

Bakwé and Neyo), whose history are dealt in a special chapter similar spirit villages and oracles are observed in Mount Niénékoué. Even monotheistic systems often preserve the traces of earlier traces in the form of shrines, sacred places for pilgrimage and worship to holy men or saints (the zawiyyas of Morocco, the places of veneration of Saints or Virgins of Mary in the Catholic church, the Buddha temples), which are often built on earlier pagan sanctuaries.

appear and dance in certain places. He is capable of driving evil spirits from possessed persons and permitted to poison witches with the alligator gall bladder. The 'little father' is even more secretive than the 'father' and even his death is kept secret from the public. No office-holders of the society are not known to the public, and only appear in disguise and with masks. Périot stayed in Taniwen, Kabade, a village only inhabited by Kwi officials, who gave him some insights into the organization of the society.²³⁹

In Jedepo, this author attended some daytime appearance of the Kwi, accompanied by the large talking-drums, gourd rattles and the 'kwi trumpet' often referred to as 'whistle'²⁴⁰ It appeared to me that on occasions a xylophone was added. Among the Sinkon I learnt that every member had his whistle by which he identified himself to other initiates.

Périot's theory about the 'ultimate magical secret' of the society appears interesting but leaves many questions open: for the Sapo, according to him, human excrement represents the concentration of the Spirit of Evil (based on accidental observations²⁴¹) characterized by its bad smell. Since the evil spirits are principally embodied in human excrement, the eating of the excrement by the Kwi represents a victory of some sorts over the evil. According to Périot, for the Sapo, the human body retains the good substances from food and rejects the bad substances, which manifest the noxious principles. After excretion the evil principle is still active in human excrement, which therefore has to be deposited in special places or destroyed. The action of the Kwi is to remind men that they continuously have to fight the evil spirits.

To me Périot's theory seems overstated and he was made to believe that this was the 'ultimate secret'. My informants said that, as parts of the human body can be used as ingredients of harmful medicines by sorcerers or witches, they have to be destroyed in order to prevent witches to use them in bad magic. Therefore human excreta have to be disposed in hidden places and babies' faecies be eliminated. But this is only an incidental activity in the overall fight of the Kwi against witchcraft in society.

Among the Nimiah, men have a spirit-society "which serves as a centre for many organized activities pertaining to witchcraft but the women have a similar organization of their own", but women were even more reluctant to talk about it than the men.²⁴²

Generally speaking, at the tribal level of social organization - especially where we deal with independent segmentary clans and lineages - the highest level of religious organization seem to be these oracles - and places of ancestral worship - which bind together several tribes having a basis of common origins; polytheistic systems like in Hinduism, or ancient Greek and Rome (but also of the Azteca and Maya) seem to be related to more hierarchic chiefdom or state organization, where several tribes or nations are integrated in kingdoms like the Hindu or Mycenaean-Minoan kingdoms or early Roman monarchy. We know of similar oracles (and shrines and sanctuaries of ancestral spirits) with their priests from whom peoples of similar origin draw prophecies and make sacrifices - for warfare or peace - for the Gallic and Germanic tribes, but also for the Dayak tribes of Borneo and the Indians of North America, and the tribes of central and northern Ghana. For the Kru of the Ivory Coast (and their relatives the Bété,

²³⁹ Périot, 171 f.

²⁴⁰ Günter Schröder - Hans Dieter Seibel, *Ethnographic Survey of South-Eastern Liberia, the Kran and the Sapo*, Liberian Studies Association Monographs, no.6, 1968

²⁴¹ such as his carriers staying behind to pass their gas; women sending in the dogs to clean up the shit of their babies; one of the chiefs presenting human excrement wrapped in banana leaf to the Kwi which the latter swallowed, accompanied by dancing and music by the Kwi members.

²⁴² Herzog-Blooah, *Jabo Proverbs*, 235

While the victim confesses all his previous sins so that the ordeal might not kill him accidentally for any of these, a young man holding a handful of stones or wood chips will take one with each mention of a sin, touch the bottom of the bowl with it and throw it away.²³³ Usually at a sudden death the Kwi-iru "consult the dead body"²³⁴ in order to find out who has caused his death. Within a circle outline by rope around the corpse put up in the open and covered with cloth the important elders and the masked diviner usually perform the divination. This masked diviner is responsible for the reference to the Kwi-iru as 'devil-society'. Formerly he Kwi rarely performed the ordeal at night - only after the missionaries began to interfere too frequently and prevented the execution - but paraded in town as a warning to potential evildoers or for catching suspects.²³⁵ Women were supposed to stay indoors in order to be unable to guess the identity of the masked diviner who found out the witch.²³⁶

The convicted victims were not buried normally but their corpse was thrown into a swamp after being exposed at the beach till the beginning of decomposition, and after the relatives had sacrificed a bullock, the meat of which is shared by the Kwi and the pato members.

