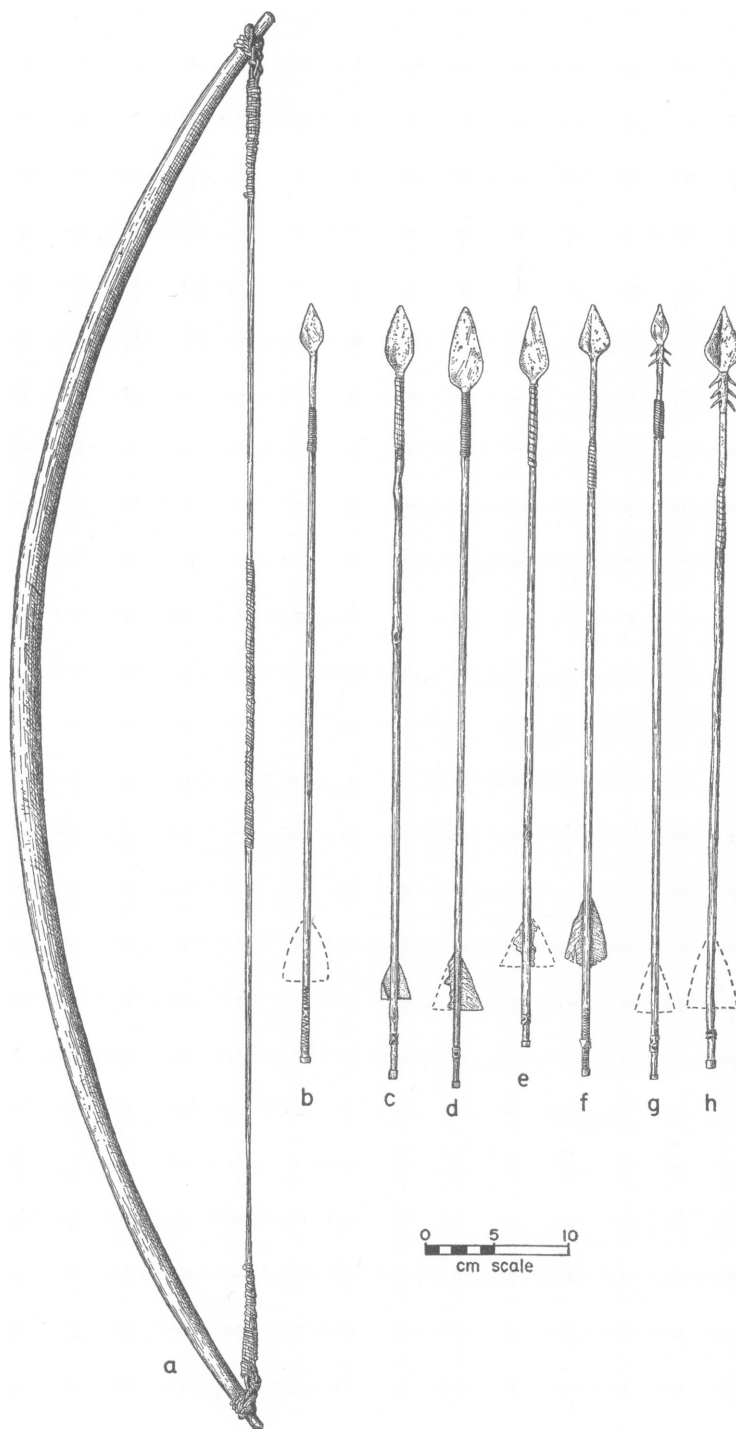


FIG. 6. Hunting equipment, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri. a. Bow. b-h. Arrows. These are typical of the eastern archers and similar to the bows and arrows of the neighboring Nyari villagers.

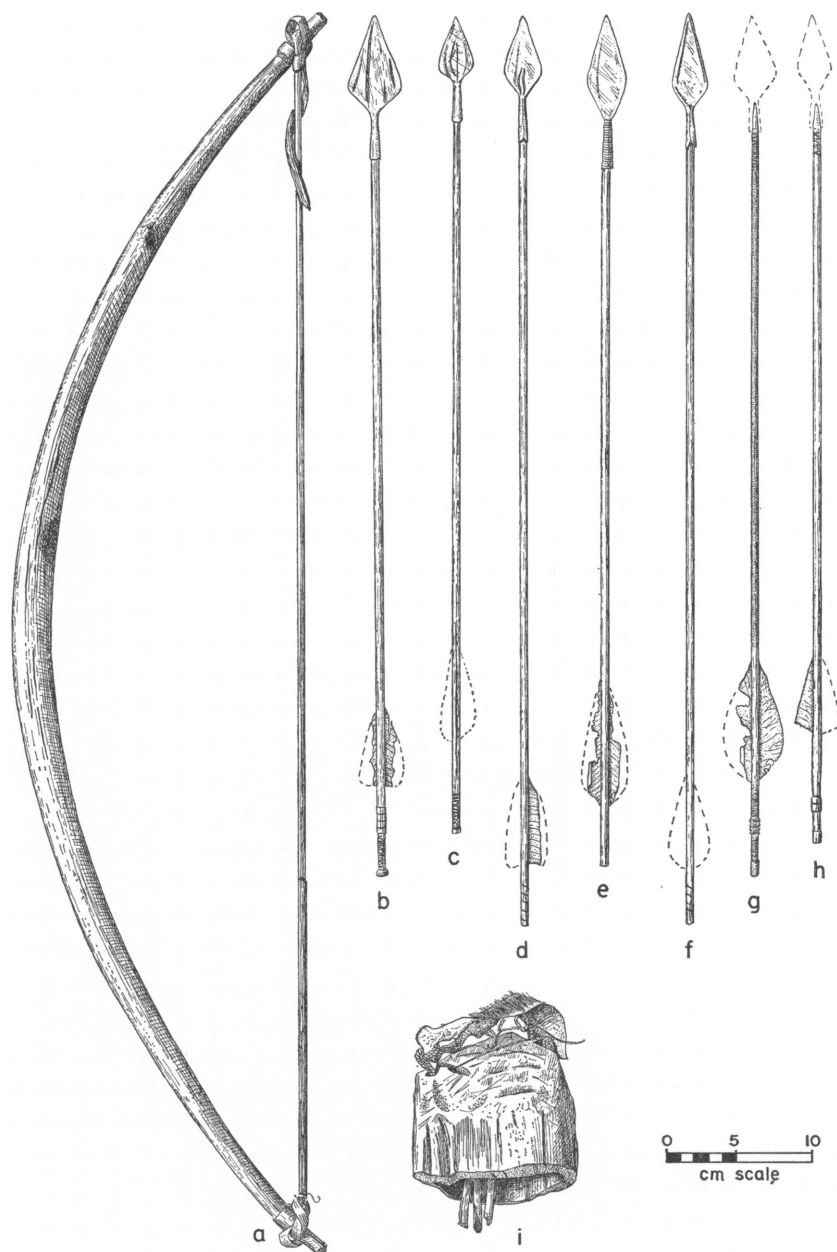


FIG. 7. Hunting equipment of a western archer from Nduye District, Central Ituri. a. Bow. b-h. Arrows. i. Dog bell.

(*Hetzjagd*, Schebesta, 1941, 89; Efe: *motá*) in which the male members of the local group take part. Five or six men go out when the sun is high (and the undergrowth dry) accompanied by hunting dogs. Schebesta mentions a hunt leader (Efe: *aetasi*) who gives the signal for

departure and follows the dog, guided by the sound of its wooden bell. He shouts encouragement to the dog, and the other trackers, guided by these sounds, spread out on either side of the hunt leader. When the dog puts up game, the hunters all stand rigid, bows flexed, ready to



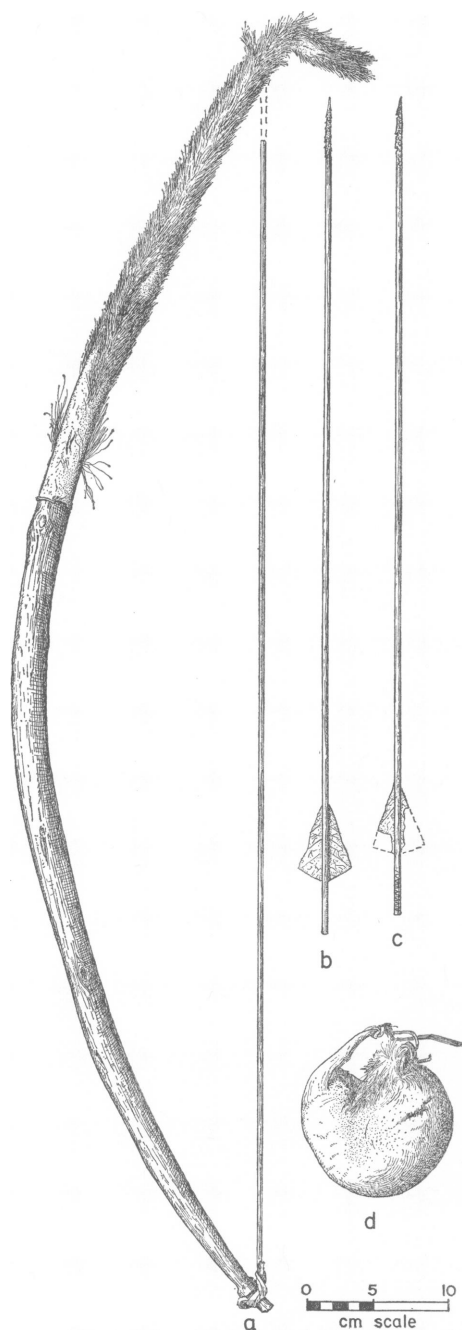


FIG. 8. Hunting equipment, archers, Oysha District, Central Ituri. a. Bow. b-c. Arrows. d. Wrist protector. Bows and arrows and wrist protectors of the archers seem, on the average, to be approximately 3 to 4 inches longer than those of the net hunters.

shoot if the animal passes their way. Sometimes the animal is killed by the dog; sometimes it escapes or is only wounded and must be pursued. It may happen that the dog itself is wounded, a major catastrophe for the hunters.

The rewards of this type of hunt are varied. A group of five or six hunters may be able to bring back an antelope each day, or may fail completely for days on end. The hunt seldom strays far from the camp and, with or without game, returns by late afternoon. According to Schebesta, the game caught is usually gutted on the spot and divided among the hunters, who bring back their shares wrapped in leaves, nothing being left unused. This division of game is according to traditional usage. If the game is brought back whole, only the elder with the aid of an assistant can divide it. It is laid on leaves, then skinned with sharp metal arrowpoints and gutted. The sharing is theoretically only between members of the band, but in fact is between any who took part in the hunt directly or indirectly. Thus the owner of the dog, or of the bow and arrow (if borrowed) that killed the game, may claim a share. An animal killed in the territory of another band belongs to that band, but Schebesta says that normally neighboring bands overlook this unless it happens frequently, when hostilities may ensue.

This method of hunting serves only for antelope; Schebesta never saw okapi, wild boar, or big game brought in from such a hunt.

The beat hunt seldom takes place, says Schebesta (1941, 98), because it requires the participation of large numbers of people, often from more than one band, including women and young girls, who can seldom be persuaded to take part. Also, it occupies an entire day. Ritual preparations include setting fire to certain herbs by the hunt leaders (an old man and an old widow in the hunt described by Schebesta). This produces a dense smoke, the sight and scent of which bring the hunters to the attention of their God. The old widow asks that rain should not surprise them. The ritual takes place a little way off from the camp; the other members of the hunt when they arrive rub their temples and eyes with the cinders, as did the old couple, in order to see better. The *begbe* hunt then sets out, and, when a suitable spot is found, the women make their petards from a certain bush (Efe: *magba*). By rolling the leafy

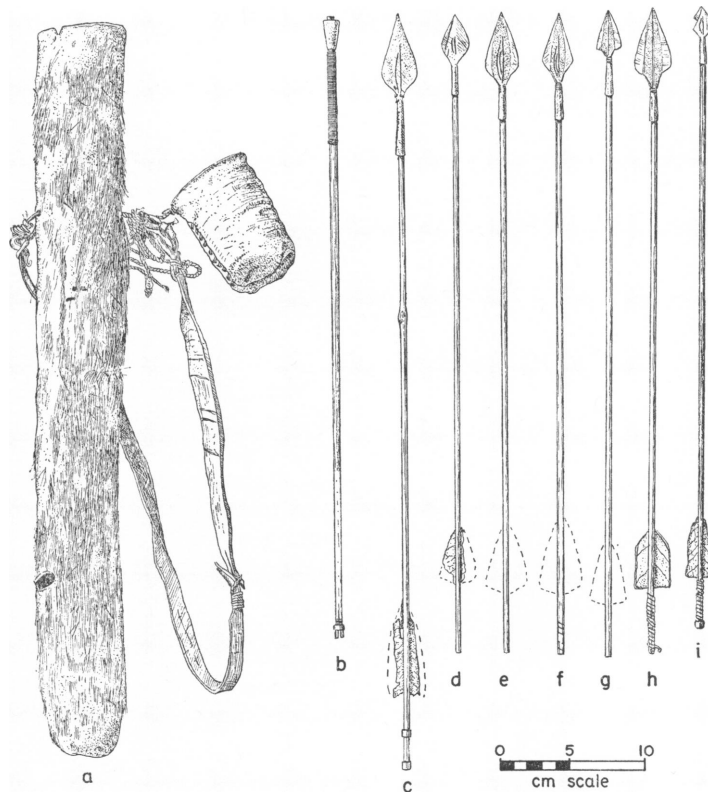


FIG. 9. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri. a. Skin quiver. b-i. Arrows. Quivers are not generally carried by either archers or net hunters; by both groups the arrows are usually held in the left hand, together with the bow.

stems in a special way they form cylinders which, when struck on the ground, make an effective clap. The women then go ahead and by the loud beating of their petards put up game for the men to shoot with their metal-tipped arrows. This form of hunt is usually successful in killing a number of animals, which are shared among the various hunting bands that took part in the beat.

Elephant hunting takes place only among those Mbuti who use spears (Fig. 10; Schebesta, 1941, 106); bows and arrows are quite incapable of doing more than blind an elephant, despite the reports of imaginative travelers to the contrary. Those archers who use only bow and arrow do not hunt elephant. Wild boar, similarly, are killed only with spear, especially when they appear near the camp. Monkeys and chimpanzees, considered as delicacies, are pur-

sued and shot with bow and arrow whenever the opportunity arises but are never the object of organized hunting. Other smaller animals and birds are hunted individually; those that take refuge in holes in trees are smoked out.

Schebesta's account suggests that, despite his proficiency at the hunt, the Pygmy takes care to protect himself against its attendant dangers and disappointments by securing the cooperation of the God of the Forest, and of his ancestors, and by making use of magic. He carries charms, observes various taboos, and performs certain rites—mostly sympathetic. It is not clearly stated, however, exactly which rites and charms are used by which particular Pygmies; there is obviously a great deal of variation. Schebesta clearly indicates, however, that among the archers there seems to be a considerable amount of hunting magic and ritual, wit-

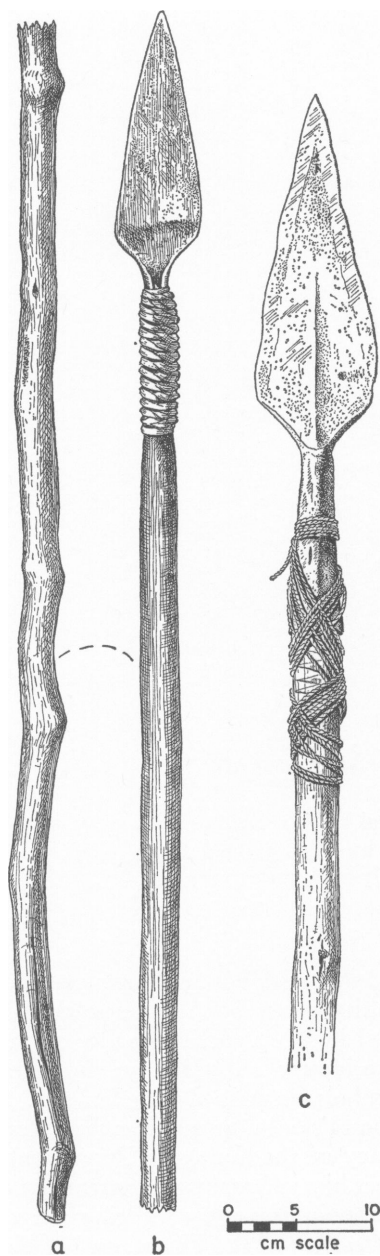


FIG. 10. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri. a-b. Spear, of village origin and villager hafted; probably Bira. c. Spear, hafted by Mbuti. All blades for spears come from the villagers, though Mbuti frequently rehaft spear, ax, and adze blades, to suit their needs.

nessed by their use of the special whistles (Efe: *segbe*), magic formulas, invocation, and ritual practices he describes.

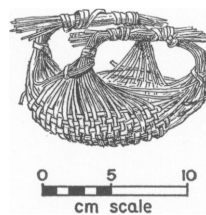


FIG. 11. Fruit press, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri. An unusual utensil, found in the hunting camp of an eastern archer band, used for extracting juice.

#### GATHERING

Meat, however, forms only about 30 per cent of the diet (Schebesta, 1941, 11). The archers' staple is essentially vegetarian, and this is provided almost exclusively by women. First place goes to the plantains, sweet potatoes, and peanuts acquired from the villagers in return for meat or service. But the forest itself provides an abundance of roots, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and edible fungi, all of which the Pygmy uses. Schebesta gives no details as to the exact proportions of these various foodstuffs consumed, so it is impossible to get any idea of the dietetics of this group. He also mentions the place of snails and grubs, termites and ants, larvae, and certain types of snake in the diet. Fish form only a small part of the diet, but the womenfolk catch crabs and small fish in the shallow streams, using their hands or small nets.

#### HONEY GATHERING

Honey gathering is of particular importance and is seasonal. The equipment consists of fire,

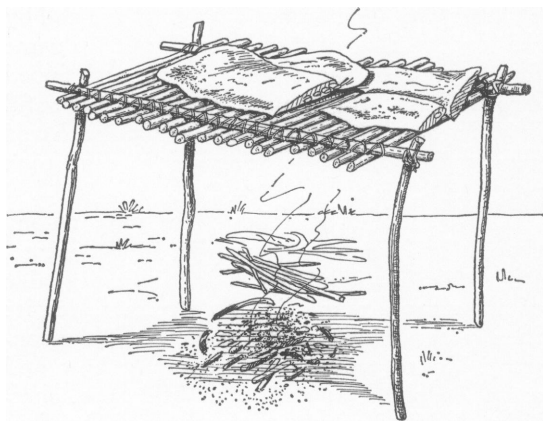


FIG. 12. Meat-drying rack, archers, Central and East Ituri. Meat drying takes place only when the Mbuti intend to trade with villagers and is by no means a part of every hunting camp.

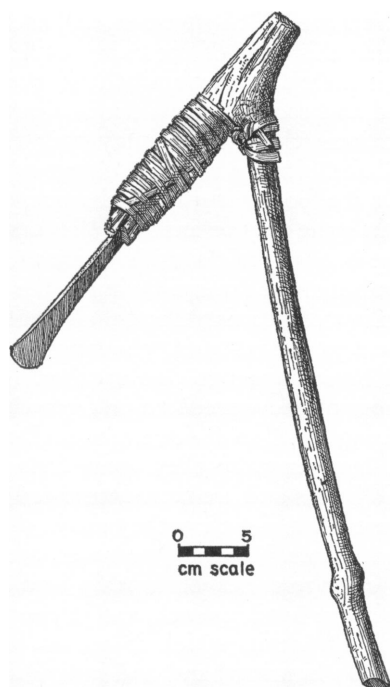


FIG. 13. Adze, Bira villagers, rehafted by Mbuti archers, Central Ituri. A villager utensil, useful but not indispensable to the Mbuti, for the extraction of honey from hives in tree boles.

a honey ax, and probably some liana to assist in the climbing of the tree where the bees have been found. The Pygmies smoke out the bees by thrusting glowing embers, wrapped in a leaf, into the hive. Then the hole is enlarged with the ax until the Pygmy can thrust in his hand and arm and take out the honey. Schebesta says that the honey gatherer throws some to the God of the Forest before he or anyone else is allowed to taste it. (A similar practice is attributed to archers when they divide the game.) If the bees are the kind that construct a hive in a hole in the ground, then the honey is collected by women. This kind of bee does not sting, but the tree bee does. The honey is distributed by the woman to members of the local band as she thinks fit, the children receiving the largest share.

The direct contribution of the children to the food quest is mediocre. Apart from such help as they give their parents in hunting and gathering activities, the children amuse themselves by hunting forest rats and mice with miniature bows and arrows. Anything they catch in this

way is theirs to cook and eat without having to be shared.

#### DRINKS, NARCOTICS, AND STIMULANTS

As stimulants Schebesta mentions *bangi* (hemp), its counterpart from the forest plant *medeaka*, and the kola nut. Palm wine, banana wine, and tobacco are available only from the villagers' plantations.

#### FOOD RESTRICTION

Clan totems (nearly always animal, rarely vegetable) are always taboo; even indirect contact must be avoided. There are other ta-

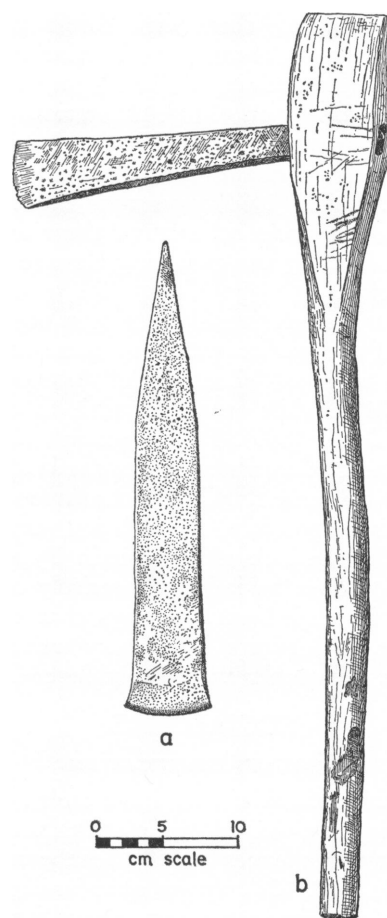


FIG. 14. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Ax blade. A common gift made by villagers to Mbuti, nominally under their control, on the occasion of an Mbuti marriage. b. Ax, used by Mbuti mainly for the cutting of light saplings with which they make their house frames; Bira hafting.

boos, mostly acquired during initiation, not connected with the clan totem. These two classes of taboos are responsible for what food restrictions there are.

### TRADE

The food quest is, in Schebesta's words, the alpha and omega of Mbuti economy. It is a day-to-day economy. The supposed uncertainty of adequate supply is given as the reason for the alleged dependency of the Mbuti on the villagers. At times the Mbuti have no food; at others, they have an excess. But living in a symbiotic relationship with the villagers, the Pygmies are able to maintain a steady diet, relying on the villagers in times of shortage and in times of plenty supplying them with forest produce. According to Schebesta, their relationship is based on this exchange. The Pygmy not only has come to rely on village plantations to supplement his own inadequate diet, but he has come to rely on villager-manufactured tools and utensils. Jadin (1936) says that the Pygmies know no resources other than those available through hunting and gathering, despite villager domination.

This trade relationship has been noticed by many of the earlier travelers, some of whom referred to it as "silent trade" (notably Burrows, 1898), while others found it to be quite open (Lloyd, 1899). But Schebesta (1941) is inconsistent in attributing it to the inadequacy of the environment, which, in the same work, he claims is responsible, through its very abundance, for the lack of advance in Pygmy culture. Nor does he indicate precisely how the trading is carried out. He says that there is, however, a definite hereditary relationship between Efe archer and Lese villager lineages.

### SOCIAL LIFE

#### FAMILY ORGANIZATION

Individual families each have their own beehive- or tunnel-shaped hut, a stick frame hung with phrynium leaves (p. 167). Schebesta (1933, 219-220; 1952, 154) reports once having seen a gigantic windscreen housing several families in an otherwise normal camp. Although each family emphasizes its individuality by separate residence, as a social unit it is far less significant than the band (a patrilineage, according to Schebesta) of which it is a part and outside which it could not exist.

The huts are built by women, and each woman regards this part of the camp as her property. It is there that the family lives: the food is prepared and cooked over a fire in front of the hut entrance; the children play near the hut; the husband sits by the fire, doing odd jobs, guarding the food in his wife's absence, or helping her in some way or another. Visitors do not enter the hut but wait outside where they meet any member of the family. Owing to the custom of exogamy of hunting bands, allegedly on a patrilineal-patrilocal basis,<sup>1</sup> the married women may all be strangers to one another. In some cases most of the women come from the same neighboring band, so their communal interest is greater, but generally they come from widely dispersed bands and are more interested in their own marital families than they are in their new band as a whole. The men, however, are bound by the strongest ties of kinship and mutual interest in the band, as such, and in the particular territory within which it moves. Conflict between the hunting band and individual family, then, is generally a conflict between men and women, and, by enlargement, between two or more bands—the band of the men and those of the women involved.

The woman becomes interested in her husband's band or lineage and becomes a part of it only to the extent by which she enriches it with children. The more children she gives to the band the greater her interest in it, and reciprocally the greater the band's interest in her. The greater her authority and that of her natal family and band, the greater the parity between man and wife in the individual family. But at all times the husband's lineage is responsible for her welfare and answerable to her own lineage in default.

A hunting band may, under certain circumstances, welcome male outsiders (*Sippenfremde*) into the community; as, for example, when a wife cannot integrate herself into her new home and returns to her own band, her husband deciding to go with her. Children may in some cases be brought up in their mother's band. These outsiders occupy a position similar to that occupied by married women in their husbands' bands; they remain members of their

<sup>1</sup> In my own experience, among both archers and net hunters, patrilineal descent systems and patrilocality are no more than trends, most bands being effectively cognatic territorial units.

own lineages and can at all times return to them or count on their aid, but economically they are members of the lineage with which they are living.

Among the archers a woman's daily activity is concerned primarily with the welfare of the individual family and only indirectly with that of the band. She takes no part in the hunt (unless it is the rare *begbe* hunt; see p. 172), and her gathering activities, which may be undertaken alone or with friends, benefit her own family only. She carries her youngest baby on her hip or her back, and the rest of the children play together or follow her about. She collects the wood for the family fire, and the materials for building and repairing her house.

Her husband spends less time near the family hut. He is more concerned with the welfare of the band than that of his own family. The children are more attached to their mother than to their father, except for the older boys who gradually transfer their loyalty to the band as a whole. Schebesta (1952, 214) reports that in general, however, a family eats together, though the father may eat apart with his sons. The separation by sex at meal times is more of a villager custom.

Both parents have an equal responsibility in the upbringing of their children—a frequent source of conjugal dispute. Children are expected to respect their parents and are severely criticized, or even ostracized, if they do not conform. Schebesta (1948, 323) quotes the case of a son who lifted his hand against his father who drew his bow and arrow and threatened to kill him; the group forced the son to leave the camp with his family.

Restrictions on relations between affines such as a mother-in-law and her son-in-law, or a father-in-law and daughter-in-law, are known to the archers, and practiced to a certain extent among those in the north, but are largely ignored by others in the southeast. The restrictions may amount to total avoidance.

#### DAILY LIFE

The main essence of the daily routine has already been covered. It is primarily concerned with food. The archer women and men are allotted to gathering and hunting, respectively, which occupy most of their time. Refuse from the food is thrown behind the hut, and elimination takes place close by, two factors favoring

the frequent moving of camp. According to Schebesta (1952, 80), the hut and the space in front are kept clean.

In leisure hours there are games and pastimes in which children and adults may take part, the dance being the most important. Schebesta (1952, 189 ff.) also mentions rope skipping; tug-of-war (often between men and women); *paliengbe*, an organized battle between men and women for a regime of plantains; and a form of gambling known as *mali*. The women and children have various string games as well.

The dance takes place on every possible occasion and is accompanied by drums made by the villagers. The emphasis in archer music (Schebesta, 1952, 190) is, as in the dance, on rhythm. Schebesta cites a number of musical instruments that are used by the archers for recreation, notably the drum, the musical bow, the *sanza*, the zither, and the *ruma* pipes.

Legend telling and mime are other important means of recreation mentioned by Schebesta (1952, 195). These, like most other recreational activities of adults, take place in the evening around the campfire. It is here, in any case, that the bachelors usually sleep (although Schebesta mentions the fact that there are bands in which bachelor huts are built), as do such of the married men as are under sexual taboo.

All activities outside the camp cease at night, with the exception of termite hunting which is conducted at whatever time of the day or night termites are found to be swarming.

#### CONCEPTION AND CHILDBIRTH

The normal course of daily life runs uninterrupted throughout the year, except when camp is moved, or on ceremonial occasions attendant on birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Of these occasions, it seems from Schebesta's account that birth arouses the least public interest. The band welcomes each birth gladly but at the same time accepts it as no more than its due. The wives of its menfolk are expected to produce children; it is their primary function in the eyes of both the band and their husbands, and even in their own eyes.

The Pygmies seem to believe that menstrual blood is an important factor in conception (Schebesta, 1948, 399) and are well aware of the connection between coition and conception (1948, 400). Schebesta reports frequently hearing the opinion expressed that repeated coition

would hasten the hour of birth. Pregnancy is recognized by the cessation of the menses and the discoloration of the breasts. During pregnancy a woman is subject to various alimentary taboos, but otherwise lives her full, ordinary life, including the carrying of heavy loads of wood, carrying all household goods when moving camp, going in search of food, and other specific activities of women.

Customs attending childbirth vary from region to region, but Schebesta concludes that, although archers have no effective method of dealing with complications, the women normally give birth easily and without any particular preparation. Although this account does not specifically relate to the Efe archers, Schebesta (1948, 402) writes that, from his observations throughout the forest, certain generalizations are possible. Women alone are admitted to assist in the childbirth. The father cuts the umbilical cord with an arrowpoint, or, among some bands, with a sharp piece of bamboo. Before metal blades were available, Schebesta (1948, 404) says that there is evidence that bamboo knives or sharp leaves were used.

Schebesta reports that the child is not named for some weeks after birth. To name a boy is the father's prerogative or that of the oldest male members of his lineage; to name a girl is the right of the mother or her oldest relatives. There is no uniform custom, except that naming is primarily the privilege of the parents. It is a Pygmy custom to fasten the umbilical cord to the child's elbow and later to bury it in some swamp. Schebesta found no evidence of the truth of Johnston's statement (1902, 1904, 539) that Pygmy women sever the umbilical cord with their teeth. Abortion is known to the Pygmies, but plays no part in marital life.

### TWINS

The birth of twins, among the archers, seems to be considered abnormal and inauspicious. Schebesta frequently heard that following the birth of twins one had died. He was told by an elder that, when twins are born, the elders are immediately informed, and they advise that if both infants are strong and healthy they be allowed to live, otherwise the weaker of the two should be killed. The mother herself smothers the infant by covering its nose and mouth with her hand. The body is immediately buried in the house, which is promptly abandoned.

Dances are organized by the women to celebrate the birth of twins, whether or not both live. Schebesta (1948, 409) mentions the fact that, although the neighboring village tribes have similar feelings about abnormal births, they content themselves with evading unhappy consequences by magical dances and other rites. Schebesta (1948, 409) suggests that superstitious terror and fear of attendant sanctions drive the Pygmy mother to the more violent way of avoiding danger. He writes that all abnormal infants are also put to death immediately following birth, either by the mother or by her female attendants; the men are never permitted to see these monsters. They too are buried in the house, which is immediately abandoned.

### POSTNATAL CARE

The mother surrounds her child with every care and attention until she again becomes pregnant, and even subsequently if the child is not yet able to look after itself to some extent. After giving birth, the mother keeps her infant in the shade of her hut for three or four days, receiving visits from admiring neighbors. The infant is protected by various charms and amulets attached to its elbow and wrist. It is fed whenever it cries. When the mother does leave her hut, carrying the infant on her back, she protects it from the sun by covering it with a leaf. When it is bigger she carries it without a supporting sling, either on her hip or on her back. The child is always with her, and she devotes her spare time to playing with it and singing to it. Even when dancing she may carry it in a sling at her side.

The child is taught to walk almost as soon as it is big enough to be allowed on the ground alone. This process is sometimes hastened by scratching its knee and placing a fast-moving beetle (*pakalakala*) in the blood, then allowing it to run away. Soon, the mother believes, her child will be running as fast as the beetle.

Breast feeding is continued for about a year; sometimes a child continues to be breast fed while it is able to run about the camp. But from a few weeks after its birth it is introduced gradually to vegetable foods.

Fathers, although Schebesta writes that they do not like to be bothered with infants, help their wives in the care of children and even attend to their personal needs.

### ADOLESCENCE

Only when children approach the age of puberty does the very close family solidarity begin to weaken. Girls fall more under the influence of their mothers; boys, under that of their lineage. At this age also, the sexes are segregated for the first time. Young boys of different families cease following their mothers and sisters and group themselves to organize hunts for rats, mice, and other small slow game in the neighborhood of the camp. Tree climbing is also a favorite sport among the boys. But while the boys become more alienated from their mothers, the young girls continue to be as closely attached to them as ever, though, like the boys, they tend to group together with others of the same age (and older). During this period there is no formal training (Schebesta, 1948, 415 ff.), but boys and girls alike learn all there is to be learned by simple emulation and by assisting their parents and elders in various tasks.

At puberty the boys break completely away from their mothers who have no more to do with them, writes Schebesta (1948, 424), than cook their meals. The adolescent girls develop their flirtatious ways, the boys develop their ability as hunters, and thus both prepare themselves for married life.

### INITIATION

Schebesta (1948, 467 ff.; 1952, 265 ff.) gives no information concerning the initiation of girls among the archers. He does, however, describe at some length the initiation, accompanied by circumcision, of boys, according to the villager rite known as *nkumbi*. His earlier account, in "Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri," is, by his own admission, drawn largely from Mbuti and villager informants throughout the forest. He was able to have only fleeting glimpses ("*flüchtigen Einblicke*"; Schebesta, 1948, 475) of parts of *nkumbi* festivals among the Ngwana, Byeru, Bali, and forest Bira, but his observations, he says, confirmed what he had been told. In 1949 he had an opportunity to see more of a single *nkumbi*, details of which he records (Schebesta, 1952), but this was among net-hunting Mbuti. Consequently, we lack precise information concerning the *nkumbi* among archers. Opinion among different groups of Mbuti varies as to the origin of the custom; some claim to have practiced it before the villagers, some say that they have adopted it only recently. There are

even Mbuti groups in which apparently it is practiced among themselves but without circumcision.

The *nkumbi* takes place approximately every six years, says Schebesta, and each initiation has a specific name, usually connected with some outstanding incident connected with that particular occasion. It is inaugurated on the decision of the village lineage head who invites the Mbuti to take part. An essential feature of the *nkumbi* throughout the Ituri is this joint participation of Mbuti and villager.

The *nkumbi* (Efe: *leku*) takes place in a special camp in the forest, some distance from the village. A large conical hut is built (Schebesta, 1948, here follows a description of a southern Lese initiation), on one side of which is the raised sleeping place of the initiates (Efe: *bemu*), and on the other, the fireplace and quarters of the elders who will guard and teach the boys. All the arrangements are in the hands of the villager lineage head (*avitiri*).

The candidates, Mbuti and villager, are led before the operator and are, if brave enough, circumcised standing up; otherwise, they are laid on the ground and held down. Next to every Lese youth stands a Pygmy boy, who is circumcised immediately after him. The two enter into a lasting bond of *karé* brotherhood. As the circumcision is completed, the Lese blows his signal horn, and the Mbuti his *segbe* pipe. The women in the village hear this and reply with a shout of joy at this sign that their sons have now become men. By this joint ceremony the *karé* stand in an even closer relationship to each other than do blood brothers.

Schebesta gives little account of the ensuing instruction, though he mentions the brutality with which he says the initiates are treated in the camp. Food is brought by the mothers and left nearby; the elders from the camp go to collect it. The boys are cut off from any comfort they might be given by their mothers. Instruction, "partly social, partly moral" (Schebesta, 1948, 481) may be given by the lineage head himself or by one of the other elders.

The major aspects of the *nkumbi*, from Schebesta's account, seem to be the formal transition from boyhood to manhood, the establishment of a *karé* relationship between Mbuti and villagers, and the introduction of all the initiates for the first time to a special trumpet that plays an important part in the men's secret



society. Schebesta also mentions other instruments particularly associated with *nkumbi* (and the secret society) among the south Lese, namely: the bull-roarer (*pahudjuhudju* or *hudjuhudju*); a flute (*likuru*); a singing pot (*pengi*); and the large wooden trumpet (*asragba*). The invitation to the Mbuti to take part in the *nkumbi* is one of the ways in which the villagers seek to maintain and extend their control over the Pygmies.

Schebesta concludes that we must distinguish two elements in the *nkumbi*: the villager element of initiation associated with circumcision and, quite distinct from it, the Pygmy element of initiation into the men's secret society (*toré*).

#### MARRIAGE

Schebesta (1948, 343) writes that it is difficult to determine which is the stronger, the interests of the hunting band or the interests and mutual affection of the two individuals concerned. Marriage is certainly an economic factor of the greatest importance to the band, and the decision of the elders usually prevails. But according to Schebesta, if there is particularly ardent affection between an unmarried couple, they may be strong enough to resist group opinion even to the point of ignoring its just claims, in which case a compromise will be reached by the bands concerned. Although there may be preferences for marriage between certain bands, no marriage is arranged with disregard for individual inclinations. Each union is usually preceded by a period of flirtation and courtship.

The rule of exogamy bars any flirtation within a hunting band that consists of a single lineage. If the band consists of two lineages, there may be flirtation but controlled by the parents, the mother keeping an eye on her daughter, and the fathers or lineage heads watching over the boys. Schebesta believes that in spite of such supervision there is, in fact, great premarital freedom, though always outside the bounds of exogamic prohibition. For the Efe, he records what appears to be a borrowed custom of making payments to the father of the girl, or to her mother, either for the privilege of having an affair with their daughter or as a penalty for being discovered.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Masturbation (*ai ofuni*), homosexuality (*ai bopa*), and adultery are known among the archers, but rarely. Lesbians (*dora bopa*) are unknown. Mbuti who practice such behavior are regarded by men with derision; women have a particular horror of homosexuals.

Marriage, however, is not necessarily preceded by a period of courtship. Schebesta (1952, 233) attests to the betrothal of infants by their parents but does not know how frequently these betrothals result in marriage. The ultimate essential is agreement between individuals and their respective lineages. The qualities in a man appreciated by a girl are courage, decision, prowess in the hunt, and ability in the dance. Her hunting band also appreciates these qualities and receives favorably any suitor who brings presents of game that he has killed, but it is said to be more interested in the suitor's band. There is no formal adult betrothal; the boy visits the girl's camp and spends some days there, giving her small presents. Her acceptance of the presents and reciprocation of his attentions constitute betrothal; it remains only to secure the agreement of the two bands and to overcome the obstacle of exchange price. If a youth fears that his prowess as a hunter or dancer is not sufficiently impressive to prove his manliness, he will resort to various love philters. Philters are also used by Mbuti girls. One further possible obstacle to marriage, outside normal rules of exogamy, exists among the archers: marriage is prohibited between two bands associated by common marriage ties with a third band. Thus if Bands A and B habitually marry with Band C, then intermarriage between Bands A and B is forbidden.<sup>2</sup> Restrictions on marrying into one's matrilineage apply only to the first generation; a child may not marry into its mother's band.

A number of early sources mention marriage by purchase (Casati, 1891; Stuhlman, 1894; Burrows, 1898). Czekanowski (1924), relying on information from neighboring villager tribes, writes of marriage both by purchase and by service and apparently learned nothing of marriage by exchange among the Mbuti. Schebesta (1948, 366) writes that, while marriage by purchase is the custom among the village tribes of the Ituri, Mbuti marriage is distinguished by being essentially by sister exchange. Otherwise the man may offer a quiver of arrows, five chickens, and 10 hoes (cited for *Eba-eba* camp); and among the southern archers chickens, hoes, spears, and arrows are used—all obtained from the villagers by begging or by trade, never money. The archers of Banyari, on the edge of

<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that all the time Schebesta is thinking of the *Lokalgruppe*, or band, primarily as a patrilineage.

the forest, pay a dog, five spears, and five arrows. Schebesta also cites the third possibility: a youth lives with his wife's band for some years, "pays" for his wife by his service to that band, then returns with her to his own band. If the payment or service proves to be insufficient, the girl's lineage claims the children, which otherwise belong to the father's band. Marriage by capture is unknown, and there are no indications that this practice ever existed.

Nuptial ceremony is lacking among most Mbuti, but Schebesta says that in imitation of the Lese the southern archers practice a form of double ceremony in which the two bands formally meet and exchange their daughters. Normally, however, the archers seem to have, if anything, little ceremony. A youth, having secured the agreement of his betrothed, takes her back to his camp, with or without the permission of her band. There she lives with his mother, who teaches her the customs of the camp. Shortly afterward members of her band arrive. They demand their side of the bargain, either a bride in exchange or a gift of arrows, axes, and other implements. If the young man is unable to produce these, they take the girl back to her own camp, but cannot prevent her from returning to her betrothed. The process is then repeated. The youth exhorts his betrothed to return to her own camp until he can find the necessary wealth, but if she insists on staying with him, her relatives will leave her and the matter will be settled later. The girl builds a house, and the two live together. There is no ceremony, although the youth's band will, if possible, arrange a feast and dance to celebrate the event. The marriage contract, such as it is, is essentially between the two bands concerned.

Marriage by exchange, by which two hunting bands exchange girls, has its complications. The girl received replaces the girl given, not only in her capacity for work but as a child bearer. If either girl falls short in these respects, the double union is nullified. Similarly, if either of the parties willfully brings about the dissolution of one marriage, the contract is void, thus possibly breaking up the other perfectly happy and fertile union. This dissolution can be avoided either by making another exchange or by substituting a payment.

Marriage by exchange is not conducive to the practice of polygyny, and Schebesta (1952, 244) estimates that 6 per cent of Mbuti marriages are polygynous; 10 per cent, in the border re-

gions most exposed to village influence. Objections to polygyny are based on economic rather than moral grounds. A further obstacle to polygyny is one-way marriage of Mbuti girls to villagers, a practice that Schebesta considers occurs with sufficient frequency to account for the gradual replacement of marriage by exchange by marriage by service or payment.

Polyandry is unknown.

The sororate, writes Schebesta (1948, 384), is usual in the wide sense of the word, and is practiced when the wife has had no children. When a man dies, his widow is not obliged to remain in his band or to remarry; she may choose for herself. But if she is childless, then her own band is obliged to make some compensation and this may influence her decision. Normally, a widow with children remains with them in her late husband's band.

Relations between husband and wife and their children are mentioned above (p. 177). It may be added here that Schebesta notes that, for the few days following the marriage, the young man is freed of any obligation to hunt and may devote his time to his bride. He further alleges that the young couple do not exhibit their affection in public, but that one may conclude from various signs that mutual affection continues even in advanced age. Jealousy, however, often comes into the open, and women are particularly suspicious of their husbands. The usual factors leading to the disruption of a marriage are cited as disagreement over the upbringing of the children, idleness of either party, the disputatious nature of the women, or the irascibility of the men.

Sexual relations are maintained during menstruation; Schebesta mentions the fact that the only restriction is during the final stage of pregnancy and for several months following childbirth. In some regions, he adds, there is also a restriction on sexual intercourse between the husband and any woman following the birth of a child to his wife. Such a statement evidently implies an acceptance of extramarital intercourse in other regions, yet he also claims that adultery is considered as a moral transgression offending the divinity; when committed with a married woman, it is criminal. Some allowance is made for a man who cannot have relations with his wife (as during a period of sex taboo); intercourse with an unmarried woman is then generally not considered as adultery. An itching body and birth of twins are, among some

Mbuti, considered as signs that adultery has taken place. An offended wife has the right to leave her husband; an offended husband may chastise his wife and attack his rival, possibly leading to a feud between two bands. If he finds his wife *in flagrante delicto*, he has the right to kill her lover. However, Schebesta cites no case histories.

#### SEPARATION

A husband's justification for separation is based on the constant infidelity of the wife, her sterility, her selfishness leading to neglect of her husband, sickness, or suspicion of sorcery. On the woman's side, separation is justified by ill treatment by her husband, neglect of his hunting duties, and his infidelity. Separation is achieved simply by each band's reclaiming the daughter it gave in exchange, or effecting compensation. It does not necessarily involve hostility between the two bands, in which case the children may remain with their father, without their mother's becoming ostracized from the community. Also, a child may remain with its mother, even if she returns to her own band or remarries into another. Only when a child marries is there a necessity to settle the question of its economic allegiance.

#### WIDOWHOOD

In any hunting band one may find divorced men and women between two states of marriage, and also widows and widowers who have had no chance to remarry. Widows, as mentioned, may remain in their late husbands' bands with their children or return to their own band. Aged widowers, no longer able to provide for a woman by hunting, remain single, as do the infirm, and both are provided for by their relatives.

Mbuti girls who have married villagers return sooner or later to their parental band; almost certainly when they are no longer fertile and cease to be of interest to their villager husbands. If still young they may take a Pygmy husband; if too old to remarry, they live the life of a widow. These "widows" do their own cooking and receive frequent visits in the forest from their children who otherwise remain in the village. Sometimes one or another of the children will remain with her in the forest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such a practice is contrary to what I was told among all Mbuti groups, namely, that such children are never accepted in the forest as Mbuti and may make only short visits, like other villagers.

#### DEATH, FUNERALS, AND MOURNING

Several early travelers mention burial customs among the Pygmies of the Ituri. Stuhlmann (1894) describes burial, with the corpse either stretched out or doubled up in a circular hole. Burrows (1898, 197), referring mainly to the Aka, says that, when a Pygmy dies, he is buried "and there is an end to him and his memory." He reports that there is no mourning and no memorials to mark the graves. Johnston (1902, 1904, 539) also mentions burial and says that important Mbuti are buried with supplies of food, tobacco, and weapons.

According to Schebesta, although burial in some form or another, generally following the villager pattern, was in common usage at the time he wrote, the northern archers formerly abandoned the corpse, placing it with its back against a tree. If someone died inside a hut, the corpse was left there for about two weeks, until decomposition had well set in. Then, without burying the remains, the camp was abandoned. The southern archers affirm that they always used to burn their corpses. Nowadays the burial takes place beside the hut of the deceased, and the corpse, covered with a cloth, is passed out through an opening made in the side of the hut. It is placed in a hole in the ground, covered with bark and earth. The hut is then pulled down over the tomb, and household utensils are added to the pile. Mourning is profound and sincere among men and women, but ritual dances of mourning, such as those practiced by villager women, are unknown.<sup>2</sup>

In "Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri" Schebesta (1948, 543) gives details of a funeral he attended in a southern Lese village, and of an archer funeral, and compares the two. The archer funeral was of an old Mbuti who died after a short attack of smallpox. Schebesta received the news at six o'clock the morning following the death. On reaching the camp he found the corpse laid out in a new cloth, inside the hut. Nearby crouched the widow and eldest daughter. All the womenfolk of the camp were gathered outside the hut, crying and moaning. The eldest son had gone to the village to inform his father's *karé* (p. 179), and within two hours returned with three villagers, wailing. Meanwhile the Pygmies had agreed that the grave should be dug beside the hut. The most promi-

<sup>2</sup> This statement, again, is totally contrary to my experience among both archers and net hunters.

nent among the many archers who had hastened to attend the funeral took charge. He measured the corpse with his stick and drew the outline of the grave on the ground. His son, assisted by others, opened a grave, using pointed sticks, a hatchet, and a bush knife, and cleared the loosened earth with their hands. The crying of the women became louder, calling "*Afae!*" (father). A few women sat nearby, singing dirges. Not only the relatives mourned, but all present. With the help of the Lese *karé*, the floor of the grave was covered with sticks, then leaves. The womenfolk hurried to the edge of the grave as the corpse, decorated only with an arm ring, was brought through a hole in the side of the hut and placed in the grave. The wailing reached its climax; the wife, children, and even the eldest grown son, threw themselves on the ground as the men began to fill in the grave. One man had to hold the eldest daughter to prevent her from throwing herself into the grave. The earth was stamped down, and the mourners moved away, women and children and some of the young men crying. One daughter remained near the grave as the house was pulled down to cover it (after the household goods had been removed).

Shortly after the burial some men went off hunting. By three o'clock the entire camp was deserted, and a new one had been built by evening.

Schebesta (1948, 545) cites this burial as evidence of band and lineal solidarity (e.g., the prominent part played by neighboring bands in the funeral), and of the importance of the *karé* relationship. Significant differences between the Mbuti and the Lese ceremonies were the absence, in the archer funeral, of the sacrifice of a hen over the grave, the absence of the official mourners in their clothes and white paint, of a goat offering, and above all of the absence of a long palaver, following the burial, to place the blame for the death. The question of blame did arise after the Mbuti burial described, but it was the Lese who were primarily interested. Nor, according to Schebesta, does a death have such far-reaching social consequences among the archers as among their villager neighbors.

#### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The relationship between the Efe archers and their villager neighbors is mentioned above. The two peoples are associated in a hereditary system, based on trade, strengthened by the

*karé* relationship, and the practice of joint initiation and circumcision.

Among themselves the archers also practice a form of blood brotherhood, but the two major bonds are membership in the same economic local band and membership (with much wider extension) in the same secret society which the archers call *toré*. Schebesta (1948, 290) points out that a sense of tribal identity is totally lacking, that "clans" are dispersed and have neither political nor economic significance, and that even lineages, which in effect are the local hunting bands, are usually most properly viewed as economic entities. He gives neither genealogies nor any indication of any complex system of kinship terminology, nor any other evidence that kinship ties might be of extensive importance. There is even little evidence to support his allegation that the hunting band is a lineal entity. It appears throughout that the major unifying factor is one of common residence.

The *toré* society, however, widens the field of Mbuti social contact because it embraces, according to Schebesta (1948, 492 ff.), villagers and Pygmies throughout the Ituri, being basically the same as other societies going under different names, such as *anyoto*, *nebeli*, *molimo*, and *lusomba* (the latter two among the Bira-Sua). The common denominator of all these societies is the common belief in the bush demon, the divinity of the Mbuti hunters. The *toré* society, as seen by Schebesta, is thus the origin of similar villager societies in the district. It has a particular significance for the Mbuti who claim it as their own.

Although women are normally excluded, the Mbuti, says Schebesta, admit aged women. The villagers admit only one old woman who is charged with the duty of cooking for the men. Further, he says, the society terrifies the villager women (cf. Anne Putnam) which is not the case with the Mbuti. The society always meets outside the village, in the bush or in a remote, dark area of the forest. Schebesta (1948, 498) witnessed no exclusively Mbuti meeting of the *toré* society, only mixed Mbuti and villager, and exclusively villager, meetings.

The meeting place contains the hut of *toré*, in which are kept the musical instruments used during the ceremonies and on the march. The number and type of these instruments vary, says Schebesta, the commonest being a long trumpet made of wood, slightly curved, some-

times called *lusomba* in Schebesta's account. All these instruments, he claims, however, produce sounds in imitation of the leopard. The archers do not carry the tattoo marks, such as those worn by the Bira-Sua, which resemble marks of a leopard's claw.

A further inquiry made among the archers in 1949 confirmed these observations (Schebesta, 1952, 279) and added some supplementary facts. The *toré* hut is to be found near or in the camp itself. Women and children may attend the *toré* ceremonies organized by the men. The "presidents" are an old man and an old woman. The meetings are held in honor of Kalisia, God of the Bush, who is, during the ceremony, implored for help in the hunt. The society, Schebesta concludes, has a religious aspect. This same study revealed the use of three wooden trumpets (*apadia*); a "sonorous pot" (*bodzo*), in fact a large clay vessel, and the tube through which the performer sings into it (*luma*); and three small whistles (*ilitodo*).

The society plays a part in social life by chastizing rebels, particularly women (Schebesta, 1948). All whom Schebesta (1937) questioned assured him that the primary object of the society was to keep the women in their place, mainly by stealing food from them for the society to feast upon. It is perhaps also worth mentioning that Schebesta (1937, 101) writes: "Nowadays in the main a *toré* meeting place is just a home for hen-pecked husbands. . . . It has no connection in any way with the ceremonial of tribal initiation."

He modified these views in his later work (Schebesta, 1948, 492 ff.) but used the same evidence. He finds a definite connection between the *toré* society and the *nkumbi* "circumcision initiation." The latter, he says, is founded on the same belief in *toré* but has taken a villager form. Circumcision above all is a villager custom and has nothing to do with Mbuti initiation. Originally, the Mbuti knew only the association of *toré*, which integrated the young men into the adult group of *toré* hunters.

As far as can be seen from this material, the *toré* society has both social and magico-religious functions. Its primary social function is the control of the womenfolk of any one Mbuti band (who, it will be remembered, come from varied bands and do not have the same communal feeling as the menfolk). Schebesta mentions the fact that, when a meeting of the Mbuti *toré*

society is to take place, any raiding of the plantations of village women that is proposed is made known to the villagers in advance, and meat is offered in exchange.

Schebesta (1948, 501 ff.) gives a detailed description of a joint village-Mbuti *toré* ceremony. At about 10 o'clock at night, announced by blasts on the trumpet, a procession of some 20 men, villagers, and Mbuti, entered the village, dancing wildly. The Pygmies (as always) were the musicians and blew into three sonorous clay pots of different sizes, the largest being called "mother" and the others "children." The largest pot contained just enough water to cover the bottom, into which a pipe was thrust. Some sang; others made weird noises by holding their noses.<sup>1</sup> In the morning the procession left for the Pygmy camp, two hours away. Before they passed through small village hamlets, someone was sent ahead to warn the inhabitants who had not heard the approaching blasts of the long wooden horn; women and children fled to the shelter of their huts as the procession went by. In one village a woman who remained in sight was threatened and made to give a chicken in payment for her release. On nearing the Pygmy camp, the trumpet was hidden in the brush, and the musicians took another path. The main procession entered the camp, where there were only a few old men and their wives.

## POLITICAL LIFE

### AUTHORITY

None of the foregoing material is much concerned with leadership, and, indeed, it has been scarcely necessary to mention it. Some of the early sources, such as Casati (1891), Burrows (1898), Geil (1905), and Lang (1919) assert the existence of hereditary chieftainship; others (Johnston, 1902, 1904; Christy, 1924) deny this just as emphatically. Stuhlmann (1894), referring to bands of Mbuti living near the Manyema, states that the leader of each band is the ablest hunter and that he controls the wanderings of his band. Whether or not he has any other jurisdiction is not known.

Schebesta flatly denies the existence of hereditary chieftainship anywhere among the Mbuti, except among those most acculturated. He also denies the existence of charismatic

<sup>1</sup> Antelope cries are imitated in this way.

leadership among the Mbuti except very rarely. He himself discusses the lineage elders ("*Sip-penältesten*," Schebesta, 1948, 332, 559) and states that lineage authority lies with these elders alone. Under villager influence these elders may assume the characteristics of a chief (cf. the "Sultani" of the Pygmies, mentioned by Geil, 1905). Encouraged in this by the villagers, who see a way of extending their authority, the lineage elders may appear to become headmen or chieftains of Mbuti bands, representing the band to the village chief.

As mentioned above, the authority of the elder derives from his age, by virtue of which he represents the lineage ancestors. Any offense against the elder is an offense against the lineage. He takes precedence in all matters: the best part of the game is his, whether or not he took part in the hunt; he presides at various ritual offerings; he is responsible for settling disputes with other bands or with villagers; he leads at the head of the dance. Succession by age is strictly observed. This much Schebesta (1952, 221-223) reports, but without citing examples in sufficient detail to enable us to make a valid comparison between different groups or bands.

The elder settles numerous disputes, both within and without his hunting band. Such disputes mainly concern marital disagreements, Schebesta says. The elders often settle controversies by delivering speeches during the evening, leading frequently to noisy debates between the elders of different bands or lineages. Outside the lineage context, the elder is not in any way different from the others; there are none of the trappings of villager chieftainship. He delivers his decisions without hesitancy and is obeyed in the same way within his lineage. His power is limited, however, by custom and tradition as well as by context. He may neither ignore nor alter traditional practices.<sup>1</sup>

#### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BANDS

It has already been observed that any formal relationship between bands is regulated by the lineage elders, according to Schebesta.

<sup>1</sup> Once again Schebesta's account is confused, and confusing, because of his failure to define clearly the kinship constitution of the hunting band. As the bands are, in effect, usually cognatic, and as descent is of little significance, his assumption that the band is a patrilineage and that authority is based on lineage respect naturally led him into difficulty.

Informal relationships occur through the custom of family visits to relatives in other bands, and, perhaps most important of all, through bands attending each other's dances. Here the Mbuti extend their social boundaries and find suitable partners for married life. There is no detailed study of inter-band relationships or of the precise implications of inter-band marriage. Joint hunting is rare, except for *begbe*.

#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BANDS AND VILLAGERS

These relationships are essentially between the lineage head and the villager chief, according to Schebesta. Maes (1935, 138) writes that the villagers regard the Pygmies as beasts of burden and that the villager chiefs force them to act as porters and to help with the upkeep of the roads (a duty imposed on the villagers by the Belgians). Costermans (1937), however, agrees with the opposite opinion that the Mbuti, who undoubtedly stand in definite relationships to the villagers, accepting their patronage, do so only as long as they find it convenient. On the slightest pretext, they transfer their allegiance to another chief. The Mbuti, he says, do not recognize the authority of the villager chief, nor do they pay any attention to villager manners and customs.

Costermans further agrees with Junker (1889-1891, vol. 3, 92) that many of the northern archers have recently themselves taken to a system of chieftainship. They lead their nomadic existence under the jurisdiction of a chief and in every way preserve their freedom under this jurisdiction. If there is any disagreement, however, they leave and place themselves under a neighboring chief. But not nearly enough information is given for any understanding of the structure of this "system."

Schebesta seems to stand between the two extremes with regard to the archers whom he studied. He stresses the economic dependency of the Mbuti on the villagers, and also, as does Putnam (1948), the personal aspect of the relationship. He does not agree with Costermans that the archers change their allegiance at the slightest provocation. He regards the *nkumbi*, with its creation of *karé* relationships between individual Mbuti and villagers, as a major factor in maintaining villager authority over

the archers and rendering the latter dependent on their Lese neighbors.

#### LEGAL SYSTEM

There is virtually no evidence from which any conclusions can be drawn about the legal system of the Efe archers or even of the nature of the sanctions that uphold social behavior. Schebesta (1941, 275 ff.; 1948, 533 ff.) points out, however, that, though the Mbuti function at one of the lowest known stages of economic development, they recognize both private and collective ownership and there is a definite property law.

The district hunted by the band, together with all the vegetable and animal food contained in that district and also raw materials used in Pygmy technology, is the collective property of the band. All members of the band share equal rights. Alien bands are tolerated only to the limit that the resident band desires to extend hospitality. The boundaries of the various territories, generally well known to all, are considered inviolable. If an animal is hunted across a boundary and killed there, it belongs to the band in whose territory it was killed. If the neighboring bands are on good terms, they usually share the spoil.

Certain objects that by their nature are collective property, however, are considered to belong to the finder. This applies mainly to vegetable products, a honey tree, a termite nest, or a nest of grubs or caterpillars. All who help in the gathering are due their share of these products, but the major part goes to the finder.

All personal objects made or acquired by an Mbuti are private property. Thus not only the utensils, but the homestead itself, is the property of the wife, who may, if she wishes, pull the hut down as a gesture of defiance. Weapons belong to men; clothes, to each individual. These objects can be disposed of in any way, at will. Petty pilfering is considered as theft, and theft is both forbidden and punished; but Schebesta does not describe any system of punishment.

With regard to succession, generally the brothers or the sons, says Schebesta, inherit from a father; sisters and daughters, from a mother.

Schebesta (1948, 533) argues that, as the

representative of the lineage, the elder is also the guarantor of its law and is responsible for the respect of collective and private property. In the case of theft, the lineage thus offended demands satisfaction from the elder. Elders of different lineages settle disputes between them and must explain the settlement and plead reason with their own lineage. In disputes with villagers, it is the elder who accepts the responsibility for the wrongdoings of any individual member of his lineage, and the lineage must provide any agreed compensation. This transfer of responsibility from individual to lineage does not, however, diminish individual responsibility; if anything, it increases the responsibility as the injury to the lineage would probably be considered a worse offense than the one originally committed.

Individuals use the lineage in this way to affirm their rights against offenses such as theft and adultery. The band, as a whole, will take arms to defend its collective property and punish any violation of territory. Murder and homicide are followed by feud, which is directed by the elder, leaving, however, a large measure of initiative to the individuals involved. No examples, however, are given by Schebesta.

The lineage defends itself equally against antisocial tendencies, says Schebesta. Sluggards find that they receive no share when game from the hunt is divided; the selfish woman who does not share any of her gathering products with others is ostracized. Incorrigible thieves, and above all those suspected of sorcery, who are considered the worst types of antisocials, are punished relentlessly, exiled from the camp, and left to die if they are not executed by some means or another. Unfortunately, Schebesta cites neither examples in detail nor enough cases to substantiate fully his conclusions. He seems, however, to be generally in accord with what is known of Mbuti groups elsewhere, except with regard to the position and authority of the elder and the alleged "system" of law and punishment.

#### INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE

##### EXACT KNOWLEDGE

There is little information on division of time and space among the archers. Maes (1934) gives the result of his work among five Mamvu-

speaking archer bands in the northeastern part of the Ituri, near Gombari. He finds the only common characteristic to be the habit of counting in pairs and the use of the term "many" for anything over five. Finger signs for numbers up to five and a separate sign for 10 are used also by the Mamvu villagers. Thus 15 arrows would be "many times two arrows and one." Some of the examples that he gives show either the disinterest or lack of skill of these archers in exact numeration—such as the woman who for totals of four and seven arrows (the article used by Maes for his tests) gave, respectively, the numbers 40 and 10.

The use of effective poisons is well attested. Geil (1905), who reported reliably on other aspects of the life of Efe archers, mentions their knowledge of antidotes. Schebesta (1941, 65) denies having come across these. He (1941, 228 ff.) does, however, give details of various effective medicines prepared from forest plants. In some instances these medicines, or the methods of application, have magical significance. They seem unable to cure such afflictions as certain types of fever, leprosy, advanced dysentery, and gout.

Cuts, wounds, and sores are treated by rubbing the medicine, prepared with water or oil, into the wound. To cure headaches, rheumatism, and mental and other disorders, the skin may be scarified with an arrow and an herb rubbed into the wound. An effective though painful remedy against frambesia is widespread among the Mbuti. Mbuti and villagers both claim that it not only cures but prevents any recurrence of the affliction: Two species of vine are used, or, if the frambesia is malignant, a decoction is made with water and the earth of the nest of the ant (*ii'i*).

The Mbuti claim to know how to reduce fractures, says Schebesta.

Dysentery, diarrhea, and constipation are treated by enemas prepared from various lianas, barks, and peppers.

Various leaves and plants are applied or rubbed externally, without any scarification, against headache and stomach-ache, or inserted into tooth cavities.

Schebesta says that he has encountered no evidence of specialization in the field of medicine. There never seems to be any need for one band to apply for help or advice from another,

nor do the archers seem to rely on the villagers for any medical help.

#### RATIONALIZATION

Speculation on problems of life and death are dealt with under Religious Life (p. 188). Here we can say only that Schebesta does not give a special account of legends or legend telling. However, from the legends that he quotes, and from those given by Joset (1948), it appears that among the archers this is an important means not only of reinforcing a system of values, or of commenting on individual behavior in the band, but also of rationalizing the strange and unknown.

Joset divides his collection of legends into four categories: (1) the Pygmy and his life; (2) animals: happy and unhappy relations between animals and Pygmies; (3) legends concerning the stars and sky; and (4) legends revealing individual psychological traits. Schebesta (1936b) says that legends tend to be spontaneous creations of individuals; there is no formal body of standard folklore.

#### ART

There is no evidence of any plastic or graphic art among the archers, other than designs used in body painting, described by Schebesta (1941, 217 ff.), some of which he says are of magical significance and some purely esthetic. In this limited field there is no evidence, either, of specialization.

As means of artistic expression, music, dance, and drama are evidently of great importance. Schebesta (1941, 243 ff.) describes these art forms and lays particular emphasis on the dance. Other, earlier sources (Schweinfurth, 1874; Burrows, 1898; Geil, 1905; Christy, 1924) frequently mention dance and also the importance of mime among the Mbuti. Of the form and function of music, Schebesta has little to say. He mentions the use of villager instruments, particularly the drum, sanza, and zither, also others such as the musical bow, rattles, flutes (Fig. 15b, c), and pipes, and resonant sticks used by women for beating time to dances. He merely mentions the existence of singing, apart from the dance.

Of dance Schebesta (1949, 252–259) gives more detail. He writes (1941, 243): "The principal, if not the daily entertainment of young



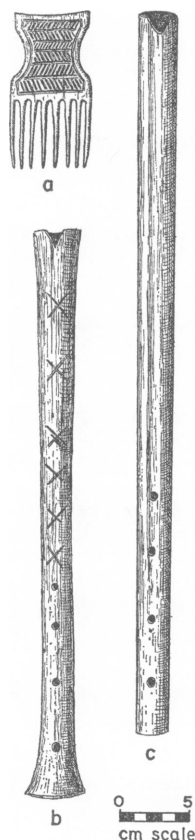


FIG. 15. Miscellaneous items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Comb. b-c. Notched flutes. These luxuries are not an essential part of hunting life but seem to be gradually becoming more common.

and old, men and women, is the dance, which is accompanied by music and song." Most of the instruments Schebesta (1941, 244-253) describes serve to accompany dance. He makes three classifications: sportive, mimetic, and erotic dances. The former are not mere exuberant acrobatics, but follow certain choreographic rules; he does not give the rules. The usual form of dance is circular, he says: an outer circle composed of women and an inner circle of men, with the drummer in the center. If there are only a few dancers, the men may dance solos, leaping one by one in toward the drummer, then back to their places in the still-moving circle.

Schebesta also mentions the existence of fire dances, one of which he witnessed on the occasion of a birth in the camp.

Erotic dances generally involve two lines of dancers, one line male, one female. Each woman comes out of the line in turn and makes an

obscene gesture to one of the men, returning to her place as the man follows her and makes a similar gesture.

Mimetic dances usually concern the hunt, says Schebesta.

Drama, chiefly in the form of mime, is sometimes associated with dance and sometimes separate. Schebesta mentions its importance and the ability of the Mbuti in this art, but gives no details.

From the material available it is impossible to gauge even the exact nature of these art forms among the Efe archers, let alone their functions in archer society, apart from their obvious recreational role, which seems to have been the only function assigned to them by Schebesta.

### RELIGIOUS LIFE

Early sources offer only contradiction and confusion concerning the magico-religious system of the Mbuti. A few affirm that the Mbuti are ridden with superstition, but most report that they are without superstition and even without religion. From the descriptions given by the few writers who mention the existence of "spirit houses" and "temples," it may well be that these in fact belonged to villagers. The style of construction described by Geil (1905), for instance, is certainly Bantu. None of these sources offers any acceptable evidence that the Mbuti used these spirit houses and temples.

Schebesta, from the outset of his first visit to the Ituri, was convinced that the Mbuti had a religious system. He finally concluded that it comprised the notion of a dynamic but personal divinity, that it was essentially the same among all Ituri Mbuti, but that it differed from the religious concepts of the neighboring villagers though it was influenced by them. Schebesta asserts that the belief in a personal God is based on the notion of vital force. God possesses the totality of this force and distributes part of it to worldly beings. Thus God is regarded not as a transcendent creator but rather as a person who lived long ago. He is sometimes confused with the first ancestor and may be represented by the moon.

The confusing abundance of names and terms used by the various Mbuti is partly due to the different languages spoken by both Mbuti and villagers, and partly to villager influence, but it in no way denotes any fundamental difference in

this basic concept of a personal God accompanied by the belief in a vital force.

Schebesta (1950) bases his detailed study of Mbuti religion on an eight-month sojourn among the southeast archers on his second visit to the Ituri. He also mentions other information collected during his two visits which is of relevance to the net hunters and the Kango farther west. Here we are concerned only with his archer material.

#### THE CHTHONIC GOD

Among the Efe archers Schebesta found the name Toré, applied to what he designates as "*Buschgott*," or God of the Undergrowth. Other names frequently heard are Muri-muri, Mbali, Muku, Kalisia, Bi'i, Ba'atsi, Epilipili, Pucho-pucho, Matu, and Lodi. Like Toré, Muri-muri is found among all archers. Those to the north describe both Toré and Muri-muri as a small, Mbuti-like forest dweller, to meet whom is death because he is the destroyer of all. The central archers distinguish more clearly between Toré and Muri-muri. The latter, who is short in stature, is sometimes termed Toré *bo'ichu* (Costermans, 1938, Toré *bo'iko*). The former is, on the contrary, tall, and wanders through the forest, striking the trees as he moves about. According to some of these central archers, the mother of Toré is Mato (Matu), who lives in the mountains, and his father is Pucho-pucho; according to others, his mother is Ou-ororo, and his father Oghi-oro, names which, according to Schebesta's linguistic studies, contain the words for fire and menstrual blood. The Chthonic God is, under many of his names, referred to as the original possessor of fire (as is the chimpanzee). Among the southern archers the possessor of fire is Mbali, and Bali is fire itself. These southern archers also regard Toré as lord of the world and creator of all things. For this reason they make offerings to him of all their products from hunting and gathering. (In this region the term Lodi is replacing Toré.)

All Efe agree that Toré sends death. The southern archers believe this because they disobeyed his command to refrain from following and spying on him. Others say that Muri-muri had confined death in a pot, which he gave to a toad with instructions to take the greatest care of it. But the toad gave it to a frog who leapt away with it and broke it, thus letting death escape.

Any abnormal personal condition indicates the presence of Toré: mental confusion or disorder, shivering spells, goose flesh, dreams, bad luck, and misfortune. Toré is everywhere. He is absolute lord of the forest, of all animals and human beings, of life and death. Everything belongs to him because he created everything, but the forest is his particular kingdom. He is offended by failure to make him offerings from the chase, by quarrels within the band, by disrespect for elders, by infraction of lineage exogamy, by failure to make appropriate sacrifices. He punishes such actions or omissions by causing trees to fall, by visiting man-eating leopards on the community (or individual) concerned, by closing the forest to the hunter.

Essentially the giver of all good, he is also the source of death and misfortune. Schebesta finds it difficult to reconcile the undoubted affection with which the archers respect their God and their fear of him. They call him "father" and "grandfather," acknowledging him as the giver of the good life, on the one hand, while, on the other, they fear him in his disconcerting association with fatality. Schebesta attributes this to a confusion of religion and magic, a confusion of Mbuti notions of God the Father with villager notions of the demon of the forest (for the villager, the forest is essentially evil). Costermans (1938) claims that Schebesta fails to take account of the essential difference between Toré and Muri-muri which he himself noticed among the central archers (above) but chose to ignore.

Schebesta believes that, though different groups of archers give precedence to one name or another, there is only one God of the Undergrowth, and he is universally associated with fire, lightning, storms, death, the rainbow (which frequently brings death), dreams, as well as with the good life of the hunter. The chameleon is the sacred animal of the archers, in rapport with the sky and the moon, the storm and lightning.

There is also a belief in *befe*, forest sprites, whose lord and master is Mbali or Kalisia. (The Lese and Mvuba use the term *lodi* for similar sprites, says Schebesta.) They are also called *toré mo-ichu*. They make their presence known by two sorts of sound: one lugubrious, portending death, the other auguring good.

#### CULT PRACTICES

A number of practices are associated with the

God of the Undergrowth in the form of invocations, offerings, propitiatory sacrifice, and perhaps also a number of the practices of the *toré* association. There is no cult to any celestial divinity, of which the Mbuti have only vague notions.

Invocations usually concern the weather (requests for a storm to pass over speedily or to be diverted) and are often accompanied by the blowing of the *segbe* magic pipe, indicating with the arm the direction the storm should take. The archers also may light a special fire and cover it with leaves so that a thick smoke rises. The God of the Undergrowth sees the smoke, smells its fragrance, and hears the *segbe* pipes. His attention is thus drawn to the plight of his "children." There is a similar ritual of fire and smoke in connection with the hunt, particularly the apparently ancient *begbe* beat hunt, as is mentioned above (p. 172). Invocations frequently use the term "father" or "grandfather."

All Mbuti are said by Schebesta to offer a portion of food to the God of the Undergrowth. We can take this to apply to the archers. The practice seems to concern only food that has been hunted or gathered—game, honey, and vegetable products. The offering, never made with great fervor, may simply be thrown into the undergrowth, either in silence or with a brief comment such as "*Mugu! daó a iye!*" ("*Mugu!* This is for you!"). Alternatively, it may be placed on a leaf and taken with care into the forest and put in the fork of a tree, with or without an invocation. Stakes may be used, driven into the ground, forked into three or more branches at the upper end. Clay pots (obtained from villagers) or potsherds are placed in these forks for the offerings. Holes in the sides of trees are also used as a depository for offerings. The Mbuti do not usually use special shrines or spirit huts, affirms Schebesta, though in imitation of the villager ancestor shrines, they sometimes build crude shelters for the God of the Undergrowth and, on occasion, place offerings there.

According to one of Schebesta's archer informants, sacrifice following the hunt is not to *Toré* but to the *lodi* (the dead) who then intercede with *Toré*.

Another important sacrifice is made for the re-opening of the forest (*abo lese* or *sulia*). Continuously bad hunting may be attributed to the anger of the God of the Undergrowth, caused by

some individual among *Toré*'s children. In his anger he closes the forest so that the hunters can kill no game. Under the circumstances all the weapons in the camp are brought out and placed in a pile in the center of the clearing. The hunters stand around in a circle, each with an arm held over the weapons. As described by Schebesta, the transgressor, who had divided game he had caught without waiting for the elder, brandished a live chicken over the center of the circle praying for success in the hunt. In the invocation he mentioned Bali (local name for the God of the Undergrowth), "fathers," "grandfathers," and the name of his own father who had apparently been an outstanding hunter. Then the elder cut off the head of the chicken, sprinkled blood on the weapons and the arms of the hunters, and threw the fluttering carcass onto the ground. Everyone watched which way it moved, and when it finally fell with the stump of its neck pointing toward the forest, this was taken as a good omen and there was a shout of joy. The wife of the elder then took the carcass and invoked Bali and the ancestors, asking them to give their children game again. The dead chicken was then given to a woman married into another band who, together with her children, ate it. This woman's son, a nephew of the band concerned, built a small hut (*sa'a*) near the elder's hut, and placed in it the heart and liver of the chicken; the head was stuck on a stake above. The elder made an invocation for game to both Bali and the *befe* (sprites).

Schebesta came across this ceremony twice, once at Rodjo and once at Maseda, identical each time except for minor differences. Certain details, he claims, are borrowed from the villagers, such as the use of a chicken, which the Mbuti do not raise. He thinks that the sprinkling of blood is also foreign but that nonetheless there evidently was once an indigenous ceremony for opening the forest, involving the offering of the heart and entrails of game.

This practice of invocation and sacrifice to the "*Buschgott*" is held by Schebesta (1950, 209) to be the most significant feature of Mbuti religion, distinguishing it clearly from the religion of the villagers who have no cult to the forest God.

Costermans (1938), however, believes that the word "*Toré*" cannot be associated with "God," that the *toré* association has no religious

function, any more than has the whole ritual of initiation. *Toré*, according to Costermans, is, if anything, a spirit cult. The *toré* are spirits of the dead, known under different names such as *toré bo ichu*, *toré bo iko*, *toré ba iza*, and are clearly differentiated from the godhead. Sacrifice to *Toré* may take two forms, writes Costermans, *toré lusi* and *toré luba* (*lusi*, invoke; *luba*, throw, offer), and is practiced more by Lese villagers than by the archers, who practice it only rarely, for the hunt. Costermans, far from denying that the Mbuti possess a notion of God, affirms that they do, as do the villagers, but insists that it is dissociated from the *toré* cult described by Schebesta.

#### DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

The Pygmy notion of soul appears complex and confused to Schebesta (1950, 90; 1952, 332). He attributes the confusion to heavy borrowing from the villagers, the Mbuti originally having little interest in life after death. There is a distinction between body, shade, and soul, respectively, *ela* (or *eda*), *tedi*, and *boru e'i* (or *borupi* in Efe). The Lese villagers make the same distinction. Breath, *ekue*, is a vital force, extinguished at death. The Mbuti believe that shades become *befe*, or forest sprites, and the villagers claim that they become *lodi* or *keti*, phantoms.

The soul, the word for which designates the pulse, appears to return to God (*Toré*) in the sky, where it becomes a star. The other vital force mentioned, *megbe*, changes into the totem after death. Death is inevitable, the will of God calling back the *boru e'i*.

Dreams are events that actually befall the soul during sleep, according to the archers. While the body sleeps, the *boru e'i* leave it and wander at will. In this way God and the dead can manifest themselves during sleep.

The northern archers think of a realm for the souls of the dead, situated in ravines and caves, and of a lord of this realm of the dead. Both the dead and their god are, like the God of the Undergrowth, termed "*Toré*"; but Schebesta attributes this to a confusion of properly Pygmy notions (the cult of *toré* as described by him) and adopted villager notions (i.e., the cult of the dead). Schebesta holds that the true Mbuti have no cult of the dead. On death one of the vital principles takes the form of a star, living with the celestial divinity, remote from

the Mbuti world. The other principle becomes one of the forest sprites, the *befe*, living with the earthly divinity, *Toré*, and assisting him in his lordship of the forest. Far from representing the dead, these sprites are regarded as knaves, to be fought with as such. In legends they are concerned principally with the hunt and frequently try to trick the Pygmy out of his prey to which, as *befe*, they have a right themselves. If they represented the souls of the dead, suggests Schebesta, the Mbuti would hardly be able to take the attitude toward them that they do.

Death may also be regarded by the Pygmy as a punishment visited on man for one of three sins. God forbade his children to look at him, but one of his daughters was overcome by curiosity, and death resulted. (This legend is actually found more frequently among the net hunters than the archers.) God forbade his children to follow him on a certain path, but they became impatient and followed, and death resulted. God (Muri-muri) left fire in the care of his mother, Matu; but a Pygmy stole it from her and she died from cold, so Muri-muri condemned all men to die. This curiosity, impatience, and greed are severally cited as causes of death.

The paramount symbol of death is the rainbow, whose representative is the python. The archers sometimes associate the rainbow with Matu, aged mother of *Toré*, the magic dancer who lured children to the forest never to return, or only to return demented. She is also the dreaded animal that hides among the rocks and kills passers-by with a glance.

The rainbow is associated not only with death but with sorcery, as is Matu and, according to Costermans, *Toré*. Like Matu it kills either by being seen by man or by looking at him. The archers, as do the net hunters, differentiate between the rainbow in the east and the rainbow in the west. (The Bira even name them differently.)

Lightning is of lesser importance, being a mere work tool of God which can be used by him to bring death. It sometimes appears in the form of a bird.

#### TOTEM AND TABOO

According to Schebesta, the archers consider the clan and the lineage as indistinguishable. A clan may be entirely contained within a single

hunting band, or, if the latter becomes too large, both clan and band may split into two or more bands. The relationship of several bands or lineages as members of the same clan is generally designated by the use of a common name, ancestor, and totem. One band is distinguished from another, regardless of relationship, by individual territorial names, but apart from identity of ancestor and totem there is no effective structure binding together the clan, if dispersed. There is no clan chief, and no clan territory (except for a very small clan that happens also to be a hunting band). Even clan exogamy cannot be said to be rigidly enforced; the invariable rule, rather, is exogamy of the local lineage or hunting bands.

Totems are generally animals, rarely plants, never natural phenomena. Schebesta cites the leopard and the chimpanzee as being the commonest totems. A man and wife observe each other's totemic restrictions in each other's presence or when with each other's group; similarly a child, who is said always to respect his patrilineal totem, respects his mother's totem when living with her group. A man also observes the totemic restrictions of his *karé*-brother. The totem is always taboo for the Mbuti. One may never eat it, and often not kill it, touch it, or even eat the food normally eaten by the totemic species. Breach of taboo is believed to involve serious illness or death.

The relationship of the Mbuti to their totem is one not of fear but rather of respect, which Schebesta says is evidenced by their addressing it as "father" or "grandfather," and by the belief that the totem animal gave birth to the first member of the lineal group observing that totem.

To this belief that the clan ancestor descended from the totem is allied the belief that on death the Mbuti is transformed into his totem. Schebesta finds it difficult to reconcile this with his analysis of Mbuti religion, and to see just which vital principle it is that becomes the totem. Connected with this difficulty is the all-important belief in *megbe*, the vital force emanating from the totem and immanent, but in different degrees, in all human beings.

Schebesta cites no individual or sex totems. As he sees it, totemism follows strictly lineage lines.

#### MAGIC

Schebesta finds the link between the religious

notions and practices of the archers and their totemism in their belief in *megbe*, the vital force dispensed, in part, by the divinity. It is one of the life principles, distinct from that which becomes a star or a sprite after death. *Megbe* is transformed anew into the totem when the body dies. The divinity possesses it in totality; astral beings are endowed with far more *megbe* than mortals; hence, their greater power and strength which derive from *megbe*. Mortals, then, have to reinforce their store of this vital force to give themselves additional strength and power. There are certain practices by which this may be achieved, notably by the use of bells hung about different parts of the body. When a man dies, his son may put his lips to those of his father to capture the *megbe* as it passes from his body.

By increasing his store of *megbe* the Mbuti can place himself on the same level as supernatural beings with whom he must have dealings. Schebesta cites legends showing how the Mbuti managed to steal fire from Toré by the use of bells to increase their *megbe*.

Various rites and magical instruments are logically consistent with this notion: the *segbe* pipes that are able to deflect the storm, attract game, or defeat the enemy; the magic horn of the *maigwa* antelope that seeks out thieves; and the various charms and amulets used by hunters either on their bodies or on their weapons. Certain animals are reputed to possess an abundance of *megbe*, notably crows, crabs, the snake (*mageda*), the antelope (*maigwa*), the chameleon, the toad, and the tortoise.

According to various legends, menstrual blood is also possessed of magical force.

Opposed to *megbe* is *uda*, the force of black magic. As mentioned above, the archer accepts death as inevitable, the recalling by God of *boru e'i*, the life principle Schebesta translates as "soul." But death may be caused by sorcerers through the use of *uda*. *Uda* is associated with menstrual blood, and Schebesta compares this notion with the legends that explain one cause of death as being the curiosity or greed of woman. This second cause of death, through *uda*, is thus attributed to the "original sin" of woman, who from curiosity or greed violated God's laws or lured man to do so.

Costermans (1938) and Boelaert (1936a) both criticize Schebesta on this point, saying that the material does not justify his conclu-

sion, based as it often is on data provided by unreliable informants but passed as certain fact (Boelaert). According to Costermans, Schebesta's conclusions result from his selection of data to suit his (admitted) preconceived theories. Further, Schebesta relies, as he himself says, on the evidence provided by legends which he accepts without exercising any of the caution necessary for the proper use of such material. Possibly many of the legends and the associated concepts are indeed of Lese origin.

#### THE GODHEAD

The Chthonic God of the Undergrowth plainly does not stand by itself, not even when supported by an embryonic "*Totengottheit*," which Schebesta finds among the archers but believes to be of little significance. From an examination of Mbuti mythology and a comparative study of religious terms, Schebesta concludes that there is a third, and important if vaguely conceptualized, "*Himmelsgottheit*." Mbuti religion thus resolves into a dualism, if not so neatly as it would were Toré, as Costermans (1938) believes, always associated with misfortune and death. For Schebesta the dualism is manifest in both the sky God and the earth God, but not between them.

He finds Toré, as we have seen, to be associated with both life and death, good and bad, fortune and misfortune. Even in his most benevolent moments, Toré seems to be necessarily associated with Matu, personification of menstrual blood and its connotations of sorcery and death, if not the personification of the dreaded rainbow itself.

The earth God is addressed as "father" or "grandfather," but the names used for the sky God, despite their diversity from one area to another, all have one common characteristic—their linguistic association with words connoting brightness, movement, or creation. The sky world is thought of as being much the same as the earth world, though much embellished in mythology. The celestial God is an old man,

with a beard which brings wind and storm to the earth world when it shakes. The Mbuti respect him, but offer no cult to him; he is too far removed and plays no direct part in the life of the earth world. He is linked to it, however, and plays his part in the Pygmy rationale as the ultimate source of all vital force which creates and gives life. It flows from the sky God into human beings, but his superabundance of the life force insures his permanent overlordship. The Mbuti regard him as the source of all creation and the support of the universe, without seeking to understand how he creates and preserves, or why he destroys by reclaiming the vital force he dispenses.

Schebesta states that the Mbuti place this sky God in the moon and thus even *deus otiosus* is involved in dualism, for the moon by its brightness is associated with fire, and by its periodicity with menstrual blood—the two symbols of life and death. (Both fire and menstrual blood have the dual association.)

There is no attempt to rationalize the fact that the force emanating from the sky God works both good and evil; it is just accepted as a fact. But it is exactly this fact that is the thread binding the various notions that form the Mbuti magico-religious system. Magic itself, good or bad, can be practiced only through the use of this force. The personal sky God himself is, for Schebesta, the supreme magician, manifest in different and opposing ways, whose power is everywhere. He is too remote to be the object of any cult but is, in a sense, represented among human beings by the lineage elders, inasmuch as they inherit the power of the original ancestors; hence, the respect and obedience that is their due.

If the outward manifestations of Pygmy religion mainly concern the God of the Undergrowth, if the cult practices seem overgrown with magic and superstition, and if there is any appearance of polytheism in the Mbuti rationale, all is resolved (for Schebesta, at least) into a consistent monotheism by the basic Mbuti belief in vital force.

## THE NET HUNTERS (AFTER PUTNAM)

### THE SOCIAL UNIT

PATRICK PUTNAM'S (1948) DESCRIPTION of the net-hunting Pygmy band corresponds in essence to that given by Schebesta; the most noticeable difference is in the matter of size. The composition described is the same, i.e., a number of nuclear families tracing descent through the male line from a common ancestor,

about 150, with from 20 to 40 active adult males.

Anne Putnam, whose experience was confined more to the net hunters of the Epulu region, mentions 17 huts as constituting a large camp (Fig. 16), some of the huts, however, possibly being in the form of double huts (Fig. 17). Huts are continually being enlarged or re-

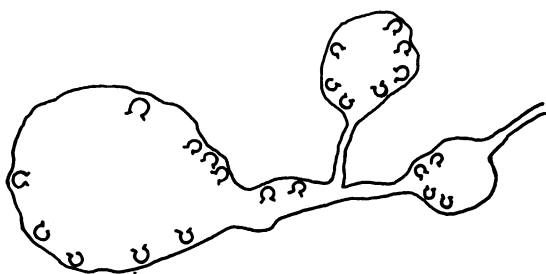


FIG. 16. Plan of net-hunters' camp (after Anne Putnam), Epulu District, Central Ituri.

for whom they are named. The patriclan, however, is generally scattered and is certainly not synonymous with the band. The size of the band is determined at each extreme by the hunting and gathering needs of a cohabitive group. Fifty huts is the maximum given by Putnam, with 25 the average and between 20 and 40 the optimum. Each hut houses a man, his wife or wives, and a few children, so the total number of Pygmies to an average camp is

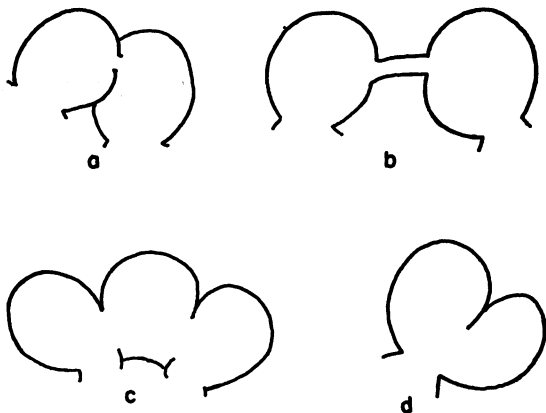


FIG. 17. Plan of net-hunters' polygynous or extended family dwellings (after Anne Putnam), Epulu District, Central Ituri.

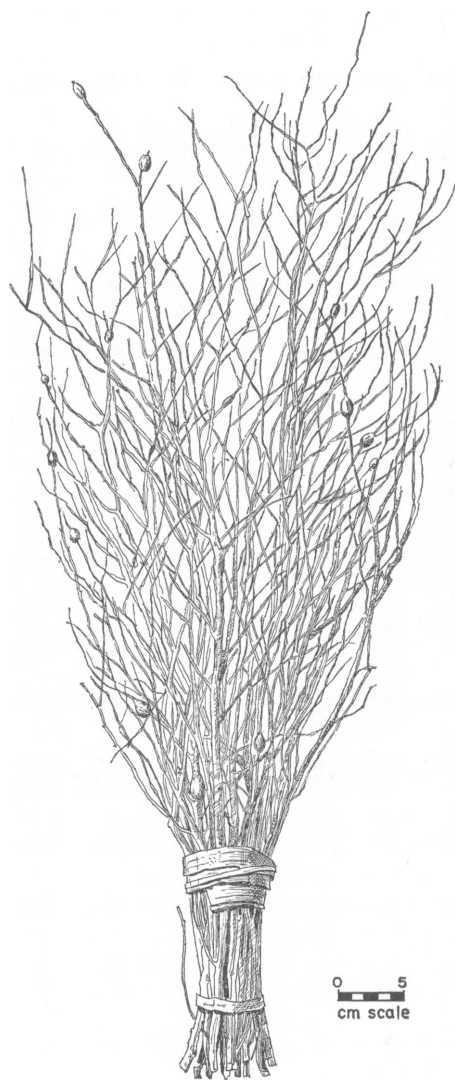


FIG. 18. Broom, *edia*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Such brooms are made daily by net hunters. The area in front of each hut is swept with leafy branches bound loosely together in this manner.

built, though the basic structure is expected to last for the duration of the camp.

In the choice of a situation for a camp, the main considerations are the close proximity of game and fruit, but a *sine qua non* is the presence of drinking water within 50 yards. Other considerations are the absence overhead of dead branches or leaning trees which might fall on the camp in the violent windstorms that occur frequently in the forest; also, a slight slope to the ground to prevent the camp from becoming swamped during rains.

Camps are moved every month or two because in that time game will have been scared away and local vegetation (fruits, fungi, and other vegetable foods) used up, and also (Putnam, 1948) because, as the Pygmies relieve themselves only a short distance from the camp, it will in that time become extremely malodorous and uncomfortable even by Pygmy standards.

### HABITATIONS

A camp consists of one hut per family. The huts are built by the women, in just the same shape and manner as by all Ituri Mbuti, in a circle with doors facing toward the center. There are no bachelor huts or huts for unmarried girls or widows, and no ritual structures. The relation of the huts to one another in the

circle is dictated, as much as anything, by the friendship of the women. (Their gathering activities do not demand cooperation, but Putnam says that they help one another for company, forming work groups of two or more adult women.)

There are frequent visitors to these camps, including villagers who come to claim, trade, or buy meat from the Pygmies. If a villager chief comes, a special hut is built for him.

### FURNITURE

The furnishings of a hut are similar to those described by Schebesta, and, like the archers, these net hunters keep their possessions to the minimum (Figs. 18-20). Leaves are used as furniture more frequently than either beds or stick chairs. The Pygmy will not sit on bare ground, and if a log is not available he will use a piece of bark or a leaf.

### UTENSILS

Also as with the archers, utensils are largely borrowed or stolen from the villagers who make them (Fig. 21). The net hunters do not imitate their neighbors, however, to the extent of making mortars for themselves. If they possess mortars, they are extremely small, unlike the large ones described by Schebesta, which could not easily be carried from camp to camp by a

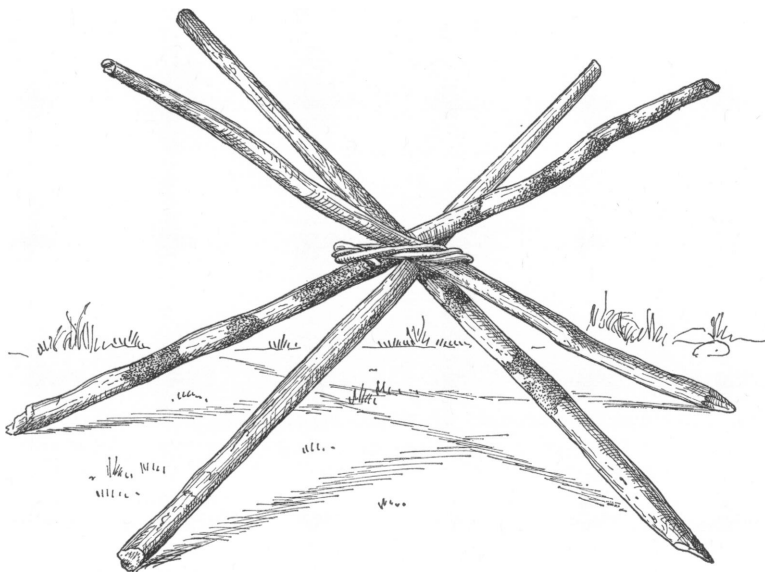


FIG. 19. Chair, *ngbanga*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.



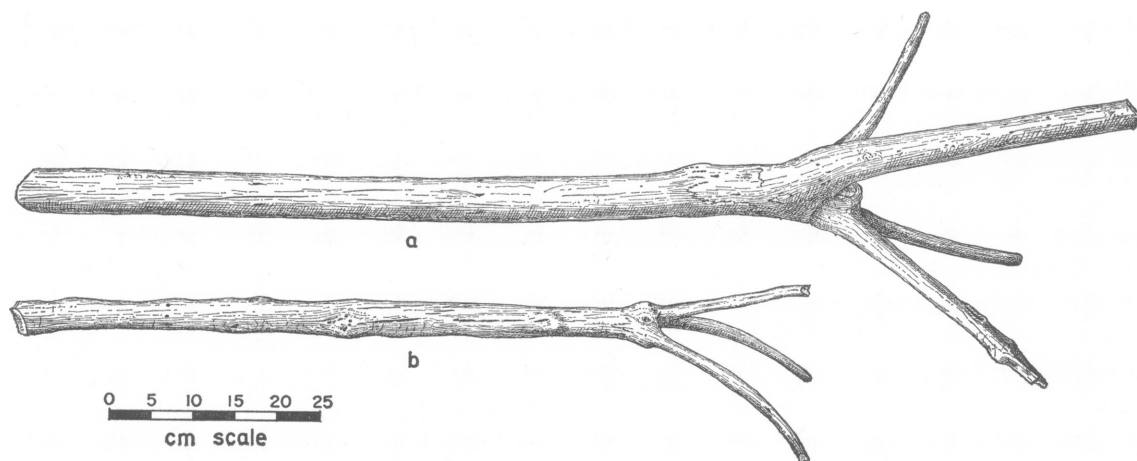


FIG. 20. Household furniture, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a-b. Benches, *mbakati*. Such forked branches are used for reclining as well as sitting, possibly in imitation of the large versions used in nearby villages.

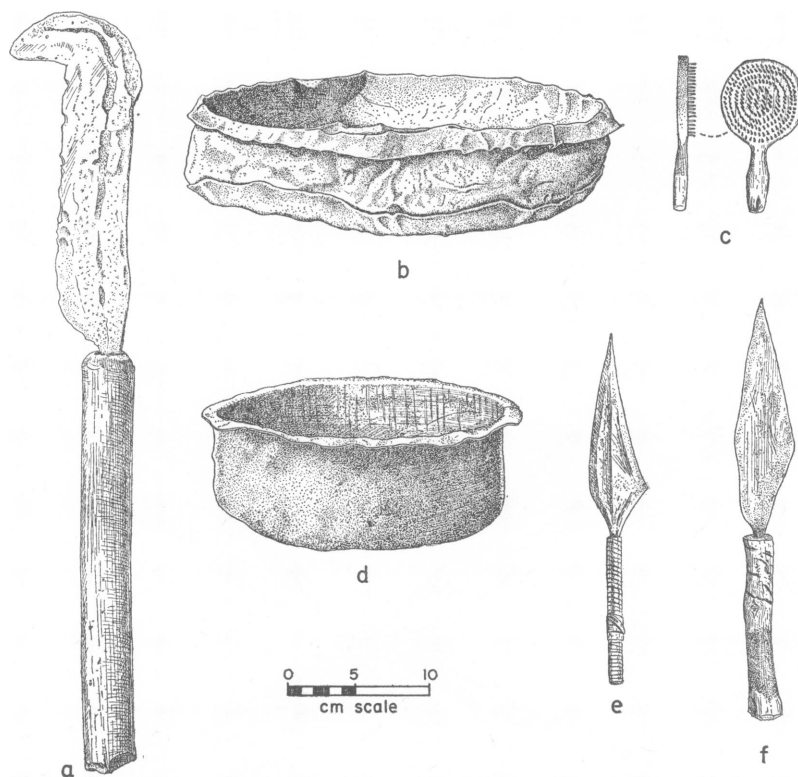


FIG. 21. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Machete, used for cutting large saplings such as those required for village houses. b. Cooking vessel (trade), needed for the cooking of village foods, such as rice, requiring boiling. c. Comb. Another villager use of metal that finds favor among the Mbuti. d. Cooking vessel. e. Knife. f. Knife, used mainly, and widely, by Mbuti women for food preparation and for the preparation of roofing leaves. These are the common household utensils of metal that might be found in any net-hunting camp.

truly nomadic group. All metal knife and ax blades are obtained ready-made from the villagers, also metal arrow and spearheads (which are frequently used as knives). The hafting and fitting of shafts may be done by the Pygmy himself, and certainly the arrow shafts are Pygmy-made. Open-mesh baskets (Fig. 41) are made by the women, who also obtain close-mesh baskets (Fig. 42) from the villagers.

### DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION

Clothing of the net hunters is also similar to that described by Schebesta, but with less ornamentation of fur and skin and less use of charms and amulets. Putnam denies the use of skins for clothing among the Pygmies he knows. Anne Putnam ranks the manufacture of barkcloth as the major industry in a net-hunting camp, occupying even more time than the making and repair of nets. Putnam once said that the Pygmies did not make nets, but obtained them from the villagers; later, he changed his opinion.<sup>1</sup> A net is never made complete, but in the course of repair pieces are added or removed to start a new net. About 12 different kinds of bark can be used for the making of barkcloth, differing not only in color but also in texture. The ivory bark beaters are always hafted (Fig. 22), unlike those of the archers; the beating ends may have one of three forms of grooving (Fig. 23), the dia-

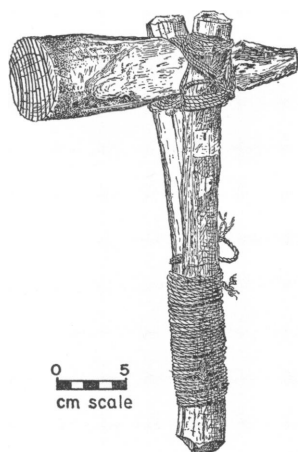


FIG. 22. Bark beater, *kolea*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. While wooden beaters are sometimes used, more frequently the ends of small elephant tusks are hafted and used to make barkcloth.

<sup>1</sup> In fact, net making is a major and constant activity calling for cooperation between men and women.

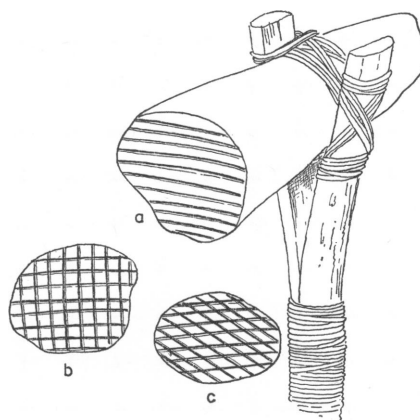


FIG. 23. Types of grooving found on ivory bark-beater heads, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

mond grooving being the commonest. There are only about two bark beaters to a camp.

There are two main ways of preparing the cloth. Strips of the bark of *Ficus* are peeled off the trunk between two horizontal and one vertical slit. Before the beating, the outer bark is scraped off, then the inner bark is softened either by being soaked in water from half an hour to 12 hours, according to the type of bark, or by being heated and smoked over a fire. The resultant barkcloth may be worn in its natural color, dyed red or blue, or be painted with simple designs (Figs. 25-27). The dyeing and painting are done by women, using a special mud for an over-all blue dye, the juice of a citrous fruit for blue line designs, and *nkula* (elsewhere *ngula*) bark, scraped with another piece of bark (Fig. 24), with water added while scraping, for

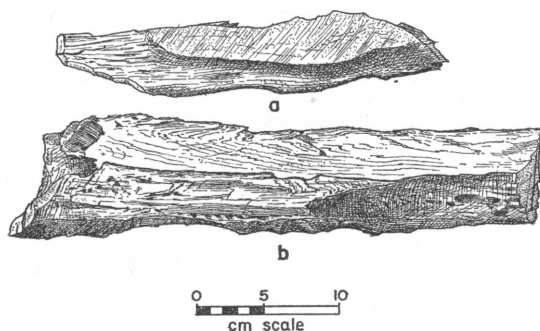


FIG. 24. Block and scraper of wood, *nkula* (also *ngula*), net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri; used with water for the extraction of the red dye most commonly employed in the decoration of barkcloth.

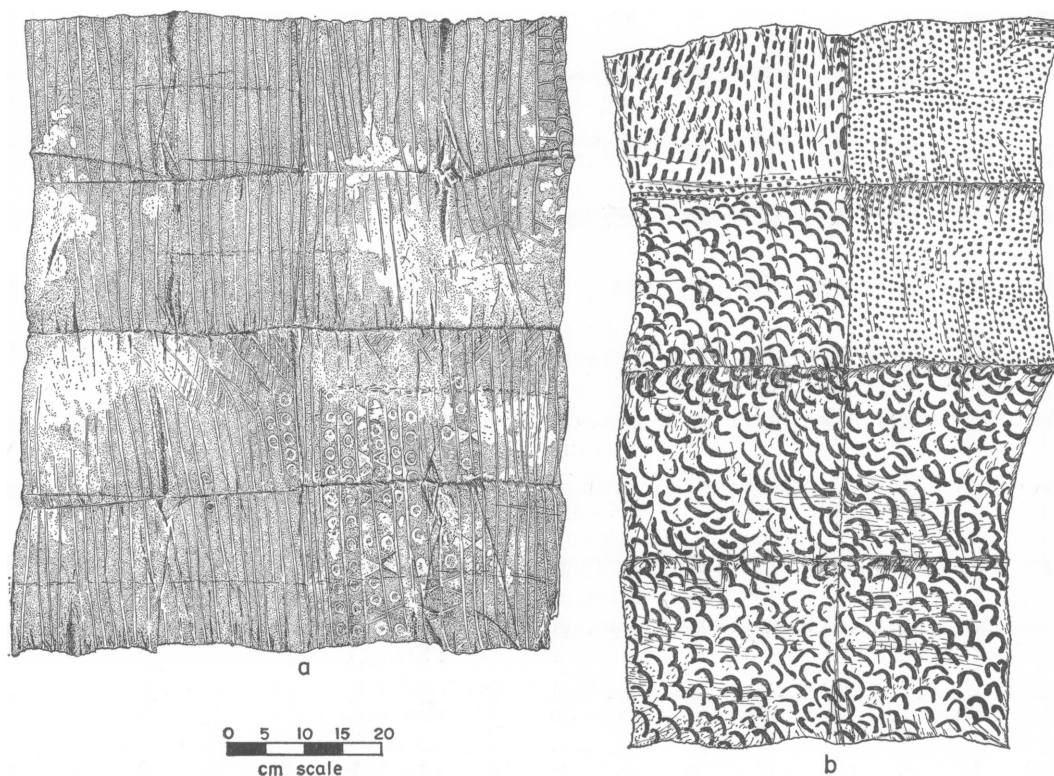


FIG. 25. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.  
a. Made of *epo'u* vine. b. Made of *esele* vine.