In 1968 to 1972 I still found the Kwi-iru in existence among the interior Kru, Sapo and Kran groups, and among the Kru in Ivory Coast, in general among groups which had been little exposed to missionary activities. On the coast, American missionaries have had almost one hundred fifty years of influence and have seemingly eradicated the old beliefs. Périot is the only source reporting in detail on the Kwi society among some Sapo groups (Droh, Kulu, Juarzon, Wajah, Kabade and Jedepo) but his information is scattered and often incoherent, and can better be understood in the light of the previous remarks.²³⁷

He speaks of 'witch-doctors' characterized by appearing at night unmasked as leaders of a 'secret society' making the laws of the tribe. On the other hand he refers to 'more traditional masked witch-doctors who are called 'Devils'.²³⁸

One of the main aims of the Kwi, according to Périot, is to fight against the evil spirits of the forest, by ringing of bells, fumigating houses and pouring water into fire. According to him, all members are initiated to the society at puberty, during several years' forest camp. During that time, the boys only come to the village nightly but return to the forest at dawn. Several levels of hierarchy are known

- the kwi, 'players of the voice'
- the 'interpreters of the voice'
- the 'owner of the house' where the kwi performs the incantation
- Kwi-Ba, the 'father of the Kwi', apparently the oldest member
- the 'Little father', his proxy.

The most conspicuous of these is the player of the instrument of the kwi: according to Périot this consists of a hollowed-out drumstick of a white fowl, decorated with human hair, feathers etc. A cocoon of the horse-fly is used to cover the openings in the bone-flute, making it to produce a humming sound. It is claimed that the Kwi can fly like a bird, is agile as a monkey and strong as a leopard. The 'voice' is controlled by the 'father' who can permit or forbid him to

²³³ *ibid.*

²³⁴ McAllister, *Lone Woman*, 200

²³⁵ Anna Scott, *Day Dawn*, 75; H. Brittan, *Scenes*, 275 f.

²³⁶ Reference to masks in the Kru context is very rare and even nowadays no specifically 'Kru' masks are known to us; missionary activities seem to have led to the disappearance of masks, if there were any, among the coastal Kru, but see McAllister, 172; H.R. Taylor, *Jungle Trader*, 1939, 103-104.

²³⁷ Gérard Périot, *The Night of the Tall Trees*, London (1960), 148

²³⁸ *ibid.*

delight to visit and dance on the graves of those whom they have succeeded in killing by their enchantments. Woe, then, be to the man or woman who is seen walking around or through the town in the night. The Kwi-iru pounce upon them, carry them to a house prepared for the purpose, put them into the top of it, where they are smoked until the next day, about ten o'clock, or the usual time for subjecting them to the usual African test, jidu, or sasswood.²²⁷

sketch "Theology of Native Africans"²²⁸ mentions

The Kwi-iru, in the morning after the administration of the ordeal "keep near the accused, and force him to walk incessantly, until it is ascertained that the gidu does *not affect* him, or he falls down suddenly dead, a victim of the poison."²²⁹

Before the relatives are permitted to bury it (the corpse A.M.) they must purchase it from the Kwi-iru, for a bullock or something equivalent. The Kwi-iru as a kind of police are often employed by the Sedibo to administer gidu in cases where persons are accused of witchcraft either by them or by the Deyabo.²³⁰

This helps us understand a report by H. Brittan

Last night a party of the Sedibo - the warriors of the oldest age-grade - went out in the night to see whether they could find the witch. As they came near the sick man's house, they declared that they saw a man and that, as they approached, he instantly changed himself into a cow before any of them could recognize him. They believe that witches have this power. Now, they will go to the devil-doctor to find out who this man is.²³¹

It is believed that a 'witch' will make his/her incantations near the house of his would-be victim. Sick or old people are often hidden in secret places in order to keep them away from witches' grasp.

The Gbo, the oldest age-group, seems to be involved with witch-finding only in as far as it is a general judicial body and as such has to punish evil-doers, while the Kwi-iru is more directly concerned with the identification and search of suspects, extraction of confessions - often by ostracism and extortion - and proof of guilt. The Deyabo have to collect evidence by means of divination and ordeals. Thus each group has a specific rôle in the judicial process.

For the sasswood ordeal which is conviction and judgment at the same time,

one of the members of the Kwi-iru is sent to the forest to get the bark of the gidu tree after which the ordeal is called. The officer of the society beats the bark in a mortar, pours water into it, then turns it out into a wooden bowl and calls for the accused to come forward and drink it. Holding the bowl in his hand, he looks toward the east, and says in substance "O God! O God! O God! I invoke thee four times. If this person be innocent, cause him to vomit this gidu and escape; if he be guilty, may it kill him."²³²

²²⁷ Rev. Payne, quoted in A.F. Scott, Day Dawn, 61-63;

²²⁸ African Repository, (aug. 1840), 233-35

²²⁹ Rev. Payne, *ibid.* 62

²³⁰ Rev. Payne, *ibid.* 63; the 'policing function' is also attributed to the Kwi by the Rev. Moffat in his MS

²³¹ H. Brittan, Scenes and Incidents of Everyday Life, 260

²³² A. McAllister, Lone Woman in Africa, 172 f.