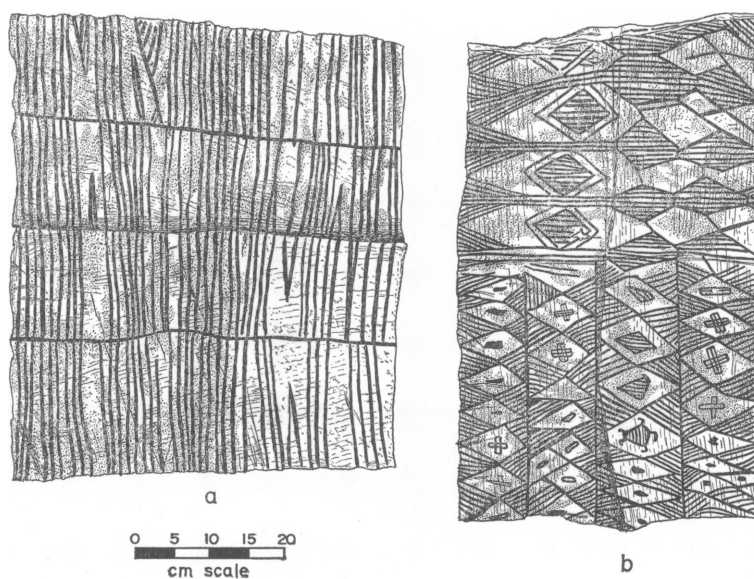


FIG. 26. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.  
a. Made of *akoko* vine. b. Made of *esele* vine.

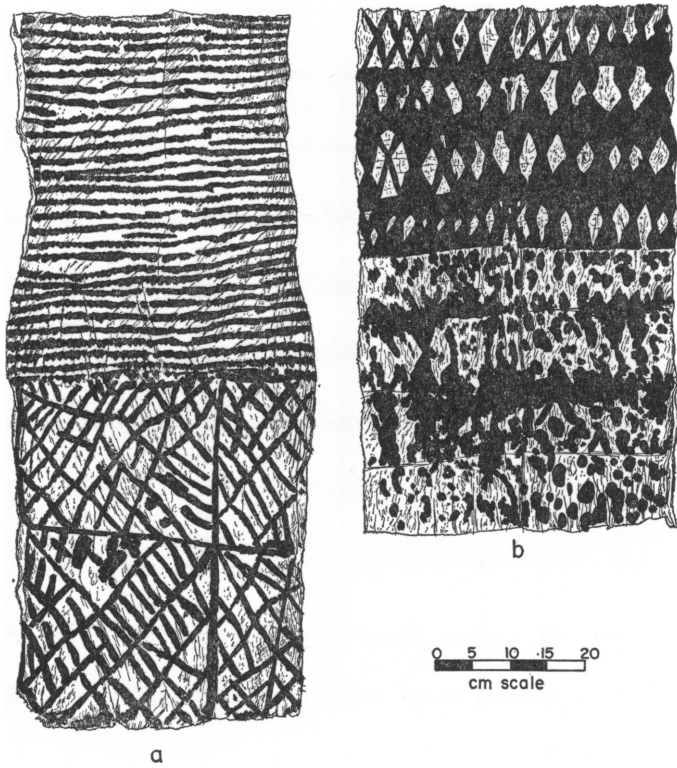


FIG. 27. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.  
a. Made of *le'engbe* vine. b. Made of *akbanda* vine.

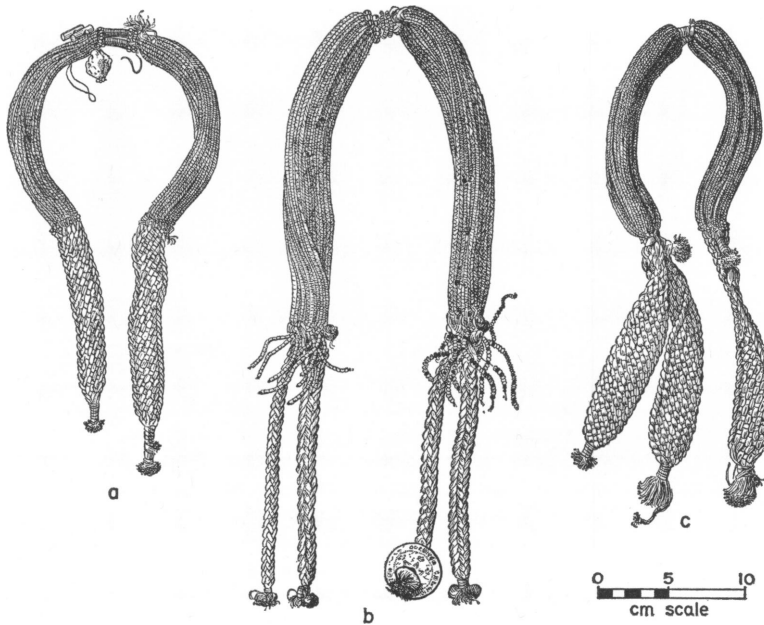


FIG. 28. a-c. Belts, *mokaba*, for barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Plaited by women from strips of vine around a vine core.

red dye. For painting designs on barkcloth, either a finger or a twig may be used. The designs vary considerably, and one piece of barkcloth may have three or four distinct patterns. This is possibly in imitation of the local villager practice of sewing strips of barkcloth together to obtain larger pieces, resulting in the juxtaposition of different designs.

The making of belts (Fig. 28) from plaited fiber and the twisting of lengths of shredded

*nkusa* vine into cord, mainly used for net repairing, are also everyday occupations. The net hunters use vine much more widely than the archers who use it for basketry rather than cordage. Putnam also mentions the use of certain types of vine that give water. *Njelani* is a long vine used for making children's swings and the high swings used by young men mainly during the honey season.

#### BODY DECORATION

Body decoration and mutilation as described in the Putnam material is similar to that recounted by Schebesta, except that in the painting of designs on the body Anne Putnam mentions the use of *kangay*, a black dye obtained from the juice of the gardenia fruit (Fig. 30a). This is applied with a small twig. Use of red and white is confined to ceremonial occasions. A variety of hats and headdresses is used by the net hunters, also bracelets, necklaces, combs, and lip plugs. All of these may be made by the Mbuti, though often in imitation of villager artifacts (Fig. 30).

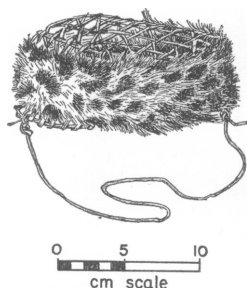


FIG. 29. Basketry hat, *ngala*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Made at whim by young or old, men or women, and worn without regard to status.

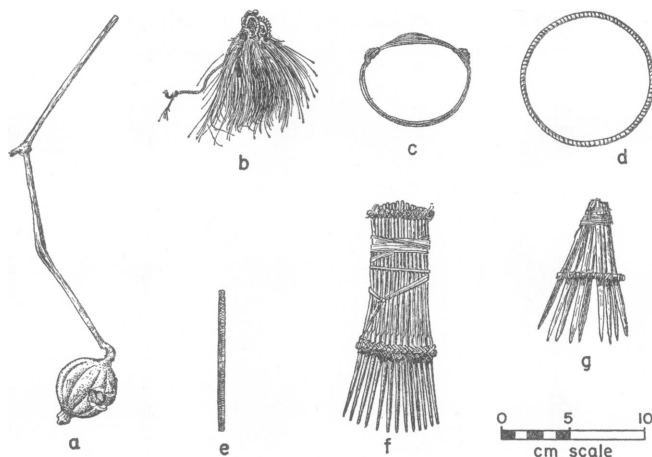


FIG. 30. Personal adornment. a. *Kangay* (gardenia) seed, used by women for extraction of a black dye for painting the body, also for painting designs on barkcloth; net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. b. Hair decoration, *mongele* antelope hair; net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. c-d. Bracelets; Bira villagers, Central Ituri. e. Nose and/or lip plug, *bobu*; net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. f. Comb, *kisanoa*; Bira villagers, Central Ituri. g. Comb, *kisanoa*; net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. As everywhere among the Mbuti, metal objects are of villager origin. Many of the wooden objects of personal adornment are made in imitation of villager artifacts (compare f and g).

### CARE OF BODY

According to the Putnams, the net hunters take much greater care of their bodies than Schebesta's archers. They bathe frequently in the shallow streams near the camp, inspect each other carefully for bugs and lice (acquired inevitably when sleeping on the ground), and shave their heads for purposes of cleanliness rather than for esthetic satisfaction. Oil, when available, is rubbed into the skin. On ceremonial occasions, when they visit the Bantu village, palm oil is used, often mixed with *nkula* paste to add to its natural deep red color.

### DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The only domestic animal, as with the archers, is the hunting dog, but this, although highly prized, is not so important to the net hunter as to the archer and tracker. Even among the larger net-hunting bands there may be only one or two dogs.

### TECHNOLOGY

Fire making is totally unknown, even as it is to some of the neighboring village tribes, according to Putnam. Glowing embers wrapped in phrynium leaves are carried everywhere, even on short journeys. They are also used, as described by Schebesta, for light at night and for fighting off invading ants. Another form of light (Fig. 31a), in the shape of resin torches (KiBira: *kasuku*), is sometimes used, but at no time is wood specially cut (such as the *akata* mentioned by Schebesta) to make firebrand torches. Campfires are always made the same way—three logs, their ends pointing to the center, where kindling is placed and where cinders form on which cooking is done.

Poison is used on untipped arrows, as described by Schebesta. These arrows are carefully protected by leaf covers until used. They are much more widely used than the metal-tipped arrows, largely, as the Mbuti admit themselves, because they are such poor shots.

Sometimes spearheads are also untipped, the wooden points being fire-hardened, but there is no evidence that these are poisoned, and they are becoming rare.

In none of the normal routine work in a Pygmy camp such as that described by Putnam is there any specialization, except in so far as certain tasks are divided between men and wom-

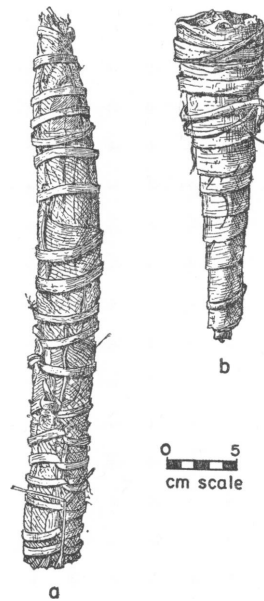


FIG. 31. Miscellaneous items, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Resin flare, *kasuku*, made of *kasuku* resin and wrapped in leaves; used when necessary to move from the hut at night. b. Bark pipe, *mbende*, used when village pipestems and bowls are not available.

en. The making of barkcloth and netting, and the painting of designs on cloth and body, are individual skills which are utilized for the craftsman himself or for his immediate family. Women living in adjoining huts sometimes exchange their skills in body painting, exercising their art on one another.

### ECONOMIC LIFE

#### HUNTING

Like Schebesta, Putnam stresses hunting and gathering as the basis of Mbuti economy. Putnam (1948, 327) also states that hunting is the principal means by which the Pygmy-villager relationship is maintained. Although there is little division of labor among the Mbuti themselves, he (1948, 328) says in a sense that they are all specialists in hunting, so there is a division of labor between Pygmy and village groups, the two together forming a larger economic entity. The villager may do some hunting, but largely by means of traps, deadfalls, and pits. It occupies little of his time and is not very productive. For the Pygmy, hunting is a full-time occupation.

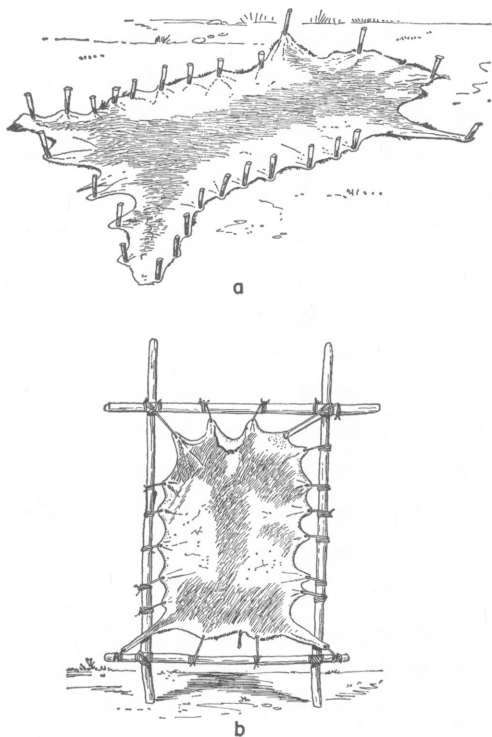


FIG. 32. Methods of stretching hides to dry, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Hides, little used by the net hunters except as baby slings and, more rarely, as quivers, are good trade items that are needed by villagers, among other things, for drum-heads.

The Pygmy has no use for traps or pits. These require too much work and are, by his standards, inefficient. Throughout the Ituri the Mbuti can be classified as net hunters or non-net hunters or, conversely, as archers or non-archers. Putnam states that this adherence to either hunting technique depends on the prevailing villager custom, as the villagers supply the Pygmies with both nets and arrowheads. Later, he modified this view because the Pygmies are, in fact, making nets all the time by adding to and subtracting from their existing nets, as mentioned above. [Schebesta (1933) refers to the Pygmies as making their own nets.] This division into archers and net hunters is also significant with regard to social organization, says Putnam (1948, 328), since "The degree to which co-operation is required in hunting, and the numbers of people involved, are the principal factors in determining the composition of the band."

The net-hunting technique is similar to that of the *begbe* described by Schebesta (1952, 133 ff.) but with the notable absence of the leadership of an "elder." The decision as to when and where to hunt is made during the evening preceding the hunt, in conversation among all the hunters around the campfire. Whereas rain puts an end to both net hunting and tracking, lack of rain (causing dry leaves to crackle underfoot) is disadvantageous only to trackers. Like the beat hunt, net hunting relies on the *amount* of noise that can be made.

The net hunt calls for a minimum of seven nets, each married man owning a net. Unmarried men may also own nets if they have proved their prowess as hunters. It is usual in a normal camp of about 17 huts for the majority of men, women, and children to join the hunt. If the camp is large, some members stay behind and perform their various subsidiary chores such as the repair of nets, the manufacture of bark-cloth and twine, gathering, and so forth. The women joining the hunt carry their babies on their backs; boys and young men are armed with bows and arrows or spears; and the heads of families carry their nets and spears. Various

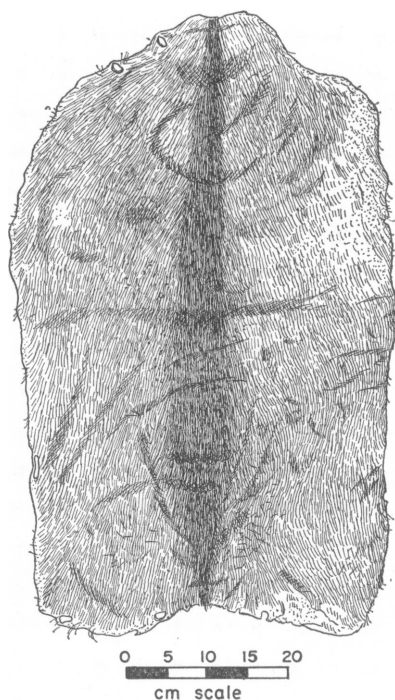


FIG. 33. Prepared antelope hide, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

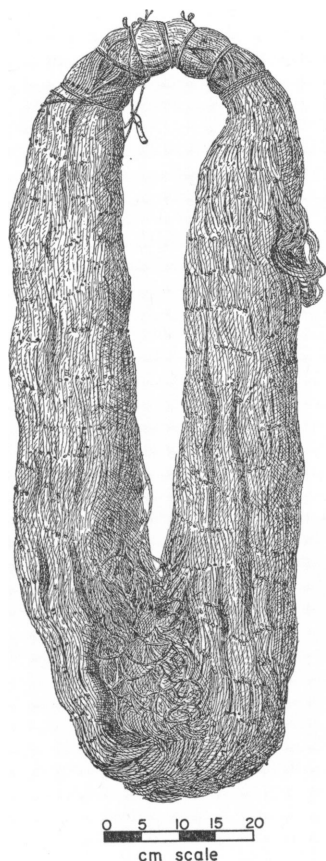


FIG. 34. Hunting net, *kuya*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Coiled and bound for carrying over the shoulders.

early travelers describe net hunts in similar terms (Parke, 1891; Lloyd, 1899; Geil, 1905; Christy, 1924). Parke (1891) gives a detailed description of the nets, which corresponds to that given by Putnam, and records their length as from 100 to 200 feet. He gives the height of the net, however, as 5 feet, while the nets used by the Epulu net hunters are barely 4 feet high (Figs. 34–36).

When a suitable place is reached, the women make beaters of twigs and branches, and go off into the forest, while the men set the nets up end-to-end, in a large semicircle. The women carry their babies, but the young children are left with the men.

Putnam indicates that there is a difference in the value of different positions in the circle of nets; the central positions are the most likely to catch game. There is a definite system in set-



FIG. 35. Magic whistle, *mamambamamba*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Such magic is rare, though pipes and whistles are sometimes blown before a hunt in the belief that the sound will attract game.

ting up the nets, with a special vocabulary of technical terms to deal with it, but he does not give the details.

When all is ready, the women, who have spread out in an opposing semicircle, start beating into the nets, calling and shouting, beating their sticks on the ground. If they see any slow game heading their way, they dive for it and catch it with their hands, put it in a basket, and continue beating. Their main object is to put up game and drive it toward the nets. There, the men are in readiness, motionless until some animal is tangled in the meshes. Then they seize it, and the owner of that particular net kills the

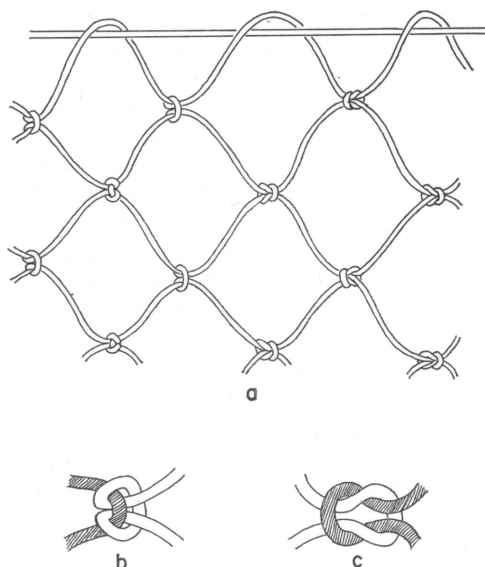


FIG. 36. Details of knotting used in hunting net, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.



animal with his knife or spear. He claps his arm-pit to signal his success to his companions. The women by the tone of their shouting and the men by their arm-clapping (KiBira: *kombo*) can indicate not only when and where game is put up, but the kind of game.

In a day's hunting this process may be repeated as many as seven times, if the rain holds off. But if the first few casts of the nets are successful the Pygmies return to camp. They make no provision for the storage of meat or any other food.

If large game, such as buffalo, is driven toward them, the Mbuti try to lower the nets to avoid their being damaged; otherwise, the buffalo will probably tear its way through, though it may be delayed long enough for the hunters to spear it. Antelope is the game normally caught. The hunter carries the dead animal around his neck back to the camp for division. If a larger animal, such as an okapi, is caught, it is cut up on the spot and carried back to the camp in the women's baskets. There all the meat is spread out and the division takes place according to specific custom (details not given), after which a share may be sent to the villagers. Putnam says that the average catch for a day is half an antelope (the size of a goat) per man (i.e., per family). Skins are stretched on frames, or staked out on the ground, for drying (Figs. 32-33).

Anne Putnam gives the hunting rules as told to her by one of the great hunters of the Epulu group. From these rules it appears that a net owner, if he lends his net to another, has varying claims according to the number of animals that fall into the net during any one day. The liver always belongs to the net owners, while the head, and a leg or legs if more than one animal is caught, go to the hunter. If an antelope gets caught in two nets, or escapes from one into another, the two net owners share it. If an animal becomes entangled and escapes without cutting the net and is subsequently caught, it belongs to the net owner. If, however, it cuts the net, then it belongs to whoever kills it.

Anne Putnam also gives the positions of net owners in the hunting circle of a large band of three combined hunting bands. Apparently, while the junior members of the two visiting bands tend to keep to themselves at each extremity of the line of nets, the main (host)

group occupies the center, with the important hunters from all three bands occupying the most central positions. Figure 16 gives the plan of the camp, showing the separation of these three "bands". In fact they are more likely segments of the same band in the process of fission.

Net hunters do not use bows and arrows (Figs. 37-39) to any appreciable extent, and they are poor archers. Putnam, in his travels throughout the forest, found few really good archers. He says that they shoot arrows with great rapidity, but that only one out of five may

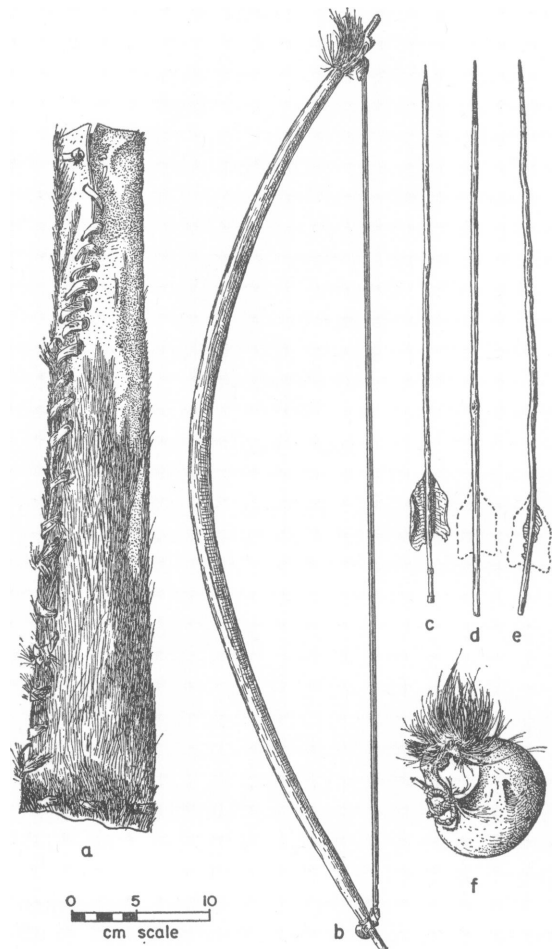


FIG. 37. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Skin quiver, *baba*. b. Bow, *mangé*. c-e. Arrows, *api*. f. Wrist protector, *asuba*. The bows, arrows, and wrist protectors of the net hunters are notably shorter than those of the archers but are only of secondary importance in the food quest. The net hunters prefer poisoned arrows to those with metal tips (see Figs. 38-39).

hit the target. At tracking, however, the Mbuti are excellent, being able to move swiftly and silently through the forest. They can, in Putnam's estimation, catch game with their hands, and often do so, as successfully as by using their bows and arrows. Iron-tipped arrows are used on larger game, and untipped, poisoned arrows are used mainly for monkeys and birds. The poison is prepared individually, *strophanthus* being the vital plant acting as a heart stimulant.

Hunting dogs are used both during the net hunt and by individual owners for hunting wild boar.

Elephant hunting is important in the Epulu District. Certain bands of Pygmies are specialists. Among the local net-hunting band from which the most detailed information is available, however, four out of 12 or 15 hunters are elephant hunters. Putnam says that the present form of elephant hunting is a recent development in answer to the needs of the villagers whose plantations were continually being ravaged by elephants and who encouraged the Pygmies to kill them off. In the early days the villagers had little use for the tusks, other than as barkcloth beaters, but with the advent of

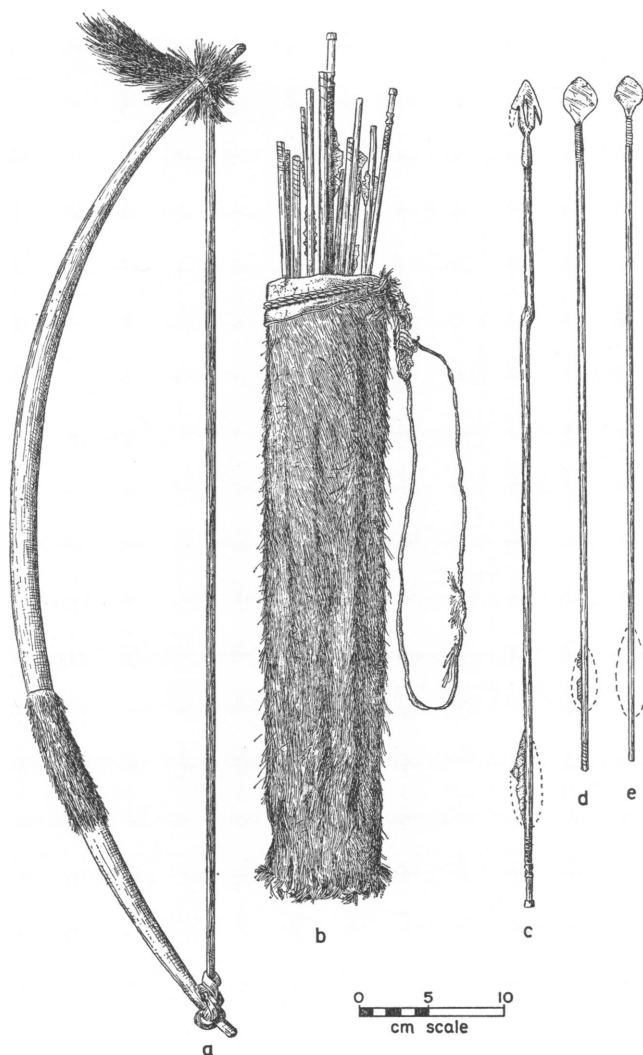


FIG. 38. Hunting equipment, net hunters. a. Bow, Epulu District, Central Ituri. b. Quiver, Central Ituri. c-e. Arrows, Central Ituri.

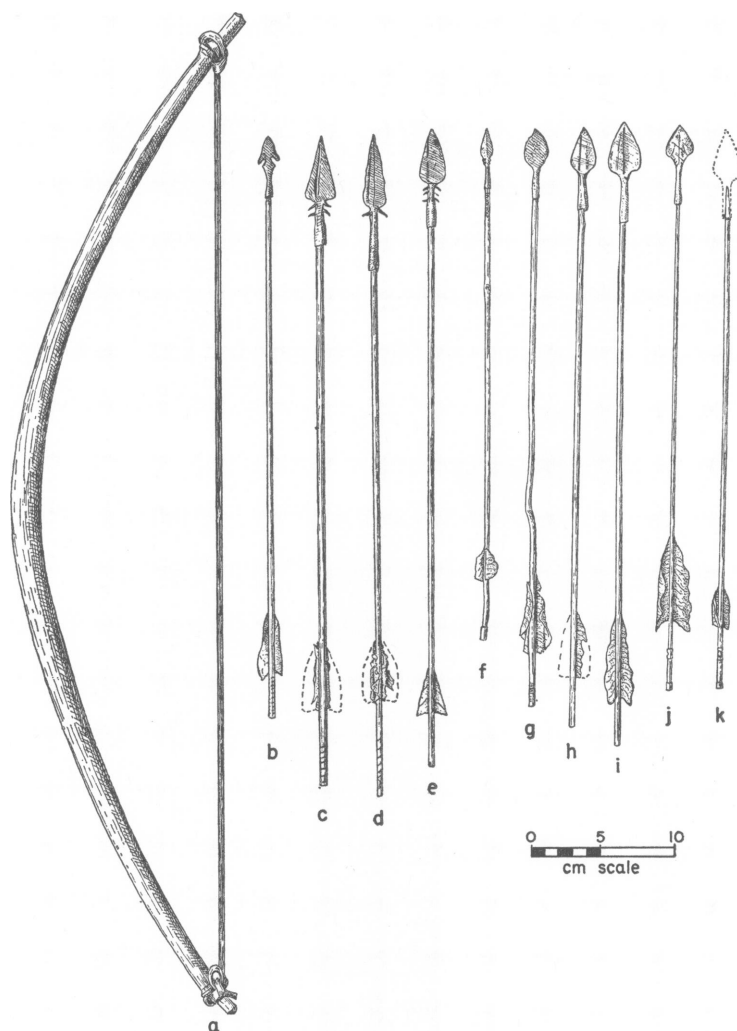


FIG. 39. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Bow. b-k. Arrows.

Arab traders ivory became a most precious commodity, and the Pygmies were doubly encouraged to kill elephants. For the Pygmies themselves, a slain elephant was a source of great satisfaction, providing them with meat ample enough to obviate the necessity of hunting for several days.

The killing of the animal was, and still is, a matter that inspired the normally audacious Mbuti with some caution. Putnam says that elephant hunting is a specialist occupation; not every Pygmy is brave enough, and the technique itself takes great skill. The villagers use spear-falls and elephant pits (dug so as to trap

the elephant's forefeet and head only), but this method of hunting is foreign to the Mbuti. Travelers such as Parke (1891) who observed spear-falls and pits almost certainly saw those made by villagers, not Pygmies. Casati (1891), Lloyd (1899), Geil (1905), Christy (1924), and others mention the fact that Pygmies are able to kill elephants with their bows and arrows, a technical ability strongly denied by Schebesta, Putnam, and the Pygmies themselves. Schweinfurth (1874, 65-66, 70) was told by a villager informant that the northern Mbuti are able to kill an elephant either with bow and arrow or by thrusting a spear into its belly. The latter

method was known to Putnam, who says that a special spear, with a long wide blade of soft metal, is used (Fig. 40). The shaft is about 4 feet long and stout; the blade is carefully sharpened on a stone (as the Pygmy sharpens all his blades). The hunter, who may make use of elephant droppings to cover his scent, tracks the elephant, approaches it silently up wind, and thrusts the spear as far as he can into the belly, just behind the ribs. Putnam says that the Pygmy then stands absolutely still (but presumably having jumped into the cover of the bush), and that the Pygmies themselves said that if you "as much as wink at this moment you are a dead Pygmy" (Putnam, 1948, 331). He may, if the opportunity offers, repeat this process. When he returns to camp the others examine his spear and decide, according to the distance the blood has reached down the blade, whether the wound is fatal and justifies tracking or not. If they decide the wound is fatal, the entire camp sets off, leaving only an old couple to look after the camp. They track the elephant for two or three days until it dies of peritonitis.

Putnam describes a ceremony that takes place at that time. A man other than the hunter cuts off a section of the skin, a little at a time, distributing it for all to eat. When he has cut down to the inner wall of the abdomen and everyone has had a piece, he stands aside for the youngest son of the successful hunter to bite through the wall, whereupon the bloated elephant bursts. Putnam says that this ceremony is repugnant to the Pygmies, who dislike raw meat, and particularly repugnant to the child, but he does not explain the practice.

Following this ceremony, the animal is quickly and completely butchered, and the meat is cooked. The Pygmies eat as much as they can. They partly boil and partly dry some (the only form of preservation of foodstuff ever practiced by them) and take this to the village.

In 1951, Putnam gave me another version of this form of hunt, in which the Pygmy thrusts the spear into the bladder of the elephant, and, if he sees that the urine is released, he returns to camp knowing that it will die within a few days. The procedure is then as above. Anne Putnam (1954, 93) mentions a net hunter who tracked and killed an elephant at a time when there was no shortage of food, simply because he felt the urge to do so.

Schebesta (1941, 106 ff.) mentions two types

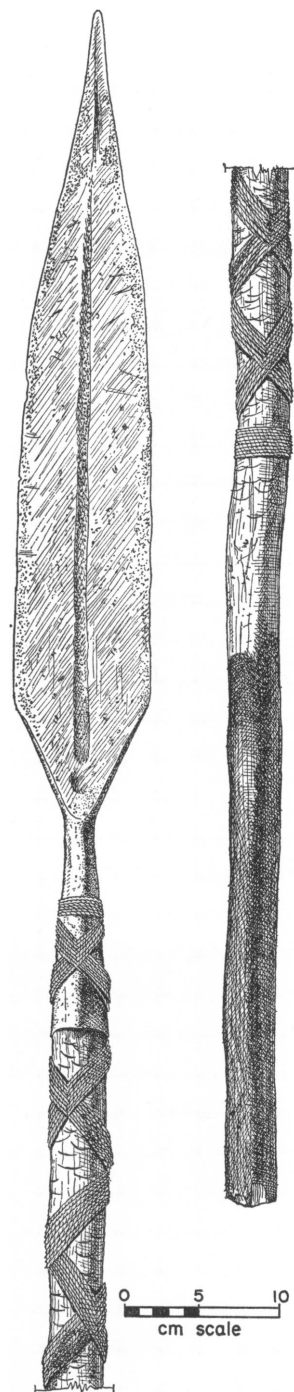


FIG. 40. Spear, *ekonga*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Used throughout the Ituri, except possibly in parts of the north, primarily as a weapon of defense and secondarily for the hunting of large game, including elephant. Mbuti hafting.

of elephant hunt known to him. The first makes use of a spear such as that described by Putnam, but the Pygmy, instead of thrusting it into the belly, creeps up behind the elephant and cuts the tendon above one of its heels. The elephant spins around, at which a second hunter, waiting for this action, leaps out of the bush and cuts the tendon of the other heel, thus bringing the elephant down, at which point it is easily killed—often by blinding it and then cutting off the trunk and leaving it to bleed to death. The second method makes use of a harpoon, and according to Schebesta, this is the method used among the net hunters. Here the harpoon is thrust into the belly, as described by Putnam, after which the Pygmy leaps clear. If thrust far enough, the elephant dies from lacerations caused by the dragging on the harpoon head as the attached cord snags on trees and undergrowth during the animal's flight.

Men may individually kill monkeys and birds with their bows and arrows, supplementing their individual family food supply, and women out gathering may catch slow game with their hands. Children, and occasionally women, fish and catch crabs. Fishing seems more highly developed among the net hunters than among Schebesta's archers, as the net hunters know of certain grubs that make good bait and can be found in the *kukumu* tree, and also understand

the use of poison for catching fish. The poison (KiBira: *matungu*) is prepared from the bark of the *atungo* tree, and has been known to blind people who get it in the eyes. Fish caught by the children are placed by them in leaves with salt and roasted on fire embers. Salt is obtained either from plantain skins, or in the *ido*, which are open, well-watered clearings found in the forest. Children also hunt rats and mice with their miniature bows and arrows.

#### GATHERING

As with the archers, gathering is mostly the province of women and children (mainly women), though men will gather any edible food they happen to pass. Gathering is an individual rather than a collective activity. Gathering activities that require the climbing of high trees, such as the collection of most nuts, are undertaken by men, who also collect termites, silk-worms, and honey. The contribution of children, though not organized, is appreciable.

The foods available are the same as those described by Schebesta. It appears that the net hunters make much fuller use of forest products, the most important of which are nuts, edible fungus, and edible roots, each of which can be subdivided into a number of different species, not only insuring a supply at all seasons, for each species has its own season, but also variety.

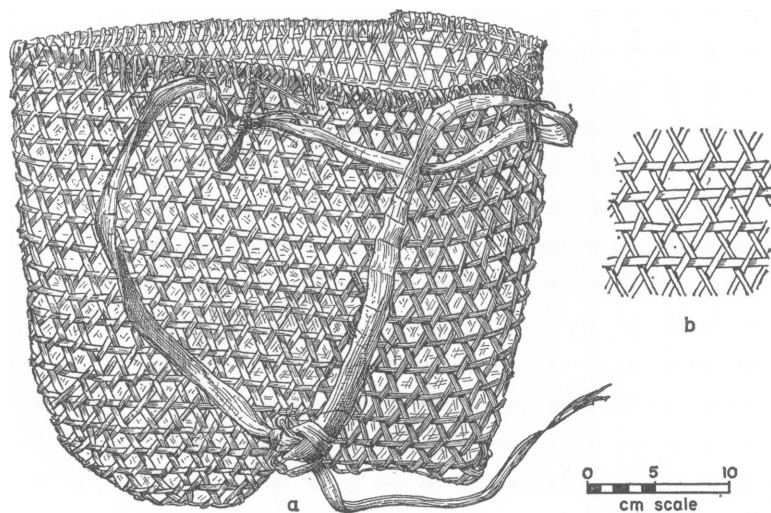


FIG. 41. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Basket, so. b. Details of construction. Open-mesh baskets, of strips of dried vine, are made and used by Mbuti women among both net hunters and archers.

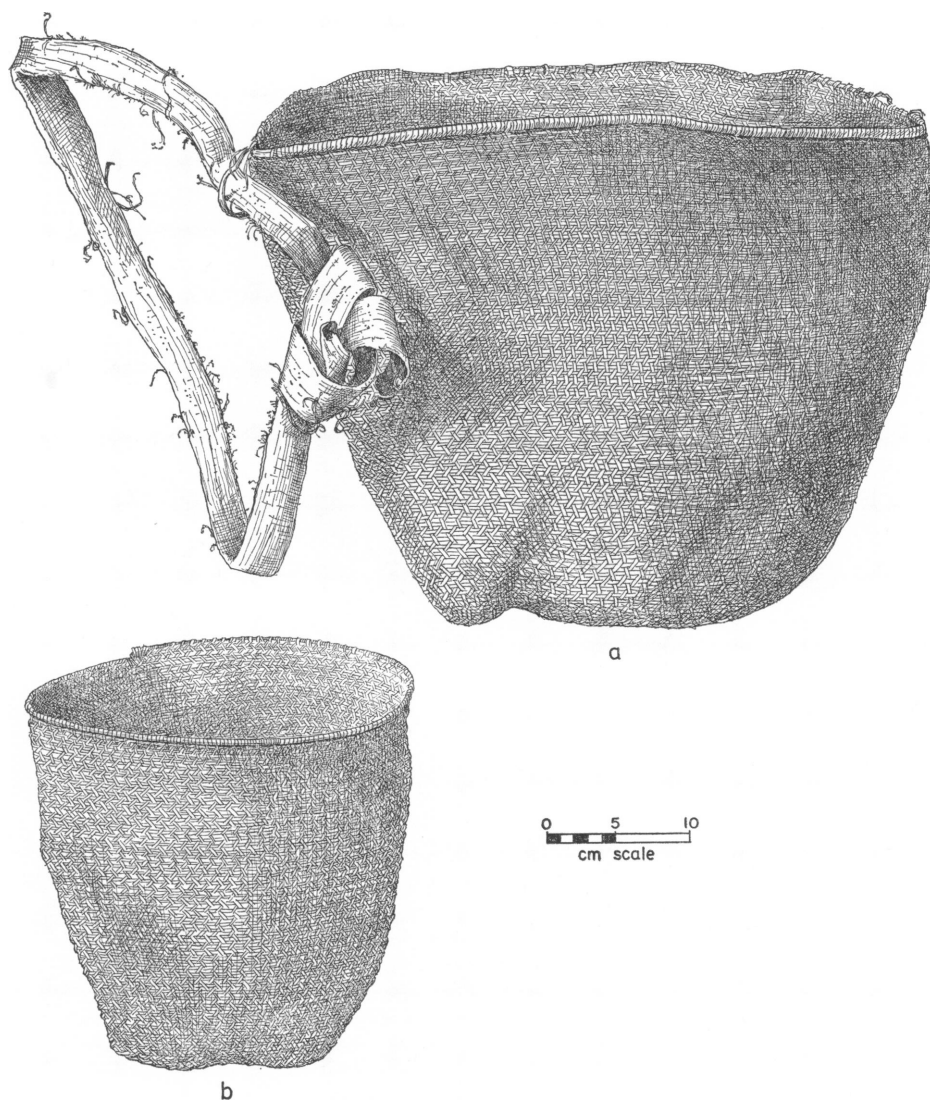


FIG. 42. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a-b. Baskets, so. Close-mesh baskets are obtained from neighboring villages and may be offered by villagers in exchange for forest produce.

Putnam says that, for most of the year, gathering can be said only to supplement vegetable food obtained from the villager plantations, although during the "dry season" (January-February) certain seeds and fruits ripen, and forest foods become so plentiful that the Pygmy can live entirely by gathering.

Particularly important among the fruits is the *ibambi*, a large fruit somewhat resembling an outsized pineapple. When ripe it can be heard falling to the ground, at which there is a

race between Pygmies and chimpanzees to get to it first. Pygmies say that chimpanzees, if they are already well fed, will take a fallen *ibambi* and hide it in the fork of a tree, but an observant Pygmy will find it. The *eseli* nut is the most important of the nuts and is too tough for chimpanzees to open, and the *itaba* is the most important of the edible roots. Following the dry season comes the season of termites, and then that of caterpillars. The honey season, however, is the only season of real significance.

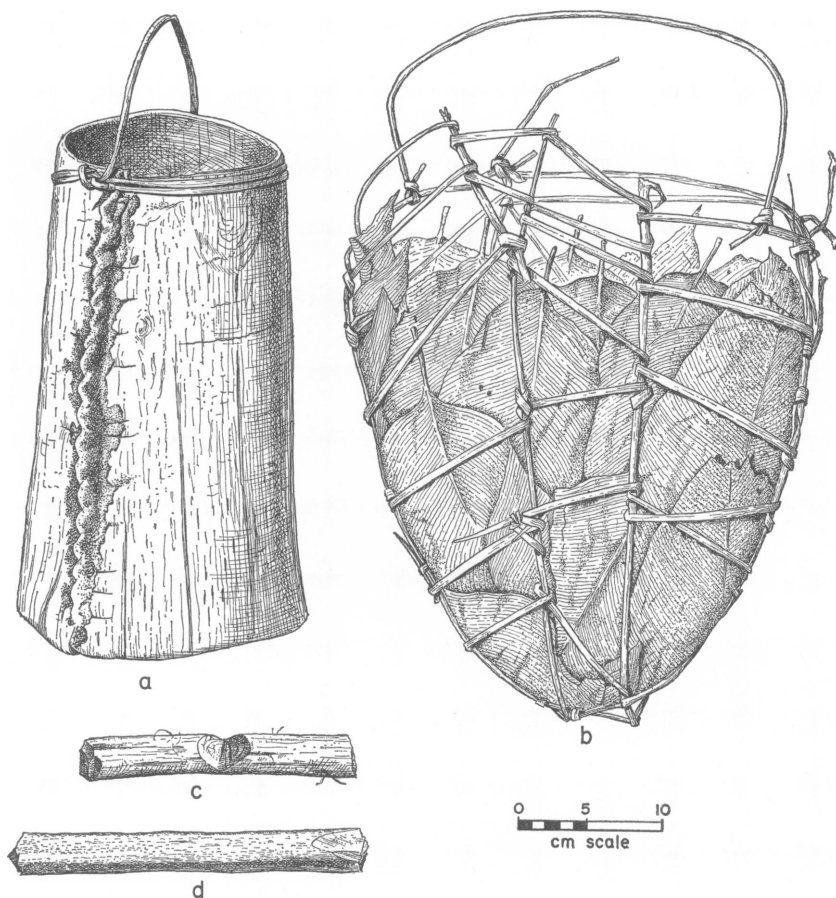


FIG. 43. Gathering equipment, net hunters. a. Bark honey container, *ebimba*, Epulu District, Central Ituri. b. Vine-and-leaf honey container, *apayabisi*, West Nduye District, Central Ituri. Normally the bark container is used, but if the Mbuti come across honey unexpectedly, they improvise a container of leaves supported by vine strands. This may be found among both archers and net hunters. c-d. Clappers, *ngbengbe*, used exclusively by the Mbuti during the honey season to accompany honey songs, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

#### HONEY GATHERING

This is an important and festive season, coming toward the middle of the year. The method of collection is the same as that described by Schebesta (1952, 143-144) for the archers, and is undertaken by men. Women may accompany them, mainly to be sure of getting their share of honey. On such expeditions, and on any other occasion when they are going from one place to another, the women carry baskets on their backs and leave the right arm free to cut roofing leaves and gather mushrooms and roots and other vegetable foods in passing. In the left

hand they carry a smouldering log end wrapped in a phrynium leaf, and they may also carry a baby on the left hip in a sling. Special utensils of Mbuti origin include a bark container (Fig. 32a) sealed with *kasuku* resin, and a fragile vine basket lined with leaves (Fig. 43b). Hardwood rhythm sticks, *ngbengbe* (Fig. 43c), are cut and used during the honey season.

#### DRINKS, NARCOTICS, AND STIMULANTS

The information available is exactly the same as that given by Schebesta for the archers. Pipestems and bowls are borrowed from vil-

lagers, but the net hunters also make a pipe by twisting a bark strip into a cone, lining the end with fire-resistant leaves (Fig. 31b).

#### FOOD RESTRICTIONS

Putnam's information on food restrictions differs from that given for the archers. While there are clan names and clan totems,<sup>1</sup> opinion among the net hunters themselves seems vague as to the exact extent of the restrictions arising from these totems. Probably, if the occasion arose (though the commonest totem animals in this particular group are the leopard and the chimpanzee, not important features of the local diet), a hungry Pygmy would turn a blind eye to the rules of totemism. Putnam says that these rules call for avoidance not only of the animal as well as of its flesh, but also of its favorite food. The animals are not regarded as representing the ancestors themselves but are associated with them in some myth.

Lesser taboos are observed by children until they reach the age of puberty. These, according to the Pygmies themselves, result from the fact that a certain kind of food makes a certain child sick and thenceforth is taboo to it.

There are also certain food restrictions during periods of puberty, pregnancy, and mourning, and others emphasizing the opposition of the sexes. Putnam gives as an example the refusal of men to eat frogs and toads, which women gladly eat, and suggests as a reason the association of the amphibians with water and land, and that they might bring about rainfall adverse to hunting.

#### TRADE

As with the archers, great stress is laid by Putnam on the present dependency of the net hunters on the villager plantations for vegetable food, particularly the plantain. In principle the system is the same as that outlined by Schebesta. Putnam says that the relationship is interfamilial and inherited according to the principle of patrilineal descent. There is no strict account kept of trade, or any system of equivalent values other than mutual satisfaction. But the villager, if displeased, may withhold bananas, and the Pygmy, if not satisfied, may leave and go to hunt with another band attached to another patron. (Putnam uses the term "host.") When

alliances change in this way it is a source of friction between the two village groups involved and was at one time a frequent source of inter-village warfare.

Prior to this trade relationship, however, Putnam stresses the importance of the place of the Pygmies as mercenaries, acting as spies and scouts for warring village tribes. From his inquiries during his first period of field work in 1928 he surmised that throughout the Ituri this had at one time been the major basis of the Mbuti-villager relationship. It necessitated the supply of food by the villager to the Pygmy, as the latter had no time to hunt and gather his own food. When the Belgians put an end to tribal warfare, there was no further need for the Mbuti as mercenaries, resulting in the present trade relationship. The difference between net-hunting Pygmies and those of Schebesta's account, in their relationship with the villagers, is that among the archers the relationship is band to village, a result of the Belgian bolstering of chieftainship, even where it did not exist, for administrative convenience. The village "chief" then chooses to work through a Pygmy "chief" of his own creation. But among the Epulu net hunters, and other central and western groups, in which village tribal structure has not been so greatly affected, the relationship is still, in Putnam's opinion, intensely personal between individual and individual, or family and family. The superficial dissatisfaction manifest between Pygmy and villager over their trade relationship is a result of and symbolizes the present stratification with the villager at the upper end of the scale and hides the inner feelings of loyalty and affection that Putnam says exists between the two groups.

#### SOCIAL LIFE

##### FAMILY ORGANIZATION

For the most part the family organization among the net hunters is the same as that described by Schebesta for the archers, and, as with them, some of the women come from different bands and are strangers to one another. The net hunting camps are larger, however, than those of the archers, and it is seldom that a bride finds herself a total stranger in her new home. Further, because of the differences in hunting technique, cooperative feeling among the women of a net-hunting band is much stronger than that

<sup>1</sup> Very possibly of village origin.



in a band of archers. Women are vital to the hunt and have their own part to play in it. In addition, they must undertake all the duties and responsibilities described by Schebesta: the building and care of the home, gathering vegetable food, and, above all, the raising of a family. Putnam's notes do not give much information on the status of women, but it would seem to be fully as high as that of women among the archers, according to Schebesta, and also proportional, to a certain extent, to their fertility. The net-hunter band has the same responsibilities to its men's womenfolk as does the archer band.

The man, however, spends relatively more time with his wife and family than can an archer. When the band is large enough, several families may stay behind while the others go hunting. On such occasions the womenfolk may go gathering, at which time the men attend to their various chores such as the manufacture of barkcloth, repair of hunting nets, and other specifically male duties, or else the women may find work to do in the camp, in which they are aided by their husbands. The men are good fathers and, contrary to Schebesta's assertion for the archers, take pleasure in looking after their children, playing with them, and amusing them with stories and mime.

The wives never lose their feelings for their own band, and a woman will either invite some of her relatives to visit her, or else will go, with her husband and children, to visit her own family.

The family hut is merely a place for sleeping; all other family activity takes place outside. There is, then, considerable interaction between one family and another. During the evening this applies particularly to the womenfolk, as at this time the men gather in a group by themselves. Family life is anything but private, and a dispute between a husband and his wife is taken up all over the camp. As with the archers, the authority of the mother over her children is fully equal to that of the father, and this is one of the most common sources of quarrel. As boys grow older they tend to spend less time near their hut and more with the men, so they come under the influence of the band rather than the individual family.

There is no information regarding relationships between affines, avoidance or otherwise.

#### DAILY LIFE

The food quest, as with the archers, is the primary concern of daily life among the net hunters. The net hunt is considerably more rewarding than the other form of hunt, although it probably occupies as much time. Care and maintenance of the nets are also laborious and time-consuming. Women gather not only as they accompany the hunt, but also on those days when the hunt stays behind in the camp. The children make a not inconsiderable contribution to the family food quest. A common occupation on a non-hunting day is for men and women to assist each other in the making of twine from *nkusa* vine. This twine is used primarily in the repair of hunting nets.

As with the archers, elimination takes place not far from the camp. Refuse is never carried away; it is merely thrown behind the huts. These practices not merely create an unpleasant smell after some weeks, but also attract armies of ants. The Mbuti themselves, however, keep their bodies scrupulously clean, and the favorite recreation of the children is playing about in the shallow streams. The men assert that they can all swim but are never seen doing so; they are certainly much afraid of deep water.

Games and pastimes are the same as those for the archers, with the addition of a form of spear practice. A large forest fruit is fixed to the end of a vine which is swung around in a circle. Men standing in a group surrounding the swinger throw their spears as the fruit comes past them, dashing in to retrieve the weapons that miss.

Legend telling, like dance and song, is an important medium of expression as well as recreation. Instrumental music among this group of Mbuti is virtually nil. In a hunting camp a *lukembi* (*sanza*) may be heard, a musical bow, and possibly, though rarely, a notched flute. If the camp is near a village the men may borrow or steal a drum for the dance; otherwise, they use sticks as clappers, either shaved at the end to give a flat sound, or left smooth to give a sharp, hollow sound. The women add to the rhythm with handclaps, and both sexes with stampings of the feet.

There are two kinds of secular dance, erotic and imitative, as described by Schebesta. The third kind of dance described for the archers,

the dance through fire, is reserved for special religious occasions among the net hunters. Secular dancing takes place at any time of the day, any day, but nearly always there is dancing in the evening, and, when the moon gives enough light, the dance may continue through most of the night. Except for the religious dances, men, women, and children take part in the dancing together.

Song is even more important to the net hunters. There is not much information in the Putnam material, except that different types of song exist for men and for women and for different occasions, but from my own observations among this group there are, as with dance, clearly two major divisions. One is between secular and sacred, and the other is between songs proper to men and songs proper to women. Certain songs are sung only by members of the men's religious association, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*), and those proper to members of the women's association, the *elima* (Schebesta: *elimo*). Then there are songs for hunting and songs for gathering. Each of these four types of song can be distinguished by its musical form alone, but its performance is not necessarily limited to the appropriate occasion. Thus a *molimo* song may be sung around the campfire in the evening without the *molimo* association's necessarily holding a formal meeting, which would exclude the presence of women. Similarly, honey-gathering songs may be sung well out of honey season. A fifth group, play songs, is associated with children's games and mothers' lullabies.

Singing, dancing, and story telling may continue late into the night unless it is raining. Families retire to their huts as they feel inclined, but throughout the night there is nearly always a small group of men or boys around the main fire, warming themselves or smoking. This is where the bachelors generally sleep.

#### CONCEPTION AND CHILDBIRTH

The general information given by Schebesta for the archers applies to the net hunters also. Putnam has, however, recorded a number of difficult births, and Mrs. Putnam witnessed various measures taken to overcome complications. On one occasion a Pygmy woman was in labor for 36 hours in a village. Villager and Pygmy women came and tried their own individual remedies, including filling the ears and

nose with leaves (Pygmy), making slight cuts on the stomach, arms, and knees and rubbing in herbal medicines (villager), and rubbing the stomach with cold water (both Pygmy and villager). While these activities were going on, children were playing about and running in and out of the hut where the pregnant woman was kept. Finally, the woman in labor, who, though in great pain, had never uttered a word of complaint was made to sit on a log, while one woman sat behind her and held her up, and another in front massaged the infant out. During the whole period of labor the woman's father and her husband were with her constantly. It was agreed that her difficulties resulted from her having broken a food taboo and eaten the flesh of an anteater.<sup>1</sup>

Another aid used by the Pygmy woman during childbirth is described by Anne Putnam (1954, 165). The girl in labor is given one end of a liana to hold; the other end is tied to a tree. Each time the pains start, the girl pulls on the liana as her friends massage her stomach.

If no foster mother is available, an infant whose mother dies during childbirth is fed banana water, supplied by the villagers, through a leaf funnel. When an infant is in such danger, the juice from a certain liana is sprinkled over it to make it strong.

A woman who has given birth is not allowed to leave her hut until game has fallen into her husband's net. If the camp is moved before this happens, she is hidden in the bush and taken separately to the new camp where she is kept hidden until her new hut is built for her by relatives (not stated which relatives). The husband himself may not join the hunt but sends his net with another member of the group.

The father keeps the arrow that cut the umbilical cord, and the cord itself, until the child is old enough to throw them both away into the forest.

If no animal falls into the husband's net (the rule is extended usually to include some close relative's net) for some weeks, the mother and infant may be brought out of seclusion by the giving of a feast to her relatives. The baby is then shaved with an arrowpoint, bathed, rubbed with oil and red *nkula* paste, and bands

<sup>1</sup> Note that this took place in a village, where such supernatural explanations are always sought by villagers. It is doubtful that the same explanation would have been given in the forest context.

of barkcloth are sewed around its arms and knees. The father and mother are now freed of most restrictions, but neither may eat meat until the baby can crawl. The exact extent of restrictions on sexual relations<sup>1</sup> during this period is not given by Putnam.

Putnam emphasizes the normality of child-birth itself, despite the possibility of ensuing complications such as those described above from Anne Putnam's personal observation. The woman makes no allowance for her condition and may actually be moving from one camp to another when her time comes, in which case she gives birth to the child and then moves on (Putnam, 1948, 339). There is no ritual recognition of the birth of a child. Naming takes place only after some weeks when the infant has shown that it "has come to stay." If it dies before it has been named, there is no particular ceremony and little mourning except by the mother. There is a great deal of fostering and adoption, according to Putnam (1948, 340), particularly between sisters and women who are friends and who work together. When a woman with young children dies, her sister takes her girls and young boys and looks after the girls until they are marriageable; the father

looks after the boys as soon as they are old enough to join him on the hunt. Fostering and adoption may also take place if a mother is without milk, or if one woman is childless and a baby is born to a friend or relative who already has a large family.

#### TWINS

There is no information available, except that twins have been born and survived, and that the phenomenon of Siamese twins is known. It is believed that to separate them is to kill them.

#### POSTNATAL CARE AND ADOLESCENCE

As with the archers, infants among net hunters are given every care and attention. They are breast-fed until after they can walk and talk. It seems, however, that mothers of this group are much more prone than the archer women to leave their children with sisters or close friends for short periods. A great deal of freedom is allowed the infant when it begins to crawl, and it may well be playing with sharp knives, bows and arrows, and trying to climb trees before it can walk. When a camp is moved, an infant is carried either on the hip of its mother or older sister or in a hide sling (Fig. 44) across the hip.

The children, as they grow older, tend to play together, frequently away from the camp.

<sup>1</sup> Again it must be stressed that many such restrictions are part of the village system, and, although the Mbuti may claim to follow them, such adherence is likely to be far from rigid.

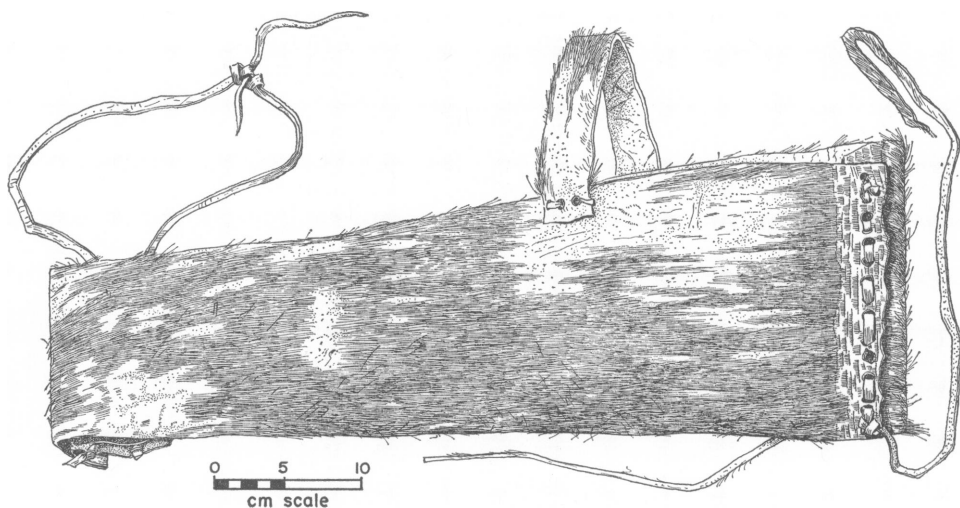


FIG. 44. Baby-carrying sling, *koko*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. The sling is used relatively rarely and usually only on long treks on which the women will also be carrying loads. Otherwise, the baby is sat on the hip and is held loosely by one arm.

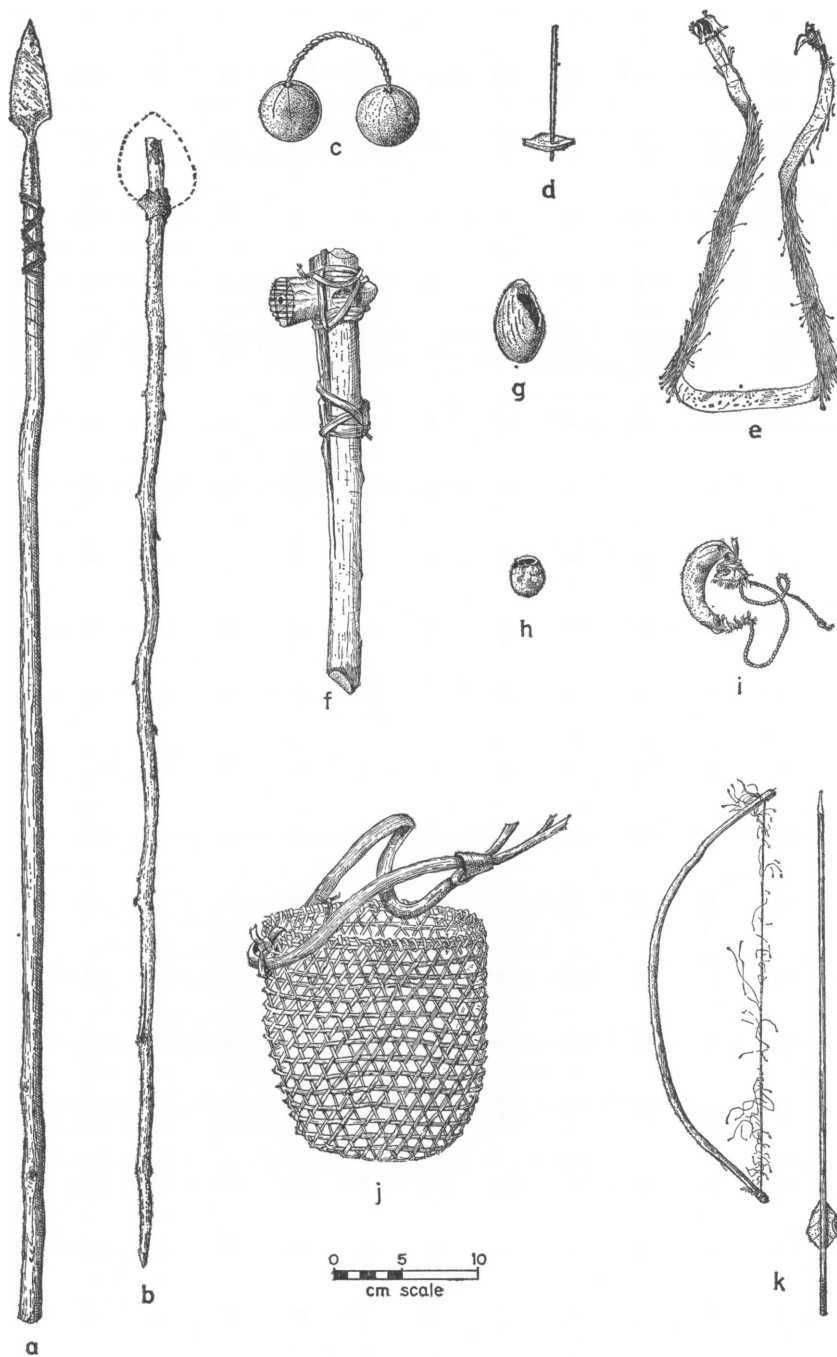


FIG. 45. Toys, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Spear, *ekonga*. b. Fire spear, *iswakamaboki*. c. Castanets, *kolokbenje*. d. Top, *tokiya*. e. Baby sling, *koko*. f. Bark beater, *kolea*. g-h. Seed whistles, *pho'u*. i. Wrist protector, *asuba*. j. Basket, *so*. k. Bow, *mange*, and arrow, *api*.

One of their favorite sports is fishing, for which they use small wooden floats with a piece of vine attached, similar to that described by Burrows (1898). Later they split into groups according to sex as well as age. The boys, until they are allowed to take part in the hunt itself, carry out imitation hunts around the camp. Even at this age, however, and after undergoing the *nkumbi* initiation, they are still under the authority of their mothers. Unlike the information given by Schebesta for the archers, the boys in a net-hunting band do not break completely away from their mothers until they become full hunters, which may be as much as two or more years after their *nkumbi*.

Education is through imitation, and both boys and girls have miniature hunting-and-gathering utensils and may, in addition, make miniature replicas of any adult possession (Fig. 45).

#### INITIATION: *elima*

The first difference between Putnam's material and that of Schebesta regarding initiation is that among the net hunters there is a form of initiation of girls known as *elima*. Schebesta believes this to be a village custom (*elimo*), but no details are available for comparison. Data on the Mbuti *elima* come mainly from Anne Putnam's notes on several such festivals that she witnessed among the Epulu net hunters. She was unable to get full information, but states that the *elima* (her spelling: *alima*) is held as girls come to the age of puberty—either individually or jointly. At such time the girl, with some of her companions (unmarried girls and those whose breasts had begun to form), enters the *elima* house, a special hut built in the camp in the usual way but larger and with a partition down the middle. The *elima* hut is in the care of one of the old women in the camp, who is also in charge of the instruction of the menstruating girl.

The *elima* lasts about a month. During this time the *elima* girls put on the vine circlets over their heads and under each shoulder (as worn by boy initiates) and paint their faces and bodies with white clay about twice a day, making designs on one another without, apparently, any particular convention. They go out of the camp together to collect vine and wood, also to collect roots and small pieces of wood that will make good ammunition. At

sundown they return to their hut, which they enter, and start singing the special *elima* songs taught to the new initiates by the old woman in charge. The women of the camp sit outside and also sing, having armed themselves with whips made from the vine brought by the girls.

The menstruating girl will have sent word to her lover, who may be of the same band but must be of a different lineage. He must fight his way into the hut, through the women armed with whips and against the shower of missiles hurled at him by the girls of the *elima*. In the old days, say the Mbuti, the fighting used to be serious, and sometimes people were killed. The young man, if successful in gaining admission, had to pay an ax for the privilege of deflowering his maiden. He remained with her all night. The next day he was bound with vine and kept a prisoner in the *elima* hut until evening. He was then washed and rubbed with ashes and allowed to leave.

From then onward any eligible young man (i.e., not of the same lineage as the girl) could try his luck. If he happened to be the husband of one of the women guarding the hut, she could claim compensation from him. The women guardians also could make it easy or difficult for the candidates, according to their inclinations. Any man, having fought his way through, had to secure the girl's permission before he slept with her. But reliable Mbuti informants reported that a large number merely fought for the prestige acquired and sought no intercourse with the girls. Outwardly, there is no change, except that instead of firing arrows from their bows the men fire fruit peel, and the fighting is less severe than that described in the tales of olden times. Exactly what happens inside the hut is not known, but the festival is evidently an opportunity for young men to prove their valor, and for young maidens to prove their womanliness, each one attesting to his or her readiness for marriage. There is unfortunately no evidence as to how far the opening of the *elima* constitutes a betrothal, nor how frequently it is followed by marriage.

During the course of the *elima* the girls are under certain food restrictions, which include a prohibition on all meat. *Elima* singing goes on all night. Presumably, as with the *nkumbi* initiation of boys, this is a period of discipline as well as of education. Apart from the special *elima* songs, apparently special dances are

taught to the *elima* initiates. In one such dance witnessed by Mrs. Putnam, the girls held arrows and cut one another, and the women struck them with whips.

There is no information from the Putnam material as to any particular ceremony to mark the end of the *elima* (but see Turnbull, 1960a, 198 ff.).

#### INITIATION: *nkumbi*

Putnam's notes on the initiation of boys concern a net-hunting band and are particularly interesting, as they describe an initiation that occurred in the Bira village of Kokonyange in 1935, 14 years before Schebesta witnessed an initiation among the same group. It is significant that Putnam makes no mention of *karé* brotherhood between Pygmy and village boys.

For male initiation among the particular Epulu net hunters we are dealing with, I have only my own field notes,<sup>1</sup> and here again there is no mention of *karé* brotherhood (Turnbull, 1957). The full details of the ceremony do not concern us, as they vary from one village to another. It is important, however, to compare the relationship between the net-hunting Mbuti and the Bira villagers with that between the archers and the Lese, with regard to initiation.

The first *nkumbi* of which I saw something was in 1951 at the village of Effundi Somali. I saw only a part and the final closing ceremony. Although I may well have missed much detail, it is unlikely that I would have missed anything of the nature of a *karé* relationship had one existed. There was certainly no sign of it. The next *nkumbi*, which took place in 1954 at Camp Putnam, was exceptional in that no village boys of the right age were available, so only Mbuti boys were initiated. Thus, there was no question of *karé* relationship between them and villagers, but also, during the entire course of the *nkumbi*, I heard no mention of it. This, together with Putnam's own silence on the subject, would seem to indicate that this relationship is either not so widespread or not so important as Schebesta assumes.

The peculiar circumstances of the 1954 *nkumbi* are given briefly here. Though exceptional, they contain some interesting points for

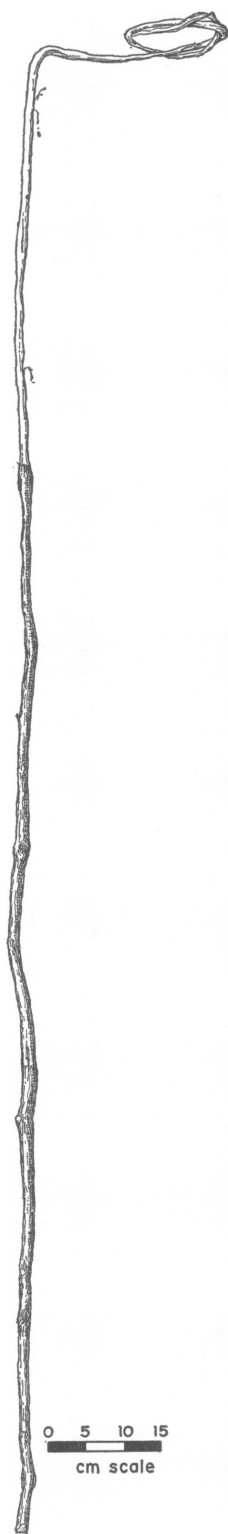
comparison with the *nkumbi* as described by Schebesta for the archers.

In the Epulu region the *nkumbi* takes place every three years. It is organized and conducted throughout by the villagers, who invite the Mbuti to take part. The first part of the year, from the dry season onward, is considered most suitable. On this particular occasion there were no village boys of the right age, but the villagers (Bira and Ndaka) went ahead with the arrangements as usual. The fact that only Pygmy boys were to be initiated made no difference to the celebrations, which were conducted in the village with full enthusiasm, bringing villagers from as far as 50 miles away. Villagers allowed themselves to be beaten with long sapling whips (Fig. 46) "to give strength" to the Mbuti candidates.

After a week of preliminary festivities, on the day of the first circumcision, the *makata* sticks (a set of eight or nine resonant sticks tuned to a specific scale) were cut and sounded. The *makata* are heard only during a period of initiation and are destroyed simultaneously with the initiation camp at the end of the festival. Villagers and Pygmies joined in a dance with the *makata*, while others went into the forest a short distance to make a clearing for the initiation camp. While some started erecting the hut, in the style of a bent-over windshield, others prepared a horizontal cross bar between two trees. Five boys were circumcised the first day, and three on separate days during the second week of the *nkumbi*. Not all were cut on the cross bar. Some were taken down to a stream. One was circumcised in the middle of the village; another, in a different place within the initiation camp. The cutting was done to the accompaniment of much drumming, while all the womenfolk of the village were shut up in their huts. No signal was given to indicate when a boy had been cut, though probably the change in the vigor of the drumming and *makata* beating served to notify the women. Only one boy was given a *segbe* pipe to blow, by a particularly superstitious father. The "doctor" wore a mask made of a thin strip of bark (Fig. 48a) and raffia armbands (Fig. 47a) which were thereafter left hanging from the roof of the initiation hut.

After the circumcision, the wounds were dressed, and the boys immediately were made to begin to learn the initiation songs. Far from

<sup>1</sup> These covered my visits to the Ituri in 1951 and 1954-1955 only.



being confined to their beds for three days, as mentioned by Schebesta (1952), they were made to move about continually by the villager instructors. The boys' fathers, who were present at all times, frequently comforted their sons, apparently to the annoyance of the villagers. There was, however, no question of the savagery implied by Schebesta. During the following two months the boys were strictly disciplined. There was a process of physical training that was undeniably tough, but it fulfilled only one of the major purposes of the *nkumbi*, namely, to fit boys for adult life. The Mbuti fathers, however, obviously had different ideas as to how far this discipline should be carried and criticized the villagers when they carried it too far. Further, when there were no villagers in the camp, the Mbuti talked quite openly and showed by their speech and their behavior that they had no respect for the taboos associated with the festival. It seemed quite evident that they consciously underwent the *nkumbi*, not because of any religious significance, but because it gave them status in villager society, in which any uncircumcised youth is a laughing stock. The important thing, then, was the circumcision, for this specific purpose.

Further, unlike the initiation described by Schebesta, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*) trumpet did not appear during the entire festival, nor was it mentioned. The initiation here seems to be almost completely dissociated from the men's religious association, at least as far as the Mbuti are concerned. The only instruments that were used were the *makata* sticks, small clappers used by the women in their dances during this period, and a bull-roarer (which the boys knew about, though in front of the villagers they pretended otherwise). There was nothing at any time in the ceremony itself, or in the instruction, to connect the *nkumbi* with the Mbuti *molimo* society. Toward the end of the initiation the boys were dressed in grass skirts (Fig. 47) and paraded through the village with leaf masks (Fig. 48b) held between their teeth to prevent them from talking to non-initiates. After the final cere-

FIG. 46. Initiation whip, *mbaka*, Bira villagers, Central Ituri.

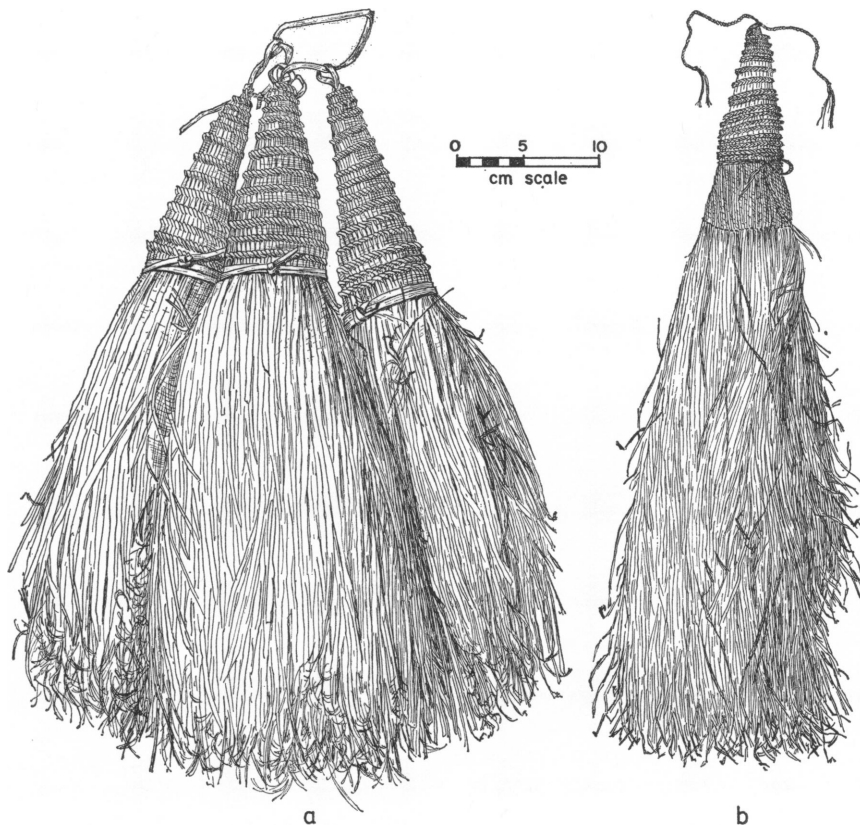


FIG. 47. Initiation items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Raffia armbands, worn by "doctor" during *nkumbi* dances; at other times, hung from the roof of the initiation hut. b. Grass skirt, worn by initiates at final presentation dance.

mony the boys returned to their hunting band and resumed their previous status.

Among the net hunters the Mbuti boys do not participate fully in the proceedings of the *molimo* society until they have proved their prowess as hunters. Putnam does not mention any such elaborate ceremony as that described by Schebesta for the archers, to mark the killing of his first game by a youth, but such an event is simply received among the net hunters with much acclaim and, if possible, feasting and dancing. It may also be accompanied by the cutting of the tattoo marks on the boy's forehead.

It seems that with the net hunters the *nkumbi* serves merely to give status in villager society. The Mbuti have different forms of initiation into the religious associations of their own men and women; the *molimo* and *elima*, respectively. They are, at least, forms of initiation practiced

apart from the villagers, whatever the origin of the actual ceremonies.

#### MARRIAGE

Putnam is able to cite several cases of conflict over marriage, proposed or accomplished, and while such conflict may secondarily be between two lineages, it is primarily between the hunting band (whether it composes a single lineage or more than one) and the individual concerned. Putnam mentions neither arranged marriages nor the betrothal of infants, although there may be bands with whom marriage is preferred. The net-hunting Mbuti themselves simply say "the further away the better," referring to geographical distance. Kinship distance means little to them, though all cite general rules of bilateral lineage exogamy.

Putnam says that the hunting band is meant to be an exogamous unit, but that in



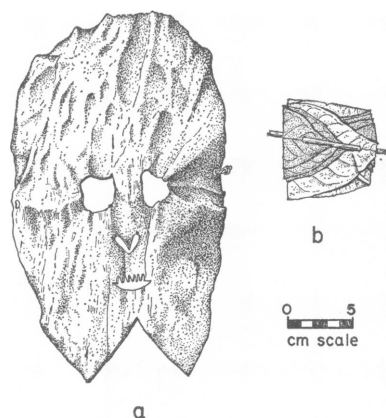


FIG. 48. Initiation masks, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Bark mask, worn by Bira and Ndaka initiators during the preliminary *nkumbi* dances. b. Leaf mouth-mask, worn in mouth of initiates when paraded through village.

fact marriages within the band occur and are in fact often favored as they can be arranged without any ceremony. Ceremony occurs, he says, only when a marriage involves two different bands. Intra-band marriage is made possible, even within the bounds of lineage exogamy, by the practice of maintaining a number of "resident aliens." A net-hunting camp, always

larger than that of archers, may not only be comprised of two or more different lineages but will also nearly always include a number of visitors who may originally have come to visit female relatives and who, for one reason or another, settled permanently. Putnam also mentions the frequency of adoption and foster-parenthood. While he says an Mbuti will never knowingly marry another related to him on either side (he does not give the degree of relationship), he has no qualms when only social parenthood is involved.

A further advantage to marriage within the band is that it does not immediately upset the economic balance, so provides a loophole in the usual requirements of exchange marriage. Putnam does not say, however, exactly what the economic status is in the band of resident alien families or of the offspring resulting from intermarriage between them and other band members. From what can be observed and from cases cited, common residence seems to be the most significant factor.

Living as he does in the present, the most important consideration for the Mbuti is the present constitution of the band. Absent members of the band, regardless of lineage, are soon forgotten as economic members, though lineal ties will be remembered for as long as any Mbuti remembers such ties (not more than three generations). Consequently, the question of economic allegiance among the net hunters does not arise even for the first generation resident aliens, let alone for their offspring. Any considerations that do arise are invariably connected with the relationship between the individual family and its villager host. When an Mbuti changes his residence, he automatically changes his allegiance to the local villagers who act as patrons of his new band. The villager, on the other hand, does not so easily adjust himself to losing a Pygmy. He tries by threats and bribery to get the Pygmy back to his own district but, failing that, will take action against the newly adopted villager patron.

It is plain that the band as an economic unit is the effective unit for net-hunting Mbuti, and that its welfare, together with individual inclination, should be the prime concern when a question of marriage arises. When the marriage is within the band and there is no immediate change in its economic constitution, there is no concern, providing the general niceties of

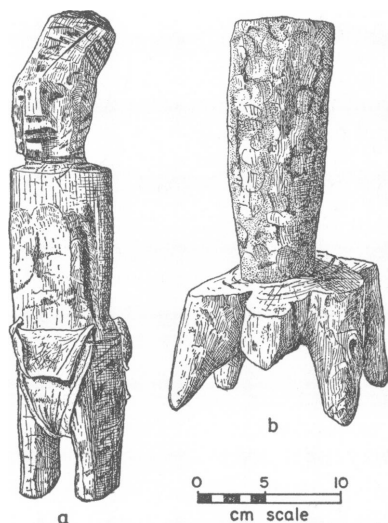


FIG. 49. Wood carvings, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Carving of standing male. b. Carving of tree. Such carving is done by the Mbuti extremely rarely and only in direct imitation of the villager carvers.

exogamy have been observed. When it is between two bands, then the Mbuti prefer them to be as far apart as possible. The trouble they envisage in a marriage with a member of a nearby band is friction between themselves and the village patron of the incoming bride. He will constantly assert every claim he has, or thinks he has, to her services, even to her children when she revisits her own band. As far as the two Mbuti bands are concerned, such a marriage would be on an exchange basis, thus maintaining the economic balance of each band. If the groom's band cannot find a suitable girl to offer, his mother's band may be asked to find one. There is always the alternative of compensation or service, or both. For compensation the help of the village patron is usually sought, and the marriage is arranged by him. Such marriages are usually subject, in the first place, to the normal Mbuti custom, which involves no ceremony other than a mutually agreeable exchange and a token offering of gifts, such as a few arrows. But it is also subject to settlement between the two villagers involved. This is formally accomplished by having a ceremony in the village according to village custom. [Both Putnam (MS) and Schebesta (1952, 238) mention the possibility of exchanging two brides rather than of effecting a "purchase."] Such ceremonies, belonging to the villager rather than the Mbuti, need not concern us here. It is worth noting, however, that, as with the village ceremony of *nkumbi* initiation, the Mbuti undergo the village marriage ceremony merely as a matter of convenience. They pay no attention to its magical or religious significance, or to the taboos that would fall upon any villagers undergoing the same ceremony (though they may pay lip service to them in the presence of their patron). Further, even during such a villager ceremony, the Mbuti have their own way of consecrating the union, both by introducing a dance with forest leaves, associated with the *elima* (the women's religious association), and by the singing of *elima* songs. In this way the young bride from the distant band is introduced to the association of her female companions-to-be.

It is unlikely that the bride will be a complete stranger to the band, but even if so, she will be immediately befriended and will have willing helpers to make her first few days of

married life free from the normal household chores.

Unlike Schebesta's description of passionate lovers who, as married couples, in no way exhibit their affection in public, both premarital and postmarital sexual relations among the net hunters seem equally open, if not quite equally free. Flirtations among unmarried boys and girls of the same band, providing again they do not openly flout exogamic convention and do not result in childbirth, arouse no interest among the adults other than casual gossip. Married women, while as incorrigibly flirtatious as ever, are not expected to have sexual intercourse with any but their husbands. On the other hand, no social convention prevents the husband from having sexual intercourse with unmarried girls, though he does so with care to avoid unpleasantness with his wife.

After marriage the affection between the young husband and his bride is no less open than before marriage. An estimation of any degree of affection necessarily depends on one's own attitude, but Schebesta's description of "passion" and "ardor" would hardly be applicable to the net-hunting Mbuti; "determination" would perhaps describe the situation better. Initial flirtations that lead to marriage openly change in character from relations on a purely sexual basis to a more intimate relationship of companionship, which is manifest by the way young grooms behave toward their brides and even older men to their wives.

#### DIVORCE

Divorce is achieved as informally as marriage, whether the union dissolved involves just the one or two bands. It is usually initiated, says Putnam (1948, 337), by the woman's simply packing her household goods into her basket and leaving with her children. In such a case, the sons, when old enough, return to their father and the daughters remain with their mother until married. Such a divorce may well upset the complementary marriage if it is a marriage by exchange. Such a dispute almost certainly involves the village patrons, who may finally be called upon to settle it between themselves, the patron of the happily married Mbuti making a compensatory payment to the patron claiming the return of that Mbuti's bride.

Polygyny exists but is almost as inconsiderable as among the archers. It sometimes comes about through the very informality of divorce. A husband who has been deserted, having made every effort to retrieve his wife, seeks another. After remarrying in this way, he may find that he still misses his old companion and will try to woo her back, or she may return of her own accord. There is no information as to the relationship between the two wives, except that they have separate huts and that there is no open friction.

#### WIDOWHOOD

Information on widowhood, though not given in detail by Putnam, seems to correspond to the general information given by Schebesta for the archers. Widows tend to remain in their late husbands' band and are cared for by their children unless they remarry. Aged widowers are similarly provided for. But even widows and widowers too old to remarry can play a useful economic role by attending to various chores in camp when the entire band is out hunting, helping in the constant manufacture of *nkusa* twine and barkcloth, and by looking after small children.

#### DEATH, FUNERALS, AND MOURNING

Burial is the custom among the net hunters, as with the archers. In general it follows the same pattern, taking place inside or immediately beside the hut of the deceased; the hut is pulled down over the grave and the camp deserted immediately. No weapons, utensils, ornaments, or food are buried with the corpse. Nor is there any attempt to find the cause of death and to place the blame.

Most deaths occur from causes easily understandable to the Pygmy. Infection is rare. Pneumonia and dysentery are the major fatal illnesses. The greatest single cause of accidental mortality is a fall from a tree (the trees are of great height, with few low branches to break a fall). Other possible and not infrequent causes of accidental death include the falling of dead branches on top of huts, which may kill several people at one time. Death through burning may occur owing to the habit Pygmies have of getting up at night to relieve themselves, then squatting down almost on top of the fire to get warm. At such times they smoke strong tobacco, which they inhale deeply and sometimes faint as a result, falling into the fire.

Far less important than disease or accidental death is animal hostility—elephants, buffalo, and leopards being the major sources of danger. It is extremely rare for any Pygmy to be killed by one of these animals. The net-hunting Mbuti have effective medicines against poisonous snakes.

For most illnesses, says Putnam, the Pygmy can find a local remedy. For stomach upsets and diarrhea an enema (a hollow reed with a gourd gummed to one end) is administered, with the use of vegetable decoctions containing *gorogoro* bark for the former complaint, and *tebuo* liana for the latter. These enemas are also used to produce abortions. For ailments that they are unable to cure and that are foreign to them, some may seek the help of a villager witch doctor, though Mbuti opinion varies as to their efficiency.

Death, then, is accepted as just as natural a phenomenon as birth, and the body is accorded little ritual respect. There are, unlike Schebesta's account for the archers, cited examples of wailing. The following instances taken from the notes of Anne Putnam illustrate its extent.

1. A Pygmy who had been visiting another band returned to his own camp and reported that a cousin of his had died. A wailing, suddenly started, was taken up, mostly by women but also by men and children, all over the camp. It lasted for 10 minutes and was repeated several times during the evening for five minutes at a time. Everyone went to sleep as usual; there was a final wail on waking the next morning.

2. A newborn infant (son of one of the most important hunters in the band) died at night. Only its father and mother wailed. Early in the morning the parents dug a pit in the house and buried the baby, wrapped in a small mat, with no ceremony. The next morning the couple dismantled the house and, using the same material, rebuilt it on the other side of the clearing. That night the father danced as usual.

3. An old Mbuti woman died while visiting the village. She was the mother of three of the male members of the band. Most of her relatives were with her when she died, and they wailed. When the news was received back in the hunting camp, such of her relatives as remained there wailed. Only one of them, one of the great hunters of the band, left to attend the burial.

4. There was an epidemic in a hunting camp,

and two people died. After burial and wailing, camp was broken. On the march to another site a woman who had not contracted the illness died, although she was not "ready to die." Within two weeks a woman gored by a buffalo (an extremely rare occurrence) died from her wounds. Following this last event, there was a consultation, and it was suggested that the band should disperse as there was some strong influence at work.<sup>1</sup> However, the dispersal did not take place.

5. A very well-liked hunter died while in the village. There was some talk that a half-paralyzed Pygmy, also a member of the band, had put a curse on him; but this in no way impaired the friendship between the accused and the children of the deceased. When the Pygmy was dying, his son wanted to take him back to the forest but was persuaded to let him die in the village in peace. His family and friends were present; those in the hut wailed occasionally, those outside were busy cooking. When he died the wailing broke out anew, and relatives started coming into the village from the forest. His villager patron could not come, so he sent his brother, the headman of a village a few miles away. There was some suggestion that the Mbuti should be buried in the village of his patron, but the eldest son refused and said that the forest was his father's "earth," and this was where he should be buried.

The grave was dug by Mbuti and villagers, about 4 feet deep, with half of it 1½ feet deeper. The body was placed in the deep section, on its side, facing north, covered with sticks and phrynium leaves. Then everyone threw in earth and filled the grave. The women at the funeral became hysterical at this point, falling to the ground and beating themselves. The dead man's second wife tried to throw herself into the grave on top of the body. When the grave was filled, everyone sat down and talked and smoked. The youngest son of the deceased had been playing around quite happily all the time. After smoking, villagers and Mbuti all washed their hands and feet in a nearby stream.

Both Patrick and Anne Putnam claim that there is, among the Epulu Mbuti, formal and controlled wailing, also wailing as a manifestation of genuine grief among both men and women. Men and women will weep apart during

the official wailing, as well as before or after it.

Anne Putnam (1954, 77) mentions the opinion of a Pygmy hunter concerning the village custom of burying the dead in a cemetery. He is reported as saying, "There the ground locks everyone's arms together and it isn't comfortable."

She also refers (1954, 81) to village speech-making following a burial, during which the cause of the death is hinted at. On one occasion, the death of a young Pygmy girl in the village, the villagers attributed the calamity to the evil-eye and roused a relative of the girl to vow vengeance. The next morning, however, the Pygmies all went hunting, despite the assurance of the villagers that it was dangerous to go hunting for three days after any death and that no game would fall into their nets. Four antelope were caught.

#### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The relationship between the net-hunting band, or between individual members of it, and village patrons is dealt with separately. It has already been mentioned that Putnam speaks of its current foundation in trade, and of how the joint *nkumbi*, unlike that of the archers, seems not to have the same significance for villager and Mbuti. For the villager it is a tribal initiation in its usual sense and with its usual implications; for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is a means of acquiring status in an alien community. It does not seem to initiate both into identical social or religious associations, such as the *toré* society described by Schebesta (1952, 278).

Also, there is no evidence of blood brotherhood or of a *karé* relationship between villagers and net hunters. When we deal with religious associations among the net hunters, we deal with exclusively Mbuti associations. This is not to deny that a close relationship exists between an Mbuti and his villager patron, which, in fact, Putnam stresses; nor does it deny the fact that Mbuti may be invited to take part in the meetings of villager associations, and that villagers may conversely be invited to take part in the meetings of Mbuti associations (though information on joint meetings is lacking). All our material deals with exclusive meetings of the *elima* and *molimo*, as held by the Mbuti women and men, respectively.

Information on the *elima* is scant; there is no evidence of any ritual other than the singing of

<sup>1</sup> Suggestions of this kind are sometimes made by the Mbuti in their village context, in imitation of the villagers. They by no means necessarily indicate Mbuti belief.

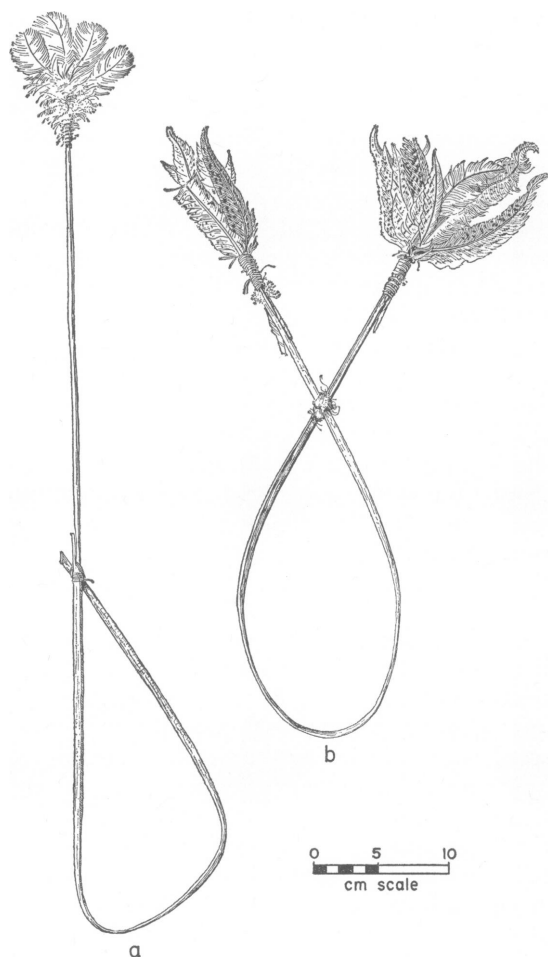


FIG. 50. a-b. Headdresses, *salakuku*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Made of vine and feathers, at will, and worn during *molimo* dances. Similar headdresses may occasionally be worn by village women during their *nkumbi* dances.

special *elima* songs by initiated girls and women, to mark any event of special importance to the womenfolk of the camp. The *elima* is an association that serves to bind women of otherwise different backgrounds together. It not only emphasizes their unity as a group opposed to the group of men, but also emphasizes their identification with the hunting band as a whole. It serves as a means of religious expression for the women just as the *molimo* does for the men. It operates separately, but simultaneously, on occasions of common religious significance. Unfortunately, details are lacking in the Putnam material as to the exact occasions on which each of these associations functions.

Unlike the *molimo*, however, the *elima* usually calls for the joint participation of men and women both in song and in dance, which in this context are essentially means of religious expression. This joint participation is in no way connected with that aspect of the *elima* that involves the formal deflowering of the young maiden.

The *molimo*, as practiced by the net hunters, both from the Putnam material and from my own field notes, is strikingly different in manifestation from the description given by Schebesta (1952, 278) of the archers' *toré* association. I mention above the fact that the Putnam material places far more weight on the religious than on the social function of the *molimo*. We have also seen that participation in the *nkumbi* does not necessarily entitle the young Mbuti to take part in the *molimo* proceedings. The *molimo* is essentially an association of adult males; an adult male is a hunter, and one does not become a hunter by being circumcised and learning a number of village songs and dances. The physical discipline and training in the *nkumbi* camp undoubtedly toughen the body, and the boy emerges, even after a short *nkumbi* of two months' duration, very much more adult than on his entry (see my separate account, 1957, of the *nkumbi*). But as far as the Mbuti are concerned, he is still a child, until he has proved himself a hunter. As he grows older, he is allowed to sit with the men in the evenings and gradually to take part in their conversation and some of their activities. He may even be allowed to sit nearby as they sing songs of the *molimo*, but not to take full part. Mrs. Putnam, however, believes that the *nkumbi* does entitle the boy to partial membership, at least, in the *molimo*. She holds this opinion because of her personal knowledge that certain boys who previously were secluded with the womenfolk in their huts during *molimo* proceedings, as she was herself, were not secluded following their *nkumbi* initiation. As a woman, however, she was unable to witness the *molimo* itself, except for some dances she caught sight of by chance. My own material indicates that anyone who has been acclaimed as a hunter is allowed to take full part in the association's proceedings and that there are *nkumbi* initiates who are not considered as hunters and who are definitely barred from full participation. The Putnam material demonstrates the close relation of hunting skill

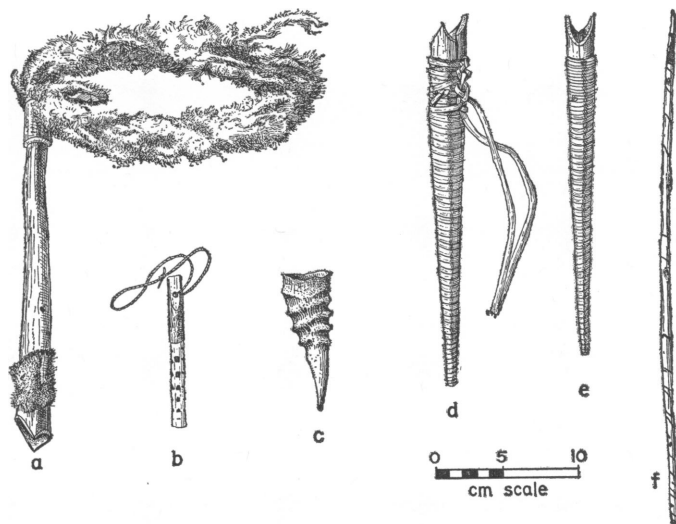


FIG. 51. Magical paraphernalia, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Pipe, *akbelea*, attached to fur headband; worn by a few net hunters, the pipe sometimes being blown before they set out on a hunt. b. Wooden whistle, *angbelu*. c. Antelope horn, *anjo*, used to carry paste sometimes smeared on the face to heighten the senses of smell, sound, and sight. d. Honey whistle, *madé*, used during the honey season for "calling" the honey. e. Honey whistle, *madé*. f. Hunting whistle, *manyongé*, found in northwest area; stuck in the ground near a special hunting fire in the camp and pointing in the direction in which the hunt has gone.

to status in the band and the fact that young men, as yet unmarried, who have displayed particular prowess as hunters may take a prominent part in *molimo* activities. In the absence of any detailed information on formal initiation into the *molimo*, we can at least say with some certainty, from the available material, that among the net hunters membership is associated primarily with hunting skill.

With regard to the proceedings of the association, all reports from this district indicate that the *molimo* is held only on occasions of the greatest importance to the community: various crises, and particularly death. A fuller account is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1960b, 307–340); a summary is given here.

The word *molimo* is used to denote the association, its proceedings, and a musical instrument. Only one instrument is reported by the Putnams as being used—the *molimo* trumpet. But Anne Putnam, in her notes, mentions having heard the trumpet one night and thinking that it sounded very different from the one she had heard some months previously. It is possi-

ble then that there may be different types of instrument, but evidently not used in conjunction. Anne Putnam further mentions having heard sounds that she took to be animal sounds but that may in fact have been singing pots as described by Schebesta (1952, 279). The only instrument that she or her husband mentions, however, is the trumpet, and no description of it is given.

This instrument is an essential part of the proceedings; its use marks the difference between two grades of *molimo* meeting. A meeting in which the trumpet is not used does not carry the significance that one with the trumpet does. There is no information as to exactly when it is used and when not, but it is recorded that the trumpet is heard during meetings following death, during serious illness, or during some crisis affecting the welfare of the band as a whole. It is frequently associated with song, accompanied by split-stick clappers, *banja* (Fig. 52) that are apparently peculiar to the *molimo*.

A third grade of meeting is that from which women and children are not excluded, during

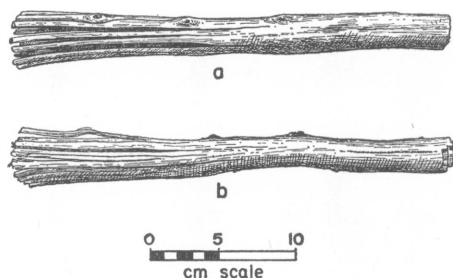


FIG. 52. Split clappers, *banja*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

which *molimo* songs may or may not be sung. Such a meeting may be said to be religious, in that it is known by all that the songs effect some kind of communion with the God of the Forest, but they are not held with any specific purpose. After an evening meal the men sit together around the main fire, talking and smoking. The subject of conversation may take a serious turn, or there may simply be a long silence during which one or another of the men starts singing. In either case someone quite spontaneously starts singing a *molimo* song, and the others join in. At such times the women and children remain sitting, as is their habit, around their individual fires outside their huts; they are not expected to retire to their huts. Only if the singing develops a certain turn do they retreat. They know that certain songs have more significance than others, and, on hearing these, they retire. It is unusual, however, for an ordinary meeting of the men to develop to this extent.

Usually the trumpet is heard at about the time the band normally retires for the night. The women in any case have been aware of whatever crisis is the occasion for the meeting and are prepared for it. On hearing the trumpet, they take their children and shut themselves in their huts. None will come out, even to cross the clearing. The men sit close together around one of the fires. As they sing, the *molimo* trumpet echoes their song, sometimes coming close, sometimes going far away into the forest. The *molimo* may come right into the camp itself and install itself, unseen, close to where the men are sitting. At a given point the men may suddenly start dancing through the fire, scattering the ashes and cinders to all sides. Shortly afterwards the participants go to bed. The singing may last only two or three hours, or may con-

tinue until first light, according to the Putnam material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory for all members to attend, and those who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors in the camp also take part if they qualify as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village men and women during initiation festivities. Putnam says that food may be prepared for the men by a woman (it is not known who), but that she never appears and has no other function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory but are mainly repetitions of one or other of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations of his goodness and omnipotence. The songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly to restore the normality to a community which in some way or another has deviated.

There is, however, some evidence that indicates another usage of the *molimo* society, more in accord with Schebesta's interpretation of its social function. Anne Putnam reports having once been in a hunting camp when there was some commotion, fairly early in the evening, and the women shouted that the *molimo* was coming. All the women and children promptly fled to their huts and shut themselves in, with much loud complaining. Shortly afterward, the trumpet was heard in the distance and then, closer at hand, the sound of a chicken being killed, which evidently called forth a renewed burst of anger from the women. The men in the camp started singing, and the women became quiet. The singing lasted until nearly dawn. In the morning it was explained to Mrs. Putnam that the *molimo* had taken a chicken and would not pay. "But that is the way of the *molimo*," explained her male informant.

That evening a basket appeared in the camp, hung up in a prominent place, filled with plantains—a gift for the *molimo*. Members were able to help themselves from the basket, and the women were expected to keep it filled. After all the women had gone to bed, the men started singing, although they had said that they were not going to sing that night. As the singing

reached a climax (drums were being used, unusual for a religious meeting of the *molimo*), the trumpet arrived. Anne Putnam heard one of the hunters say, "We shall give the *molimo* a present tonight." Another said that there was nothing to give. Then one of the more important but younger hunters said, "We'll give it water." At this point Anne Putnam looked out and saw water being thrown over a figure that seemed to be white and that was playing the trumpet. The figure did not flinch and continued playing, while the hunter who suggested throwing the water laughed. Shortly afterward the trumpet left, and the men sang without the drums before going to bed.

During this same meeting of the *molimo*, the basket was kept filled with food for the men of the association. The singing went on each night, sometimes with drums, sometimes without. On some occasions the singing, particularly when there were no drums, appears to have been serious. At other times the meeting seems to have been more in the nature of a joke, as in the case of the water throwing, and on another occasion when the *molimo* kept moving about in the bush and refused to come to the camp. Some of the men tried to find it, but, as they went after it, it stayed silent for a while, then suddenly was heard on the other side of the camp.

Anne Putnam gives one other instance of this kind of meeting. While the evening meal was being eaten, the trumpet was heard and all the women had to shut themselves up. The trumpet approached the camp, and the men ran out to greet it, shouting and beating the drums. The trumpet came right into the clearing. Mrs. Putnam heard much shouting, drumming, hunting cries, and swishing of branches. The trumpet made a quick tour of the circle of huts and was then heard to disappear into the distance. The women were called out. The men were busy dancing. The women cooked a large meal, and the men all drank salt water so that they would sing well. They sang until about midnight. The trumpet was heard again for a short time early in the morning, in the distance.

The occasion for this *molimo* meeting, which lasted about a month, was poor hunting. However, an old woman died during the month. Anne Putnam was told that if the *molimo* had not already been meeting, they would have had to call it out for this occasion. They also explained that the woman's death was the reason

for the particularly long and intense singing at that time.

I myself witnessed only one such meeting of the *molimo*,<sup>1</sup> the occasion for which was not clear and which took place down near the village. One villager took part. The trumpet and the performer, covered with a cloth, were carried in from the forest on a crude litter and disappeared behind one of the huts. As the playing and singing proceeded, the villager and one or two Mbuti danced around the camp, tearing leaves off the roofs of huts and placing them against the door of the hut behind which the trumpet was playing. There was much laughter, but everyone spoke in low tones. Finally, the player and trumpet were carried away as they arrived, and everyone went to bed.

The other meetings of the *molimo* that I have witnessed were of the more serious kind, following the general disruption in the district among villagers and Mbuti alike when Patrick Putnam died. At these meetings no drums were used, even though they were sometimes available. But even at such meetings there was generally a period, early in the night, during which the men started singing a *molimo* song that mocked the womenfolk, accompanied by a mildly obscene dance around the fire, with much laughter. During this time the food was being cooked, and the women were still chattering, though shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi*. When the women once found themselves rivaled by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*, they competed but were sung down and finally gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* trumpet died into the distance, however, the women started up again. When it was a case of death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But then the men caught the

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.



animal and since then no woman has been allowed to see it.