"The people believe that every newborn child is some deceased member of the family who has returned to live among them."²²³

Now in order to counteract the 'evil' forces of witches - gedio or we dio - which may be applied by one their own, the 'doctors' first have to divine them: he has to go to the home of the person believed to be bewitched, and builds a small fire and boils 'medicine' on it; walks about his quarters and sings the korá song while nobody is permitted to look out of the window. The medicine and song compell the other doctors to come to the house in disguise. Then the doctor demands to find out the sorcerer. If none of them confesses, he keeps them till morning. Since they have to disappear before first like strikes, in order to keep their powers, one of them may confess. The 'doctor' then informs the victim. The victim then demands that the suspected one be subjected to an ordeal which might confirm and kill the suspect, or otherwise disculpates him.²²⁴ However, we have other information that doctors and sorcerers are never subjected to ordeals, since they know evil as well as good magic and would be killed by the ordeal, which kills any person having practised magic, in any way.²²⁵

There are other organisations involved in the search of witches and not only individual doctors - and we may say here that Kru society seems to be obsessed with the finding of witches more so than other African societies - and the Rev. Moffat describes them as 'Children of the Night' to protect the community "from all dangers and temptations of the nights"; this reflects the reluctance of present-day Kru, who are professes Christians to speak openly about witches and admit their belief in witchcraft

They would see that no stranger or strangers should enter the city or court house of the community after the hour of twelve a'clock in the night. Any stranger or trespassers entering after twelve or one o'clock in the morning are considere as of dangerous characters or weird sister(s) or supernatural beings.²²⁶

Rev. Payne reports for the Grebo

a curious secret association or society to be found in every Grebo community, called Kwi-iru, or 'children of departed spirits'. Although it is attempted to keep everything connected with these association concealed, it is known to be composed of persons of almost all ages in the community, except children. They have a 'father' as he is called but he is never visible or known except to members of the society. When as is rarely the case the Kwi-iru appear in the day, the 'father' is always so masked as to be perfectly disguised. The night, however, is the usual time for this strange association to go abroad; often at midnight on the outskirts of the town, or in the adjoining bush, a sudden discordant shrieking, whistling, yelling and hideous noise bursts forth, as if scores or spirits had been let loose from the lower world, and as if their object was to frighten men from the earth. In a tumultuous body they run around and through the town. Women and children fly affrighted into their houses, and close them up, for a heavy fine would be the penalty of their seeing and being seen by the mysterious visitors. If in their wild revelling they fancy to want anything from anyone, they surround his house, and there remain yelling, dancing, screaming and threatening, until their demand is granted.

The avowed object of the association is to seel and to punish witches and wizards. These are said to be particularly active in practising their arts at night. They strip themselves naked and go to the houses of those whose lives they seek; and especially it is their

²²³ *ibid.*

²²⁴ the sasswood ordeal, described by many sources, is dealt with in most detail by G.W. Harley, *Native African Medicine*, London (1941)

²²⁵ cf. Herskovits-Sieh Tagbe, *Kru Proverbs*, 284-85

²²⁶ Rev.S.Moffat, MS on the Kru

marriage. About the training itself of the de yabo who are supposed to be in contact with the oracle of Ki Jirople, E. Nagbe gives the following description:

It often took a young man four to five years of preparation for the priesthood. Within the first year he was taught how to receive guests who came from the different sections of the tribe, how to clean the cottage, how to prepare meals for them and their guests. He was also taught to obey orders and keep the secrets of the village, besides these there was an initiation which he had to undergo. In the years that follow he was taught how to handle herbs and to administer them. In his final year he was introduced to the different parts of the cave and learnt to interpret instructions from the oracle to the guests.

When this was completed, he was brought to the town to his people where a number of people were waiting to witness the ceremonies that followed.

The fellow was dressed in the uniform of an acrobatic dancer, and danced around a big fire built outside for this purpose; he would sometimes stop to feed himself with live coal or jump into the fire without being burned. While the ceremonial drums were beating, the ex-Chief-priest would beat him with a clump of fire or a knife. The young man would cause it to thunder and rain and command them to stop in a few moments. These and other things would continue for two days, and on the third day a goat would be slaughtered for a big feast. After few days of rest he would be taken to the village in the woods to resume his duty. Later when the practice of shaman of besio, as the Kru call him, became to be as (sic!) part of religious practice, these besios or gedios as they are called took on the uniforms and some of the ceremonies of the priestly order."²²⁰

These priests were selected and trained by the order of bowianpo and would succeed to be chief priest of the three 'priests' serving the oracle, who would be replaced when he was about 6 years of age.

The Reverend Payne made similar observations on the deyabo, the 'doctors' of the Grebo. The test ceremony consists of the killing of a fowl or duck whose blood is sprinkled over the candidate's eyes and whose head is thrown into the bush, following which the candidate is sent to 'divine' its location in order to show that the spirit assists him. If he succeeds he is accompanied home by his relatives, divested there of his filthy hair and old dresses. From now on the spirit is expected to guide him in preparing effective medicines against witches but also for good weather and health. He also is permitted to administer the 'sassafras' ordeal (jidu) in order to find out witches.

When the deya has consulted his demon and prepared his charms, it is common with him to say: if God wills, this will accomplish the good you seek but not otherwise."²²¹

This reflects the belief that the spirit conveys the will of the supreme God, and that the deya is the interlocutor for the ordinary Grebo or Kru man. Doctors can also 'divine' the names of new-born children by finding out who of the ancestors will be born again. Grebo like many African societies have a circular conception of life, namely that ancestors, especially renowned ones like warriors or chiefs, can and will be reborn and that children who cry at birth intend to reveal their name. Accordingly a 'doctor' is called to interpret the cries and find out who wants to return to earth. In case it was revealed that a great warrior was reborn into his family, the father "brought a gun, a powder case, a shot bag, a war dress and a fringe for the waist made from palm leaf."²²²

Thus the deyabo are not only 'doctors' administering effective medicine but first of all 'diviners' or diagnostics who not only find out what disease one suffers from, but also what type of person one will be and what type of life one will lead (which ancestor one may impersonate).

²²⁰ E. Nagbe, Religion, Appendix C in Davis, 17-19

²²¹ A. Scott, Day Dawn in Africa, 65

²²² A. McAllister, Lone Woman in Africa, 211

mungo-swamp (*sic!*) and then on the solid ground - there she would fall to the earth apparently in convulsion, foaming at the mouth etc.; then the same thing would be repeated, with such wild screams, gestures and vociferations." Brittan's informant told her that the woman was about to become a 'devil-woman' and was possessed by the spirit dwelling on the rock. Such people, called Deya ('devil doctors') "profess to find out witches, to be enabled to foretell the future and, in fact, to perform all the charms and spells such people ever have done in all parts of the world."²¹³

During their period of training they "become suddenly seized with the idea that they are possessed by a devil, that they cannot get rid of him, but that he will teach and enable them to perform many wonderful things....; they go into violent convulsions, wallowing on the ground, gnashing their teeth - sometimes, I have been told, falling in the fire and, as I now witnessed, into the water."²¹⁴

As soon as they show these symptoms of possession, they are sent to an expert doctor for training. ... The introduction into ritual and native medicine is done by other specialists called "slakaliya" or "mulyalakon" by Mekeel and lasts several years - 1 to three according to Payne, 12 according to Mekeel "during which they have to separate entirely from their family."²¹⁵

The apprenticeship seems to take place first in town before they are sent out to a place in the forest or even another tribe. During this preparative period they may practice as do jyipo nyo or 'soothsayers' or sla pātō nyo 'undergraduate doctors'²¹⁶, until they have access to and control over magic powers and can use them for their purposes.²¹⁷ Herzog states that a real doctor acquires a certain spirit in the forest, Korâ, after which he is called korâ je nyo i.e. 'bush (spirit) seeing man'. But the proverb says korâ je nyo se wee dio, 'the spirit-seer is not a witch doctor'²¹⁸, meaning that diviners are different from sorcerers. This implies that the spirits for divination are not the same as the forces acquired for the practice of magic, that they are 'good' in contrast to the 'evil' ones acquired by witches. The proverb also says "the person who sees a spirit does not do this by witchcraft" implying that the communication with forest spirits is not considered witchcraft in itself²¹⁹. Spirits located in the forest trees, in rocks or rivers are potentially harmful or beneficial, depending whether they can be appeased by means of sacrifices. The ancestral spirits and charms can protect against harmful action by such 'natural spirits' - in which category also fall the spirits which enter animals, totem animals, as helper spirits when certain food taboos are respected. Certain men and women are pre-determined to have contact and be possessed with spirits, and this seems to be a hereditary quality, and when this is revealed, they are sent for further training in spirit possession and divination. Trained diviners can unearth witches and annihilate the results of their intended evil actions with the help of the acquired 'good' spirits.

At the end of his training period, a de nyo is to undergo a test administered from an elder 'doctor': he locks him into a hut and sends various spirits in which are supposed to torment the novice. Until the 'graduation' from the test, the apprentice is forbidden sexual relations and

²¹³ compare the situation with various pilgrimages in the Middle Ages, such as to St. Martin of Tours, Santiago de Compostela, St. Peter's in Rome; here believers seek relief from earthly pain but also beg forgiveness for sins.