Local villagers, who claim also to have the *molimo*, are critical of the occasional joking attitude of the Mbuti and say that they, the villagers, call it out only when someone important has died.

## POLITICAL LIFE

### AUTHORITY

Putnam goes further than Schebesta with regard to the existence or non-existence of chieftainship among the Mbuti. Primarily of the net hunters he writes, "... there are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp" (Putnam, 1948, 334). There is respect, he says, for age and experience (*not* for "elders"); the opinions of the old and the wise are generally heeded. Any individual who shows disrespect for an old man, or who refuses to comply with any reasonable request, is abused by the others. Old men who are eccentrics are ignored.

At the same time every man in the band has a full say in any discussion. There may well not be the placid acceptance of the "elder's" decision described by Schebesta (1952, 221 ff.). For one thing, among the net hunters the old men themselves may disagree. But again, unfortunately, we do not have details as to the subjects most or least open to dispute, so can give only a general account.

Additional information on this point comes from the notes of Anne Putnam, in which a loose form of council of five or six of the older men is reported. Each one of these is said by Mrs. Putnam to have some specific sphere of authority such as the regulation of hunting activities, settlement of interpersonal and other disputes, but further details are not given. No evidence is offered that they act in council rather than simply in their individual capacities. In the particular band to which Mrs. Putnam refers, however, five or six of the older men included the most experienced hunters in the whole band, so that only the aged and infirm, the children, and the younger and less experienced hunters would *not* be members of the "council." According to Putnam, the Mbuti respect experience as well as age, so that an individual's experience in a particular field increases his authority in that field. Thus the "council"

is almost certainly informal, because special authority within it is the result of individual qualities rather than of hereditary title to any particular office. Nowhere is there mention of any formal constitution of the council or hereditary tenure of office. Mrs. Putnam's information serves to confirm Putnam's assertion that there is no formal leadership, that any question that arises is settled by discussion, and that there is no single leader in such discussion, though respect is given to the older and more experienced men.

Nowhere is there any mention of any representative of the lineage or clan ancestors, or any indication that the lineage as such is of any importance in government. The net-hunting bands, it will be remembered, are larger than those of the archers and are more often comprised of more than one lineage.

### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BANDS

There is no account of formal relationships between different bands of net hunters. Informal relationships are created through inter-band visits. These visits may be made by individual Pygmies or by whole families and may be occasioned by the desire (particularly among womenfolk) to see relatives or to seek a spouse, or by some dispute leading to ostracism, or by trouble between the individual concerned and his villager patron. The visits, according to Putnam, may become permanent but normally last only two or three months, which would allow for one or two changes of camp. These visits are important with respect to the practice of exchange marriage and lineage exogamy (which may amount to exogamy of the hunting band, though among the net hunters less frequently than among the archers) as an important way of allowing marriageable couples to meet and become known to each other's families.

Occasionally two or even three bands join to form a single hunting unit. Under these circumstances each sets up separate but adjoining camps. If, as may happen though rarely, this association continues, the camps are moved closer to each other and finally become part of the same camp. In one of the final stages of the process of fusion, the two groups build their huts in the same clearing, but each as a distinct unit. Similarly, fission may be preceded by a gradual physical splitting of the camp. Each

change of camp may thus reveal significant tendencies not only in interpersonal relations but also in the composition of the band itself.

#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MBUTI AND VILLAGERS

Putnam had the advantage of being able to observe the changes in composition of the Epulu hunting band and its ties with neighboring villagers for more than two decades. As is stated above, the relationship between the net hunters and their villager neighbors is an individual and strongly personal relationship, as described by Schebesta (p. 185). The effect is that of an inherited relationship, but inheritance is not the basis. The effect is maintained only by the closeness of the personal bonds of loyalty and affection. If these bonds are weakened through any cause, there is nothing to stop the Pygmy from changing his allegiance to another villager. It may cause bad feeling between him and his patron, but it primarily affects the relationship between the two villagers concerned.

The villagers, says Putnam (1948, 324), regard the Mbuti as a class of beings somewhere between humans and animals. They take Pygmy wives, however, because they are prolific and good to sleep with, and the children of such unions are considered as full human beings and are brought up as such. Further, the villagers think of the Mbuti as barbaric and uncultured, but this attitude does not affect their mutual affection.

There is some evidence that respect for the Mbuti, in some form, is not lacking among the villagers. Geluwe (1956) mentions the Bira custom of offering first fruits from the plantations to the Pygmies. Anne Putnam says that the villagers agree with the Pygmies and that the latter have the right to take what food they want from the plantations following the killing of an elephant. Possoz (1954, 2575) suggests that there are linguistic grounds for assuming that the villagers originally referred to the Mbuti by a term denoting respect for them because of their closer connection with the forest spirits.

Putnam mentions trade and the *nkumbi* as two of the major factors, apart from personal relations at an inter-familial level, in maintaining the Mbuti-villager relationship.

Another important factor in interaction is the dance. When the Mbuti stay near the vil-

lage for any length of time, as when the villager needs help in the cutting of new plantations, then the Pygmy dance is a spectacle eagerly awaited by the villagers.

Finally, Putnam mentions the fact that, when there is a case of poaching by one band within the territory of another, instead of one lineage head or "elder" consulting the other (the process described by Schebesta for the archers), the bands probably just inform the villagers involved and leave it to them to settle.

In disputes between villagers and Mbuti, there is no question of any one Mbuti representing his lineage or band; such of the more important hunters as are available, and usually a number of the younger men and even older boys, come in a body to argue their case together. The villager is always at a slight disadvantage. While the Mbuti can easily move and find another village patron, it is not so easy for a villager to find more Mbuti.

Anne Putnam reports that Pygmy groups pay social visits to villagers when they feel like having a rest from forest life. They stay for as long as their patron is prepared to feed them, or until they decide to return to the forest. She states that while a Pygmy certainly can break his relationship at any time, such is not often done. She also reports groups of archers and of net hunters that are very much under the control of their villager patrons and can defy them only with the greatest difficulty. The effective mechanism by which any individual villager maintains his authority over the Mbuti is not clear, as the benefits the Mbuti receives he can receive from any villager.

#### LEGAL SYSTEM

There are no data available on property law, and there is no clear distinction between collective and private property, as far as can be learned from the material that is available. Most items of personal possession, except used barkcloth, change hands at some time or another, temporarily or permanently, with or without any immediate exchange. There is certainly no scale of values by which any item of property may be assessed in relation to another. The question of whether personal goods, such as cooking utensils for the women or weapons and hunting nets for the men, are

owned or merely possessed by the individual is not answerable at the moment. It would seem that utensils are in fact owned by the women and spears and bows and arrows by the men, but hunting nets appear to be subject to collective control, not only over their positioning during the hunts but also over their participation itself. Further, it is recorded in the notes that on occasion a hunting net that has not produced game for the community may be burned. All we know is that, when it is burned it is done with the approval of the community, though apparently on the initiative of the "owning" family. There is no detailed information on inheritance, only the general observation that girls inherit from their mothers, men from their fathers.

It seems, first, that the forest and both its animal and vegetable produce are considered by the net hunters to be the property of the Mbuti as a whole, as opposed to the alien villagers. Second, it seems that any one section of the forest belongs to the band that hunts that section. But, although the band may be said to own a part of the forest and its members have an equal right to the produce, the equality is of opportunity rather than of division. A lazy hunter and his family go without meat; an idle woman goes without vegetables and has no roof to her hut. The division of game obtained during a net hunt is the only division that includes everyone in the band, whether or not they attended the hunt. Even then we do not know whether those who did not attend had any arrangement with any of the actual hunters. Nets are frequently lent, as are spears. It may well be that absentee members of the hunt participate by proxy and in this way entitle themselves to a share. The division itself, as is mentioned above, is said to be subject to complicated rules.

Apart from the net hunt, which is essentially collective and cooperative and concerns the band, other forms of food quest are familial. A woman is entitled to what she finds, for herself and her family. Similarly a man, hunting individually with bow and arrow, may claim as his own anything that he may bring in, though in such a case there is some doubt. Using bow and arrow he would be likely to bring in only small game, and rarely, these Mbuti being very poor shots. If however, he killed or found large game, such as an okapi, on his own, it would be

most unlikely that the collective rules of division would not apply. It seems therefore to be a question of surplus. Every family is entitled to a minimum insured by the collective hunt and is equally entitled to the maximum that it can acquire and consume itself. Any surplus is not used for trade but becomes the share of the rest of the community. Maximum here must imply a correlation of capacity and decency. Putnam says that a woman who does not share the products of her gathering expedition with her friends (regardless of the quantity) is looked on with scorn. Similarly, when a man is sitting among his fellow hunters and his wife brings him a meal, he eats most of it himself but shares at least some with his companions. There is a definite preference in such sharing, but whether the amount of the portion depends on kinship or friendship or both is not clear in the sources under consideration.

In the absence of any "elder," it is difficult at first to understand the legal system and how it functions. From the examples cited, however, it appears that one of the first rights of every Mbuti is the right of self help, but because of the nature of the band in which he lives it is unlikely that any serious dispute will remain restricted to the original participants and left to them to settle. Such can happen, and has, but usually the dispute is widened, involving more and more of the others and, finally, the whole band itself, until a settlement is reached.

Thus in a case of incest between members of the same lineage, the first act on the part of the girl's family was to pursue the boy, threatening him with knives and spears and driving him from the camp. There, they said, he could die. He would get no shelter and no food. Returning from this chase, they promptly tore down the house of the boy's "father" (actually his father's brother, with whom the boy was staying). As far as the offended family were concerned, the matter was finished, but the "father" thought otherwise and threatened to take counteraction. At this point, while the womenfolk on the girl's side were making the usual demonstrations of grief (throwing themselves on the ground and beating themselves) and the men on both sides were brandishing spears, knives, and bows and arrows, the dispute degenerated into the practical consideration of where the houseless "father" was

to sleep and how he was to rebuild his house. His wife, who would normally have undertaken this task, was sick. He was offered hospitality for the remainder of the night by other relatives, and early in the morning the offended family were themselves assisting him to rebuild his hut. During this dispute no mention was made of the fate of the transgressor.

This particular band was composed of two major segments. The dispute was confined to one segment and almost exclusively, though not quite, to the two families concerned. Other members of that lineage came forward only to appease and compromise.

The other segment, separated by a few hundred feet (the band was in the process of fission), listened eagerly to the dispute, making comments among themselves, mainly to the effect that the boy was a fool to have allowed himself to be found out and deserved to be beaten. When the pursuit of the boy led through their part of the camp, they hid. The older men carefully shut themselves up and refused to take any part in the proceeding. Younger men, regardless of family or lineage ties, brought food to the transgressor, who stayed outside the camp for two days. His reappearance on the third day caused no excitement on either side. This must not be taken as a full account of the incident. Undoubtedly a great deal is not known about how the settlement was effected, but it is useful to show with what informality a serious transgression can be dealt with.

The intimate nature of a Pygmy camp is stressed by Putnam. Even in the middle of the night, when people are inside their huts, a conversation at one end of the camp can be clearly heard at the opposite end. Thus, even a matrimonial squabble may well become enlarged until it involves the entire band. Matrimonial disagreements and allegations of flirtation and of selfishness or dishonesty in the division of the meat are frequent causes for dispute. Disputes may be resolved entirely by self help, which may involve a fight or a beating, by public abuse or ridicule during the group discussion, by ostracism, or exile. The group discussion, mainly among men but with comments hurled at them by their wives, is the main regulatory mechanism. Both Schebesta and Putnam agreed that the part played by the women, who do not participate directly in these

gatherings of the men but sit outside their huts, listening and making loud comments, is not insignificant. In the early stages of a dispute among the net hunters, a woman may take a leading part on behalf of whichever member of her family is involved, but not when the dispute becomes the topic of these evening discussions.

Apart from the driving of the incestuous youth from the camp, there is no record of even temporary forcible exile from an Mbuti band. Individuals who offend the group are, however, ostracized and induced to go elsewhere.

Whatever the dispute, and at whatever level it takes place, the entire band is concerned in its settlement. If it is settled in its early stages, it may be assumed that it is with the approval of all. As long as a single voice is raised in disagreement, the dispute continues. Even over a question of hunting, or of moving camp, it may take several days, says Putnam, to reach a decision.

There is no record of any form of execution, though it has been known for the aged and infirm, too sick to care for themselves, or for those suspected of being possessed of supernatural powers, to disappear or to die of some strange sickness, under unusual circumstances. It was Putnam's opinion that such deaths might have been occasioned deliberately, but he had no means of verification.

## INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE

### EXACT KNOWLEDGE COUNTING

Putnam mentions the use of finger signs in counting and the Mbuti habit of counting in pairs. Despite this simplicity, however, they are able to assess quantity accurately and speedily, as witnessed by their dexterity in their favorite gambling game in which beans are thrown onto a mat. The success of the throw depends on whether or not a combination of four results. The Pygmy knows at a glance whether he has to throw in an extra bean or slip one out in order to make the necessary adjustment. If there is disagreement, the beans are checked in pairs of pairs.

### MEDICINE

Putnam frequently tried to copy the preparation of poisons used by the net hunters on

their arrows but seldom achieved the same effect. The ingredients were known to him, and he concluded some special skill was used in the actual preparation. There is no mention of antidotes to these poisons.

Putnam knew of the existence of effective medicine among the net hunters, but no details survive in the notes. Anne Putnam's notes, however, mention a number of cases in which she observed the use of indigenous medicines and treatment.

During a fight a boy was knocked unconscious by a blow from a piece of wood. He was immediately propped up; the main concern seemed to be to prevent him from lying flat on the ground. Even when semiconscious, the boy was not allowed to lie down. This possibility seemed to frighten the Pygmies more than anything else, and for a while no other treatment was given. Then some incisions were made on his chest, and a leaf was applied.

Against toothache a certain leaf (not identified) is chopped fine and mixed with water. This mixture is poured from a leaf cup down each nostril.

Newborn infants are scarified on the stomach, chest, and leg, and the wounds are treated with herbs, often mixed with goat manure if the net hunters are near a village.

The Mbuti in this area claim to have a method which they have practiced for a long time for the treatment of paralysis. Examples given, however, describe this treatment as being given to villager or Pygmy children by villagers. The treatment can also be given to an adult. For paralysis of the legs, it consists essentially of standing the patient in a pit, filling it, and stamping the earth down hard. Only the upper part of the patient's body, which is continually washed with warm water, is left above ground. The stem of the *atumba* (a small plant resembling a dandelion) is cut and cooked with manioc and rubbed into a light incision in the affected limb. The patient may be kept in the pit for four hours a day for a week; each time he is taken out he is washed with warm water. It is claimed that after this treatment the patient will be able to walk, however crippled he was beforehand.

A similar treatment is reported for sprained back or arm. The patient is laid flat in a shallow pit. He is covered from knees to chest with a mixture of earth and leaves, about one

inch thick, packed tight. The top layer of dry leaves and kindling are soaked with oil and set on fire. The fire is kept going for about four hours, then the patient is taken out and hot leaves are applied. This treatment may be followed by hot baths, scarification and insertion of herbal medicine into the wounds, and resting on a bed, but none of this is said to be absolutely necessary.

A young man, given to being seized with trembling fits, is calmed by having incisions on his stomach rubbed with a black powder. A liquid is poured down his nose from a leaf funnel.

A certain type of bark, *ikanya*, extremely poisonous, is used to procure an abortion by making a decoction from it and giving it to the pregnant woman to inhale. It appears that even inhaling the dry bark might be effective, but is not certainly so.

Mrs. Putnam mentions a villager chief who called in a Pygmy "doctor" who made an incision in the chief's knee from which he withdrew antelope bones and some bugs. Putnam (1948, 340), as does Schebesta (1941, 236), mentions Pygmies' going to villager doctors for treatment of ailments for which the Pygmies have no remedy. This is the only instance quoted of the reverse process, and the only mention of any Pygmy specialist. No further details are known as to how and where the Pygmy acquired his art and reputation.

The villagers recognize the Mbuti knowledge of forest lore. There is one incident known among the net hunters of Pygmies' being called to treat a village girl bitten by a Gaboon viper. The venom of this snake is both hemotoxic and neurotoxic and is normally fatal. The girl was bitten in the face, which was swollen like a balloon by the time she was treated. She was cured quickly and completely. Details of the snake-bite antidotes of these Mbuti are not known.

#### RATIONALIZATION

As in the parallel section for the archers, speculation on problems of life and death are considered under Religious Life (p. 235). A word of warning, however, should be offered. Mimicry is a widely attested Mbuti practice. Their great ability in the art is equally well confirmed on all sides. They are equally able to imitate speech as well as action and, with true

artistic flair, even enter into the thought processes of their subjects. They answer questions in precisely the way they want to answer them, without necessarily any regard for the truth. They will give a villager the answers that they think he wants, and similarly with the European. Even among themselves Pygmies may appear to be conducting a serious discussion in their own terms, but one or another will, in fact, be talking, consciously or unconsciously, as a villager or a European might talk. Single or even several instances of what individual Mbuti say therefore must be taken only with extreme caution merely as general indications of what they really mean, particularly when they are replying to questions. While we may be able to talk with some certainty about "rationalization among the Mbuti," we do not have nearly enough evidence to talk about "Mbuti rationalization."<sup>1</sup>

Putnam, despite his long sojourn among the Mbuti of the Ituri, was always extremely cautious concerning questions of origin and was very alert to the difficulty presented by the Mbuti mastery of imitation. The problem, as he saw it, was concerned not in the least with origin, but rather with dissociating the insignificant from the significant, regardless of origin. A collection of legends as told by four men of the Epulu net hunters, then, is something of great value but to be used with care. Mrs. Putnam made such a collection, totaling some 200 legends. Its very size, coming from a single hunting band, adds to its value. To a person knowing the band and the men who told the legends, the significant can often be easily distinguished from the insignificant. But source material of this kind needs much fuller documentation than is available for use to be made of it for purposes of sociological analysis (see Turnbull, 1959).

<sup>1</sup> Similar caution is needed with legends, which, as with the archers, are an important means of expression for the net hunters. The legends are also effective means of social control and illustrate attempts to rationalize the unknown. If we talk about "Mbuti legends," we not only open ourselves to questions as to whether particular legends are of villager or Pygmy origin, but we also imply that the legends necessarily have traditional significance for the Mbuti. The Mbuti like a good story; they will retell it whatever its source. A legend may have had some particular significance for the people to whom it originally belonged, but for the Mbuti its only importance may lie in the scope it offers their histrionic talent.

The general observations that can be made from this collection of legends are:

1. The Mbuti of the Epulu are remarkably little concerned with matters relating to origin and tradition.

2. Their legends can be classified under three main sections: legends concerning their social life, legends relating to the animal and human kingdoms, and legends concerning the supernatural. In fact, the second section falls in part into social relations and in part into supernatural relations, but we mention it here to show the correspondence with Joset's (1948) classification for the archers.

While there are no professional storytellers among the Epulu net hunters, there are individuals who have a greater mastery of the art than others. They seem to hold an important position in the community, especially in relation to the activities of the *molimo* society. The storyteller and the clown seem to occupy a privileged position and to have a definite role to play in the men's society. Whether this also applies to the women of the *elima* is not known (p. 216).

In so far as the net hunters are much more likely to tell a legend than they are to discuss a question or expound a theory, legends are a valuable source that should be tapped, with the necessary cautions, to give us some insight into Mbuti rationalization as opposed to rationalization among the Mbuti.

#### ART

As among the archers, graphic art is limited to the decoration of the human body (notably the buttocks, legs, and face) and also of bark-cloth. As mentioned above, the juice of the gardenia fruit is used for painting body designs, which Putnam says are for pure esthetic effect and of no magical significance. He believes, however, that some of the facial scarifications may indicate clan membership. No details are given. He adds that sometimes women name their designs; for example, a spotted design may be called "leopard." The design rests in the hands of the artist rather than of the subject.

Sometimes even head shaving is performed in such a way as to leave simple designs.

Some carving is now being done (Fig. 49) in imitation of village carvings.

As with the archers, music and dance are vitally important means of expression to the

net hunters. They have not only social but also religious meaning. Schebesta's (1941, 252-253) classification of dances as sportive, mimetic, or erotic would also apply to the net hunters, with the addition of religious dances about which we know little. Also, like the archers, the net hunters separate the sexes in dance. There are circular and erotic dances which correspond almost exactly to Schebesta's (1941, 253-256) description of those of the archers.

If the band is near a village, they may borrow or steal drums, but the drum, resonant sticks, and handclaps are the only accompaniment (apart from song). A style of dance which uses an orchestra of eight or nine single-pitch bamboo pipes, much in vogue among the villagers, is sometimes copied by other Pygmies in the district. The players stand in a circle. Each player blows his pipe after his opposite number, forming a melodic line. The melodic line and the rhythm are altered by changing both the order of playing and the time lapse. The performers dance as they play and are joined in the dance by others. It is essentially the same style of dance as the *makata* (musical stick) dance seen at the time of *nkumbi*.

Normally, however, and when drums are not available, short resonant sticks are used. These are either smooth, giving a sharp hollow sound, or else they are split and shaved at one end to provide a totally different accompaniment. These sticks, handclaps, and leg stampings provide the rhythmic background to the dance.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Putnam has seen a dance in which a mask made from a leopard skin was used by the Mbuti. She also describes fully (1954, 296 ff.) a dance performed by them following the killing of a leopard. The body of the leopard is strung up to a branch or a tall stake. All the men, armed with liana whips and whips made from plaited antelope hide, gather around it. The men who are responsible for killing the leopard dance by themselves, approaching the stake. As they do so, they are attacked by the others, and have to fight their way to the leopard's body and cut it down, at which everyone gives a shout of triumph. In the

dance observed by Mrs. Putnam the man who first speared the leopard was wounded but nonetheless took part in the dance. The other two men involved in the killing protected him as much as they could from their attackers and guarded him as he cut the leopard down. Onlookers said that he would not have been thought a coward if he had not taken part, because of his wounds, but he had chosen to do so.

Song, used in conjunction with dance, as described by Schebesta, also has a separate function and operates as an art form in its own right. This, at first, Schebesta (1933, 301) denied, but later (1936b, 27; 1948, 259) he conceded the greater importance of song over dance. Among the net hunters there is a very clear division of song into four main categories, each of which can be distinguished by style and technique alone, and a fifth subsidiary category of play songs. The main categories are, as briefly mentioned above (p. 213), religious songs and secular songs, each subdivided according to sex, i.e., songs of the men's religious association (*molimo*) and of the women's religious association (*elima*); songs of the men's main economic activity (hunting) and of the women's (gathering). It is perhaps not quite justifiable to make the subdivision according to sex, as, in hunting and gathering among the net hunters, both sexes hunt. Most of the gathering songs concern honey gathering which is primarily a male occupation. Nor, in fact, does the classification into sacred and secular stand up to full scrutiny, as, in a sense, all songs are sacred as all are related to forest activities and the forest itself is sacred (pp. 258-259).

Unlike the archers, the net-hunting Mbuti make extremely little use of musical instruments of any kind, except for the resonant sticks used in accompaniment to their forest songs. For one thing, a truly nomadic group with only the most basic means of locomotion and transport, namely, the human body, can hardly afford to accumulate possessions beyond the absolute necessities—even less so with bulky nets as an additional item to be carried when camp is moved. Some net hunters know how to make and play notched end-blown flutes, with even greater skill and precision than the neighboring villagers, but they are rarely made. A *lukembi* (*sanza*) is the only instrument

<sup>1</sup> It is most notable that for religious song and dance such is the only form of accompaniment, even if drums are available.

that a Pygmy would think of carrying with him, as it is light, portable, and most easily concealed from the villagers from whom he probably stole it. There is no record that the net hunters make any instruments other than the flute and the resonant sticks, and possibly a special musical bow which is made just as is their hunting bow but larger and with a larger section of vine as the "string." Ordinary hunting bows are sometimes used as musical bows.

From the material on net hunters it seems that music is virtually exclusively vocal and that, apart from lullabies and some play songs, song involves chorus rather than solo work. Men and women join in song; sometimes they merely double each other's parts (as in the "secular" songs); at other times each takes different and complementary parts (*elima* songs). Certain *elima* songs and all *molimo* songs are sung only by adult women and men, respectively.

Merriam (1953), in an examination of music from the Congo and Rwanda, writes that Congo music has four main characteristics: (1) lack of emphasis on percussion; (2) variety of instruments and styles; (3) heavy Arabic influence; and (4) considerable change currently in process.

This account of music among the villagers in the Ituri Forest region is certainly accurate. In contrast, the music of the Mbuti differs on each one of these four points. Though the music of the Mbuti of the Epulu District is here specifically considered, it appears from all the known material, including Schebesta's work on the archers and other Pygmy groups, that there is remarkable uniformity of music among African Pygmies, not confined to the Ituri or even the Congo. Even in the absence of drums, extreme percussive effects are obtained by resonant sticks, handclaps, and foot stamps; some vocal effects achieved by the Mbuti might also properly be described as percussive. As noted, there is a lack of interest in instrumental music, and styles are formalized; there is no Arabic influence at all; there is no evidence concerning change, except that up to now the Mbuti have managed to preserve their distinctive musical form in the face of strong influences from all sides, which would seem to indicate resistance to change.

As with the archers, song and dance both overlap into the field of drama, and of the

latter little is known in detail. Song is sometimes used when legends are told and is frequently mentioned in them. Dance and mime are even more closely connected.

The subject matter of Mbuti drama seems to correspond, as might be expected, with our classification of the subject matter of legends, but the former places greater emphasis on events of the day, particularly hunting. In default of detailed and accurate accounts of dramatic art and all attendant circumstances, the only generalization that seems permissible is the evident lack of interest in personal problems and a preoccupation with the maintenance of the relative status of the human (Mbuti), animal (villager), and supernatural worlds.

With reference to specialists in song and dance, as with other art forms, some individuals who have greater skill than others achieve a measure of renown for their skill. A mediocre hunter who is a good singer or dancer or legend teller is a far more important person than a moderate hunter who is none of these things. Above all, the outstanding singer, however young (so long as he is a hunter, therefore qualified to participate, of course), plays one of the most important roles in the meeting of the *molimo* society. In the *molimo*, respect for skill in song and dance seem, from the material to hand, to surpass respect even for skill in hunting and for old age.

### RELIGIOUS LIFE

The religion of the net hunters is far less well documented than that of the archers, since little is known beyond what Schebesta (1950) writes of the "Sua" regarding their religious terminology, notions of God, and afterlife. On the other hand, the functioning of their men's religious association (*molimo*) is far better documented than that of the *toré* association of the archers, both in Mrs. Putnam's notes and my own (1960b).

As far as magical practices are concerned, little information is available beyond a few isolated descriptions of various ceremonies mainly concerned with the hunt or the weather. Many practices are certainly of village origin, and some practices that are shared by both groups have different functions. Thus the naturally distorted stick (Fig. 53), known as *amati a oni ganza* (the tortoise saw the circumcision), is for the villagers a magical protection against



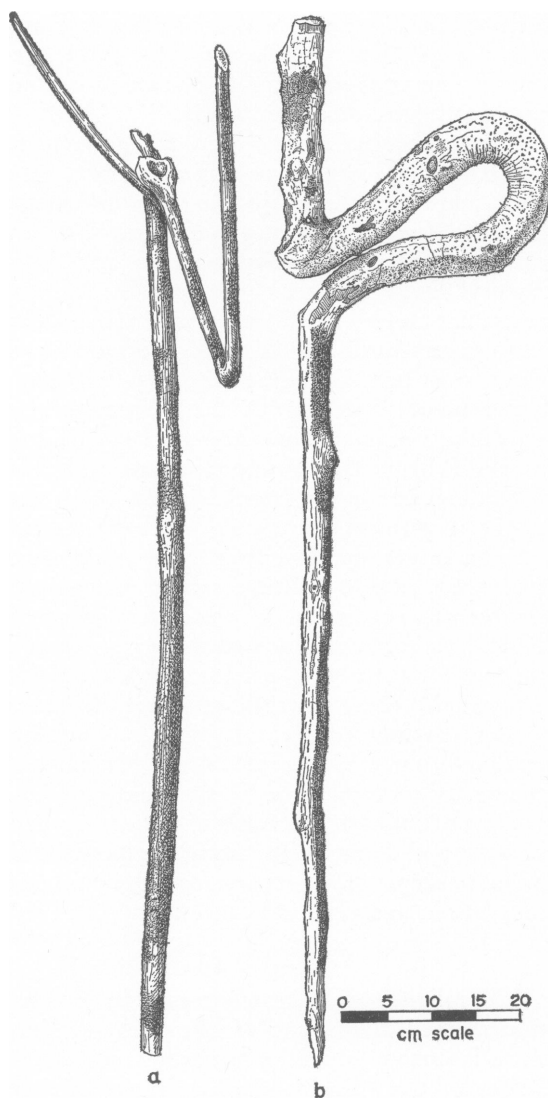


FIG. 53. a-b. Fetish sticks, *amati a oni ganza*, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. "The tortoise saw the circumcision" is the name of the stick, but neither villagers nor Mbuti can give a coherent explanation of either the stick or its name. The villagers use it for protection against theft; the Mbuti net hunters on rare occasions may idly place it in the ground near a *molimo* hearth as an indication of spiritual presence.

theft, but among the Mbuti is used as indication of spiritual presence during the *molimo* festival.

For this section we follow the same outline as that for the archers, but a fuller account of the net-hunters' magico-religious complex is given in the final section (pp. 248-259). It is excluded from the present survey because the lack of

complete documentation places it in the realm of hypothesis rather than fact.

#### THE CHTHONIC GOD

Schebesta does not specify whether the particular Mbuti from whom he collected most of his Sua material are net hunters or archers. But, except for his remarks on the Kango and "village Sua" (1952, 49, footnote, 301) to the extreme west of the Ituri forest, he seems to have drawn largely on the southeastern Mbuti. His information (1950, 14-24) does not differ greatly from that for the archers. The names given to the divinity are Mu(n)gu, Ketī, Kalisia, and So(n)ge. Epulu net hunters also loosely use the term Mungu, as do the neighboring villagers. According to Schebesta, Kalisia is the lord of the forest and game, and patron of the hunters, whom he loves. They owe everything to him. Above all, he is a benevolent God, helping the Mbuti in the hunt, guiding their weapons and assisting the beat, preceding the beaters and opening the trail. He is also the lord of dreams, making his wishes known to the elder, telling the hunter where to find game.

Kalisia, if displeased with the Mbuti, will close the forest to them, until they make the propitiatory sacrifice *sulia*. The Mbuti are expected to make offerings to Kalisia from their food-gathering and hunting expeditions, and Schebesta (1952, 304) mentions a shrine for this purpose (*ende kela*). The hunters may less ceremoniously throw offerings of food into the forest. Schebesta says that no Mbuti in his right mind would fail to make these propitiatory sacrifices: "*à ce que m'a raconté un Nègre Bira*" (Schebesta, 1952, 304). Unfortunately, Schebesta does not always identify his source of information. However, from a number of admissions such as that noted above, we must assume that his informants were frequently villagers, not Pygmies, and that he also relied on the question-and-answer technique among both villagers and Mbuti (Schebesta, 1933, 171).

Both Schebesta and Putnam agree that the forest God of the net hunters is feared by the villagers, who regard him in no way as benevolent, in contrast to the Mbuti.

Schebesta also mentions the celestial divinity Songe (the moon), with its own remote world, as the sky God of the archers; also Ketī, a bush

God and lord of the *ba-keti*, the dead. Schebesta (1950, 23) says that among the "Sua" he was not able to discover any association of the rainbow, lightning, thunder, or death, with the benevolent "*Jägergottheit*" (Kalisia).

The Putnam material does not attempt to interpret the Mbuti notion of a chthonic God. Among the Epulu net hunters, Kalisia is apparently unknown to the Mbuti, who use the term Mungu both among themselves and when talking with villagers. This God is benevolent, though in some mysterious way that does not detract from his benevolence he is associated with death.

Disaster, ill fortune, and lack of success in the chase are usually attributed to *satani* (also *sitani*, *shaitani*), forest sprites akin to the archer *befe* (Schebesta gives the Sua word as *beki*). It seems that Mbuti may become *satani* when they die, but it is not clear by any means that all *satani* were once Mbuti. They are never referred to as though they had been Mbuti, though at death the word *satani* is sometimes used in connection with a vital force leaving the body (p. 238). There is also some confusion among the net-hunter Mbuti between the terms *munngu* and *satani*, which at times appear to be interchangeable. Schebesta (1948, 493) says that the local Bira refer to these forest sprites as "*molimo*," the name they also give to their secret association of men.

As with the archers, abnormal conditions of the physical world denote the presence of the chthonic God. At such times the net hunters are careful not to expose themselves to his sight, which would bring death, nor to attract his attention by unseemly behavior. He is a benevolent God but one best kept at a distance. There is no evidence of any connection between God and the lineage through the elder, but each hunting band seems to regard Mungu, while God of all Mbuti everywhere, as being particularly concerned with them.<sup>1</sup>

#### CULT PRACTICES

In so far as ritual is a response to uncertainty or crisis, the net hunters have far less need of it than many other peoples. As we show above, their forest environment provides them with

the basic necessities of life. No seasonal change involves them in any significant change of activity (except possibly the honey season, when game hunting may be abandoned). The economy of the Mbuti further militates against elaborate ritual by preventing the easy manufacture of ritual trappings and by not allowing for any substantial form of sacrifice. Nor is it possible to provide time and men for ritual specialization. This much applies throughout the Ituri. However, the net hunters, by their hunting techniques, are assured of a larger and steadier supply of game than the archers. Nevertheless, crises occur. The Mbuti, for instance, are frequently beset with the tempestuous rainstorms that sweep the forest in the afternoons and, more rarely, during the night or early morning. Putnam (1948, 338) points out that these storms not only cause physical discomfort in the hunting camp, where huts may become flooded and the clearing so swamped in mud that the whole camp must be moved, but they also prevent hunting and bring death through lightning or through causing dead branches to fall on people. Putnam writes: "No other element in their life causes so much disturbance or upsets them so profoundly" (1948, 338). The Mbuti associate the storms with water, rain, thunder, lightning, rainbows, and snakes, and possibly fire. The net hunters have a particular fear of water and, as do the local villagers, seem to believe in water spirits, or, as they call them, "water animals." These are most frequently associated with death. A water animal is connected with the rainbow, perhaps the most dreaded of all natural phenomena.

As might be expected therefore, such ritual as exists is most often connected with the storm and its symbols. Putnam, who knew of Schebesta's account of ritual among the archers, did not disagree with it in so far as cult practices were described among the net hunters. However, cult practices are far less common, and he mentions no spirit huts or shrines such as were described by Schebesta (1950, 77). Food offerings may be thrown into the undergrowth, though specific information is lacking. I have met net hunters who stoutly deny that they would waste food in this way; certainly I never saw any offerings being made. But Putnam disagrees strongly that prayer or invocation is involved. The net hunters, he says (in unpublished works), do not invoke the storm god or

<sup>1</sup> In view of the extremely loose usage of the term *munngu*, I interpret net-hunter expressed attitudes as indicating a belief in a local deity, not necessarily named Mungu, somehow related to the over-all God.

any other god or spiritual being for protection or aid. Mbuti ritual, such as it is, is simply "A number of symbolic actions performed as parts of technological operations in order to smooth over the disturbance caused by some kind of change," e.g., the elephant-hunting ritual in which the youngest male descendant of the hunter ritually pierces the elephant's side and opens the operations dividing the meat for consumption (cf. p. 207).

Putnam, further, was never convinced that the Mbuti had any notion similar to the European notion of God. He disagrees strongly with Schebesta's interpretation of Mbuti religious practice as indicating a belief in a personal god. He suggests that the ritual practices described by Schebesta were, in fact, no more than sympathetic magic, and that a belief in the direct cause and effect in their magical practices is the only kind of "religious" belief that can safely be ascribed to the forest dwellers, Pygmy or villager.

The dividing line between magic and religion, according to Putnam, is even more difficult to draw with the Mbuti than with other people. His notes, however, do not attempt any analysis. The only other available information on cult practices is a few isolated descriptions in Mrs. Putnam's notes. These, except for the description of burial, are given in the section on Magic (p. 239).

#### DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

There is hardly any information on the notions of the net hunters on life after death, except that they firmly believe that life continues in some form or another, in much the same way that it is lived by the living. There is some indication, both from Mbuti informants and from the legends collected by Mrs. Putnam in the Epulu District, that the net hunters believe that when a body dies, a vital part of it, the personality or soul, leaves. It may become either a forest sprite (*satani*), or it may go to some other place where it will have nothing further to do with the living. In either case it will live much as it lived before—hunting and gathering, dancing and singing. *Satani*, however, can die, whereas there is no death in the more remote spirit world.

The net hunters believe that death is caused by the water animal that is the rainbow that is, sometimes, the python. It is not clear whether

the water animal is the cause of all death or whether it causes only unexplained deaths. It seems that it may not be connected with "normal" deaths—deaths that do not, in fact, cause any particular crisis as far as the community as a whole is concerned.

According to Mrs. Putnam's notes,<sup>1</sup> the water animal that is the rainbow is also the *molimo*. She asked a direct question as to whether this was so or not and was given an affirmative answer by one of her most reliable informants. She says that his manner seemed to indicate further that she had asked the right question. According to the same informant the *molimo* comes out the day following the death of some important person, regardless of whether the death was by natural or other means. The informant also referred to a dance in which the men "chased" the *molimo*, but this evidently was not one of the serious *molimo* dances as it was not fatal for women to see it. It seems certain that the water animal and the rainbow are two manifestations of the same spiritual being and that both this being and the *molimo* are in some way connected with death. The former causes death (whether in some or all cases is not known), but the latter seems to be different in that it appears only the day following death and can restore normality to the community in crisis (not only death) rather than cause crisis. The *molimo* association calls to the *molimo* "animal" in times of crisis and brings it physically into the camp, according to Mrs. Putnam's notes. It appears to be propitiated by offerings of food, which is consumed by members of the *molimo*, and by dance and song.

No information is given as to any belief in the origin of death, or of any human failings that might cause it other than violation of the *molimo* by a woman or of the *elima* by a man. Infringement of rules of exogamy and other taboos may or may not cause death; individual opinion among the net hunters varies considerably on such matters.

According to local informants, the only villagers that have the *molimo* are the Bira, Lese, Ndaka, and Bali.

Lightning is also a symbol of misfortune but not necessarily of death. When lightning comes at night, campfires may be covered so that the

<sup>1</sup> In her notes, Mrs. Putnam invariably uses the term *esumba* or *esamba* for *lusumba*.

flames will not be seen, then the lightning will pass. Mrs. Putnam reports that on one occasion a particularly large and bright fire was built during the night because, according to the Mbuti, a Lese woman who had died recently was "tapping in the trees." Fire is reported to be extinguished in one of the *molimo* dances, among the net hunters as well as among the archers.

#### TOTEM AND TABOO

Putnam distinguishes four kinds of taboo for the net hunters. The first is related to what he calls the clan totem.<sup>1</sup> Each clan, he says, has its own private totemic animal. This is believed to be not the clan ancestor but, rather, connected with that ancestor in mythology, as having rescued him from danger or helped him in some enterprise. Putnam mentions seven species of antelope and 12 species of monkey that appear as totemic animals among the Mbuti bands in his area. Other animals, not important as food to the Pygmy, are also totemic animals but, according to Putnam, less frequently. Slow game and vegetables, that is, food collected by women, are never used as totems.

Rules concerning the clan totem vary, in theory and practice. Its flesh may never be eaten by members of the clan and, as far as possible, the animal is avoided—alive or dead. If the clan is dispersed, its seceding factions tend to forget their own totem and adopt the totems of the dominant clans in whose areas they settle, evidently, in fact, effectively changing clan affiliation.

The second kind of taboo mentioned by Putnam is the sex taboo symbolizing the differences in male and female activities. Women and children eat frogs and toads; men refuse to touch them. As mentioned above (p. 211), this difference is probably connected with the association between these amphibians and both water (portending disaster) and land (the hunt).

The third type of taboo is the taboo applicable to times of crisis in the life cycle—puberty, pregnancy, and mourning. At such times certain taboos are observed, but they vary from band to band, and there is no detailed information.

Lastly, Putnam mentions the existence of

personal taboos, which simply involve the decision of individuals to abstain from eating certain foods. These may be the result of some near disaster involving the taboo animal, or the result of some physical allergy. Many personal taboos are acquired during puberty, but they can be acquired any time. During puberty a taboo may be "given" to the individual on the decision of his relatives who observe that he has an allergy to a certain food; or they may be, and at other times always are, acquired by personal volition. Porcupines, snakes, and slow game not used as clan totems are subject to personal taboo.

These forest animals that symbolize clans, sexes, and individual idiosyncracies, says Putnam, are personified by the Mbuti, who believe that they used to be able to talk and were on an equal footing with human beings.

Thus the totemism of the net hunters seems to be very different from that described by Schebesta for the archers, among whom there was neither sex nor individual totemism (p. 191). Further, Putnam denies that there is any belief, at least among the net hunters, in totemic ancestral spirits such as the *lodi* described by Schebesta. There are *genii loci*, *satani* who inhabit well-known caves, ravines, or hills, but Putnam says that these are not associated with clans.

#### MAGIC

The Putnam material contains no information on any vital force corresponding to the *megbe* of the archer Mbuti, but the various practices of the net hunters indicate a belief in some form of force associated with the individual, which can be utilized by him during his life and which is released at death. It is by no means clear that this force can be acquired by magical means, such as by the use of bells and charms among the archers, or that it can be passed on from father to son by the latter's breathing in the breath from the dying man's mouth. There is mention in the Putnam material of this being done only once.

Putnam mentions magic in connection with the hunt and with the weather that might affect the hunt. Magical practices are not mentioned in other contexts, such as protection against one's enemies or, conversely, as aggressive action against them, or for the prevention of imminent disasters such as the falling of a

<sup>1</sup> By "clan" Putnam means a patrilan or gens.

tree limb on top of a hut. Such contexts evoke a different response, it seems, among the archers who actively influence the outcome of any critical situation by the use of their *megbe*, often by their *segbe* pipes. The magic described by the Putnams is essentially sympathetic and does not involve any belief in spiritual assistance. Thus stones may not be dropped in the water, or they will cause rain; a bright fire should be smothered until it is a mere glow during a storm, lest it attract the lightning (according to one informant) or in order to drive the lightning away (according to another, in the same discussion). All the magic that Putnam observed among the net hunters was connected with the weather and the prevention of rain, though he does not deny the possibility that magic might be used to stop the rain, once begun.

Mrs. Putnam describes a number of magical practices, most of which are connected with either rain or the hunt. The latter simply involve the use of villager witch doctors to perform a ceremony to improve the hunting. The ceremony is never conducted by a Pygmy, nor is it clear on whose initiative it is usually performed. Mrs. Putnam says that the Pygmies may ask the villager to perform the ceremony, but it is also certain that the villagers themselves, if they do not get enough meat from the Pygmies, insist on performing it. The use of a *segbe* whistle is mentioned only once by Patrick Putnam. It was incorporated in a hunting net (Figs. 34-35) for the hunter to blow into to attract the antelope. This hunter was the camp joker. *Segbe* whistles and pipes may assume many forms, being incorporated in fur headbands (Fig. 51a) or left loose (Fig. 51b). Other hunting magic found among the net hunters, not mentioned by Putnam, is *anjo* (Fig. 51c), an antelope horn in which is kept a paste made of animal parts, rubbed over the eyes and head of the hunter before the hunt.

*Segbe* are not to be confused with *madé* (Fig. 51d-e) pipes, which are used only during the honey season.

Rain magic involves the covering of the campfires with leaves but evidently without much faith in the efficacy of this action, as all practical precautions are taken as well, such as putting hunting nets under cover, bringing fire inside the huts, and taking in barkcloth that has been left outside to dry. Further, the use of

leaves to cover fires is an effective way of keeping them burning during a rainstorm, is not always accompanied by the production of smoke (thought by some to be an offering), and is never described as being accompanied by any invocation. As far as the descriptions and my own observations go, it could be a simple precautionary measure taken to preserve the all-valuable fire.

Mrs. Putnam was told that barkcloth should not be beaten if it is going to rain, but this may also be for purely practical technological reasons. She once saw an old Pygmy blow a *segbe* pipe a number of times, looking at the sky, in an avowed attempt to avert the rain. When it rained the old man simply shrugged his shoulders and took shelter.

On another occasion, when it threatened to rain and spoil the dance one evening, the young men and boys all seized leaves and ran down to the stream and back, beating the leaves on the ground. They evidently did not wait to see if this magic would work, and all retired to their huts.

There seems to be a very vague belief in a malign force similar to the *uda* described by Schebesta (1948, 527 ff.), and for which the net hunters use the villager term, *ulozi*. It is generally associated with very old people and with cripples who, not through any malevolence but rather because of their condition, may cause death. If someone is thought to be possessed of *ulozi*, he may be put to death. The Putnam material records the Mbuti as beating one old woman accused of being a *lozi*. She was prevented from being beaten to death by Putnam's putting forward an effective argument as to why she could not possess *ulozi*. This same old woman, however, died two years later following an epidemic in a camp where she was staying, and where two Pygmies died. The old woman died when the camp was broken, before they reached the new camp, and no explanation was given. She certainly had not contracted the disease. Putnam mentions other instances of the disappearance of people, particularly the aged and crippled.

In legend the *lozi* are accredited with being the most gluttonous cannibals, devouring corpses in the middle of the night. Apparently, if a Pygmy wakes up and sees a *lozi* feasting on one of his comrades, that person will merely become sick. If the *lozi* is not seen at his (or her)

work, the victim dies. If the victim himself awakes and recognizes the *lozi* who is killing him, or if he is bewitched by unwittingly sharing his food with a *lozi*, he can save himself by calling on that person to come to him. If the *lozi* comes he will be saved, otherwise he will die. But there are no instances that such ever happened.

This belief seems associated with death and with people who are near to that particular crisis. There is a recorded instance of two men, a Pygmy and a villager, who were both accused of being *lozi*. Some time later the villager died in the arms of the Pygmy; since then the village family have held that particular Pygmy in great respect. Among the Mbuti of this area, however, the existence of *ulozi* seems to be of little, if any, practical significance, except as subject matter for storytellers.

#### THE GODHEAD

The Putnam material does not support any theory of a celestial God such as that described by Schebesta for both the archers and the net hunters. Putnam denies that there is any evi-

dence among the net hunters of a belief in a personal god. He asserts that all their ritual actions can be explained in terms of direct cause-and-effect belief, without any reference to spiritual beings. The Putnam material itself, however, indicates some notion of spiritual existence and power, although in nothing like the highly formalized system that Schebesta attributes to the archers. Coon, in his notes on an interview with Putnam (*in* Patrick Putnam, 1948), points out that the water animal is in a sense a personification of the storm, as is the belief that the neolithic axheads found throughout the forest are excreta dropped by lightning.

It is largely a question of degree. The material available is not sufficient for us to make any useful observations on the net-hunters' theology or cosmology. All that can be said is that there is a belief in a benevolent power associated with the forest (which may or may not be the *molimo*) and a power symbolized by the rainbow, or as a water animal, and associated with death. Whether these are two aspects of the same divinity, two distinct divinities, or unconnected with any notion of divinity cannot be said.

## EVALUATION

THE SURVEY that is given above of the available reliable material on the Pygmies of the Ituri Forest does not claim to be exhaustive. Every opportunity has been taken to follow up any references that promised to bring to light information, however slight, to a point where the quality of such information is so poor that further search becomes uneconomic, not justifying the further expenditure of either time or energy. It is possible, then, that isolated pieces of valuable information have escaped our scrutiny.

The survey as it stands, based on a careful selection of the most reliable information available, is in itself anything but satisfactory and falls short of the standards of authenticity and completeness of detail that are a *sine qua non* for proper anthropological analysis. The historical sources were, for the most part, not sufficiently well documented to be acceptable as fact; contemporary sources (with particular reference to the field of social anthropology) are virtually limited to Schebesta and the Putnam material. These each have their drawbacks. Schebesta gives a more complete picture than Putnam of the Ituri Mbuti but in such generalized terms as to be, in effect, no more than a disjointed anthropological gallimaufry. It is evident from his own statements concerning his field-work technique (Schebesta, 1932, 1936b) that the "facts" he presents are sometimes no more than hearsay, perhaps confirmed by "*flüchtigen Einblicke*" (1948, 475). In addition there is often no certainty as to which particular Mbuti he means. It is equally evident from his admittedly preconceived notions and avowed objective that his theoretical work is more than a little biased.

The Putnam material does not provide such over-all detail as Schebesta's account and is regrettably lacking in information on kinship systems (as is Schebesta's work), legal system, and even on the more observable manifestations of the relationship between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors. It is, however, localized. We know exactly to which Pygmies he refers. It is unbiased by any personal prejudices or preconceived theories. It is based on more than two decades of intimate contact with the Mbuti throughout the forest in the case of Patrick

Putnam, and nearly one decade in the case of Anne Putnam.

The vital gaps in this combined material, together with its general nature, render any attempt at systematization fruitless. As it is presented, however, it stands as a body of facts, more or less reliable, related to two specific types of Mbuti society—archers and net hunters. We can use it initially, then, to test the validity of this classification. Second, the survey suggests a new approach to the relationship between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors. Incidentally it throws a clearer light on Schebesta's notions as to the cultural unity of the Ituri Mbuti and on the irrelevance of his division of the Mbuti into linguistic groups which correspond only to villager groupings, and not directly to any significant structural differences among the Mbuti themselves. Here we concern ourselves with a brief comparison of our two major sources, section by section, with reference mainly to the classification of the Mbuti according to hunting technique.

## ORIENTATION

There is little call for comment on this section. Despite their linguistic differences, it seems that the Ituri Mbuti form a broad cultural unit physically differentiated from other Pygmy or Pygmoid groups, notably the Twa of the Kivu area and the Tswa farther west. However, before any conclusion can be reached, we need more detailed studies, of the Pygmies of equatorial and western Africa in particular.

The hunting band appears to be the largest political unit, except in opposition to the villagers when, it seems, Pygmy bands may unite regardless of clan or lineage considerations. There is no evidence that, during the period when the Pygmies were used as mercenaries, they ever fought with one another at the behest of the villagers.

Despite Schebesta's assertion that *efe* is, in fact, the remnant of the original Mbuti language, linguists disagree on this point. Van Bulck (G. van Bulck, 1948, 1953; V. van Bulck, 1948, 1952) questions it. Professors Tucker and Meeussen (in conversation) indicate that the possibility of determining its correctness with any degree of certainty is remote. This attitude

was also Putnam's, although he was keenly interested in the problem and spoke all the major villager languages of the area fluently. All we can say is that the Ituri Mbuti now speak the same languages as the villager tribes with which they are or have been in closest contact.

Questions of origin and history can be answered only by speculation and do not concern us at the moment.

As stated, physical anthropology is too specialized a subject to be treated here, though the findings of detailed studies would be of great value not only in helping to answer questions of origin, but also in tracing affinities between different Pygmy and Pygmoid groups, estimating migratory movements, and determining the degree of miscegenation with villager tribes and the relative direction of such miscegenation. This last consideration is of particular importance with reference to the Mbuti-villager relationship.

### ENVIRONMENT

The importance of environment in this particular study cannot be overestimated. The forest environment throughout the Ituri is much the same, so it cannot be held responsible for such differences as we may find between one Mbuti group and another. Such differences seem more likely to be due to the human environment, that is to say, varying degrees of Pygmy association with different villager tribes.

The forest environment is important, however, in favoring the specific way of life followed by the nomadic hunting-and-gathering Mbuti communities. That it certainly does not compel this mode of existence is witnessed by the very different and equally successful adjustment made to it by the other major group of forest inhabitants—the villagers. But by enabling the Mbuti to continue their nomadic way with comparative ease and to their almost entire satisfaction, the forest enables them to preserve their independence in the face of technologically superior and politically more organized villager opposition. By virtue of their particular response to the forest, the Mbuti retain their individuality socially, economically, politically, and intellectually.