²¹⁴ this double aspect, of cosmology and cultic fetishism, was also observed in several villages of the Kru and Sapo, where cults for Nyesoa are located in certain huts where food offerings and cult objects such as hunting trophies are deposited, Holas, Mission 108, 109, 114

²¹⁵ A. Scott, Day Dawn in Africa, 63, quoted from the Rev. Payne

²¹⁶ Mekeel, Social Administration of the Kru, 93

²¹⁷ E. Nagbe, Religion, Appendix C in Davis

²¹⁸ M. Herskovits, T. Sieh, Kru Proverbs, Journal of American Folklore 43, (1936), 284-85

²¹⁹ Herzog- Blooah, Jabo Proverb, 196

This mountain also called Tyede, Tyalé, Tyele or Tyaylé by Holas was identified with Mount Niété on French maps and on the Firestone map by Schnell and Holas.²⁰⁷

D'Ollone in 1899 passed Paoulo, capital of the Sao or Sapo tribe²⁰⁸, at the foot of Mount Niété which he compared with Mount Niénékoué, the holy mountain of the Krumen in Côte d'Ivoire near Tai, where the souls of the departed dwell. His party was forbidden to ascend the mountain, while Holas in 1946 climbed the 575 m high mountain, but did not report on anything he saw related to our oracle. The reasons of significance for the peoples of Eastern Liberia given by him are known to us: a place of origin, village or the dead ancestors, abode of the Great Spirit to whom sacrifices are made for the following reasons: to ask for rain, to request a good harvest, to thank for prosperous years.²⁰⁹ The offerings such as chicken, goats, bottled spirits are presented to him in a cave below the mountain peak. In the neighbourhood, at Mandwa, was probably the afore-mentioned meeting place for the delegations from the various Kru groups.²¹⁰

2. special religious bodies). Doctors and kwi society

A regular flow of goods offered by the coastal tribes to this oracle seems to have existed; the oracle was generally approached through middlemen who would be certain members of villages or a whole class of people from a particular tribe, such as the Jilepo (Bètu), Jraoh (Sasstown) and the Jedepo. As middlemen they 'monopolized' the contact with the oracle in a similar way as the coastal tribes acted as middlemen in the coastal trade for Europeans.

The evidence we have that gifts and offerings to the interior oracles had to be *given* to some 'middlemen' tribes which in turn *approached* the groups, on whose territory the oracles was, is very limited "The Jidi stated that in order to communicate with Jlorpeh, they carried gifts to the Jlaoh. Among the Jlaoh there lived persons belonging to a particular quarter and who acted as intercessors between any group and Jlorpeh." "The Kra said that they brought their gifts to their members of a particular tribe, the Bowsan or Soboe, who served as their intercessors. Members of this tribe were scattered among the other tribes of the area, thus making it easier for them to approach the god."²¹¹

We must assume that those referred to here belonged to a class of intermediaries often mentioned as 'devil-doctors' living among particular tribes, such Sasstown and Betu, which were considered to have strong magical powers, but also other tribes. (following section).

The 19th century conceptual framework - mostly of missionaries without ethnological notions - was either modelled on the bible or on classical mythology, and called this class either "devil doctors", or "priests". Harriet Brittan gives an account of the "Devil Rock " of the Grebos.²¹² "As we drew near this rock we heard the most strange unearthly cries and screams" as we approached nearer we found they proceeded from a woman; we heard them a long distance before we saw her. She was in the water and she would rush frantically from the water into the

²⁰⁷ R.Schnell, A propos de l'hypothèse d'un peuplement negrilla ancien de l'Afrique Occidentale, Anthropologie 1948, no.52

²⁰⁸ which I identify with Peloke (Paloken) in Holas' itinerary of 1948; the center of power had shifted to Penoke to the south of Peloke, probably due to the influence of the Assemblies of God Mission and the Liberian administration. The former capital Paulo (Paloke) was probably destroyed by Liberian troops after the 1924 Putu revolt, whose course is not entirely clear, when the oracle's priest was also killed. However in 1948 Holas reports that the High Priest called Kuya resided at Penoke, which means that the oracle continued.

²⁰⁹ Holas, Mission, 113

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

²¹¹ Holas, Mission, 114, note.7

²¹² both quotations from Zetterström, Ethnographic Survey of South Eastern Liberia, 47

10. kpama, a clay-idol without a personal name.

A consideration of the concepts of spirits is in place here: every being and especially every person has a 'spirit' (sg. ku, pl. kwi), which is responsible for life but is immortal in the sense that after death of a person, he lingers around the grave for some time and progressively joins the spirit of the other dead, the ancestors.²⁰⁵ In the case of tribes which have migrated from other places, the ancestral spirits have their abode in this original place, such as Mount Jedeh in the case of all the tribes of the confederation of tribes called Pan.

Distinguished from these individual spirits of human beings and animals are what the Rev. Payne has called 'public spirits' like the above, which are like the essence of the tribe, and above those a supreme spirit, believed to be the creator of the world, Nyesoa, who for the Kru is of the same importance and level as the Christian God. Each individual can invoke Nyesoa directly and immediately without going through a 'public spirit'.

Now, between the creator and the 'public spirits' there are what I call 'pan-tribal' spirits and their oracles, through which they speak. 'Pan-tribal' should be understood in the same sense as the oracle of Delphi, the voice of Apollon, which was of relevance for all the Greek 'tribes' or island-nations, and was essentially an oracle for bringing together the various tribes on joint missions and endeavors, beyond the everyday competition and petty wars. Similarly, the oracle of Zeus at Olympia was consulted for inter-tribal war, but during the Olympiad all hostilities had to cease.

For many Kru groups dealt with in this book the main spirit and oracle was that of Ki Jirople. The belief is that it was given to the Kru by Nyesoa, the creator. The oracle was located in a cave on Mount Jede in the Jedepo tribe (cf. map), and it only spoke through special men, some kind of soothsayers or diviners, the Bowianpo, who lived in a special house called Ku-won (the spirit's mouth) near the cave. Here, delegations from the various Kru tribes arrived, deposited their gifts, communicated their questions or pleas, and awaited and received the messages from the oracle. (3) Sapir, in reference to the Nimiah, speaks of two spirits which could be identified with this oracle: ku kè "a spirit located in the interior of the Jabo invoked by many tribes of Eastern Liberia in times of great crisis", and b) ku jele who also dwells in the interior: "here it is claimed, upon the rock of jele, the soul of every living person in Eastern Liberia appears shortly before death claims him."²⁰⁶ This 'rock' can certainly be identified with Mount Jedeh (Bobo Jede), the mountain of the 'departed spirits of the ancestors' of the Kru from where most Kru groups claim their origin.

²⁰⁵ Herzog and Blooah, *Jabo Proverbs from Liberia*, London (1936) no.3, p.20, display the different aspects in proverbs. A ble ku nê soa, nō nê blo zlō nêsoa, "we control spirit-god, but no one controls eternity-god", zlō nêsoa referring to eternity or death. Ku, according to Herzog, covers the spirit of persons and ancestors, ku yo le, the 'national' god of the tribe, ku kè, spirits of the forest, and ku jèlè, the high spirit of Mount Jedeh. All these can be invoked by means of charms. Ble ku or ble jili means invoke a spirit.

Herskovits and Tagbe Siah, give the additional meanings of ku (kwi): corpses or spirits of the deceased; the spirit of oracles which can enter persons to act as a medium being possessed by a spirit; 'dignity, honor'; kwi the performers of the kwi-jiru, and finally Kwi 'white, modern, civilized'. The latter meaning is explained by the legend that when Europeans first appeared at the coast, the Kru believed they were spirits, as all spirits are thought to be as white as the bones of the dead, and they were afraid of their contact. Hence, one of the 'doctors' consulted an oracle which told him they were human beings; therefore he contacted them and they talked to him by means of signs

²⁰⁶ Herzog and Blooah, *Jabo Proverbs from Liberia*, London (1936) no.3, p.20

Lu, a rock one mile from the mouth of the Cavalla river.¹⁹⁶ The name of the Bassa oracle is not known to me, the Kru oracle was that of Ki Jirople in the interior Putu mountains (Mount Jede) and was consulted by all members of the Pã (Sapo) group and the Five Tribes, and probably an oracle nearby called Nyanka Tupo.¹⁹⁷ The Cavalla river oracle, east of its mouth on a rock in the sea was known under the name of Bwide Nyema, Blidi Nyepa or Beda Nyebo.¹⁹⁸ The other one at Mount Nitie Lu, in the Webbo territory, was referred to as Siu Bu Wia (possibly there was another one farther down the Cavalla at Hidie whose name I do not know).

Furthermore, according to some informants¹⁹⁹ and an oracle comparable to that of Ki Jirople (2) called Vêtõ. Interestingly enough, the Bollowh mention a god Femi ... (Zetterstrom²⁰⁰). Information concerning the relation of Vêtõ to Ki Jiroplè is far from clear: some say he was identical with Ki Jirople the only difference being that of name; others say that they were two different Gods. Possibly he was consulted as an oracle in war time; the groups which said they consulted Vêtõ were the Kabor, Gbeta, Nifu, Betu, Nuon and perhaps Bolloh (i.e. all the seaside tribes of Kabor and Gbeta-Klepo extraction). From the information given it may be assumed that his *seat* was among the Jilepo (Betu), a group considered as having the strongest 'medicines' among all coastal groups and which is regularly consulted by the others.