The environmental factor sharply divides the forest people (Mbuti) from the non-forest people (villagers)—the true forest hunting-and-

gathering economy of the former from the adapted forest cultivation of the latter. Perhaps, above all, it distinguishes the values of the forest people from those of the villager invaders from the plains. The Mbuti adapt themselves to their environment; the villagers adapt the environment to their own way of life in so far as they can, compromising when they cannot. It is not difficult to see the possible psychological implications of this attitudinal difference and the profound difference in religious and social values that either rise from it or are strengthened by it. In the opposition between forest values and non-forest values we find the highest degree of opposition between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors.

### THE SOCIAL UNIT

At this elementary point in our survey of Mbuti society, we begin to find significant structural differences between one group and another. These differences are not related to linguistic differences. Moreover, we find that, with the possible exception of the archers described by Schebesta, the Mbuti are polyglots. While there may be one preferred "camp language," most of the members of any one camp speak three different languages with more or less equal fluency. Each individual's linguistic abilities depend to some extent on the direction of his kinship ties and to some extent on his attachment to one villager tribe or another. The differences in social organization can be related directly to differences in hunting technique. Concerned as we are with the situation as we find it, we need not deal here with the alleged origin of these hunting techniques nor the relative "purity" of the Pygmy groups practicing them.

The immediate and most obvious difference found in a comparison of the accounts of the archers and the net hunters is in the size of their hunting bands which is related directly to the requirements of the particular technique. A distinct process of fission and fusion related to the economic size of the band is observable among the Epulu Pygmies. A successful net hunt cannot be carried out with fewer than seven nets, with an optimum of about 15. When a net-hunting band falls below 10 families (i.e., 10 married men with nets), hunting becomes difficult, because there is little allowance for sickness, or for the men and women required to



remain in camp to guard it and perform other duties. When the band falls below seven families, it can no longer exist. Similarly, when it rises above a certain number (between 20 and 30) it becomes too unwieldy to function as a single hunting unit and must, of necessity, split. Under these circumstances a compromise is reached, and very conveniently so, by the hunting from a forest camp by one section of the band, while the other section lives a more or less parasitical life near the village.

The composition of the bands of archers and net hunters seems to be similar, though Putnam lays more emphasis on the presence of visiting families. The archers live in considerably smaller bands, some interconnected through kinship ties and also allegedly through common allegiance to a villager lineage. In the larger net-hunting band there may very likely be no single villager attachment.

With regard to material culture and technology, there is far more uniformity than divergence. The technology of the net hunters demonstrates a greater adaptation to the forest environment, and their material culture is consistent with the fact that they are more truly nomadic than the archers. Heavy objects such as the mortars and drums mentioned by Schebesta could not be maintained by a nomadic band unless it was always within easy reach of the village.

### ECONOMIC LIFE

In a comparison of the two major types of hunt, according to which we classify the Mbuti into archers and net hunters, three factors in particular are worth noting:

1. The net hunt, of all the hunting methods described (including the *begbe* beat of the archers), produces both the surest and the largest supply of meat. The inadequacy of archery among the Mbuti, owing partly to inaccuracy with their small bows and partly to the generally poor visibility, may account in part for the greater economic dependence of the archer bands on their villager neighbors.

2. The net hunt is essentially a cooperative activity, requiring the participation of the band as a whole, including women and children. It reinforces the strength of the band as such; it does not differentiate between the relationships of the men and the women toward the forest; and it establishes for each sex a basic and

mutually dependent and equally important role in this, the major activity of the Mbuti. Archery, on the other hand, may be conducted on a familial basis or, as is described by Schebesta, with the cooperation of two or three men. It is not essentially cooperative, and it does not include women and children, so placing the sexes in different relationships with the forest. In so far as hunting is the "superior" economic activity (though economically perhaps less important than gathering), it emphasizes the disparity of status between the sexes.

3. The net hunt, demanding close cooperation and lack of specialization, is associated with a more egalitarian political system than that of the archers. While Schebesta described an embryonic chieftainship, with powerful lineage heads, Putnam vigorously denies the existence of even a council of elders. Further, according to Putnam, whereas an old man is treated with respect, he is so only if age is accompanied by wisdom. A great hunter is respected regardless of his age. An unmarried boy of 16 who kills a buffalo with a spear is entitled to have a net of his own and to take full part in the meetings of the men's religious association. Such leadership as exists among the net hunters is charismatic, with little emphasis on lineage—a position quite the reverse of that described by Schebesta for the archers.

A fourth factor might be added: While the net hunt quickly scares animals away from the area around the hunting camp, necessitating frequent changes of site, the archery technique neither depletes the game so quickly nor frightens it away. An archer band can therefore remain confined to a smaller area, near the village, while the net hunters sometimes must wander several days' march away from their patrons. The more nomadic group also has constantly fresh supplies of vegetable growth at its disposal, thus decreasing the need, which is apparently felt by the more settled archers, for plantation products.

Thus at once we can see the possible economic, social, and political implications of the difference in hunting technique and how these implications follow in fact.

Gathering occupies a similar position of social and economic importance in each type of community. It is regarded primarily as the work of women, though, wherever it calls for tree climbing, it is undertaken by men. Among

both groups it appears that food acquired by gathering is more prominent in the Mbuti diet than the product of hunting.

Honey gathering, a primarily male activity, is the only major seasonal activity. There are indications from both groups that the Mbuti regard this as a festive season and that it was possibly once of greater social significance than it is now, when recreation and variety are more easily had through contact with the villagers. Nonetheless it is still more important to both groups than can be accounted for by its economic aspect alone.

There is not enough information on drinks, narcotics, and stimulants, nor on food restrictions, to allow for these to be placed in a systematic framework.

With regard to trade, we have no details for either the net hunters or the archers on this extremely important point of contact between the Mbuti and the villagers. Trade with villagers exists in both Mbuti groups, and both Schebesta and Putnam attach great importance to it. Neither, however, explains it satisfactorily. Schebesta (1952, 42-43) involves himself in a blatant self-contradiction by saying at one point that the Pygmy culture is static and conservative because the forest provides him with an abundance from which he can satisfy all his needs. Elsewhere (1933, 28; 1952, 100-101) he writes that the Pygmy could not survive without the villager plantations. Both Patrick and Anne Putnam would reinforce the latter statement from their experience of the Epulu Mbuti, but only in so far as luxuries, such as plantains, have become necessities. Putnam asserts that the Pygmy could, when he wanted, support himself from the forest alone, and sometimes does. There can be little doubt about this latter point, as a hunting group may be 10 days away from the village. Transportation of adequate supplies of bananas over so great a distance would be impossible, particularly among a net-hunting community in which the women are required for hunting as well as gathering. The archer woman, for whom gathering is a full-time occupation, might just as well gather in the villager plantation as in the forest, particularly as, according to Schebesta (1952, 148), archer bands are always situated close to villages. More information is badly needed for an accurate assessment of exactly how fundamental this trade relationship is and how far it is a

mere outward expression of an inevitable relationship brought about by territorial propinquity. It would certainly seem, from both accounts, that there is no question of necessity on either side. The Mbuti *can* gather all they need, and the villagers *can* hunt, without having to go far into the forest, by using traps, pits, spear falls, and other means.

### SOCIAL LIFE

We indicate above some of the differences in social life that may be attributed to differences in hunting technique, notably because of the cooperative nature of the net hunt. In the material considered in the section on Social Life (pp. 211-223), these differences may be observed more directly. There is not only greater parity between the sexes among the net hunters, but also the father enters more fully into family life than among the archers. We would connect this difference with the lesser importance of the lineage among the net hunters. Schebesta (1948, 306-307) describes a "local group" (i.e., an economic hunting unit) as being primarily a lineage, under the authority of the lineage elder. Owing to the prevailing rules of exogamy, this means that the "local group" is in fact the adult male community, to which are attached the wives and unmarried sisters or daughters. The "family" is primarily a separate, if not opposed, unit consisting of mothers and their children (including boys up to their *nkumbi* initiation). Schebesta (1948, 320 ff.) does not deny the authority of the father in the family. Indeed, he gives it as a frequent source of conflict between husband and wife, but it is authority as a member of the lineage to which his wife is a stranger rather than authority as a father. Further, Schebesta (1948, 313 ff.) makes no mention of women's associations other than individual friendship of neighbors who may work and gather together.

The picture we get from Putnam's account is quite different. Among net hunters the band is primarily an economic unit. There is no such highly developed lineage feeling. Authority is vested not in any representative of the lineage but rather in the economically important and valuable members of the group. He stresses the part that women play in group discussions. Although their position may appear to be peripheral, neither he nor Anne Putnam underestimates the weight they carry in any discussion,

ostensibly between the group of males sitting together around a campfire. The net-hunting band, then, consists of men and women. There is no hint of any opposition between the individual family and the band.

That there is virtually a total absence of any data on kinship terminology is in itself significant. Apparently a classificatory system, if one exists, is in extremely simple form, reduced to generational levels (grandchildren and grandparents, children and parents, and siblings) for each sex. There is no evidence that special terms are used to distinguish between, say, a patrilineal and a matrilineal grandparent. Also, when referring to his wife's brother's child in KiNgwana, an Mbuti calls him, if he uses a term at all, *mutoto*, whereas an Ngwana uses the reciprocal term *muyomba*. But, more frequently, the Mbuti use personal names, distinguished when there is possibility of confusion either by the addition of the name of the patrilineal grandfather (not the ancestor) or by the substitution of a name in another language. Thus in the Epulu region most Mbuti have both Ngwana and Bira names, not necessarily with the same meaning. The occasional use of a grandfather's name is another indication of the lack of importance attached to lineal ties in this group, and an indication of the size of the largest group to which they conceive of themselves as belonging. Clan names (ancestor names) exist, but these seem to have little social significance. Place names are used frequently to differentiate one hunting band from another.

It is virtually impossible to distinguish any of the alien families that have attached themselves to a net-hunting band, so completely are they assimilated. Perhaps the easiest indication would be open flirtation between members of the opposite sex within a hunting band. And finally (see below, p. 257, for a fuller treatment), there is the *elima*, the women's religious association which unites the women of the band in opposition to the men (regardless of lineage), and at the same time acknowledges the common values of both, so unites them as a single group in relation to the forest. It also unifies the total band in relationship to the worlds of spirits, animals, villagers, and presumably of other semi-human beings such as Europeans. It never unifies the band in opposition to other hunting bands or lineages.

Another very striking difference between the archers and the net hunters concerns the initiation of boys. As this is treated more fully below (p. 252), we only indicate here the fact of the total absence of any *karé* brotherhood between Pygmy and villager initiates among the net hunters. Schebesta, on the other hand, places great importance on this pact for his archers, probably because of his insistence (1952, 281) on the fact that the *nkumbi* initiation is an initiation into the religious association of *toré* for both Mbuti and villagers. This is denied by Costermans (1938) for the archers and is contradicted by my own experience among the net hunters. In any case, if there is a difference between the two groups over the significance of *nkumbi* initiation (and it may well be only a difference of interpretation rather than of fact), it does not seem directly related to any difference in hunting technique.

Similarly, with marriage, separation, death, funerals, childbirth, and other occasions with ritual connections, such difference as exists in the two accounts seems to be associated more directly with prevailing differences in villager custom rather than with any inherent differences in the Mbuti communities. This, and the nature and function of the closed associations, are more properly the subject of discussion of the Mbuti-villager relationship rather than the difference between net hunters and archers, which is our main concern here.

### POLITICAL LIFE

The fact that authority is vested in the lineage for the archers, and in the great hunters among the net hunters, is mentioned above as one of the major differences corresponding to the difference in hunting technique. Also relative to this difference is the greater emphasis laid by Putnam on the participation of women in public discussion among the net hunters. We cannot go beyond this bare observation of fact, however, as there is no recorded description of authority in action beyond one or two isolated records of conjugal disputes. From these it is evident how even a private dispute enlarges its bounds by being taken up by all within earshot (which means in effect all in the camp), until everyone is involved. If the dispute is settled before it reaches these proportions, it can be assumed that it is with the approval of the entire group, as they are all aware of it whether they

have taken part or not. With Schebesta's archers it seems that the lineage elder is the final authority, below which rank the family heads.

Whereas the status of men is related to hunting ability and to proficiency in the arts of mime, dance, and song, the factors involved in determining the status of women are not clear. Fertility is probably one factor, and, almost certainly, ability as a singer another, for a good singer takes a leading part in the *elima* celebrations. The *elima* itself may be connected with adult male status, since one of its main features is the battle between the young men seeking to gain admission to the *elima* hut and the women guarding it. Married men may and do take part in this battle, but there comes a point when a man has neither the incentive nor, possibly, the necessary stamina. Anne Putnam writes of one elderly Mbuti, still active as a hunter, who was seen to cry during an *elima* festival. In response to a question he answered: "I fought my way into many an Alima hut when I was younger. Now I have no desires. It saddens me" (Putnam, 1954, 218). A young man who does not take part in the *elima* is a subject for ridicule. The fact that men go through the not inconsiderable beating inflicted on them by the women in order to gain admission, without ever taking advantage of the young maidens then available to them, is another indication of the function of the *elima* in determining male status.

Male status depends primarily on skill in the hunt; this may be deliberately acquired by individual exploits such as elephant hunting. Among certain bands elephant hunting is a specialized profession, the ivory being used for trade. Among the Epulu net hunters it is not so. It is an exceptional occurrence and, as described by Anne Putnam (1954, 143 ff.), may be undertaken without any thought for the food or ivory, at times when the band has no need of extra meat or of trade with the villagers. On this occasion the Pygmy hunter admits that he was frightened. He describes how he killed the elephant simply because he felt compelled to do so. This compulsion may have arisen in part by virtue of his reputation as a great hunter, and in part from constant opposition between the human world and the animal world, and the constant effort of the Mbuti to assert the superiority of the former.

This latter aspect was also witnessed in the ceremony described by Anne Putnam (1954,

296 ff.), following the killing of a leopard. The dead leopard is tied to a stake, which is surrounded by the men, armed with liana whips and plaited hide thongs. The hunters involved in the killing of the leopard perform a dance, in the course of which they have to fight their way through to the stake and cut down the carcass of the leopard they have already killed once. In the instance cited the most prominent of the three chief actors had been wounded by the leopard but insisted on taking part though his fellows said that none would call him a coward if he did not. The other two men protected him from the attackers and guarded him as he swung his spear and cut the leopard down. The cutting down is acclaimed by all with a shout of satisfaction. Unfortunately the information does not carry essential details such as which of the men or how many of the band held the leopard as their totem, or as to what relationship, kinship or otherwise, existed between participants in the dance. Possibly the ceremony is propitiatory, but from the information on totemism among these particular Mbuti it seems unlikely. It rather appears as a formal opposition between the human and the animal worlds.

Little can be said of inter-band relationships as there are so few data. Neither type of band has any need to cooperate with neighboring bands for the hunt but may do so on rare occasions when there is a particular profusion of game. Among the archers joint hunting would be necessary in order to make use of the *begbe* beating technique. Among net hunters two or more bands might combine either when the individual bands fall below economic level or when a particular profusion of game requires more nets than are possessed by the single band. With the net hunters such association could become permanent, whereas with the archers it would never be necessary as the band is of such small optimum size.

The difference between the archers and the net hunters in their relationship with the villager tribes, as described by Schebesta and Putnam, is one of both degree and kind. We have seen that with their less efficient hunting technique the archers must rely more on vegetable products, and how, with the women's sphere limited to gathering, the women have more time and opportunity for gathering from the villager plantations. The less exhaustive and less noisy

nature of the hunt also makes possible a more permanent settlement near the village. The trade relationship among the archers, then, assumes greater importance and is more formalized. Schebesta further understands it as being an inter-lineage relationship. Putnam, while acknowledging its importance also for the net hunters, says that it is interfamilial and can be broken by either side. The net-hunting technique makes more game available for trade, so there is less demand by villagers upon the net hunters than by the Lese of the archers. The necessity of a more strictly nomadic life also militates against permanent and continuous attachment between the net-hunting Mbuti and any one villager "master."

Of the legal system no more can be added to the section dealing with authority and leadership. There are simply not enough data even for comparison of the concepts of property and ownership between the two groups.

#### INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE

There seem to be no significant points of divergence between archers and net hunters under this heading, except in theory and interpretation of their rationale. In music the archers make much more use of instruments than do the net hunters. Schebesta does not give details of the types of archer song such as given for the net hunters, which does not mean, of course, that such a classification into sacred and secular, for men and for women, does not hold equally well among the archers. It is simply one of the many points on which we need more field data, and it may prove to be an extremely important point when it comes to trying to unravel the contradictions, implicit and explicit, in the material on religious life.

#### RELIGIOUS LIFE

Here, as in the previous section, the similarity of fact is far greater than the dissimilarity, though this may be obscured by the contradictory nature of various interpretations of the facts. It is here that Schebesta's work is more open to criticism, as it is here that his bias is strongest and here where the material most easily lends itself to interpretation in the light of bias. Costermans (1938) raises an extremely important question when he questions Schebesta's assertion that the *toré* society is an integral part of the religious system of the archers

and that *Toré* is applicable as a term for God.

As there is confusion, even among the Mbuti, on questions of religious terminology we can do little by pointing to this or that context. We must go a great deal further and try to discover something of the underlying system of values. In the light of such an inquiry we shall be able to assess better the significance behind the outward differences between the two groups; for instance, differences over the performance of ritual, differences in magical practice, and others. Here we cannot be content with a comparison of outward behavior, for we are dealing with a world of symbolism, and in that symbolic world we can fruitfully compare only the values that underlie the symbols. To do so leads us into the very much wider field of study that is broached in the succeeding and final two sections (pp. 249-272). By attempting to understand something of the Mbuti system of values we may not only hope to understand the significant differences between one type of hunting band and another, but also we may hope to get some idea of the real relationship between both kinds of band and their villager neighbors.

Schebesta (1950, 13) insists that there is a cultural unity among the Ituri Mbuti, which he believes is clearly visible in their magico-religious system. He may well be right. Probably he is, but his method of comparing terminological usage among a number of different Mbuti bands as though he were dealing with self-evident facts, while relying frequently on casual information, does little to support his theories. When dealing with cult practices, he is more concerned with the origin of a particular practice than with its sociological significance. He accepts statements and even legends at their face value and builds his elaborate theories on this flimsy foundation.

In trying to draw any useful comparison between the material on the archers and that for the net hunters, we are constantly confronted with the question of origin. Is this or that custom or ritual of villager origin? If so, how far has it been adapted and what significance has it? The latter question is more important for the social anthropologist than the former and is precisely the question we must ask. We are concerned not with the origin of any particular ritual but rather with its significance and its relationship to other practices in a system of related institutions. Thus when we deal with religious

(or any other) institution common to both villager and Pygmy, we necessarily deal with the relationship between these two people. Unless we understand this relationship we cannot possibly understand the institution. We can understand the relationship only by observing something more fundamental than the origin of a particular practice in a specific group, let alone the more obvious facts concerning the trade relationship. As indicated in the present survey, even the *nkumbi* initiation cannot be taken at its face value as far as the Mbuti are concerned.

No aspect of Mbuti life brings the people into more effective contact with their villager neighbors than the field of magic and religion. It seems that this is the field therefore in which we should attempt to understand the systems of values underlying the relationship between these two people.

### THE MBUTI-VILLAGER RELATIONSHIP

In the preceding sections we dealt with the survey briefly, mainly in order to test the validity of our classification of the Mbuti into net hunters and archers. We deliberately avoided, as far as possible, reference to the Mbuti-villager relationship, although in the final section on religious life it became particularly obvious that this relationship could not be ignored. In Mbuti society a number of institutions in one way or another are associated with or appear to be identical with villager institutions, and we must understand this connection. The only alternative is to assume that the relationship between the two peoples is one of straightforward symbiosis based on an exchange of meat for plantation products and that, in the course of this symbiosis, certain customs have been adopted and are practiced either separately or jointly. This often-drawn picture represents only the outward appearance of the facts. When one tries to understand it as part of a coherent system, however, it can be done only by creating a hypothetical Mbuti social system that is in fact a hodgepodge culled from all over the Ituri area, from which any offending portions are plucked with the excuse that they are of villager origin.

We must determine, then, the underlying facts, as opposed to the mere outward appearance: the extent to which various institutions have been adopted by the Mbuti; how far their underlying values have also been adopted, or

how far only the outward form of the custom has been taken over and the values rejected. The most we can do is to clear the ground for such a study. We do so with reference only to the Epulu net hunters (unless otherwise stated), as our information is fullest here.

In the first place, what are the major points of contact between these two people? They may be listed as follows:

Material culture  
Trade  
Magical practice  
Dance and festivity  
Intermarriage  
Ceremonial attendant on birth, puberty, marriage, and death

### MATERIAL CULTURE

The adoption by the Mbuti of various villager items of material culture or technological skill has only one significance for us, which is the extent to which it places the Mbuti in a dependent position. This is difficult to estimate. It is difficult to visualize the Mbuti without metal and hard, though quite possible, to visualize them without plantains. But, even among the net hunters, luxuries tend to become necessities, and we must admit of the trend, if not the accomplished fact, toward economic dependency on the villagers.

### TRADE

The bare facts only are known. The Mbuti supply the villagers with meat and with certain forest products, such as roofing leaves or lianas, in return for plantation products. The villager invariably tries to enforce some service as well, with varying degrees of success. Either extreme can be found: cases in which the relationship is formal and binding in fact as well as theory, and those in which the theory is held only by the villagers and does not correspond to the fact, i.e., the Pygmy maintains his side of the trade relationship only so long as it suits him. In my experience the latter is the situation far more often than otherwise.

Then again we must emphasize that trade is not necessary on either side. The villagers could perfectly well hunt if they had to, and the Pygmies could equally well gather all their vegetable needs from the forest. Further, contrary to Schebesta's (1952, 112) assertion, the Mbuti are perfectly capable of cultivating, given a

clear space. Some of the net hunters in the Epulu area have tried, and with success, but quickly lose interest and revert to their old nomadic ways.

The fact that there is no attempt to equate the supply of meat and the supply of plantains is also significant. Either side gives what it feels like giving, except that the Mbuti believe themselves free to take what they want if it is not given. There is also the Bira custom mentioned by Joset (1947, 13) of giving the first fruits to the Pygmies. The Mbuti seem to have control of this situation. The villagers have no means of preventing the Mbuti from returning to the depths of the forest whenever they wish. When the Pygmy hunting camp is some distance from the village, the villagers may send in to ask for meat, or the chief may even come himself.

Sometimes the villagers try to gain control of the situation by supplying nets and claiming the appropriate share of a net owner. The Mbuti accept the nets, but see to it that only such game falls into them as they think fit. They eventually contest the ownership of the net, claiming to have added to it themselves and thrown away the damaged, village portion.

At most, it seems possible to regard the trade relationship only as one of mutual convenience. By itself, it is far too unformalized and unstable to provide the basis for the remarkably close relationship that does, in fact, exist between the two groups.

#### MAGICAL PRACTICE

It might be observed that the Pygmies have adopted a number of villager magical practices; certainly some individuals give the appearance of having done so. But we cannot accept this as significant, nor can we relate these practices to other practices in Pygmy society until we understand, for instance, the significance of the old Pygmy who blew his magic whistle vigorously at the sky to prevent rain and who, when it poured, simply shrugged his shoulders and retreated to the shelter of his hut. This incident may seem trivial, but there are many such incidents that indicate a lack of faith in the efficacy of such magical practices as the Pygmies attempt.

Also to be considered, and more important because it brings villager and Pygmy together more directly, is the reported resort to villager witch doctors to improve the hunting. Sche-

besta (1950, 80) mentions ceremonies performed by the archers themselves to "open" the forest. There is no evidence of such a practice among the net hunters, but they may call in a villager for the purpose. But here we should consider Pygmy acumen. If he has not been supplying the villagers with meat for some time, yet has been drawing supplies of bananas, he gives as his excuse the fact that the hunting has been poor. Such an excuse is safe enough, as the villagers never accompany the Pygmies on a hunt. Even if the villagers wait for them in the hunting camp, the Pygmies see to it that they never know how much game was actually caught. But the Pygmy may seek to reinforce his position by inviting the villager to improve the hunting. In doing this, he is a step ahead of the villager, who will himself insist on performing the ceremony if hunting is persistently bad. As far as one can judge from casual conversation among themselves after such a ceremony, the Mbuti have little faith in it. Further, they have their own method of dealing with any critical situation. If the hunting is really bad they convoke the *molimo*. In effect, they "sing" the hunting well: there is no supplication and no prayer. The song may or may not be accompanied by a dance re-enacting a successful hunt, but, even if so, the stress is laid on the song and the participation of all the hunters.

In so far as individual magic is concerned, it seems that its practice among the Mbuti, when taken over from the villager, is of no more significance than our own superstitious crossing of the fingers, touching of wood, or avoidance of walking under ladders. When Pygmies call in villager specialists to perform magic for them, mainly to improve hunting, we have at least to consider the possibility of a mere political maneuver.

#### DANCE AND FESTIVITY

Villagers and Pygmies associate frequently at festive seasons or occasions. Pygmies will attend any village festival, and when they have an occasion of their own (such as the killing of an elephant) they first celebrate in their forest camp, then break camp and continue their celebrations in the village.

Dance is an important feature of any celebration, villager or Pygmy, but in this the two never mix. They watch each other's dances with enjoyment, but take part only in fun. One ex-

ception is the ritual *makata* dance which is held only during the *nkumbi*.

Even in ordinary times, when a hunting band is visiting a village, it may come down to the main meeting place in the evening and dance. The villagers expect it and regard it as one of their forms of entertainment, though they say they consider the Pygmy dance barbaric. The Pygmy definitely fills the role of entertainer and is not infrequently called on by the villagers to dance.

When the two groups meet on both festive and ordinary occasions they keep apart from each other. There is no leisure activity in which they participate together, only a few ritual activities (which are discussed below). The Mbuti camp beside the village, on the edge of the plantation where the forest begins. This physical disposition of the two communities, which seems to be invariable throughout the Ituri, and general Pygmy behavior in the village may well symbolize the contiguous nature of the relationship between the two peoples, as opposed to any close symbiosis such as was alleged by Schebesta.

#### INTERMARRIAGE

As pointed out above, this traffic is one-way. There are no records of Pygmy men taking villager wives, nor any acknowledged instances of Pygmy men begetting children by villager mistresses. Blood counts (Schebesta, 1938, 111), however, reveal a small proportion of villager influence in hunting communities, which may or may not be accounted for by the return of the half-breed offspring from the village to the forest. Normally the children of such unions are brought up as villagers. The father will, to the best of his ability, prevent children by his Pygmy wife from returning to the forest, and apparently the Pygmies themselves regard such children as villagers.

There are not enough data on individual intermarriage for us to determine how far this one-way tendency is a form of hypergamy. It may, in fact, simply be the result of the practical consideration that no villager woman could fulfill the requirements of a woman and wife in a Pygmy hunting camp. Even if the latter is the case, it does not answer the question as to why a Pygmy girl should marry a villager. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that gives us even the hint of an answer. There is certainly no

general acceptance of villager superiority among the Mbuti, although some individuals may rarely seek to increase their status by emulating their villager neighbors. From general observation I would say that the hunting band tolerates an occasional marriage to a villager because of its economic and political advantages, to which they are very alive and of which they take full advantage when it suits them. They receive little payment for the girl they give (a fraction of what the villager would give another villager), but they consider that they then have a villager they can well and truly "eat."

#### CEREMONIAL ATTENDANT ON BIRTH, INITIATION, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH

All the areas of contact between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors so far mentioned have been in or near the village. This point is of no small importance. The Pygmies always make the move, make contact or break it, and they take care that, apart from occasional visits from villager individuals to their hunting camp, all contact takes place in the village. Also, the areas of contact so far described could all be explained away at a more or less superficial level. The degree to which trade and adoption of villager magical practices and beliefs actually affect the forest life of the Mbuti is bound to vary from band to band. But among the Epulu net hunters, at least, the points of contact described above have not affected their nomadic way of life unduly.

These Mbuti, however, just as much as others, *appear* to have adopted villager religious beliefs and practices. This could be taken as symptomatic of a much closer relationship involving a shared system of values. We cannot help noticing, further, that by retaining a monopoly of ritual specialists the villagers effectively seem to assert their superiority over the Mbuti. When birth or death takes place among the Mbuti while they are in the vicinity of the village, the local villagers take a prominent part in the appropriate festivities, appropriate according to their custom, that is. Marriage between Pygmies, while not always subject to ceremonial "ratification" in the village, is usually performed twice: once according to the simple Mbuti custom of arranging and effecting an exchange of brides with the necessary courtesies of prestation and feasting but with no other ceremonial; and once according to the



local villager custom. The latter ceremony is conducted entirely by the villagers and at their expense. On these occasions the villager takes the leading part and carries out his own ritual, but the Pygmy does not let this supplant his own indigenous way of recognizing the event. The villager ceremony is something the Pygmy adds to his own.

With initiation the situation may seem to be different. The Mbuti have not only adopted the villager custom of initiation accompanied by circumcision, known as *nkumbi*, but they attend the same initiation schools which are always run by villagers, never by Pygmies. Initiation is nothing if not entry into a very definite indigenous system of values, yet here we have the Mbuti placing themselves in a totally subordinate position. The *nkumbi*, according to Schebesta (1952, 281), initiates the youth, Pygmy or villager, into membership of the Lese *toré* association (for the archers) or its Bira equivalent, the *molimo* (for the net hunters). The function of this association is not clear from his various accounts, but he is emphatic that it is closely connected with religious belief and practice. If so, then he would be perfectly justified in stating, as he does (Schebesta, 1952, 278), that nothing has made the Mbuti so dependent on the villager as the *nkumbi*. It would all fall neatly into the picture he gives, or tries to give, of a clear-cut symbiotic relationship between the two peoples.

Schebesta (1952) describes initiation for the net hunters. All that he says would be confirmed by casual observation of the practice of *nkumbi* in the Epulu District, among the net hunters and their Bira neighbors. As may be seen in the survey, however, there is one striking difference between the account by Putnam and that by Schebesta, and that is the lack in Putnam's description of any institution such as *karé* brotherhood. Apart from this, from Putnam's detailed account of the 1935-1936 *nkumbi* at Kokonyange and from my own observations of the *nkumbi* at Effundi Somali's village (near Epulu) in 1951, there would be nothing to contradict Schebesta's fact or theory. The Pygmy boys appear to go through the *nkumbi* on equal terms with the villager boys, except that the ceremony, instruction, and the camp itself are run entirely by the villagers and according to a custom that is generally acknowledged to be of villager (probably Bira) origin.

In the survey, in giving my own account of the next *nkumbi* (1954) that I witnessed in the Epulu District, I show how, under peculiar circumstances, when no villagers are present in the initiation camp, the Mbuti men and boys take the opportunity to mock both the villagers and their ceremony. This burlesque would not be enough in itself to indicate that the Mbuti completely rejected the *nkumbi* or, indeed, that they are doing any more than many individuals or groups do who occupy subordinate positions.<sup>1</sup> I suggest, however, in the survey, that there is such a rejection, and that the Mbuti undergo the *nkumbi* in order to acquire status in villager society; further, that the *nkumbi* for them is quite dissociated from initiation into the *molimo* association.

In order to follow this important point further, as it is one of the most significant pieces of information we have on the villager-Mbuti relationship, I must refer to a full account of the 1954 *nkumbi*, compiled from my field notes (Turnbull, 1957). From this we get sufficient indications to justify a rejection of Schebesta's analysis of Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*. This analysis, in any case, could stand only by isolating the *nkumbi* or by relating it only to other villager institutions in the villager society. When we try to relate the *nkumbi* to Pygmy institutions, Schebesta's interpretation cannot hold.

In the 1954 *nkumbi* there was a very evident divorce between initiative and authority. The villagers took most of the initiative; they decided when the *nkumbi* should be held and made all the necessary arrangements. Villagers carried out the operations and gave all the instruction. But their authority over the Pygmy *ganza* (members of the *nkumbi*) was far from complete. The Pygmies decided which boys should take part, without reference to the villagers; though they made use of Effundi Somali, a village chief, to reinforce their own demand that a certain boy should take part (Turnbull, 1957, 197). During and following the operation, the Mbuti fathers acted contrary to villager custom and in the face of villager disapproval by comforting their children. Both fathers and children ignored the various taboos imposed by the vil-

<sup>1</sup> The burlesquing attitude of the Mbuti is significant but could possibly be interpreted merely as a psychological reaction to subordination. It is in the light of other facts that we think differently.

lagers when it suited them to do so. In the dispute over the visit of the *ganza* to the forest hunting camp, the villagers were quite unable to enforce their will or even to enforce the compromise they finally effected with the Mbuti. The villagers themselves made no major decisions concerning the arrangement or carrying out of the *nkumbi* without at least discussing the matter with the Pygmy fathers. No difference was observable in the preparations or the ceremony that could be attributed to the fact that Mbuti only were being initiated.

The account given shows not only the extent to which the villagers were unable to control the *ganza*, but also the thoroughness with which they attempted to dominate the initiation. Despite the fact that the *ganza* were entirely Pygmy, for the villagers the *nkumbi* was nonetheless sacred. They were interested in the *nkumbi* itself rather than in the individuals participating. Whether or not the villagers thought that by initiating the Mbuti they were subjecting them to tribal and supernatural authority is uncertain, though Schebesta (1952, 278; 1948, chap. 7) so suggests. The evidence considered here suggests that the villagers not only lacked control over the Pygmy *ganza*, but were not particularly rigorous in maintaining it, except in so far as any desecration of the initiation camp or the *nkumbi* itself was concerned. It seems that the villager was primarily interested in the *nkumbi* as a tribal festival; if any subordination of the Pygmies took place, it was incidental.

Similarly any subordination on the part of the Pygmies was incidental and insignificant, though they lost no opportunity for maintaining their individuality when their feelings clashed with those of the villagers. Unlike the latter, they had no interest in the *nkumbi* as such. This lack of interest was manifest from the outset, when the village was in a state of festive turmoil in preparation for the ceremony, and the Pygmy camp was unchanged. This lack of interest was frequently manifest as total disrespect. Apart from the breaking of such touch and food taboos as were imposed by villager custom, and the general burlesquing among the *ganza* as described in the account, there was the attitude of the rest of the Mbuti band—notably the women and children. The young children in their forest camp found a new game to play. They were the *ganza*, imitating all

the major aspects of life in the initiation camp, including some of the ordeals. They not only knew the initiation songs, but were taught them by their mothers, who even more than their uninitiated male children were supposed to be in complete ignorance of such matters.

When the *ganza* moved to the forest, the instructors did not come with them, and the *ganza* had only occasional visits from one villager who stayed in the nearby Mbuti hunting camp. There were no ordeals during this time, no singing except when visited by the solitary villager, and no other form of instruction by the Pygmies to replace that of the villagers. The boys did not accompany the hunt. It seemed to be, for both children and the adult members of the *ganza*, a holiday camp, free from the rigors of the initiation school.

But if the Mbuti showed no respect for the ceremonial or ritual significance of the *nkumbi*, they could scarcely avoid respecting the physical discipline imposed by the various ordeals they had to undergo. This was a frequent topic of conversation. Both by their conversation and their behavior they showed that they were well aware of the benefit of this training for the children. The older men talked of ordeals that their "fathers" had experienced (apparently without reference to any villager *nkumbi*) in order to make them into men and hunters (both terms were used). They were always critical of any sign of excessive harshness on the part of the villager instructors and protected their children from it. But, on the other hand, the fathers showed no sympathy for a boy who could not endure the normal rigors of camp life and accept the routine ordeals without complaint, and it will be remembered that the boy who became ill himself insisted on returning to his place among the other boys before he had completely recovered (Turnbull, 1957).

It is, at the moment, an open question whether the Mbuti respect the physical discipline of the *nkumbi* because of its effect on the boys, or because of the status it gives their children in the eyes of the villagers, under normal circumstances equating the Mbuti (at least in terms of manliness) with their fellow villager initiates. The fact that no ordeals were practiced in the forest camp is perhaps an indication that the Mbuti do not lay very much stress on the physical and mental training aspect of the *nkumbi*. These are, in any case, benefits that

they could quite well achieve in their own way. Such practical benefits as there may be do not demonstrate why the Mbuti should participate in the villager *nkumbi* any more than does the often alleged subordination of the Mbuti to villager authority and custom. The obvious rejection by the Mbuti of the significance attributed to the *nkumbi* by the villager and the relatively passive acceptance by the villager of this rejection serve only to emphasize the hiatus between the two people. They certainly do not demonstrate that the *nkumbi* serves to draw them closer together or to assert the authority of the villager over the Pygmy.

This hiatus becomes even more evident when we consider the religious aspect of the *nkumbi*, as far as the Mbuti are concerned. It is a hiatus not only between two ways of living but between two ways of thinking, and it shows that we are dealing with two totally different sets of values. What the *nkumbi* achieves for the village boy bears little resemblance to what it achieves for the Pygmy. Ceremonial, ritual, and magic are ways of interpreting or influencing the supernatural in terms of the natural, and in his forest environment the Pygmy has relatively little need of either. It is not surprising then that his attitude to the ceremonial and ritual of the *nkumbi* differs from that of the villager. To the villager the masked dancers described in the account of the 1954 *nkumbi* (Turnbull, 1957, 193) represent the *ngosa* bird, indicating the presence of a benevolent spirit. Similarly, the bullroarer represents supernatural power. The various taboos applied to the *ganza* express village subordination to that power which is sufficiently strong to prevent the villagers from staying in the camp over night even though it meant allowing an already unruly *ganza* further scope for getting out of control. The *nkumbi* places the villager initiates in a definite relationship to the supernatural. It is closely connected with tribal lore and the ancestor cult.

The Pygmies have no tribal lore and no ancestor cult. To them the masked dancers were the villagers, André and Sabani, and the bullroarer was a piece of wood whirled around on the end of a length of twine. The "*ngosa* bird" and the "voice of the spirit," for the Mbuti, were neither "real" nor did they represent any reality. They were empty and rather ineffective theatrical devices, an opinion evidenced both by

conversation among the *ganza* at night and in their constant burlesque.

Schebesta (1948, 508-510) says that, for the archers, the *toré* association has both social and religious functions and that membership is common to both villagers and Pygmies through the *nkumbi* initiation. Among the net hunters the term *molimo* is used instead of the term *toré*, and among the Bira villagers the word has apparently similar usage. Thus the *molimo* horn is an instrument that is sacred to both villagers and Mbuti. The villager *molimo* normally makes itself heard during the *nkumbi*, when the young initiates are introduced to it for the first time. It made no appearance at all during the all-Pygmy 1954 *nkumbi*. Evidently it was unable to appear as there were no villager boys among the *ganza*, and the villager *molimo* has a distinct totemic aspect that excludes the Mbuti. Yet for the Mbuti, in particular, the instrument is associated with their most profound magico-religious concepts, and it is inconceivable that they should regard the *nkumbi* as initiation into their own religious society without the inclusion of their version of the *molimo* horn.

"Initiation" in its broadest sense implies admission to some form of exclusive association or adoption of a certain system of values. The 1954 *nkumbi* cannot be regarded as initiation for the Mbuti under this definition. Although the circumstances were unusual, in that no villager boys were available to share the *nkumbi* with the Pygmy boys, it is precisely this factor that throws a new light on the more usual joint participation of both groups. If it is not "initiation" for the Mbuti, what is it?

We seem to be in the presence of an attempt to maintain or establish some kind of common ground between two neighboring peoples who can find no common values, yet who inevitably come into contact with each other. We have seen that the original point of contact was the use of the Mbuti, by warring villagers, as mercenary soldiers, spies, and scouts. While acting in this capacity the Mbuti were necessarily dependent on the villagers for food supplies. The Mbuti were also used by the villagers to hunt elephant and to bring in tusks for the ivory trade. But, with the cessation of tribal warfare and the government control of ivory, these relationships came to an end. The villager no longer had any use for the Pygmy, who in

turn was free to return to his nomadic existence. We can suppose that the present relationship between the villagers and the Mbuti originated in this way and not in economic dependence or physical subjugation. Whereas it was once a clear patron-client relationship, it now seems to have no such clear basis, either economic or political.

There is, among both the archer and the net-hunter Mbuti, a trade relationship with the villagers, but this now appears to be economically artificial rather than necessary. Particularly among the net hunters, who are more nomadic than the archers, this trade relationship is little more than one of mutual convenience. By itself, trade does not provide a sufficiently stable basis for Pygmy-villager interaction. The spasmodic nature of contact between the two peoples complicates the issue further. Also, because of their nomadic existence and the loose structure of band composition, any Pygmy net hunter establishes relationships with villagers in different villages, quite possibly of different tribes. It seems that greater stability is precisely one objective that Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi* achieves, for this festival is common to the majority of the tribes in the area.

If we look at the situation in reverse, the fact that the Mbuti simultaneously participate in the *nkumbi* and reject its significance indicates the instability of their relationship with the villagers. The villagers would undoubtedly like to assert their superiority but are unable to maintain effective control over the nomadic Mbuti, either as individuals or in bands, during the *nkumbi* or at any other time. The *nkumbi*, however, does at least place the villagers in an overt position of dominance. On the other hand, the Mbuti would like to be completely free from subordination to the villagers, yet they find it as necessary to submit to initiation in villager society as the villagers find it necessary to accept them as candidates. The *nkumbi* undoubtedly gives the villagers an opportunity to drive the first blow in asserting their superiority over the Mbuti, but at the same time it gives the Pygmy status, as well as economic benefits, in any village throughout the region. It also strengthens his own identity as a Pygmy by enabling him to reject the villager system of values in mimetic burlesque. The 1954 *nkumbi*

shows the extent to which these particular Mbuti preserve their "in-group" feeling.

A Pygmy net-hunting band is powerfully integrated yet fluid, and its contact with alien societies is necessarily unformalized. Less well-knit bands, such as may be found among the archers described by Schebesta, may find it possible to enter into some kind of symbiotic relationship with the villagers, but not so an active, nomadic, net-hunting band. Some kind of relationship must be established because of the inevitability of contact. As the smaller, more powerfully integrated group, the Pygmies must make the move to fit into the larger, looser group. But there is no question of absorption; the smaller group preserves its identity. The *nkumbi*, and participation in or adoption of other villager ceremonies, provide the Mbuti with an opportunity both for establishing a place in villager society and for asserting their independent set of values by opposition. The antagonism that remains and is even heightened by this opposition is smoothed over to some extent by the secondary mechanism by which the two groups attempt to express their relationship—mutual trade. Trade may be an initial step in the direction of the symbiosis described by Schebesta (1941, 263) for the archers and their Lese neighbors. Joint participation in the *nkumbi* indicates no more than a willingness on both sides to acknowledge an unavoidable relationship based, as much as anything, on mere territorial propinquity.

What at first appears to be a conformity by the Mbuti to villager custom now appears as a superficial conformity at best and one that barely conceals a detachment of two ways of life. By his participation in the *nkumbi*, and, we may suspect, in other villager institutions, the Mbuti shows his willingness to accept an outwardly subordinate position in villager society. This acceptance is partly responsible for the popular notion that the relationship is one of master-servant or patron-client. His rejection of the inner significance of the ceremonial shows not only a superficiality in the process of acculturation and assimilation but a conscious effort on the part of the Pygmy to keep his two worlds apart—the sacred world of the forest, with one set of values, and the profane world of the villager, invader of the forest, with another set of values. The Epulu Mbuti, at least, have

as yet assumed village values in name only, and only for the duration of their contact outside the forest where their own values do not apply.

This interpretation of the function of the *nkumbi* initiation ceremony as providing an outward symbol of the association of two neighboring peoples that, for one reason or another, come into contact and cooperate is very similar to the interpretation by Peristiany (1951, 299) of initiation among the Pokot and Karamajong: "The recognition of a common system of age ranks by these two neighbouring peoples permits them to move with ease in each other's society and allows, during peace-time, the extension of social bonds and the obliteration of cultural frontiers."

In the Ituri such a statement could also apply to relationships not only between Mbuti and villagers but between neighboring village tribes themselves, such as the Ndaka, Bira, and Lese.

We indicate above that the *nkumbi* could not be considered as "initiation" by the Mbuti who practice it, as it does not admit them to any exclusive (villager) association or to any exclusive system of values, except possibly on a superficial level. We also suggest that the *nkumbi* offers the Mbuti an opportunity for asserting their individuality at the same time that they are subordinating themselves to the villagers, by asserting an independent system of values. In the *nkumbi*, as in other villager ceremonies practiced by the Mbuti, there is an opposition between the pygmaean forest world and the non-forest world of the villagers. This subject is dealt with in the final section; here a word should be said about the forest values themselves.

In the survey we mention two exclusive associations to which the net-hunting Mbuti are admitted—the *molimo* for the men, and the *elima* for the women. As far as our observations go, there is no reason at all for connecting the Mbuti *molimo* association with the *lusumba* or the *molimo* of the neighboring Bira and Ndaka. They may or may not have similar origins, but in the present situation they seem entirely dissociated. We may well suspect that this is also true of the archers' *toré* society. It is certain, at all events, that the *nkumbi* by itself does not initiate Mbuti boys into membership of the *molimo* (by this term I always refer to the Mbuti institution unless otherwise stated). At the end of the 1954 *nkumbi* the boys all reverted

to their previous status in the Pygmy camp and even returned to the care and authority of their mothers. None of these boys was allowed to take part in subsequent meetings of the *molimo*. The reason—they were not "hunters," they had not killed "real animals" (i.e., animals large enough to be worth distributing among the band, as opposed to the small animals caught by children and that are not worth dividing except within the family). To kill "real animals," usually antelope, a boy must be old enough to be allowed to wander away from his father during the hunt and to try his luck at either end of the semicircle of nets, where animals might escape and be shot with bow and arrow, speared, or caught with the hands.

Entry into the *molimo* therefore depends on a combination of physical growth and prowess. Boys seem to qualify by the time they reach the age of 14. Once a member, one is a full member; there is no hierarchy within the *molimo*; like the *elima* it is a religious association without priests. There is no ritual to be performed; all members play the same part in the meetings of the association with the exception of one who is delegated to play the *molimo* horn. The choice invariably falls on the best performer present, without regard for age or other qualifications.

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social function at the moment because of insufficient information.) It fulfills its purpose through song and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The association may meet informally any evening as the men sit around the main campfire. They may sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but the horn will not be heard. Women and children are not excluded from the group, though, as is their normal habit, they usually keep to their own individual firesides. The association meets formally following any crisis such as death, serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting. Women and children are then rigidly excluded, and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occasions compel the attendance of all members. Adult members of the hunting band who are away come back; adult male visitors to the camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and practice among the net hunters, nor, according to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.

For the net hunters, the *molimo* is their only means of dealing with the unknown, with situations for which they have no practical, immediately effective remedy. Individuals may and do indulge in the spontaneous practice of sympathetic magic, but this is informal and unsystematized. The *molimo* (and the *elima* to a lesser extent) may be considered "magical" in that the meeting of the association in proper circumstances is believed to restore normality to a situation that has in some way deviated. The "proper circumstances" to which I refer seem to be the non-participation of women and children, the attendance of all adult male members of the band, the use of special songs and the *molimo* horn, persistence in nocturnal meetings of the association, and constant reiteration of the songs until normality is restored. As far as is known, although certainty is lacking, the meeting of the association, which may last for a month, is not accompanied by any taboos on hunting or gathering, eating, or sexual activity. Some doubt exists also as to the position of women with regard to the *molimo*.

If this is magic, it is totally different from the kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skeptical amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very different attitude to the forest from that of the villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*, from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must fulfill the conditions listed above in order to make itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings. Women and children are presumably excluded, because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.<sup>1</sup> The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

<sup>1</sup> It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

physical disposition they are emphasizing their unity. Their means of communication are special songs, as mentioned in the survey, sacred to the *molimo*. These songs are not phrased in terms of explicit supplication. They merely call on the God of the Forest by constant repetition of his name (frequently changing from one name to another, it seems for the sake of variety and euphony), and an occasional recitation of his qualities as the source of all good in the Mbuti life is given. This song is echoed by the *molimo* horn, which is far off in the forest, though it may, in the course of the meeting, visit the camp. The song is picked up by the lone performer who follows it, singing it into the horn, passing it on still farther into the forest, finally letting it die away into the distance.

In this way the Mbuti make sure that their song is heard. Sung in this way, the song itself rouses their God from an apparent state of sleep or detachment, bringing him to a consciousness of the plight of his children. This, for the Mbuti, is sufficient. There is no attempt to ask for favors. The God of the Forest is the source of all that is good and bad, so that, as long as he is conscious of what is happening, the Mbuti are content. But they say that sometimes he sleeps, and when he is asleep things come to pass that might have been prevented had he been awake. The *molimo* makes sure he is awake.

With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women are members, and participation is compulsory in one's own camp or when visiting another. Communication with the forest God is again established by means of songs, special and sacred to the *elima*. However, the men take part. The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty, marriage, and death. Thus at birth and death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned. (As mentioned, however, the occasion of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.) Both associations meet in the forest camp but out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring huts. Young children may be present. The exception, when the men take part in the meeting of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

hunters are *de facto* members of the *molimo*. I have never witnessed nor been told of any formal rite introducing the new hunter to the association, and I do not believe that there is any such rite. The boy already knows all the *molimo* songs and has probably been allowed, for the past year or so, to sit with the men during the informal meetings of the association. The only act that might be regarded as a formal token of initiation is the cutting of three sets of three vertical slits in the flesh of the forehead, each side of the eyes or above the eyebrows, and above the nose. The flesh is gouged out with an arrow, and a black paste is rubbed in. The wound heals smoothly, leaving black streaks under the skin. The operation is performed without any formality by one of the "great hunters," that is, one who has killed buffalo or elephant. The initiate, if he can be called such, becomes the immediate object of interest to the womenfolk, as he is now considered marriageable. But the marks themselves do not qualify him for membership in the *molimo*, nor does their absence debar him from taking part. All that seems to be required is public recognition of his having killed "real game," marked by the kind of feasting and dancing that always follows a particularly successful hunt.

The contrast between the more formal *elima* initiation and this informal initiation into the *molimo* requires explanation, and more needs to be known about the function of these associations before any such explanation can be offered. It may be, in part, a consequence of the participation of Pygmy boys in the *nkumbi*; it may be that, as Schebesta (1957, 78) suggests, the *elima* (*elimo*) is of villager origin and has been adopted by the Pygmies. Or it may be that we have underestimated the part played by the young men in the *elima* festival described (p. 216). It is for both girls and boys, equally, a formal occasion recognizing their physical maturity and their prowess—the girls as proficient in womanly art and the boys as proficient in physical strength and endurance.

Until further material is available it is impossible to elaborate on initiation among the Mbuti. It is sufficient to show that, among the net hunters at least, religious associations there exist for men and women, each with some form of initiation practiced without the aid or presence of villagers, whatever the origin of the actual ceremonies. The function of these asso-

ciations is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti.

Finally, it is worth taking very brief note of the function of music among the net-hunting Mbuti in so far as it throws light on their participation in the *nkumbi* and village society in general.

Music in the forest is almost entirely vocal. Drums may be used if within easy reach of the village, from which they are borrowed or stolen. But drums are never used for formal meetings of the *molimo* and *elima*; rhythm is given out by wooden clappers. None of this song can be said to be secular, as it is all related to the forest. The extreme importance attached to song is most plainly seen in its usage for the *molimo* and *elima*. It is mentioned above in the survey how the Mbuti consecrate a marriage ceremony that is performed in the village according to villager custom, by singing the songs of the *elima*, welcoming the bride to the women's religious association in her new home. We also see how the *elima* songs mark the arrival of Mbuti girls at the age of puberty. *Molimo* songs mark

any major crisis affecting the community as a whole. But, as well as these religious activities, both major economic activities, hunting and gathering, are also consecrated by special types of song. It is inconceivable that the Mbuti, who accompany every important event in their lives with song, should not consecrate the initiation of their boys in this same way. But for the *nkumbi* they have no music at all. As we have said, in 1954 the *molimo* horn was not heard, and no *molimo* songs were sung. I suggest that other initiations, in which the horn and songs are heard, are in connection with villager institutions to which the village boys are being initiated. The only conclusion we can draw is that for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is not sufficiently significant in their forest life to merit consecration by forest song.