Other regional oracles at the seats of great spirits or 'idols' are known by their names but little else is known about them. They are

1. Kpelle, a god for the Kulu, living in a pond.²⁰¹
2. Nibe Tarpeh, a spirit living in the Dugbe river, worshipped by the Jedei.²⁰²
3. Tutoh, a rock worshipped by the Kra.²⁰³
4. Gbala Nyipahu, a god worshipped by the Dreoh.²⁰⁴
5. Koba, a 'monkey-shaped' god, perhaps an idol, consulted by the Tasu-Jao.
6. Jlopã and Jlonypã, gods consulted by the Kabor.
7. the purely local idols of the Sekleo, pèpã ('war god'), and domo sugbo, consulted in withcraft cases.
8. a tiger-shaped God or idol of the Garraway tribe.
9. Ku Yola the 'national god' of the Nimiah.

Kjell Zetterström, Ethnographic Survey of South Eastern Liberia: Preliminary Report on the Kru, Robertsport 1968, 46

¹⁹⁶ References to the Oracle on the Upper Cavalla:

Theology of Native Africans, A.R. (aug. 1840), 234

Anna Scott, Glimpses of Life in Africa, n.d. New York, 11

References to the Oracle at the Lower Cavalla

Dr. Mc Gill, A.R. (jan. 1842); Native Africans A.R. (dec. 1855); Robertson, Notes on Africa, London, 1819;

E.R.C. Burton, Wanderings in West Africa, London, 1852, 104-05; Anna Scott, Day Dawn in Africa, 1868, 68;

Anna Scott, Glimpses of Life in Africa, n.d., 11; S. Mekeel, Social Administration of the Kru, 1936, 85; Agnes McAllister, Lone Woman in Africa, 1896, 131-33.

¹⁹⁷ Kjell Zetterström, Ethnographic Survey of South Eastern Liberia, 46

¹⁹⁸ called Blieron by the French from Ivory Coast; there is another one near the ferry-crossing across the Cavalla, at Patake which is frequented by the Tabou tribe, Blapo.

¹⁹⁹ Mr Isaac Twah and Timothy Nyaa

²⁰⁰ Kjell Zetterström, Ethnographic Survey of South Eastern Liberia, 46

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

²⁰² McAllister, A Lone Woman in Africa, 131

²⁰³ G. Herzog and Charles Blooah, Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, London (1936) no.210, no.3, p.20

²⁰⁴ Emmanuel Nagbe, Religion MS. Appendix C in R. Davis, Ethno-Historical Studies on the Kru Coast,

he states that the first human beings created by Nyessoa were tired of paying him regular visits and asked him for help, he then gave them an oracle to act in his place

plausible; the only consistent answer referred to the fact that the 'speaker' In the officers' Council always received the lower jaw, neck and tongue of a bullock or cow, since these were the vocal organs.

Below data from the Nyanno, Kpanyan, Nemopo, and Siton

	Nyanno,	Kpanyan,	Nemopo,	Siton
head	jugbedio	jugbedio	singers	mèlènyo
right fore leg		jibedio, bodio,	wulapo	
back		doctors		kroba
left hind leg	bodio	nyan	bodio	
right hind leg	kroba	kroba, bodio	bodio	
right hind foot	-	çiao		
neck	trôbleô		singers	
lower jaw	trôbleô			speaker
heart (plooo)			kroba	
liver			all officials	elders, <u>gbo</u>
breast				bodio
guts				(trobo)
genitals				<u>gbo</u>

Chapter VIII. Kru Migrations

Chapter IX. Kru Religious Elements

The role of the pan-tribal oracles and spirits has to be discussed first: it can be assured that all dako sharing a common tradition of origin and *migrated* from a place had a supreme oracle connected with a powerful 'fetish' or 'oracle' located in the original place. This oracle was consulted in all matters of tribal or inter-tribal importance (war, election of high officials, epidemics).

From the literature and personal investigations, four such oracles of inter-tribal importance emerge - for Liberia, there are others in the Ivory Coast :

- one for the Bassa in the Bi mountains,¹⁹⁴ one for the Kru on Mount Gedeh (Bobojede)¹⁹⁵, and at least two for the Grebo groups, one at Witie Lu on the Upper Cavalla, the other at Dade

¹⁹⁴ A. Priestley Camphor, *Missionary Story Sketches*, Cincinnati-New York, 1909, 3-56; *African Repository* 48, (June 1872), The Gibbi Country, 170. Both sources mention the cave on the mountain as a place of sacrifice and worship of a great fetish.

¹⁹⁵ T.C. Brownell, *Missionary Exploration by a Native to Mt. Gedeye, A.R.* (Oct. 1869), 368 f.; *Missionary Exploration in West Africa, A.R.* (September 1869), 278-279. Hostains d'Ollone, *De la Côte d'Ivoire au Soudan et à la Guinée "au centre du pays Sapo s'élève le Mont Niété qui domine Paoulo. Le Mont Niété est célèbre dans tous les pays Krouman, comme le Niénokoué. Lui aussi a sa légende: c'est sur son sommet que demeurent les morts."*

Walter and Maude Williams, *Adventures with the Krus*, 194, p.54 f.