This is closely paralleled by the absence of forest music (songs of the *molimo* and *elima*, hunting-and-gathering songs) when the Mbuti are camped on the edge of a village. When they do, the Mbuti themselves behave as different people. In the forest they feel and observe a certain restraint. Their songs are related to and emphasize their supreme value—the forest. Their daily activities are dominated by the forest and the hunt and the need for close cooperation. Once in the village, however, forest values are cast off. Interpersonal relationships become looser; the hunting band as such disintegrates into so many individual families; forest norms of behavior are cast to the winds; forest song is abandoned. Drum-dance replaces forest music entirely. This is the type of dance and music described by Schebesta (1941, 245). It is never heard in a forest hunting camp among the net hunters, only in the neighborhood of the village. It seems that the Mbuti regard the village primarily as a place for eating, drinking, and making merry, free from the rigors, however pleasurable, of forest life. These rigors demand periods of relaxation. I have suggested that the honey season was once a major holiday season for the Mbuti but that visits to the village are now taking its place.

Through their relationship with the villagers, the Mbuti find an opportunity for relaxation, an excursion into the profane world, a period of license which ends, however, in a re-alignment and re-affirmation of the values of their own sacred world of the forest, all quite dramatically seen in the way in which a visit to the vil-

lage often comes to an end. After a few days or weeks of drinking and dancing, one evening the drum-dance is replaced by song, probably a subdued hunting song sung by a group of dejected-looking Pygmies sitting around a fire in their village camp. They get increasingly melancholy until one evening, probably a day or two after they have stopped drum-dancing, they start singing *molimo* songs. The next morning they are suddenly full of life again, and, despite all protests from the villagers, they pack their few belongings and return to the forest, singing loudly as they go.

The evidence considered suggests that there is a dissociation of two sets of values for the Mbuti—those that apply to the village and those that apply to the forest. The two sets of values, corresponding to two worlds, are accompanied by two modes of behavior. It is a case of culture contact without acculturation; such villager institutions as the Mbuti seem to adopt are adopted and are significant only with reference to their village life. The relationship between the two people is, on the one hand, characterized by various attempts to formalize it through trade, participation in various ceremonies and activities, and, on the other hand, it is characterized by a sharp opposition of two different sets of values. This opposition is an opposition of the forest to the non-forest; the humans, to the animals; the Mbuti, to the villagers.

In the final section we consider some legends collected by Anne Putnam among these same Mbuti, and observe in them more of the Mbuti attitude to the villagers and how they equate themselves, as humans, with the forest and with “good” animals, as opposed to the villagers who are associated with destructive animals and *satani*.

#### MBUTI VALUES AS SEEN IN LEGEND

In order to understand the Pygmy values more clearly, and to assess how far the Mbuti rejection of villager values is effectively valid and how far it is merely the psychological reaction of a subordinate people, it is worth considering a collection of nearly 200 legends noted down by Anne Putnam during the last years of her stay in the Ituri. These were all related by four of the more important hunters belonging to an Epulu net-hunting band. I myself have heard many of them told by these same hunters



and by others. Although only a limited though representative selection of the legends is presented, a word should be said about the way the legends are told and the way these particular examples were collected and translated (Turnbull, 1959).

The original manuscripts were prepared under extremely difficult conditions by Mrs. Putnam while living in one of the Mbuti hunting camps. No typewriter was available. Apart from the physical difficulty of making a long-hand rendition of the legends, as they were told, was the problem of translation. Mrs. Putnam did the only thing anyone except a proficient linguist could do, she translated the legend as it was told and wrote it down in English. This procedure was further necessitated by the habit of these Mbuti, who speak three languages, of changing in the telling of a single legend from one to another as the mood seizes them.

Certainly, the ideal would have been to record the original texts, but these we do not have and could hardly expect to have under the circumstances. But we can be sure of the content and the general form of expression. I myself worked on the original manuscripts shortly after their completion and had the opportunity of hearing many of the tales retold, sometimes spontaneously but more often with a little prompting given with the aid of the manuscripts. The only legends that were retold in recognizable form were those concerning creation myth, origin, and tradition, and a few of the more popular ones concerning the *satani*, or forest spirits.

In transcribing from the manuscripts I have not altered the content, but I have attempted to reproduce the legends in a way that will convey something of the manner in which they are told, and I have omitted the often endless repetition. For the present purpose I have divided the legends into three groups: (1) creation myths, legends of origin and tradition; (2) legends dealing with social relations; and (3) legends dealing with relationships to the supernatural.

The bulk of the collection is divided equally between the second and third categories. Only three of the total of 200 legends concern the creation of the world, the stars, and the sky. Fewer than a dozen may be said to deal with the origin and traditional history of the Mbuti. The creation legends are very curtailed versions

of villager legends. The legends of tradition are somewhat more original and are told in a slightly less summary way but still without any great show of interest or enthusiasm.

Most of the tales concern the Mbuti and their relationship with the three planes of existence that they acknowledge: the human, animal, and supernatural worlds. By various notable omissions and commissions they add to our understanding of their social and religious life. Whether the tales are villager in origin or not is for the present purpose not particularly significant. In practice they are never told the same way twice. They are often spontaneous creations arising from a certain set of circumstances, or they may be adaptations of dimly remembered tales, or of traditional villager tales, again made to fit certain sets of circumstances. One of the weaknesses of the present collection is the absence of such surrounding details.

A full analysis of legends and the circumstances under which they are told, together with a similar analysis of other Mbuti arts, such as music and drama (all vitally important means of expression to the Pygmy), would give us a body of facts on which we could draw in a study of the Mbuti system of values, joining such an analysis to a more formal anthropological study. It is not intended to attempt such an analysis here; there is insufficient detail and further field work is needed. However, a study of the legends we have at our disposal, if it cannot provide the detailed systematization we would like, does at least give us a clearer picture of Mbuti values than could be had by merely observing their behavior.

#### 1. CREATION MYTHS: LEGENDS OF ORIGIN AND TRADITION

As mentioned, for the Pygmy these subjects seem barely worth mention in legend. I give all three legends that deal with creation and with the sun and moon. None concerned the stars.

##### THE WATER AND THE EARTH

Many, many moons ago the Water was down below, and the Earth was way up in the sky. When it rained it rained dirt, and the dirt ruined all the water vegetables and spoiled all the water food, so that it had to be thrown away. The Water said to the Earth: "You are spoiling my water gardens by raining dirt. You come down here and I'll go up there."

The Earth agreed, and so the Water moved up and the Earth came down. When they had changed

places, the Water said: "Now I'm going to rain on you, but I'm going to rain water." And the Water rained on the Earth. The earth vegetables flourished and the earth gardens grew. The Water said: "See, when I rain I don't spoil your food like you spoiled mine. It is good like this."

And from then onward the Water stayed up in the sky and the Earth stayed down below.

*Basi*

#### THE SUN AND THE MOON

The Sun and the Moon, who were close friends, had a big discussion. The Sun said to the Moon: "Come on up, high, high up; you and I will be higher than anything else—but now we should part. I will be high up over there in the east, and you will be high up over there in the west."

The Moon said: "Yes, I would like that, and it is good that we should stay apart because you are bright and shine like I do."

And so they divided the Heavens between them. When the Sun disappeared in the hours of the night, then the Moon passed by, all by itself. The Sun said: "This is very good. Your path is there, and mine is over here, but we must never cross at the same time; that would be very, very bad."

So they parted forever. That is why the Sun always shines in the daytime, and the Moon at night.

*Basi*

#### THE PYGMY AND THE SUN

There was a Pygmy who saw the sun in the middle of one afternoon. He thought it was a pigskin, so of course he tried to chase it and catch it. The Pygmy kept following, but the sun would not stay still. Still, the Pygmy followed until the sun disappeared from sight and night arrived. The Pygmy couldn't understand what had happened to the pigskin. He went to sleep.

When dawn came, the sun was way off in another direction. The Pygmy woke up and said to himself: "How did the pigskin get way over there?" He went toward the east and the sun kept coming toward him. They got nearer and nearer . . . then suddenly the sun passed the Pygmy. The Pygmy said: "Now, how did I pass the pigskin?" He turned and chased after the sun. He walked to the west. He walked and walked and walked, until the sun disappeared from sight and night arrived. The Pygmy couldn't understand what had happened to the pigskin. He went to sleep.

*Basi*

The first beginnings of the Pygmies receive scant attention. The single legend in the collection referring to them runs as follows:

Way, way back, when the Great Forest was young, there were two Pygmy men and one Pygmy woman.

They went off into the Forest together. The one man lived with his wife, but time went by and still they had no children. The other Pygmy saw this and decided that he would go to the main hunting camp. There he found another woman. He lived with her, and in due course a child was born. The Pygmy ran to his friend in the Forest in great joy, and told him the news. His friend immediately left the Forest and also lived with the woman in the hunting camp. They too had a child. And that is how Pygmies began, and how they became so plentiful.

*Basi*

Another legend tells how two brothers fought over an ax.

One was killed, so the other said to his nephews and nieces: "See, I have killed your father. From now on, your family and mine are enemies. We will live apart; you will live over there and I will live here." And they parted forever.

That, a social anthropologist might say, was the beginning of fission and fusion.

But apart from this, and one legend telling how a great dreamer dreamed and was told how the Pygmies should make nets out of *nkusa* vine and hunt with nets, the remainder of legends dealing with the traditional past refer to relationship with the villagers, a subject of much more interest to the Mbuti.

There is a particularly nice contrast in the way the villagers tell how the relationship began and the way the Pygmies tell the same story. Here is the villager version:

In the old days the Pygmies lived in holes in the trees, and nobody ever saw them. But one day a real man and his wife were walking through the forest and heard a strange sound. It was very loud and noisy. "What is this strange noise?" said the man to his wife, who replied, "I have no idea." "Well," said the man, "we will have to find that noise and see what it is. I'll go home and think what we should do." So he went home and thought, and he prepared a trap. He baited it with a banana, so that when the animal or whatever was making the noise grabbed the banana, an arrow would come down and pierce it.

The next morning the man and his wife set out with the trap and fixed it at the entrance to the hole in the tree from where the noise was coming. Then they went off a little way and waited to see what would happen. In a little while one of the Pygmies came to the mouth of the hole and saw the banana. He said to himself, "What is this?" Finally, his curiosity got the better of him and he made a grab for the banana. But as he touched it, the trap came down, and his hand was pierced by the arrow. He let

out an awful scream. The man and his wife came rushing to the trap and seized him. They released him. The wife said, "What is this?" They stared at him and examined him carefully, and the wife admired his barkcloth. They took him back to their home and gave him lots of good things to eat.

One day the Pygmy said, "I have many relations in that hole." So the man fixed his trap and went back to the hole and put down his trap with a banana as bait. In a little while a hand came out of the hole and reached for the banana. The trap fell and the arrow pierced the flesh and the Pygmy let out an awful scream. The man and his wife rushed to the trap and took the Pygmy home. The first Pygmy saw them coming and shouted for joy, because they had caught his wife.

The next day the man and his wife went back with the trap, but all the other Pygmies refused to be tempted out of their hole, so they waited and waited in vain. The Pygmies in the hole said: "See, the other two grabbed the banana and were taken away. They must have been eaten up."

In the meantime the two Pygmies who lived in the village were having a very good time, and the real people gave them lots and lots of food. In due course they had a child, and then another child. When those children grew up they had children, and their children had children, and that is why there are so many Pygmies in the forest today.

*Basi*

The Mbuti, as might be imagined, tell it differently:

The Mbuti were out hunting termites because, as you know, termites are good to eat. They built their houses. When night arrived the wives cooked food for their husbands. Then they all went to sleep. But in the middle of the night they heard a cry, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" "What is that?" said one Pygmy. "It is coming from over there!" cried another, pointing into the Forest. "Yes, it is a great noise coming from the old *liboyo* tree!" shouted a third. "We should go and see what it is!" They took their spears and crept up to the old *liboyo* tree. There they found a large hole in the ground, and they thought they could see faces peering up at them. But it was very dark, and they were afraid to go too close, so they returned to their camp.

"Tomorrow we shall go and see what it is all about," they said. "We shall go and we shall smoke it out of the hole, whatever it is."

The next morning they went back to the *liboyo* tree, carrying bundles of sticks and some fire wrapped up in *mongongo* leaves. They put the fire to the wood and started filling the hole with smoke. Then they heard voices calling out from the hole: "I'm dying, I'm dying! Oh, let me out, Brother, I'm dying!"

The Pygmies stopped the smoke and hurried to

help whatever it was out of the hole, and out came people—Real People—much bigger than themselves, holding their heads and crying. They were villagers. "Where do you come from?" asked the Pygmies. "We don't know!" answered the Real People. "We fell into the hole by the old *liboyo* tree and then you started filling it with smoke. We should have died if you had not helped us out."

The Pygmies took the Real People with them, back to their termite camp, saying: "Come back with us to our termite camp. Now we shall all live together; there will be no fighting between us. You will be the Real People, truly, truly; you will be the Real People, truly."

*Basi*

But the Mbuti have their own notions as to the origin of the "Real People." This legend characterizes their attitude to the villager—an attitude they never express in the presence of the villager, finding it more profitable to let the villagers continue to think that even the Mbuti themselves recognize the great superiority of the "Real People."

#### HOW THE REAL PEOPLE BEGAN<sup>1</sup>

In the old days there was a Savage. This Savage had a big house. She was a strange-looking woman. Not only was she tall and skinny and bony, but she had a mouth like a hippopotamus, and her stomach was enormous and her body covered with arrows. In the even older days she had had two husbands, but now both were dead. She said: "Now I'm all alone; everyone has left my village. But I'll get even. Anyone that comes by, I'll eat them."

And that is how the trouble started. She had a medicine that she put out to attract people, and when they came by she would say: "This is my house." If they became frightened and went away, her medicine brought them back. And always, she ate them. She ate them whole. She ate them one after another. Her stomach got larger and larger.

Then all the people she had eaten whole had babies and she soon had a flourishing village. She did not eat these people. They built lots of houses.

*Basi*

The remaining three legends in this section explain how the Pygmies got fire, how the "Real People" tricked them out of the plantains they discovered (which is why the Pygmies have none), and, finally, how war began between Pygmies and villagers. Again the villagers are at fault. A Pygmy is tapping away in a tree, chopping out some honey, and some villagers

<sup>1</sup> As told by a Pygmy.

passing by hear the noise and shoot at it with an arrow. But even though wounded, the clever Pygmy remains very still, so the villagers think they must have been mistaken and go on. Then the Pygmy cuts them off and lies in wait and kills one of them as they come to him. And that began the war.

## 2. LEGENDS DEALING WITH SOCIAL RELATIONS

In this group we have a few legends telling of the good mother (who protects her daughter against nasty villagers) and the good father (who looks after his son when out hunting); the good sister (who protects her baby brother against a *satani*, a forest spirit); and the good brother (who does not quarrel with his brothers).

Social behavior is extolled in a similarly positive vein. Marriage and divorce, cooperative effort in the food quest, war and feud, hospitality to strangers—these are common topics, treated by telling how the reasonable Pygmy behaves in any of these situations. The remainder of the legends in this group deal with virtue and vice.

Among the few legends commending the good mother and father, the good brother and sister, only one takes the opposite approach and tells of the bad mother. I include it in this section because the emphasis seems to be on the thoughtlessness of the mother rather than the trickery of the *satani*.

A Pygmy, his wife, and his child, were all asleep. In the middle of the night the child woke up and began crying. He cried and he cried. He was crying from hunger, because his mother had not fed him. At last the mother got up and gave the child a plantain. Then she went back to lie down and they all fell asleep again. A little while later the child woke up again and started crying again because he was still hungry. He cried and he cried, but his father and his mother went on sleeping.

A *satani* arrived. "Why are you crying, my child?" he asked. "I am crying because I am hungry!" replied the child. "My mother hasn't given me enough to eat and she won't wake up."

So the *satani* fixed two pots of plantains, and lots of meat. He put them on the fire to cook. When it was all ready he put the food in front of the child and the child ate, and ate, and ate. "Oh! This is good!" said the child, and he ate still more. When he finished there was still a pot of plantains and lots more meat, so the *satani* said, "Eat some more, my child, then

you will not wake up hungry again." So the child ate some more.

At last the child had finished all but a few plantains and a little meat. "Oh! How full I am!" he said, holding his little stomach. "I have had enough, really." But the *satani* pointed to the plantains and the meat that still remained and said, "You must eat some more, or you will surely wake up hungry!" "But I have eaten all I can, really!" said the child. "Eat!" said the *satani*.

The child took a plantain and slowly began to eat it, then suddenly BAM! He burst. The *satani* vanished. The mother and father woke with a start and saw the dead body of their little child. "Oh, what can have happened?" cried the mother. And there was much grief.

But the father knew what had happened, the mother had let the child go to bed hungry. So the next night when they lay down to sleep, the father slept only with his eyes. In the middle of the night the *satani* arrived to see if there were any more children who had been allowed to go to bed hungry, so that he could feed them until they burst. The father leapt out of his bed and seized the *satani* and cried, "You devil! You killed our son because his mother allowed him to go to bed hungry!"

And the father killed the *satani* completely.

*Basi*

Most of the legends extolling social behavior are told in a matter-of-fact way and are not infrequently related to incidents in the lives of members of the community. Again, only one legend in the collection deals directly with anti-social behavior. It concerns a man who constantly maltreated his hunting dog. In net-hunting groups, such as the one in which these legends were collected, anything that concerns hunting concerns the entire society. This particular individual fed his dog only on the genitals of other animals. The dog saw that other dogs were being fed on more dainty morsels, such as liver; so one night when his master was sleeping he got his knife and killed the Pygmy. The Pygmy's wife woke up so the dog killed her also. The dog then disappeared.

Even a brief glance at the legends reveals that the one quality to which these Mbuti attach the greatest importance is cleverness, a term that in certain circumstances also means trickery. Conversely, while selfishness, greed, laziness, and gossiping women are mildly condemned in a number of legends, the sin of sins is stupidity. These two qualities are so overriding that cleverness can make crime pay, whereas stupidity can bring death and disaster to the

best-intentioned of Pygmies. It is worth noting here that we find an almost exact parallel in the way these legends deal with the animal world, in which cleverness is the supreme virtue. Legends extolling cleverness among Pygmies must not, then, necessarily be taken as supplying a model for behavior in Pygmy society, but rather as showing how satisfactory relationships can best be established with the animal world. This has much wider implications, as we shall see below.

One of the tales of cleverness tells how a young Pygmy becomes a great hunter, not by killing game by himself, simply, but by killing it with trickery. In such legends the great ideal of the Mbuti seems to be to match the animal world in its own terms. But in other Mbuti legends they rely on aid from the animals to help them in their trickery.

Two men went to their camp. While they were walking through the forest they came across a tree called *pusia*, which bears delicious nuts. One of the men gathered nuts from this tree, but the second man gathered from another tree, bearing very bitter nuts. When they reached their camp they roasted their nuts over the fire. The man with the bitter nuts offered them to his friend, who tasted them and said, "Oh! These are terrible, I can't eat them." The two of them shared the sweet nuts.

Later on, the man with the bitter nuts went back to the tree and stole the rest of the sweet nuts and roasted them over the fire. When they were ready he offered them to his friend. His friend tasted them and said, "These are sweet; they must be my nuts. You have stolen my nuts." "I wouldn't steal your nuts!" "Well, tomorrow I'll go and see."

At first light, the man who had found the sweet nuts went to his tree and saw that all the nuts were gone. He returned to the camp and told his friend what he had found. "You see, you did steal all my nuts. You can stay here no longer."

So the man who stole the nuts left the camp and went through the forest until he came to a *konga* bird. When he saw the *konga* bird, he explained what had happened and said, "Please don't kill me." The *konga* bird said, "All right, you can stay here and look after us." In the meantime, the other Pygmy, his nuts all eaten, decided to follow his friend. When he finally arrived his friend said to the *konga* bird, "There is my brother whose sweet nuts I stole. You can kill him if you like." So together, they killed the Pygmy who had allowed himself to be tricked.

*Basi*

As might be expected, cleverness is frequently

associated with smallness. In several legends the whole purport is the superiority (in this respect) of small animals over large. It is not difficult to identify the smaller, clever animal as the Pygmy, nor the larger, more clumsy, and stupid animal as the villager. Already we are on the fringe of a borderline world. The animal and the human worlds are related with regard to this quality of cleverness, or trickery, a quality that seems to be essentially animal rather than Pygmy. By cultivating this quality, by imitation, the Pygmy is able to establish a relatively satisfactory relationship between the two worlds. But "cleverness" also brings the Pygmy into relationship with the spiritual world. It is through cleverness, for instance, that he is able to thwart the trickery of the forest *satani*.

Old age, with its greater store of experience, connotes cleverness to the Pygmy. Old people are regarded as possessing a special abundance of this quality, which automatically associates them more closely with the animal and spiritual worlds. A number of legends deal with the cleverness of old people. There are old aunts and old grandmothers who eat children left in their care, and old men and women are frequently deserted by the Pygmies when they move camp (in their legends). Yet these old people can use their powers for good, if so inclined, as in the legend of the old woman with yaws who tried to save three young Pygmies from being killed and eaten by a tricky old man. Also, of course, it is the old people who have the most success in dealing with the *satani*. But (discussion of this aspect of old age is given in the next section) the legends do reveal quite clearly that old age, when accompanied by disability, is regarded with loathing by the Pygmies as, indeed, is disability by itself. In the legends, old people and cripples are given every chance to prove that they are still useful members of society. The old cripple who is deserted but who can kill a *satani* and rejoin his hunting group is welcomed back. But another old cripple who cannot move at all when he is deserted, although he kills two *satani* who attack him, is left to die. Old women seem particularly suspect, and I cite here an example of sanctioned matricide. I might add that I have never known this to occur and that, in my experience, the Mbuti take great care of their old people. At the same time I must admit to having seen no complete cripples and to having heard disquieting stories

about cripples that just happened to disappear or who suddenly just "died completely."

There was once a Pygmy named Butuwa. He was in the forest, and was sleeping with his wife, children, and old mother. His mother had no legs. In the middle of the night Butuwa said to his wife: "Mother is sleeping soundly; get the children together and let's go away." So they quietly picked up their belongings, and, together with their children, they crept away. They walked and walked and walked.

Early in the morning the old woman woke up. She said: "Where is everybody? Oh! They are a bad family, they have gone off and left their legless old mother to die. I will follow them." So saying, she stood on her head and walked and walked and walked until she caught up with them, walking on her head. She was very angry with them for having deserted her, and told them how bad they were to have left her alone in the forest. That night they all went to sleep together.

In the middle of the night the Pygmy said to his wife: "Now mother is really asleep; get the children together and let's go away." So they collected the children, picked up their belongings, and stole away. They walked and walked and walked.

Early in the morning the old woman woke up, and she was very, very angry to find that her family had deserted her again. So she stood on her head and she walked and walked and walked, until she caught up with them, walking on her head. She told her son how bad he was. She was very cross indeed. Her son went off into the forest and gathered some honey. And then he got a very bad worm and put it in the honey. He returned to the camp, and said: "Don't be angry with me, mother. Look, I have brought you some fine honey." And the legless old mother ate up the honey, worm and all. And the worm ate up the legless old mother's stomach, and the legless old mother died.

Butuwa left and went to another camp where they had relations. When they got to the camp, their relations asked: "What news; where is your mother?" "Oh! She died," said Butuwa. "That's too bad," said the others.

*Basi*

### 3. LEGENDS DEALING WITH RELATIONSHIPS TO THE SUPERNATURAL

Above, we see animals appearing in connection with the quality of cleverness and how an excess of this quality can break through the flimsy barrier between the natural and the supernatural world. Here we consider the large number of legends in the collection in which animals appear with almost exclusive reference to their supernatural quality. Some legends

seem to deal with relationships between animals as animals. But, even with these, we can suspect that there is some hidden meaning that is not clear to us, until we know more about these Mbuti or, indeed, that may not even be clear to the Mbuti themselves. Here is such a tale:

There was once a chimpanzee and an elephant. The chimpanzee took bugs out of the elephant's hair. When he had finished he said to the elephant, "Now, you take the bugs out of my hair." So the elephant took out bug after bug after bug. He pulled harder and harder, and finally he pulled so hard that he pulled the chimpanzee's head right off. When the elephant saw what had happened he ran away. He went to his cousins in their hole. He said: "I have done something awful; I have killed a chimpanzee." His cousins said: "Really? Tomorrow we shall go and see."

The next morning they all left the hole. They saw the dead chimpanzee and said, "What shall we do with the body?" They decided the best thing was to let it rot there. So they let it rot, and they went back to their hole.

*Basi*

Most of the tales, however, deal with relationships between the animal and the human worlds. Some of these relate how Pygmies and animals become friends—almost. This corresponds to a mutual sympathy that the Pygmies seem to believe exists between them and the animals that share the forest with them, but, however much they may both try to meet, it can never quite be done.

An elephant and a Pygmy were friends. The Pygmy was called Mbali. He went to visit his friend, the elephant. When he arrived at the elephant's village, the elephant was delighted and said to his wife, "My friend, Mbali, has come; make us a nice dish of mashed plantains." So his wife pounded the plantains, added salt, and put the dish over the fire. When it was ready the elephant took some red-hot embers and held them to his feet, and the elephant fat ran into the food. When there was enough he turned to his friend, Mbali, and said, "Eat well." The two of them sat down and ate up all the food. The Pygmy said, "This is delicious." He went back to his camp.

The next day the elephant said to his wife, "Now I will go and visit my friend, Mbali." So he cleaned himself up and set off. When he arrived at Mbali's camp, Mbali saw him and called, "Welcome, friend! Come and sit down." He told his wife that his friend had come, and that she should prepare some mashed plantains for him. When it was cooked the Pygmy took some red-hot embers and started putting them

to his foot. The elephant said, "Don't do that, it will kill you. My feet are big and heavy, let me do it." "Don't be silly," replied the Pygmy, and put the embers to his feet. He screamed with pain and almost died. The elephant took hold of him and brought him back to life, then said, "See, I told you it would kill you." The elephant then took the hot embers and put them to his feet so that the oil ran out into the plantains, and they all sat down and ate.

When the meal was finished the elephant returned to his home. His wife greeted him and asked if he had had a good time. He said: "It was terrible. My friend, Mbali, took red-hot embers and put them to his feet and almost killed himself. I shall never go back there again, never."

*Basi*

Relationships with chimpanzees are less happy. The Pygmy and the chimpanzee seem to be just about equally matched in cleverness, and they are continually killing each other. Typical is the tale of the Pygmy who sat down to watch a group of chimpanzees playing.

One of the chimpanzees noticed the Pygmy and came over to him. He said, "What are you doing here?" He called to his brother chimpanzees, "Come and see this Pygmy." They came over and said, "We'll fight him." One of the chimpanzees grabbed at the Pygmy, but meanwhile the Pygmy had taken up his spear. The Pygmy killed the chimpanzee. The others said, "What did the Pygmy kill our brother with?" And one answered, "It seemed to be with the root of a tree." So another of the chimpanzees gathered up the roots of the trees and threw them at the Pygmy. The Pygmy killed him with his spear. The remaining chimpanzees sat down and tried to puzzle this out. One of them searched all round and found the spear. He took it and killed the Pygmy. The chimpanzees then gathered some leaves and put them over the Pygmy. They all left.

The Pygmy's brother went to look for him. He found him dead, covered with leaves. He said, "What could have happened? Who killed my brother?"

*Basi*

Leopards and turtles are tricky animals that teach the Pygmy much of his cleverness in legend. They appear frequently, and it is always their cleverness and trickery that are stressed. But here we consider another aspect of these animal tales. Not only is it always their cleverness and trickery that are stressed, thus automatically associating them with the supernatural, if only indirectly, but they are often identified with villagers. In talking of villagers, in legend, more often than not the Pygmy gives them animal form. The villager is very defi-

nately not included on the human side of the opposition between the animal and human worlds (the villager is often associated with an excess of cleverness). A frequently heard motif is for a Pygmy to wound an animal with a spear or an arrow. The animal escapes, carrying away the weapon. Later, the Pygmy discovers that weapon, covered with blood, hidden in the house of some Bira villager. The Pygmy then knows that he had, in fact, wounded a villager who had changed into an animal.

The collection includes one very similar legend in which exactly the same motif is used, accounting for enmity between two Pygmy hunting groups. A Pygmy wounds an elephant with a spear, and the elephant escapes, carrying away the spear. The Pygmy's father sends his son off to look for the lost spear. On his way through a village, he meets a Bira who says he has seen the spear in the hut of the Pygmy's best friend, another Pygmy. The Bira helps to conceal the unfortunate hunter in his friend's hut; at night, when his friend is sleeping, he searches and finds his spear. But, as he is escaping, he is seen by other Pygmies who say, "Oh! So it was you who tried to kill our brother; we will kill you."

In the ensuing fight the elephant hunter kills all the other Pygmies and returns to his father who is well satisfied.

The Bira villagers frequently turn into elephants and take advantage of their great size to make war on the Pygmies, destroying the forest as they do so. They are bad enough at the best of times, in Pygmy estimation, but apparently they become elephants when they are particularly bad.

A Bira and his wife had a terrible fight. The wife decided to leave and go to her mother's village, but her husband followed her. And as he followed, he turned into an elephant. He crashed through the forest and destroyed everything in sight. His wife heard the great noise and climbed a tree. The elephant tracked her down and started to knock the tree down. He charged at it and tore at it, but try as he might he could not pull it down. His wife held on tightly. Then she called to the Pygmies. The Pygmies heard her and came to her rescue. When she saw them she told them to kill the elephant. They attacked it with spears. They speared it again and again, but it would not die. It charged at the Pygmies and drove them back, right back to the Bira village. There the elephant spoke and said, "You have tried to kill me, your friend, a Bira." The Pygmies replied:

"But you have turned into an elephant and tried to kill your wife. Because of that you must cross over to the other side of the river and die." The elephant said, "You want to kill me?" "Yes," said the Pygmies. "You have become a very bad elephant." So the elephant went across to the other side of the river. The Pygmies went back and took his wife to her mother.

*Basi*

We next examine some of the legends that very definitely attach supernatural attributes to certain animals and birds. There is a legend that warns against annoying porcupines. A Pygmy that tries to smoke some porcupines out of their hole is attacked, driven into another hole, and turned into an animal. Similarly a pangolin, if annoyed, has the power to drag its tormentor down into the world of the ancestors, through a great hole in the ground.

But some of the strangest tales concern birds. Above is an account of the *konga* bird that helped the Pygmy who stole the sweet nuts to kill his brother. Another, unidentified bird is popular in legend—the Bird with the Beautiful Song. It sings the most Beautiful Song that the Great Forest has ever heard.

One day, a Pygmy child heard this Beautiful Song and searched for the Bird that could sing so wonderfully. He found it and praised its Song. The Bird flew down and perched on the boy's head, and the boy brought it back to the Pygmy camp. His father saw the Bird and praised it. When it sang he told the boy to give it some food. The Bird then flew off. The next day the boy heard the Song and searched until he found the Bird again. Once again he brought it back to the camp. This happens three times, and the last time the father takes the Bird from the boy and says, "Now you go off and leave me. Leave this camp and go away to another; go! go!" The young Pygmy left his father and went to another camp. When he was alone, the father took the Bird, the Bird that sang the most Beautiful Song that the Great Forest had ever heard, and he killed the Bird. And he killed the Song.

And no sooner had he killed the Bird than he himself dropped down dead, completely dead, dead forever.

*Basi*

Another curious bird is *ffi*. Like the legend of the Bird with the Beautiful Song, the legend

of the *ffi* is told with great awe by the Mbuti; it is reproduced here in full.

There was once a poor Pygmy girl. She was crippled, and her skin was full of disease. She was only about eight years old. The Pygmies were breaking camp. Nobody was willing to carry the little cripple for fear of catching the disease. So when all the Pygmies had left the camp, the little girl was all alone, by herself. She cried and she cried and she cried. And when night fell she crawled into her empty hut and she cried herself to sleep.

At daybreak she heard a sound like: "Pip! Pip! Pip!" It was the bird called the *ffi* bird. It had fastened a long rattan vine between two trees, and it was sitting on the vine swinging back and forth, back and forth. The little girl went to look more closely, and the bird flew away.

In the distance there was a Bira villager with his hunting trap. Seeing the diseased cripple he came up and said: "My poor child, you have been left here all by yourself . . . I must kill you." And he took his knife and lifted it to kill the girl. But the knife caught his nose and cut it. It killed him and he fell down dead. The girl caught hold of the rattan vine, and she swung herself back and forth, back and forth.

As she was swinging on the vine, another Bira villager, seeing the movement, came slowly into the clearing. "What is this?" he said to himself. "Why, it is a crippled little Pygmy girl. Get off your vine swing, my child, and come over here to me."

The girl got down from her swing and made her way over to where the Bira was standing. Then she sat down on the ground and held her withered little legs. "Come nearer, my child," said the Bira, reaching forward. "No! No! I can't come any nearer," cried the girl. "My legs hurt so much, and I am all diseased." "Very well, I shall kill you," replied the Bira. "Oh, please don't do that, I'm only a poor deserted child." "But why did your father leave you all alone?" asked the Bira. "No, I must certainly kill you."

And he took a piece of wood and tried to strike the little crippled Pygmy girl. But the wood flew back in his face and hit him on the nose, and the blood streamed down. With the blood still streaming down he ran back to his village and told everyone: "There is a poor deserted Pygmy girl in the Pygmy camp. She is crippled and diseased, and she has the evil eye. She will surely kill us all." And with some friends and relations he hurried to the deserted camp.

There was the little girl, sitting on the swing, swinging herself back and forth, back and forth. The Bira called to her: "Come here, my poor child. You have killed one of our relatives, and you have wounded me. You are crippled and diseased, and you have been deserted. I am going to kill you."

The little girl got down from her swing and slowly



came over to where the Bira was standing. "Come nearer, little one!" said the Bira. "Oh, please don't kill me," said the Pygmy girl, "I am only a deserted cripple, and I haven't run away." But she came closer still. The Bira raised his knife. "Now!" he said, "Now, I am going to kill you!" But the knife caught in his stomach, and he fell down, he fell down dead.

The girl went back to her swing, dragging her withered little legs along the ground. And she climbed on the swing and swung herself back and forth, back and forth. The remaining Bira all hurried back to their village.

"Come! Come! Come, all of you!" they cried. "There is a crippled little Pygmy girl in the deserted camp, and she will surely kill us all unless we kill her. Get your spears, and come!" And all the Bira villagers seized their spears and came running to the deserted camp. They all came to take their revenge and kill the deserted little Pygmy girl.

But the girl had gone.

The only sign of life was the *fifi* bird, and the *fifi* bird was sitting on the rattan vine, swinging itself back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

*Basi*

There is another link between the animal and the supernatural worlds in the alleged existence of "water animals." These water animals are not particularly dangerous spirits; they appear rather as vehicles to transport the Pygmy from the natural world to the supernatural. There is a legend told by the Epulu Pygmies of a man who was known, they say, to their fathers.

There was once a man called Ngoyi. He was tired of all his relatives and said: "I can't live with you any longer. I'm going to live on my own." And off he went to the river named Tato, where he disappeared into the water. He called out, "I'm going to stay here in the water, and you won't be able to see me any more."

His family had all followed him to the river and asked: "Are you really going to stay there in the water?" He replied, "Yes." He called his children and took them into the water with him. They all disappeared.

Now Ngoyi was a clever worker of wood, and, if you go to the river today and throw in a piece of wood, he will make it into whatever you want. His children are there also, and during the day time they come out to play. And even though they disappear when you come near, you can always hear them talking.

*Basi*

Another legend tells how two brothers were crossing a stream, and one fell in. The other

thought his brother had been drowned, and returned to camp with the news, but actually he had become a water animal. Some weeks later the land brother saw his water brother and tried to tempt him home, so glad was he to see him still alive. But the water brother caught hold of him and pulled him into the water, so the land brother also became a water animal.

And the two Water Brothers stayed in the stream; they stayed in the stream and never came out again.

A third legend connects the rainbow with these water animals.

Some girls were off cutting wood. They crossed a stream by a fallen tree. But really the tree was the "bad water animal, called *klima*, the Rainbow." When returning they all crossed, except the slowest of the girls, and a man who waited for her. As these two were halfway across, the dead tree, which was really the rainbow which was really a water animal, suddenly dived down into the water, carrying them with it. Later on, the couple was seen sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream, but never again after that.

Quite distinct from the water animals are the forest spirits which these Pygmies call *satani*. They are, unlike the water animals, capable of being dealt with. Their outstanding characteristic is an excess of cleverness amounting to the grossest trickery. They molest the Pygmies on every possible occasion, stealing their food, devouring them in anthropophagous orgies. The Pygmies resort to cleverness of the same order. It is perfectly possible, though difficult, for a Pygmy to outwit a *satani*, even to kill one. But one of the legends warns against imitating a *satani's* ways too closely.

One day a Pygmy and his child went for a walk. They collected some *eseli* nuts. On the way they met a *satani*. The *satani* put a nut on the child's head and split the nut with a machete. "Oh!" said the Pygmy, "that's like the *nkumbi* circumcision school. Tomorrow, I'll collect some more nuts and try that."

The next day he went with his child to the same place and collected some more *eseli* nuts. He put one of the nuts on his child's head and hit it with his machete. He killed his child dead. The *satani*, who had been watching, said, "See! You have killed your child."

The Pygmy left his child's body there and went down to the river. The *satani* went with him. The *satani* threw his spear into the water. The Pygmy said, "I'd like to do that!" But, when he tried, the

spear went all over the place, everywhere except into the water. He said: "When you do it, *satani*, it goes straight, yet when I do it it goes all over the place." They left each other.

*Basi*

Pygmies become *satani* far less frequently than they become water animals, but it can happen. The woman who gossiped became a *satani*. The following tale tells how a certain Pygmy was driven to the same fate by his relatives.

There was once a young Pygmy whose name was Mambalia. His relations kept whipping and whipping him until at last he could bear it no more and ran away into the forest. His family followed him, but he built a huge fire and said: "I am not going back—never!" And he ran even farther away. His relations returned to their camp.

After that, whenever Mambalia heard voices he ran farther away still, until finally, he said: "Now this is my part of the forest, and nobody must come here. I'm going to stay here all by myself."

He lived in a hole in a tree where no one could find him. He became very, very powerful. He became a *satani*. And now he is an old, old man.

*Basi*

*Satani* are very popular with the Mbuti as subject matter for their legends, and they let their imaginations run riot. A *satani* can do almost anything except kill a really clever Pygmy. They are used frequently as excuses for failure in the hunt or in honey gathering. When a Pygmy has found a good honey tree and has managed to consume most of the honey himself, his excuse to the camp for not bringing back more will be that he was waylaid by a *satani* who was so tricky that he turned into the Pygmy's grandmother, so he had to hand over all his honey, or something to that effect. (This excuse I heard myself.) Rather than examine more *satani* legends, we now briefly review the collection as here presented and draw such conclusions as we can.

Any conclusions are necessarily general and tentative and are of course based not only on a knowledge of the entire collection of legends, only a bare tenth of which is reproduced here, but of the Mbuti themselves. Also it must be emphasized that we are dealing with only one particular band of Pygmies, a net-hunting group in the Epulu District of the Ituri Forest.

My classification of the legends into three groups, which is quite arbitrary and satisfactory

only for certain purposes, reveals at once a lack of interest in the past which is in accord with the apparent shortness of memory among these Pygmies, particularly noticeable when an investigator tries to construct some sort of genealogy. For me it heightens my suspicion of such genealogies given by a people who at times are only too willing to please by inventing totally fictitious names. The legends prove singularly unrewarding to anyone seeking some evidence of a lineage system. If they represent anything, they represent a people who are wholly absorbed in the present. If we accept this evidence, we can look for its consequences in the magico-religious life of the Mbuti as well as in other spheres.

Also with reference to the Mbuti magico-religious system, there is possibly some significance in the tendency to emphasize the natural order of events in the legends relating to social life. The ideal represented in the legend is the normal; consequently, these particular legends seem singularly unimaginative. They read like reports of actual occurrences. A certain amount of cleverness is normal, but an excess of it (when the term becomes best translated as "trickery") is abnormal and leads us, as we have seen, into the world of the supernatural. The Pygmy is anxious to preserve the normal, the *status quo*. Although one could hardly determine this with any certainty from the legends alone, they certainly confirm the notion, which is of particular significance with reference to Mbuti religious thought. We return briefly to this point below.

The second section dealing with social relations also reveals a center of interest on food, the importance of the food quest being implied repeatedly. Also emphasized is the importance of cooperation, not only between members of the same family, but between all members of the hunting band. These legends tell us that vice and virtue are scarcely understood as such, that the dominating quality is cleverness, with its converse, stupidity. But, as pointed out, this is a borderline world. Whereas cleverness may be of use to a Pygmy in his normal everyday life, it is really a quality associated with his dealings with the animal and supernatural worlds. In fact, one legend, not mentioned, quite distinctly tells us that in everyday life it is not good to be too clever, but better to be normal. An elephant hunter who loses his normality (by failing to accept food offered to him, and failing to join in the conversation) is

promptly deserted as being unsafe company. So we might gather that in daily life normality is the ideal, and, when the supernatural (including animals, regarded as possessed of supernatural powers), is dealt with, cleverness is dominant.

From the second section of legends we can finally glean some information from the treatment of old age. Two things emerge: first, old age is associated with extra cleverness, approaching trickery; second, we find Pygmy realism emerging again when old age is accompanied by disability. Either way, old age is a dangerous condition. In this particular band it is perhaps significant that the leaders of the group are not old, but are the active—the "great hunters."

Animals, like food, enter into the majority of legends, and in some cases they seem to be regarded merely as animals. But more often the trickery of the animal is emphasized and, consequently, its association with the supernatural. In the third kind of legends, those dealing with the supernatural, we find animals in almost every one. We also find villagers. Throughout, the legends are interesting in their revelation of the Pygmy attitude to his villager neighbors, but nowhere more so than when the villagers appear as elephants, profane elephants desecrating the sacred forest. At times the Pygmy regards the villager as stupid (in matters concerning everyday forest life), but at others the villager is associated with the excess of cleverness that we call "trickery," and then he belongs in either the animal or the supernatural worlds—certainly not in the Pygmy (human) world. This notion is one that we might usefully transpose from the legendary world to the world of reality. Just what is the Pygmy's relationship with the villager?

Here I wish to draw attention, at the risk of appearing repetitious, to the constant opposition we find in the legends between the natural (Pygmy) world and the supernatural, the normal (reasonable) world and the world of trickery. In his everyday life the Pygmy is also faced with an opposition between two real (in our sense) worlds—his forest world and the world of the villager. No two worlds could be more dissimilar. The villager is afraid of the forest; he believes it to be full of darkness and evil. One of the most striking points brought out by a study of these legends is the absence of any concept of evil (in the sense of conscious

malevolence) in the forest world of the Pygmy. In his daily life the Pygmy regards the forest as a kind, good, protective home. At the risk of being accused of begging the question, I would like to say that other evidence (song, dance, and the practices of the Mbuti religious associations) also suggests that the Pygmy opposes these two worlds as we would oppose the sacred to the profane. Our understanding of his relationship with the villager tribes that surround him is, I think, considerably increased if we bear this fact in mind and realize its full implications.

I deliberately use the term "supernatural" loosely in order to allow the fact to appear that very few of these legends deal with the supernatural as we generally understand the term. Situations that would, to us, be supernatural—such as villagers turning into elephants or even *satani* changing form at will and luring innocent Pygmies to their doom—to the Pygmy are, in a sense, natural. Like the difference between the sphere of magic and that of religion, and in a way corresponding to them, the dividing line is difficult to define. Perhaps the nearest approach is to say that, while trickery is not a human quality, it is one that the human (i.e., the Pygmy) can cultivate and use to deal with those to whom it properly belongs—animals, *satani*, and in certain circumstances the villagers.

Another significant feature in this collection of legends is the total absence of reference to witchcraft and sorcery. This is also reflected in daily life, where magical practices are almost non-existent. We are here considering the legends, so shall not digress with a discussion of Mbuti magic, but it seems appropriate to mention the coincidence of two deficiencies—a lack of any real body of traditional folklore, on the one hand, and a lack of traditional magical belief and practice, on the other.<sup>1</sup> Legends are invented *ad hoc* or altered and adapted to suit varying circumstances. Even when answering questions, the Mbuti often invents a myth and tells it as though it were fact. The recounting of an incident during a hunt or while honey gathering often appears in the form of a legend. There

<sup>1</sup> The possible correlation of these two was suggested during a discussion with Dr. Michael Smith at the University of the West Indies. Though he cannot be held responsible for the exact interpretation given here, I am grateful to him for the stimulus.

is no standard body of folklore; it is rather a matter for individual, spontaneous invention or adaptation. Now it is reasonable to suppose that a standard folklore is associated with magical belief, for magical belief is no more than a socially accepted way of explaining the otherwise inexplicable. If the reason cannot be clearly seen, it is invented and at least clearly understood. With the Mbuti such is not the case. There is no common explanation of death or illness in terms of witchcraft or sorcery. A man invents his own legends; he invents his own explanations for abnormal occurrences. The nearest approach to standard mythological rationalization is perhaps the popularly accepted myth concerning *satani*. Yet *satani* are not malevolent (they do not wish disease and death on people). Though it is their nature to be dangerous, they are dangerous only when seen. They are essentially tangible. They work in a perfectly understandable way and can be counteracted in an equally intelligible manner. Whatever their nature, the essential thing is that, in counteracting *satani* danger the Pygmy in his behavior is absolutely pragmatic. He uses his spear or his bow and arrow and his cleverness. At most the Pygmy will use the common belief in *satani* as an explanation of some minor mishap, the real explanation of which he probably knows but is not willing to admit (carelessness during the hunt, failure while looking for honey, and so on). The belief in *satani* is never used to explain anything more. Yet it is the only common belief of this kind. We are undoubtedly faced, as the legends themselves indicate, with a people with no standard body of magical belief and practice.

It will need further field work and analysis to determine the connection here between myth and magic.

I mention one further factor, which in a way may be said to be magical, and that is the power of song. Yet it is so unlike magic in the accepted sense of that term (with connotations of witchcraft and sorcery) that I do not feel it affects the foregoing hypothesis. Here we enter another world, mentioned again and again in the legends. Unlike the world of animals and *satani*, with which the Pygmy can cope by cultivating cleverness, this world is one in which at first it seems that he has no such weapon. This is perhaps more truly the "supernatural." This is the world of water animals and

rainbows, of streams where strange things happen, of birds and beautiful songs. (It is also, oddly enough, a world of vine swings.)

However one might quibble about the meaning of the term "evil" and its applicability to animals and villagers, it most assuredly seems to have no place at all in this last world, any more than cleverness or trickery. We return again to the value of normality. We have a fusion of the normal and the supernatural that is difficult to grasp, but in which, I believe, lies the key to the magico-religious system of these Mbuti. It is difficult to determine the exact significance of the part birds play in the legends in the last section, but there is no doubt that the Mbuti associate them in some way with what I am now forced to call the "supernormal" world, that unknown world that lies beyond death. To conclude, I would like to refer to the legend of the Bird with the Beautiful Song, which I mention above.

The curious thing about this legend, and the many variant forms in which the theme is repeated, is the emphasis on the song. Sometimes the narrator sings; these are rare moments that are not easily forgotten and far less easily explained. But there is a feeling, and I cannot say that it is more than that, that song has power. The song may have no words; it may be a mixture of meaningless sounds; but plainly it is esthetically satisfying to the Mbuti. These wordless songs are among the most powerful. When the father killed the bird, he killed the song, and he dropped down dead, completely dead, dead forever. In real life, also, song is powerful. Membership in the religious associations of the women and the men gives the Pygmy the right to take part in the singing of songs peculiar to those associations. In fact, it imposes a duty to do so. The songs are distinguished not by their content but by their musical style and the technique of performance. It is the *sound*, rather than the word content, that matters. These songs are sung, in their most powerful form, only on occasions of the greatest distress, such as sickness or death of one of the great hunters, or failure in the chase. These are departures from normality. It has been my contention from an analysis of the function of music among the Mbuti that song is believed to restore that normality.

As well as several more obvious differences from villager values, such as emphasis by the

Mbuti on the food quest, their lack of interest in the past, with a corresponding lack of interest in lineage or tribal ancestry, and an opposition typical of forest people between the animal and the human worlds, more significant differences appear in the legends. One such difference is, of course, the way the Mbuti tend to class the villagers with the animals, in association with the spiritual world, the world of trickery, in opposition to the human world. Then there is the contrast between the Pygmy attitude to the forest as the provider of all that is good as well as bad, and the attitude of the villagers who regard the forest as a place to be feared, the abode of evil. This contrast is heightened by the different magical and religious approaches of the two people. The legends tend to confirm the validity of my suggestion that the prime function of the Mbuti magico-religious system is to maintain normality in the relationship between the people and the forest. The villagers seem more concerned with disorders and abnormalities and appear to have no such use of song as that I have described for the Mbuti, making greater use of witchcraft and sorcery.

To understand the meaning fully in each type of legend, we need to know who told it, to whom, with what accompanying mime, to what effect, and under what circumstances. Given such surrounding details, we could use legends and allied arts to analyze that extremely diffi-

cult subject of sociological study, the magico-religious system. In the absence of such details we can do only as we have done above and indicate some of the general tendencies in the legends, where emphasis is given and where it is lacking, without being able to attempt any formal systematization. Even so, from this collection of legends there seems to be ample justification for supposing that the rejection of villager values which we saw in the *nkumbi* is real and not a mere psychological reaction. It is in fact an integral theme running through the legends. If the opposition is such as we suppose, it accounts for the lack of responsibility manifest by the Mbuti toward their villager hosts at all points where the two people come into contact.

The legends further emphasize the sanctity of the forest. This emphasis is one of the main ways in which the Pygmy maintains his distinctness from the villager. But the importance of the forest is not confined to the Mbuti-villager relationship. It is the central theme of the Mbuti magico-religious system, a glimmering of which we get in the legends relating to the supernatural, a system that is evidently quite distinct from that of the villagers, despite the common usage of certain names and practices. At this point perhaps, the two people are farthest apart.

## CONCLUSIONS

WE SET OUT TO MAKE an ethnographic survey of material on the Mbuti of the Ituri Forest, to evaluate that material, and to see what problems it raised and which direction further field work should take. Rather than attempt to record the material from all sources, we used only the material that added to our knowledge of two specific groups of Mbuti—the archers of the southeastern Ituri Forest and the net hunters of the Epulu District. The rest of the material consists largely of isolated descriptive remarks which cannot always be accurately associated with any one particular region, let alone any particular group or band of hunters. Its inclusion would have added nothing to the sociological value of this work.

The material on the two groups to which we limited ourselves is by no means adequate either. Schebesta's information for the archers is to be regarded with caution because of his admittedly preconceived notions and his faulty methodology and field-work technique. The Putnam material is drawn not from a single coherent account, but from a number of isolated manuscript notes and from the written observations of Anne Putnam, put together by myself in the light of my own partial knowledge at the time of writing, of the particular Pygmies of whom the Putnams write.

The survey must be taken as a survey of source material and not as an ethnographic description of two types of Mbuti society. Though I have tried to draw from the material as much description as possible, obvious gaps are revealed, particularly in our knowledge of the social structure of the Mbuti. We have virtually no information, for instance, on the kinship, legal, or political systems of either group. Undoubtedly, the social structure is simple, but it is all the more regrettable that we do not have any detailed description of it. Our ethnographic description, in so far as it is such, gives an account of various institutions but with no hint as to their interrelationship. The account itself is never sufficiently detailed to permit speculation with any accuracy. In one sense it is virgin ground for the field worker, but not completely so. The survey reveals that the Mbuti should be studied with regard to their economic classification as archers and net

hunters rather than as Efe, Aka, or Sua—the linguistic division made by Schebesta which does not correspond to any sociological division. It may well emerge that there is a better classification, according to structural principles rather than purely economic differences, but at the moment this cannot be seen.

The survey also reveals a strange contrast between an apparently simple social structure and primitive material culture and a highly developed artistic sense. It seems worth while for the future field worker to pay particular attention to myth and mime, noting all the surrounding circumstances and not only the subject of representation. Similarly music is of obvious social importance and should be fully treated, with special attention to the social context. We might in this way gain some insight into the Mbuti system of values, which not only would be of significance itself but would immeasurably help our understanding of the relationship between the Mbuti and the villagers.

In treating the Mbuti art forms, we must determine both their function and their meaning, to see how far they form part of the social structure, possibly as regulative mechanisms, and the values they express, maintain, or enforce. In so doing we can reach the heart of the Mbuti magico-religious system which promises, from the material presented here, to be of particular interest and to provide useful material for comparison with the magico-religious systems of other forest peoples, hunters and gatherers.

The Mbuti-villager relationship is probably the major problem that arises from the survey. We try to show, particularly by citing the 1954 *nkumbi* initiation, that this relationship is not a straightforward symbiosis based on necessary trade amounting to a division of labor between the two people. Such a division of labor exists, but it is an outward symbol of the relationship rather than its inner core. In studying this problem we are studying social change which is likely to assume a different form for each hunting band we consider. There are practical grounds for the difference between the relationship of the archers to their villager neighbors and that of the more nomadic net hunters to

theirs. There is also evidence, but in regrettably little detail, that certain hunting bands maintain a client-patron relationship by specializing in elephant hunting, bringing the tusks to the villagers, on whom they rely for all vegetable products and on the edge of whose villages they live in permanent camps.

However, no matter how great or little the degree of dependence on the villagers, the Mbuti for whom we have any information all seem to maintain a distinct individuality in opposition to the villagers, despite their apparent adoption of villager institutions and even of villager language. With regard to the adoption of villager customs, the 1954 *nkumbi* shows the degree to which this adoption may be a mere superficial conformity and may indeed conceal a formal rejection of villager values. A very careful study should be made of all such institutions held in common, if not practiced jointly.

It is indeed at this level that we seem to find some excuse for referring to the Ituri Mbuti as a single people rather than as consisting of a number of widely scattered, semi-independent hunting bands. We seem to have, throughout, this clear opposition between the forest and the outer world, the Pygmies and the villagers, the human and the non-human worlds. As far as we can see, both the archer communities and the net hunters maintain their separateness, however close their symbiosis with the villagers may appear to be. They maintain not only a physical distance between themselves and their villager neighbors, but also a spiritual one, emphasizing their own indigenous system of values in opposition to that of the villagers. It remains for further field work to tell us whether the system of values held by each group is the same, common to all Mbuti, or not. Despite the difference between Schebesta's account of the archer *toré* association and my own account of the *molimo*, a re-interpretation of the material published by Schebesta could easily suggest that there is a remarkable degree of unity here. But as presented, the facts could be interpreted in any number of ways.

The Mbuti is always conscious of his relationship with the villager and of the subordinate position he is forced to accept. It is a major consideration, it seems, that must be taken into account in every aspect of his life when he is in the village (here I refer mainly to the net

hunters). Even in situations that do not directly associate the two groups, the Mbuti thinks in terms of his ethnic status. Thus, when the villagers were taxed by the administration and exemption was granted to all Mbuti, the point at issue among the Pygmy hunters when they discussed the matter was whether or not such exemption was a slight on the Mbuti, placing them somehow on a lower level than the tax-paying villagers. At least one Mbuti felt so strongly that he secured the necessary money and insisted on paying. The majority, however, compromised by saying that they were different people, so why should the same law be expected to apply to all?

The villager himself opposes the two worlds just as does the Pygmy. While he always tries to include the Pygmy in social, economic, and political fields, there is a rejection at the magico-religious level. In the *nkumbi*, the villagers seemed to be both aware of and unconcerned with the formal rejection by the Mbuti of villager values associated with initiation; the villagers failed to introduce their *molimo* into the ceremony, presumably because there were no villager boys present. But even more obvious, and ever manifesting itself, is the difference between the two people in their attitude to the forest. In the legends as told by the Mbuti we see something of the Mbuti attitude to the forest as the provider of all that is good and bad, as the source of the essentially good life of the Mbuti people. The forest is a place to be trusted (witness the *molimo* invocation to the God of the Forest) and loved. The villagers, on the other hand, fear the forest and people it with malevolent spirits. In their fear of the forest, there is necessarily an element of fear of the Mbuti, whom they recognize as its original inhabitants, as forest people. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Possoz (1954, 257) claims that the term "*Batwa*," derived from "*Batoa*," was originally applied by the Bantu-speaking tribes to the Pygmies, denoting that the latter were of older stock, closer to the ancestors and so worthy of veneration. The more recent term "*Batswa*," however, means "those in the course of disappearing." It would be difficult to prove or disprove such etymological deductions, but there is other evidence that the villager inhabitants of the Ituri Forest do not entirely lack respect for the Mbuti. There

is even the formalized manifestation of this respect mentioned by Joset (1947, 13) when the Bira villagers offer first fruits to the Mbuti.

The Mbuti, on the other hand, when they are in the presence of the villagers, do not openly assert their own attitudes and values but, rather, reinforce those of the villagers, telling stories of the terrible things that can happen in the forest and of the difficult and dangerous life there. The Mbuti regard the villagers as uninitiated foreigners, alien if not actually hostile, to their own forest world. They therefore tolerate, it would appear, the fanciful beliefs of these outsiders, effectively preventing the villagers from entering the forest, either physically or spiritually. The villager is afraid to enter the forest, and his belief in the evil nature of the forest erects an effective spiritual barrier between himself and the Mbuti. The taboos and magical practices that he observes are in accord with his religious beliefs and his system of values. To the Pygmy, however, these same practices are meaningless, as they do not conform with his own notions of the forest world. There is, consequently, a hiatus in the relationship between the two people or rather a hiatus between their relative systems of values and their structural relationship. For a proper understanding of the situation we need a great deal more data, the gathering of which should be one of the foremost tasks of any field-work project.

With reference to such a project, there appear to be two main needs. First, there is a need for detailed studies of representative hunting bands, both archer and net hunter, and of their relationships with their villager neighbors. Second, we need as large a number of such studies as possible for purposes of comparison, not only according to economic technique, but according to other possible systems of classification by structural principles or by degrees of affiliation to different villager tribes. The second need will be fulfilled simply by an extension of the first project. This initial project must necessarily cover not only a single band but other hunting bands with which it is associated through bonds of marriage or for any other reason that may become apparent. At the moment, the single hunting band appears to be the major effective political unit. Such single hunting bands are loosely associated only through

marriage or very rarely through cooperation in the hunt, this latter sometimes accompanying a process of fission or fusion. In the course of such a study it should appear how far all these bands unite in terms of values in opposition to the villagers. This question will be further extended when we come to study another such loose association of hunting bands, that which utilizes one or other of the alternative hunting techniques.

Thus we shall be studying the social structure of individual hunting bands and the structural relationship between different bands (presumably but not necessarily utilizing the same hunting technique). The structural differences and relationships between one type of hunting band and another should then appear and the identity or difference in their systems of values. In the course of the study we shall probably accumulate material for a comparison of the relationships of these different groups to their villager neighbors and will learn what generalizations, if any, can be made about this relationship.

It would seem advisable to begin by working in the communities already covered in the survey, checking and verifying the known information and filling in the numerous gaps. It should be possible by an eastward extension of the study of the Epulu net hunters to reach the point where they come in contact with a westward extension of the archers in the southeast of the area. The Pygmies ("Aka") in the north, of whom little is known at present, should certainly be included in the study, in so far as they can be fruitfully compared with the net hunters and archers. We should then at least know whether or not we are justified in using the term "Mbuti" to include all the Ituri Pygmies as a single cultural entity. It may prove that we are no more justified in studying them together on account of their outward physical similarity than we would be in regarding the Dinka and the Nuer as a single people simply because they both have long legs.

It seems unnecessary even to consider the question of origin or of "purity." We are interested in the situation as it is. We can consider the past only in so far as we know it with certainty (which is not very far), or in so far as it plays a part in the beliefs, attitudes, or values of the people we are studying, in which case it is



part of the present situation. Nor need we be concerned whether any one group is more "acculturated" than another. In any case, the adoption, or otherwise, of villager institutions or language seems to be a poor index to the degree of assimilation involved. Nor can we assume that the simpler society is necessarily the purer, as parasitic organisms are usually simpler in structure than their hosts, who take over the function of certain parts of the parasite. The parasite community, while maintaining an outward separateness from the host, loses much of its own vitality and originality. On the other hand, the community that is taken over

quickly and fully integrated, say, on a definite basis of division of labor, may well retain much of its original structure because it is still a fully live organism living a complementary rather than a dependent, or even partial, existence.

Eventually, then, the study should include such well-integrated groups of Pygmies, or Pygmoids, as the Kango, on the western edge of the Ituri; the Twa and the Tswa; and other Pygmy groups toward the west coast. We should then have some opportunity for seeing how far the term "Pygmy" has any anthropological meaning, but first we have to discover the same truth about the Ituri Mbuti.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARISTOTLE  
1910. *Historia animalium*. Edited by D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson. Oxford.
- BATTEL, A.  
1625. On the regions and customs of the peoples of Angola, Congo and Loango. *In* Purchas, Samuel, *Purchas, his pilgrimes*. London.
- BERNARD, G.  
1922. Une société secrète chez les Babali. Congo, yr. 3, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 349-353.
- BOELAERT, E.  
1936a. De elima der Nkundo. Congo, yr. 17, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 42-52.  
1936b. Waar komen onze Pygmoiden vandaan? Kongo-Overzee, vol. 3, pp. 22-25.
- BOURITIUS, G., AND J. JONK  
1954. Waarseggerij en Beheksing bij Bandaka en Arabisés. Zaïre, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 595-613.
- BULCK, G. VAN  
1948. Les recherches linguistiques au Congo Belge. *Mém. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge*, ser. 8°, vol. 16.  
1953. Les Pygmées Asiatiques et les Pygmées Africains, constituent-ils une race unique? Zaïre, vol. 7, no. 8, pp. 845-850.
- BULCK, V. VAN  
1948. Où en est le problème des Pygmées de l'Ituri? Zaïre, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 423-436.  
1952. Existe-t-il une langue des Pygmées en Afrique centrale? *Wiener Beitr. zur Kulturgesch. und Ling.*, vol. 9, pp. 365-396.
- BURROWS, G.  
1898. *The land of the Pigmies*. New York.
- CAMBRON, L.  
1923. Circoncision dans la région de Beni et des environs. Congo, yr. 4, vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 708-711.
- CASATI, G.  
1891. *Zehn Jahre in Aequatoria und die Rückkehr mit Emin Pascha*. Bamberg.
- CHRISTY, C.  
1924. *Big game and Pygmies*. London.
- CIPRIANI, L.  
1933. Osservazioni sui Pigmei centro-Africani. *Arch. per l'Anthrop. e Ethnol.*, vol. 63, pp. 202-217.
- CLEENE, N. DE  
1933. De oudheid der Pygmeeën van Centraal-Afrika. Congo, yr. 14, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 109-114.
- COSTERMANS, B. J.  
1937. De Efe van Watsa-Gombari. Congo, yr. 18, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 526-532.  
1938. Torè, God en Geesten bij de Mamvu en hun dwergen. *Ibid.*, yr. 19, vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 532-547.
1947. De gebouwen bij de Mamvu-Mangutu-Walese. Zaïre, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 281-295.
- COTLOW, L.  
1956. *Zanzabuku: dangerous safari*. New York.
- CUREAU, A. L.  
1915. *Savage man in central Africa*. London.
- CZEKANOWSKI, J.  
1924. *Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der Deutschen Zentral-Afrika-Expedition 1907-1908*. *Ethnogr. und Anthropol.*, vol. 6, no. 2.
- DAVID, J.  
1904a. Ueber die Pygmäen am oberen Ituri (Bambuti). *Globus*, vol. 85, pp. 117-119.  
1904b. Notizen über die Pygmäen des Ituriwaldes. *Ibid.*, vol. 86, pp. 193-198.
- DAVIS, R. H.  
1907. *The Congo and the coasts of Africa*. New York.
- DE HALDRINGHAM, R.  
[ca. 1290.] *Mappa Mundi*. Hereford, England.
- DENIS, P.  
1952. La tortue et le léopard dans les légendes Mangbetu. Zaïre, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 155-172.
- DU CHAILLU, P. B.  
1867. *A journey to Ashango-Land*. London.  
1890. *Adventures in the great forest of equatorial Africa and the country of the dwarfs*. London.  
1900. *The world of the great forest*. New York.
- EICKSTEDT, E. VON  
1934. *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit*. Stuttgart.
- EVANS, IVOR H. N.  
1937. *Negritos of Malaya*. Cambridge, England.
- FAHRENFORT, J. J.  
1927. *Het Hoogste Wezen der primitieven*. Groningen.
- GEIL, E. W.  
1905. *A Yankee in the Pygmy land*. London.
- GELUWE, H. VAN  
1956. Les Bira et les peuplades limitrophes. *Ann. Mus. Roy. Congo Belge*, vol. 2.  
1957. Mamvu-Mangutu et Balese-Mvuba. *Ibid.*, vol. 3.
- GREGORIUS, P.  
1952. P. Schebesta's Expedities onder de Bambuti-Pygmeeën aan de Ituri-rivier. Zaïre, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 379-390.
- GRIERSON, P. F. H.  
1903. *The silent trade*. Edinburgh.
- GUSINDE, M.  
1942. Die Kongo-Pygmäen in Geschichte und

- Gegenwart. Acta Nova Leopoldina, new ser., vol. 11, no. 76, pp. 167-415.
1945. Benennung der Afrikanischen Pygmäengruppen. Mitt. Geogr. Gesell. Wien, vol. 88, pp. 47-53.
1948. Urwaldmenschen am Ituri. Vienna.
1955. Pygmies and pygmoids: twides of tropical Africa. *Anthrop. Quart.*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 3-61.
- HAENE, J. DE  
1949. Découvertes préhistoriques en Haute-Ituri. *Zaire*, vol. 3, no. 9, pp. 1003-1110.
- HERODOTUS  
1866. The history of Herodotus. Edited by G. Rawlinson. New York.
- HOMER  
1864. Iliad. Edited by Lord Derby. London.
- HUTEREAU, A.  
1909. Notes sur la vie familiale et juridique de quelques populations du Congo Belge. *Ann. Mus. du Congo Belge, Ethnog. et Anthropol.*, ser. 3, Doc. Ethnog., vol. 1, fasc. 1.
1924. Les Négrilles de l'Uele et de l'Ubangi. *Congo*, yr. 5, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 495-514; no. 5, pp. 693-711.
- IMMENROTH, W.  
1933. Kultur und Umwelt der Kleinwüchsigen in Afrika. Leipzig.
- JADIN, J.  
1936. Groupes sanguins des Pygmées et des Nègres de l'Ituri (Congo Belge). *Anthropos*, vol. 31, pp. 177-186.
1938. Aperçu sur l'état sanitaire des Pygmées de l'Ituri. *Anthropologie*, vol. 16, pp. 69-83.
- JASPERT, W.  
1930. Through unknown Africa. London.
- JENSEN, A. E.  
1933. Beschneidung und Reiferzeremonien bei Naturvölkern. *Studien zur Kulturk.*, Stuttgart, vol. 1.
- JOHNSTON, H. H.  
1884. The River Congo. London.
- 1902, 1904. The Uganda Protectorate. New York.
1903. The Pygmies of the great Congo forest. *Ann. Rept. Smithsonian Inst.*, for 1902, pp. 479-491.
1905. Pygmées et hommes Simièsques de la frontière de l'Ouganda. *Rev. Sci.*, vol. 3, no. 15, pp. 449-454.
1908. George Grenfell and the Congo. London.
- JOSET, P. E.  
1947. Notes ethnographiques sur les Babira-Babombi (Babira de la forêt). *Bull. Assoc. Ancienne Ethnog.*, Univ. Colon, Belgique, vol. 1, pp. 9-24.
1948. Buda Efeba: Contes et légendes Pygmées. *Zaire*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 137-157.
- JULIEN, P.  
1934. Tusschen Nijl en Congo: Onwetenschappelijke ervaringen tijdens een Pygmeeë-noverzoek in N. O. Congo. *Congo*, yr. 15, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 728-729.
1954. Pygmeeën. Amsterdam.
- JUNKER, W.  
1889-1891. Reisen in Afrika. Vienna, 3 vols.
- KERKEN, G. VAN DER  
1944. L'ethnie Mongo. *Mém. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge*, ser. 8°, vol. 13.
- LABROUGHE, O. DE  
1933. Chez les Pygmées. Paris.
- LAMAN, K. E.  
1928. Languages used in the Congo basin. *Africa*, vol. 1, pp. 372-380.
- LANG, H.  
1919. Nomad dwarfs and civilization. *Nat. Hist., Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, vol. 19, no. 6, pp. 696-713.
- LE ROY, A.  
1897. Les Pygmées: Négrilles d'Afrique et Négritos d'Asie. Paris.
- LLOYD, A. B.  
1899. In dwarf land and cannibal country. New York.
- MAES, J.  
1932. Allume-feu des Pygmées de l'A.E.F. *Congo*, yr. 13, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 704-707.
1933. L'allume-feu des populations de Congo Belge. *Ibid.*, yr. 13, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 21-41.
1934. Enquête sur la façon de compter et les mimiques des nombres employées par les Pygmées de la région de Gombari. *Congo*, yr. 15, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 564-571.
1935. Volkerkunde van Belgisch-Kongo. Antwerp.
- MAIURI, A.  
1955. Una nuova pittura nilotica a Pompei. *Atti della Acad. Naz. dei Lincei*, Rome, ser. 8, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 65-80.
- MEEUSSEN, A. E., AND B. LECOSTE  
1955. Systématiques des termes de parenté Ngwana. *Zaire*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 403-405.
- MERRIAM, A. P.  
1953. African music re-examined in the light of new materials from the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Urundi. *Zaire*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 245-253.
- MOELLER, A.  
1934. Les grandes lignes des migrations des Bantous de la Province Orientale du Congo Belge. *Bull. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge*, vol. 5, pp. 63-111.
1936. Les grandes lignes des migrations des Ban-

- tous de la Province Orientale du Congo Belge. Brussels.
- NENNEN, O.  
1927. La circoncision chez les Samba (Baluba). Congo, yr. 8, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 368-376.
- NIPPOLD, W.  
1936. Rassen und Kulturgeschichte der Negritovölker Südöst-Asiens. Göttingen.  
1937. Umwelt und Rasse als Kulturfaktoren. Göttinger Gelehrte Anz., pp. 544-564.
- PARKE, T.  
1891. My personal experience in equatorial Africa. London.
- PERISTIANY, J. G.  
1951. The age set system of the pastoral Pokot. Africa, vol. 21, pp. 188-206, 279-302.
- POSZOZ, E.  
1954. Batoa, Batwa, Batswa. Africa, vol. 24, pp. 257-260.
- POUTRIN, M.  
1910. Contribution a l'étude des Pygmées d'Afrique. Anthropologie, vol. 21, pp. 435-504.  
1911. Contribution a l'étude des Pygmées d'Afrique. *Ibid.*, vol. 22, pp. 421-549.  
1912. Contribution a l'étude des Pygmées d'Afrique. *Ibid.*, vol. 23, pp. 349-404.
- POWELL-COTTON, P.  
1907. Notes on a journey through the great Ituri forest. Jour. Roy. Anthropol. Inst., Great Britain, vol. 7, pp. 1-12.
- PUTNAM, ANNE E.  
1954. Madami. New York.
- PUTNAM, PATRICK  
1948. The Pygmies of the Ituri Forest. In Coon, C. S. (ed.), Reader in general anthropology. New York, pp. 322-342.
- QUATREFAGES, A. DE  
1887. Les Pygmées. Paris.  
1895. The Pygmies. London.
- SAUZY, M.  
1926. Les Pygmées au Congo Belge. Géographie, vol. 46, pp. 24-32.
- SCHEBESTA, P.  
1929. Chez les Pygmées de l'Ituri (entre la Lindi et l'Ituri). Congo, yr. 10, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 415-421.  
1931a. Voyage d'exploration chez les Pygmées du Congo Belge. *Ibid.*, yr. 11, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 327-341.  
1931b. Les conceptions religieuses des Pygmées de l'Ituri. *Ibid.*, yr. 11, vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 645-666; vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 45-68.  
1932. Bambuti, die Zwerge vom Congo. Salzburg.  
1933. Among Congo Pygmies. London.  
1934. Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge. Salzburg.  
1936a. My Pygmy and Negro hosts. London.
- 1936b. Der Urwald ruft wieder. Salzburg.  
1936c. Données essentielles sur la religion des Pygmées. Congo, yr. 17, vol. 1, no. 13, pp. 321-331.  
1937. Revisiting my Pygmy hosts. London.  
1938. Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri: Geschichte, Geographie, Umwelt, Demographie und Anthropologie der Ituri-Bambuti. Mém. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge, Sect. Sci. Morales et Politiques, ser. 4°, vol. 1, ser. 1, vol. 1, pp. 1-438.  
1941. Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri: Die Wirtschaft der Ituri-Bambuti. *Ibid.*, Sect. Sci. Morales et Politiques, ser. 4°, vol. 2, ser. 1, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 1-284.  
1947. Tore, le dieu forestier des Bambuti. Zaïre, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 181-195.  
1948. Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri: Das Gesellschaftsleben. Mém. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge, Sect. Sci. Morales et Politiques, ser. 4°, vol. 2, ser. 1, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 285-551.  
1949. La langue des Pygmées. Zaïre, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 119-128.  
1950. Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri: Die Religion der Ituri-Bambuti. Mém. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge, Sect. Sci. Morales et Politiques, ser. 4°, vol. 4, ser. 1, vol. 2, pt. 3, pp. 1-253.  
1952. Les Pygmées du Congo Belge. Mém. Inst. Roy. Colonial Belge, ser. 8°, vol. 26, fasc. 2.  
1957. Pygmy music and ceremonial. Man, vol. 57, no. 78.
- SCHMIDT, W.  
1910. Die Stellung der Pygmäen-Völker in der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschen. Stuttgart.  
1933. Die Ursprung der Gottesidee: Die Religion der Urvölker Afrikas. Münster, vol. 4.
- SCHWEINFURTH, G.  
1874. The heart of Africa. New York.
- SERVATIUS, P.  
1932. De besnijdenis bij de Bene-Nsamba. Anthropos, vol. 27, pp. 525-542.
- SOORS, M.  
1950a. A propos des découvertes préhistoriques en Haut-Ituri. Zaïre, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 59.  
1950b. Notes sur les Pygmées. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 299-301.
- SPEKE, J. H.  
1864. Journal of the discovery of the source of the Nile. New York.
- STANLEY, H. M.  
1879. Through the dark continent. New York.  
1890. In darkest Africa. New York.
- STUHLMAN, F.  
1894. Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika. Berlin.

- TORDAY, E.  
 1925a. *Causeries Congolaises*. Brussels.  
 1925b. *On the trail of the Bushongo*. London.
- TRILLES, H.  
 1932. *Les Pygmées de la forêt équatoriale*. Paris.  
 1945. *L'âme du Pygmée d'Afrique*. Paris.
- TURNBULL, C. M.  
 1955, 1957. *Pygmy music and ceremonial*. *Man*, vol. 55 (1955), no. 31; see also vol. 57 (1957), no. 157.  
 1957. *Initiation among the BaMbuti Pygmies of the central Ituri*. *Jour. Roy. Anthropol. Inst., Great Britain*, vol. 87, pt. 2, pp. 191–216.  
 1959. *Legends of the BaMbuti*. *Ibid.*, vol. 89, pt. 1, pp. 45–60.  
 1960a. *The elima: a premarital festival among the BaMbuti Pygmies*. *Zaire*, vol. 14, no. 2–3, pp. 175–192.  
 1960b. *The molimo: a men's religious association among the Ituri BaMbuti*. *Ibid.*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 307–340.  
 1961. *The Forest People*. New York.
- TYSON, E.  
 1699. *The anatomy of a Pygmy compared to that of a monkey, an ape, and a man*. London.
- VANDEN BERGH, L. J.  
 1921. *On the trail of the Pigmies*. New York.
- VANSINA, J.  
 1956. *Migrations de la Province du Kasai: une hypothèse*. *Zaire*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 69–84.
- VERBEKEN, A.  
 1947. *La signification mystique des couleurs chez les Bantous*. *Zaire*, vol. 1, no. 10, pp. 1139–1144.
- VERGIAT, A. M.  
 1936. *Les rites secrets des primitifs de l'Oubangui*. Paris.
- VERNER, S. P.  
 1902. *The African Pygmies*. *Atlantic Monthly*, August, pp. 184–195.
- VON HOFFMAN, C.  
 1929. *Jungle gods*. New York.
- WARD, H.  
 1910. *A voice from the Congo*. London.
- WAUTERS, G.  
 1940. *De Bilima van de Batswa der Evanaars-provincie*. *Kongo-Overzee*, vol. 6, pp. 95–103.
- WINDLE, B. C. A.  
 1894. *A philological essay concerning the Pygmies of the ancients*. London.
- WISSMAN, H.  
 1890. *Unter deutscher Flagge (quer durch Afrika von West nach Ost)*. Berlin.

## CATALOGUE DATA FOR CERTAIN ILLUSTRATIONS

### TEXT FIGURES

4. Household utensils carved from wood, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Stool (90.2-2862)
  - b. Mortar (90.2-2861a)
  - c. Pestle (90.2-2861b)
  - d. Stirrer (90.2-2903)
5. Household utensils made from clay, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Pipestem and clay bowl (90.2-2921)
  - b. Cooking vessel (90.2-4962)
6. Hunting equipment, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri
  - a. Bow (90.2-2851)
  - b-h. Arrows (90.2-2852d, a, c, b, f, e, g)
7. Hunting equipment of a western archer from Nduye District, Central Ituri
  - a. Bow (90.2-2848)
  - b-h. Arrows (90.2-2849a-g)
  - i. Dog bell (90.2-2899)
8. Hunting equipment, archers, Oysha District, Central Ituri
  - a. Bow (90.2-2847)
  - b-c. Arrows (90.2-2850c, f)
  - d. Wrist protector (90.2-2856)
9. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri
  - a. Skin quiver (90.1-8913a)
  - b-i. Arrows (90.1-8913c-d; 90.2-2368a, g)
10. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri
  - a-b. Spear, Bira (90.2-2837)
  - c. Spear, Bira, hafted by MButi (90.2-2936)
11. Fruit press, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri (90.2-3691)
13. Adze, Bira villages, rehafted by Mbuti archers, Central Ituri (90.2-2933)
14. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Axblade (90.2-2916)
  - b. Ax (90.2-2928)
15. Miscellaneous items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Comb (90.2-2907)
  - b. Flute, notched (90.2-2876)
  - c. Flute, notched (90.2-2877)
18. Broom, *edia*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2943)
19. Chair, *ngbanga*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2949)
20. Household furniture, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Bench, *mbakati* (90.2-2951)
  - b. Bench, *mbakati* (90.2-2950)
21. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Machete (90.2-2929)
  - b. Vessel, cooking (90.2-2866)
  - c. Comb (90.2-2906)
  - d. Vessel, cooking (90.2-2867)
  - e. Knife (90.2-2935)
  - f. Knife (90.2-2926)
22. Bark beater, *kolea*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2343)
24. Block and scraper of wood, *nkula* (also *ngula*), net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2942a-b)
25. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. *epo'u* vine (90.2-2814)
  - b. *esele* vine (90.2-3692)
26. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. *akoko* vine (90.2-2815)
  - b. *esele* vine (90.2-2920)
27. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. *le'engbe* vine (90.2-2818)
  - b. *akbanda* vine (90.2-2816)
28. Belts, *mokaba*, for barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. (90.2-2810)
  - b. (90.2-2372)
  - c. (90.2-2812)
29. Basketry hat, *ngala*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2808)
30. Personal adornment
  - a. Seed, gardenia, *kangay*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2900)
  - b. Hair decoration, *mongele* antelope hair, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2901)
  - c. Bracelet, Bira, Central Ituri (90.2-2904)
  - d. Bracelet, Bira, Central Ituri (90.2-2902)
  - e. Nose and/or lip plug, *bobu*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2911)
  - f. Comb, *kisanoa*, Bira, Central Ituri (90.2-2909)
  - g. Comb, *kisanoa*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
31. Miscellaneous items, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Resin flare, *kasuku*, (90.2-2939)
  - b. Bark pipe, *mbende* (90.2-2919)
33. Prepared antelope hide, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2859)
34. Hunting net, *kuya*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2802)
35. Magic whistle, *mamambamamba*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2895)

37. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Skin quiver, *baba* (90.2-2858)
  - b. Bow, *mangé* (90.2-2366)
  - c. Arrow, *api* (90.2-2367i)
  - d. Arrow, *api* (90.2-2846c)
  - e. Arrow, *api* (90.2-2846a)
  - f. Wrist protector, *asuba* (90.2-2857)
38. Hunting equipment, net hunters
  - a. Bow, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2842)
  - b. Quiver, Central Ituri (90.1-7968b)
  - c-e. Arrows, Central Ituri (90.1-7958o, e, i)
39. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Bow (90.2-2361)
  - b-k. Arrows (90.2-2367d, a, e, m, k, j, f, c, l, b)
40. Spear, *ekonga*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2376)
41. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Basket, *so* (90.2-2804)
42. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Basket, *so* (90.2-2803)
  - b. Basket, *so* (90.2-2805)
43. Gathering equipment, net hunters
  - a. Honey container, *ebimba*, bark, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2944)
  - b. Honey container, *apayabisi*, vine and leaf, West Nduye District, Central Ituri (90.2-2945)
  - c-d. Clappers, *ngbengbe*, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2873a-b)
44. Baby-carrying sling, *koko*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-2822)
45. Toys, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Spear, *ekonga* (90.2-2840)
  - b. Fire spear, *iswakamaboki* (90.2-2839)
  - c. Castanets, *kolokbenje* (90.2-2869)
  - d. Top, *tokiya* (90.2-2887)
  - e. Baby sling, *koko* (90.2-4964)
  - f. Bark beater, *kolea* (90.2-2937)
  - g. Seed whistle, *pho'u* (90.2-2882)
  - h. Seed whistle, *pho'u* (90.2-2883)
  - i. Wrist protector, *asuba* (90.2-2855)
  - j. Basket, *so* (90.2-2806)
  - k. Bow, *mangé* (90.2-2354), and arrow, *api* (90.2-2844e)
46. Initiation whip, *mbaka*, Bira villagers, Central Ituri (90.2-2833)
47. Initiation items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Armbands, raffia (90.2-2355, 90.2-2356, 90.2-2357)
  - b. Skirt, grass (90.1-226)
48. Initiation masks, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. Mask, bark (90.2-2356)
  - b. Mouth mask, leaf (90.2-2830)
49. Wood carvings, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Male, standing (90.2-4686)
  - b. Tree (90.2-4687)
50. Headdresses, *salakuku*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. (90.2-2827)
  - b. (90.2-2828)
51. Magical paraphernalia, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri
  - a. Pipe, *akbelea*, attached to fur headband (90.2-2890)
  - b. Whistle, *angbelu*, wood (90.2-2896)
  - c. Antelope horn, *anjo* (90.2-2893b)
  - d. Honey whistle, *madé* (90.2-2889)
  - e. Honey whistle, *madé* (90.2-2888)
  - f. Hunting whistle, *manyongé* (90.2-2892)
52. Split clappers, *banja*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri (90.2-3693a-b)
53. Fetish sticks, *amati a oni ganza*, Bira villagers, Central Ituri
  - a. (90.2-2952)
  - b. (90.2-2953)







PLATES 26-38

PLATE 26

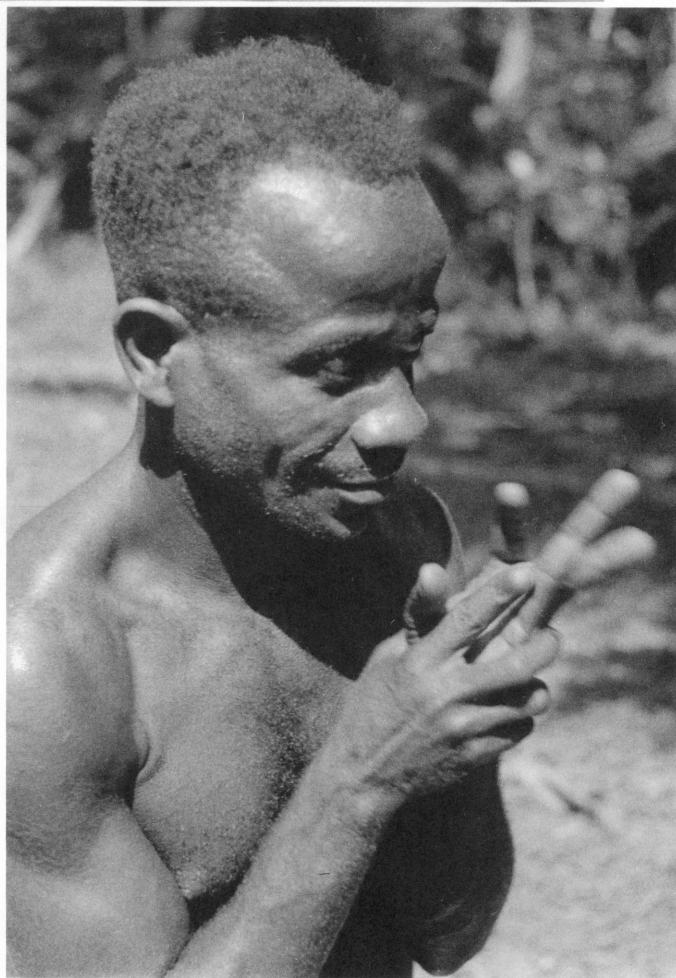
PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. An Mbuti elder. Too old to be a successful hunter, he can be sure of food and shelter, provided by the younger generation of hunters, for as long as he lives. The genet skin hat is not a formal indication of status, but, effectively, only elders are likely to wear hats of any kind.

b. An Mbuti hunter, upon whom, together with his wife, falls the main burden of providing for young and old. He will address the elders as "mother" and "father," regardless of actual kinship considerations, and he will have toward them all the same obligations that he has toward his biological parents. The hand gesture, a snapping of the fingers onto the palm, is used in conversation as an indication of speed or sudden activity.



A



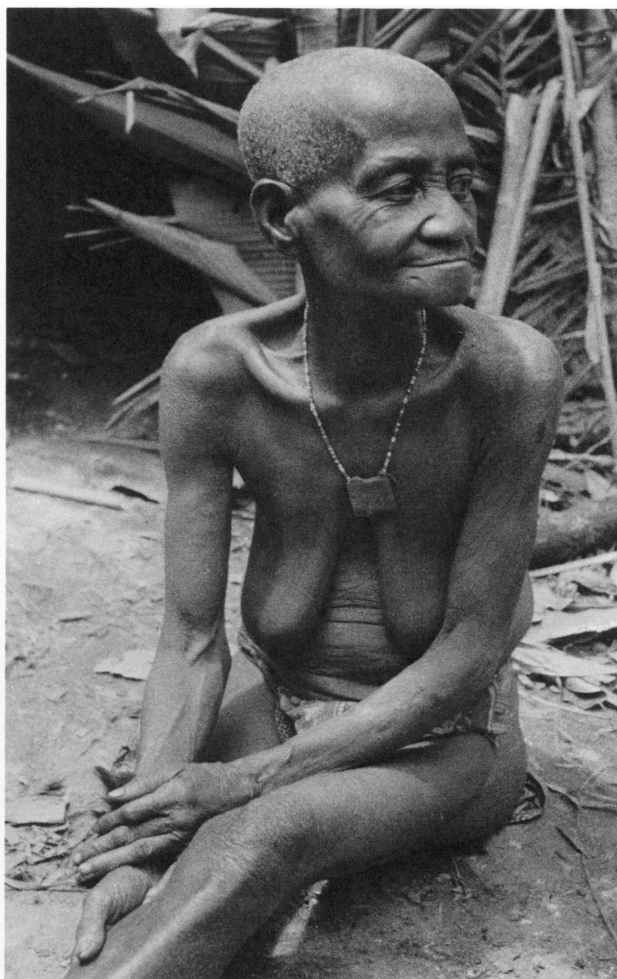
B

## PLATE 27

### PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. An old Mbuti woman, probably around 60 years of age. She enjoys the respect and affection of her entire band. The pendant charm around her neck is of village origin, a gift from the Arabisé tribe of Ngwana cultivators. For them it is magic; for her it is purely decorative.

b. An Mbuti mother and child are close throughout life, but never more so than during the infancy of the child. Wrapped in a specially prepared piece of barkcloth, symbolic of the protection afforded the Mbuti by the forest, the infant is seldom out of its mother's arms. When it is, however, any woman or older girl may take the mother's place, holding, fondling, and even nursing the child.



A

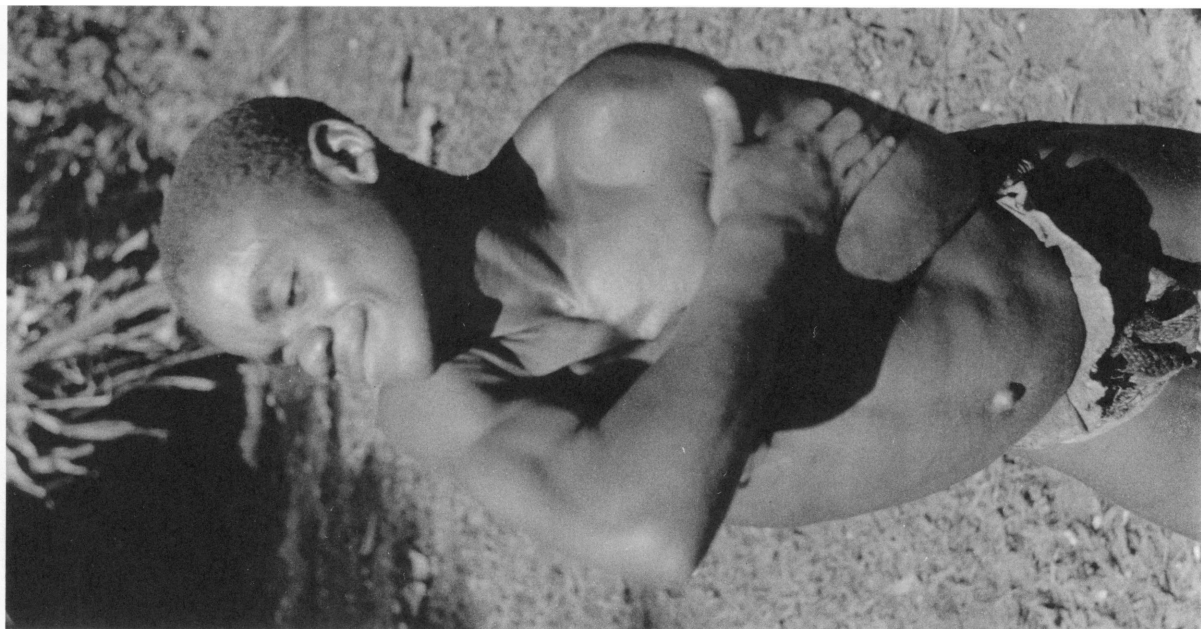


B

PLATE 28

PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

- a. An Mbuti hunter and child. Every child has a father in every hunter, even in such a case as this, in which the child's mother was a member of the band until she married a villager, who fathered the boy. Such children are brought up in the village, as villagers, and never become members of an Mbuti band, however much affection they might receive when the hunters visit the village.
- b. A youth, shortly to become a hunter. He will already be assuming the responsibilities of adulthood, though he is unlikely to own a hunting net of his own until he is married. Elbow clapping is a major means of signaling through the forest. By flexing the elbow against the side of the chest the sound box is enlarged or compressed, causing a variation in pitch, which, when combined with rhythmic variations, allows for the sending of reasonably complex messages. The result of a hunt can be quickly relayed back to the camp in this way.



B



A



## PLATE 29

### A HUNTING CAMP, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. A hunting camp is always near a stream, usually in a natural clearing. A small archer camp is often circular, but larger camps, such as those of the net hunters or of archers during communal hunts, are more often irregular, reflecting not clan or lineage divisions so much as personal preferences, friendships, and hostilities that have little to do with kinship considerations.

b. A family group, such as this considered itself to be, may well consist, as this does, of people linked not only by affinal connections but by the strongest bonds of friendship. The elder in the center is a widower, living with the hunter to his right, whose child he holds. Their relationship is that of distant affines, as is the elder's relationship with the other hunter, to his left (with wife and child) with whom he also sometimes lived. He thus formed a link between these two families, forming an effective subunit within the camp.



A



B

PLATE 30

HUT BUILDING, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. Hut building is one of the few activities reserved exclusively for women, who also have the right to tear the hut down as a sign of conjugal distress. Here a woman is slitting the stalks of the phrynium leaves that will form the roof, being hung like tiles.

b. Hut building. The frame is made of young saplings, collected by men and women, but erected by the women in a matter of minutes. The leaf "tiles" are usually hung by starting at the top and working downward. The entrance to the hut is changed, often several times, as the camp grows, reflecting relationships between neighbors. At lower right is an Mbuti stick seat.



A



B

PLATE 31  
MANUFACTURE OF BARKCLOTH, STRIPPING,  
EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

Barkcloth manufacture is predominantly the work of youths or young hunters. The first step, after the strip of bark is cut from a vine, is the stripping of the outer bark. Here a youth uses his leg as a platform for support and works with a village-made machete. In the absence of a metal blade, it is said by the Mbuti that they use slivers of bamboo or sharp stones as knives.



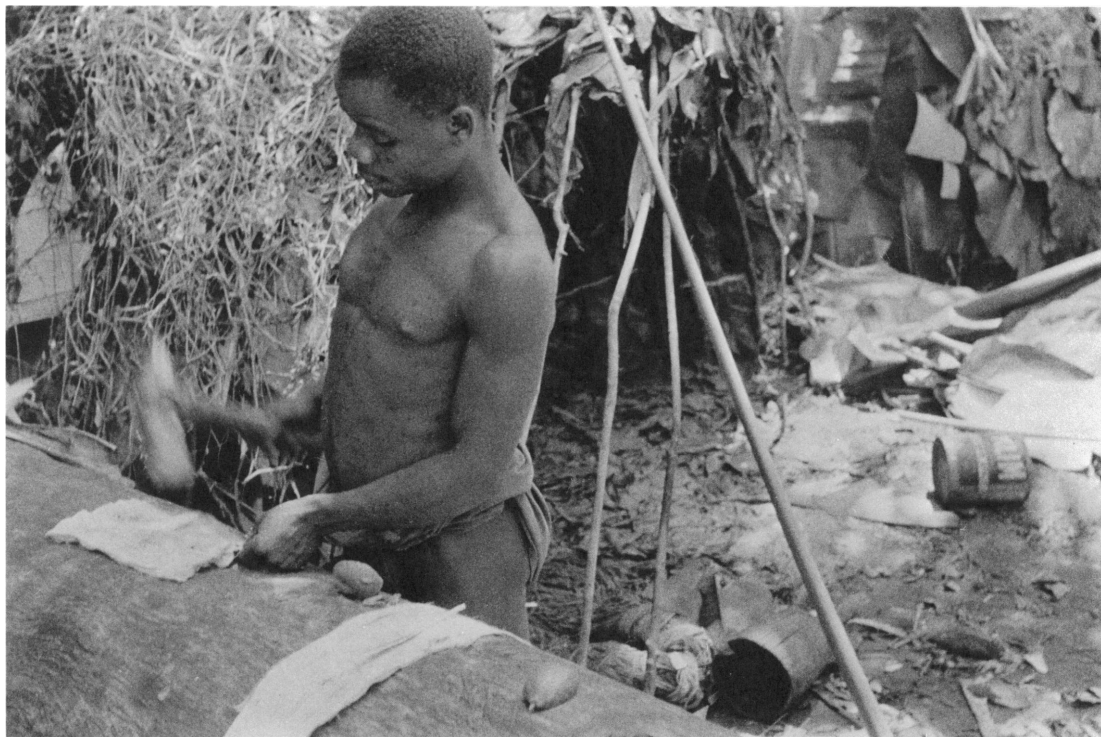
PLATE 32

MANUFACTURE OF BARKCLOTH, HAMMERING AND DECORATION,  
EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

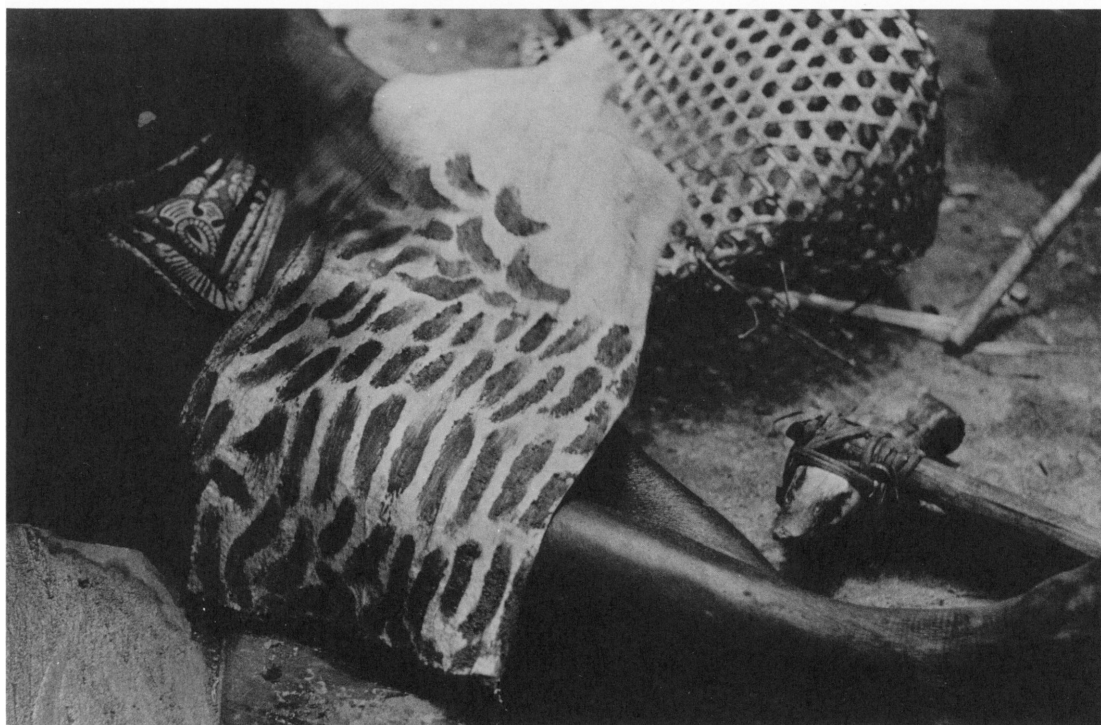
a. The stripped lengths of bark are softened in water or over a fire and then hammered out with the end of an ivory tusk. Usually such hammers are hafted, though sometimes they are used, as is the more rare wooden hammer, without being hafted. The tin can, the grass, and the banana leaves indicate that this camp is in the near vicinity of a village.

b. Decoration. Women do all the decorating of barkcloth. They smear red *nkula* paste onto the cloth with their fingers, or use small twigs to trace outlines in the black juice of the gardenia fruit or the blue dye obtained from certain citrus fruits.





A



B



PLATE 33  
AN MBUTI GATHERER WITH HER TYPICAL BASKET AND TUMP LINE,  
EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

Women and girls do nearly all the gathering, though a man may pick any mushrooms or fruits he happens across on the trail. Women are also responsible for the maintenance of fire. Not knowing how to make fire, women always carry a smoldering ember, as does this woman, wrapped in fire-resistant leaves.



### PLATE 34

#### NET HUNTING, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. Net hunters on the trail. The Mbuti are naturally well camouflaged and can conceal themselves with ease against the foliage. Although net hunting demands cooperation between men, women, and children, the men and youths generally set off by themselves. Spears are carried for protection and for killing large game that might fall into the nets.

b. Net hunters setting up the net. Youths help their older brothers, or sons their fathers, as the net is stretched through the undergrowth for up to 300 feet, joined end to end with the nets of other hunters to form a vast semicircle into which the women and children drive the game.



A



B

## PLATE 35

### NET HUNTING, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. The kill. When an animal falls into the nets, nearby men and youths run to catch it before it tears itself loose or damages the net. As the men disentangle the trapped animal, a youth stands by with a spear ready to make the kill. Even the smallest antelope, when trapped, can be dangerous. Although the hunt is vital to the food economy of the Mbuti, they take no pleasure in the kill. It is considered a crime to hunt or kill more game than is essential for sustenance.

b. The main weapon of the archers, the bow and arrow, is for the net hunters only an incidental means of obtaining food. The net hunters prefer their own poisoned arrows with a fire-hardened tip (as used here) rather than the unpoisoned metal tips supplied and used by the villagers.



A



B

### PLATE 36

#### COLLECTING HONEY, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. Honey is generally found high in the treetops in the fork of a limb or in a bole. More rarely, it is found in the main trunk a few feet above the ground. Only when the hive is in a fallen trunk on the ground itself do women collect honey; at other times it is exclusively the work of men and youths. An ax or adze is used to enlarge the opening, the bees are then smoked out, and the honey is withdrawn by hand.

b. As with the rest of Mbuti food economy, honey is eaten as gathered, never stored. Comb sections are eaten raw; the liquid is usually warmed over a fire and drunk. If the honey contains too much dirt, it is wrapped in leaves and soaked in water which is then drunk.





A



B



PLATE 37

MUSICAL BOW, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

Mbuti music is almost entirely vocal, the voice being accompanied by wooden clappers. The musical bow is used sometimes to accompany the telling of legends or simply for personal amusement. As here, it is most often simply the hunting bow, tapped with an arrow, the mouth acting as a resonator.



PLATE 38

GIRLS' HOOP DANCE, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

Dance, together with song, forms the major outlet of artistic expression for the Mbuti. The line between sacred and secular is almost non-existent. The hoop dance is used by girls and women to celebrate the *elima*, or puberty, of one of their number, but it may be seen also as an idle moment in almost any day. Words of accompanying songs are nearly invariably in praise of the forest.











ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS  
OF THE  
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Volume 50

PART 1. Hopewell Culture Burial Mounds near Helena, Arkansas. By James A. Ford. Pages 1-56, plates 1-12, 38 text figures, 5 tables. 1963. Price, \$1.75.

PART 2. Deh Morasi Ghundai: A Chalcolithic Site in South-Central Afghanistan. By Louis Dupree. Pages 57-136, plates 13-25, 30 text figures, 199 designs, 12 tables. 1963. Price, \$2.50.

PART 3. The Mbuti Pygmies: An Ethnographic Survey. By Colin M. Turnbull. Pages 137-282, plates 26-38, 53 text figures. 1965. Price, \$5.00.

Volume 50 is complete in three parts.

---

Walter J. Johnson, Inc., has been designated sole distributor of certain scientific publications of the American Museum of Natural History.

For information about the availability and cost of papers appearing in volumes 1-45 of "Anthropological Papers," write to: Walter J. Johnson, Inc., 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003. For information about later volumes in this series, write to: The Librarian, the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, New York 10024.