Scudder Mekeel, *Social Administration of the Kru*, *Africa*, (1936), 83

Bohumil Holas- Dekeyser, *Mission dans l'Est Libérien*, *Mémoires IFAN* (1948), 112-113

W. C. Schulze, *Early Iron Ore Mining in the Putu Range of Liberia*, *University of Liberia Bulletin*, July 1964

from the interior to the coast

<u>Putu</u> ¹⁹³	<u>Kabade</u>	<u>Sikon</u>	<u>Juarzon</u>	<u>Wajah</u>
1. klø ba	klø kø jui	bloa dyu	bloa ba je	kløba
2. nyø klaba	-	-	nyø klaba	nyø klaba
3. tabo yu		tabo yu	taabo yu	tabo ju
4. wulø ba	wulø ba	wulø ba	wulø ba	wulø ba
			(wulo kø je bli = men who hold the village)	
5. biø	biø	biø	bi klaba	-
6. ta nyø	taa nyø	taa nyøbiø	biø	
7. bla blø	-	-	-	bla blø
8. çea çi	-	çi çè nyø	-	-
9. kløi	klè	-	klè	-
10. koba (ta nyø)	blo ba kø nyø -	-	-	-
11. -	bloa jedi	-	bli nyø	-

Chapter VII. The Distribution of Sacrificial Animals

The relative importance of the individual sibs in each tribe became apparent during the meat-sahring ceremonies. These were attended by a number of particular Officials chosen from particular sibs who butchered and divided the animals offered for sacrifice, or given to the gbo as a fine.

Ceremonial bullocks, the first catch of the season or animals of the forest killed by hunting parties -often the gbo went out for communal hunting - were slaughtered in the tugbedia and divided into proportionate shares. These were allocated to the officers and the sibs and households according to their importance, either in rank or in numbers. Cows given as fines were almost exclusively attributed to the gbo members. In some of the dakc where I did field-work I inquired about the parts of the animals which were allocated to particular offices or sibs. The sample appears to be too small for a consistent pattern to emerge but many of the reasons given for the allocation of a particular part to a particular sib appeared not very

¹⁹³ The Putu were referred to as Sapa by G.Schwab, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland, 167-69. He mentions a bodia (high priest) and boloba (speaker). Hostains-d'Ollone, De la Côte d' Ivoire au Soudan et à la Guinée, Paris, 1901 write on p.71 (translation mine A.M.)

"in all the forest region, each chief has a minister who not only handles current affairs but also, on serious and important occasions acts in his - the chief's - name. Very rarely a chief himself talks; he contents with stating his opinion beforehand; it is then up to the minister to lead the discussion and bring it to a satisfactory ending by means of his own resources in the presence of the chief and his notables who remain quiet and apparently indifferent to the arguments.... In Sapa, this officer (singer belonging to the court) is called bli nyø 'sing person' or 'minstrel'. His insignia is an elephant's tail. From what the interpreters said this individual seems to be a sort of court entertainer and jester. In Sapa only the town chief has a messenger." 72

samna	sane nyo
falia çè	sali çè
weiçilia çè	tali çè
kaloa çè	kalo çè
kribei	jeluo çè
wuluo	kpolo çè
seô	glala çè
	wietiewo çè

gbadia çè, originally a sib, increased in population and today forms a section (Clan in the Liberian administrative language).

The villages of the bloa are governed by the wulu ba 'father of town', the oldest man of the land-holding sib; at village level, the civil and military organization consists of 2 age-grades, the mela nyo, 'young men', and the ta nyono or bèø, adult men and warriors. Both of them formed the assembly of the adults, which in peace was presided by the sib selders, nyè klaba. In war time, each section gathered its warriors under the leadership of the jibadio. This office was filled by any competent warrior and was not (82).....

In jurisdiction involving a higher level, the only pan-tribal officers were bodio and kroba were involved in arriving at ultimate decisions after consultation of the 'Grand Devil', the main representative of the 'Kwi' society. The bodio, from trobo sib, was the highest-ranking official of the entire nemopo, and his office waws surrounded by similar attire as among the other dake. A speaker pronounced his final decisions in the councils. The jidio (doctors), coming from a particular sib, janibo,¹⁹² assisted the bodio in the protection of the people against outside enemies. They make charms and medicines for the warriors.

Unfortunately we have not as many data for the government of the other Sapo groups (the questionnaire used by Schröder/Seibel for eliciting status terms appears in hindsight insufficient for the traditionall political system little of which was known by then. However, some of the titles sound familiar to those we have already discussed for the Kru. The descriptions of the contentes of these offices are lacking however. We present below the status terms given by Sch./S. The general translations given by the author for those terms are

1. 'head of the tribe'
2. 'oldest man of the quarter, head of the lineage'
3. oldest men in the village, or 'council of elders'
4. 'owner of town' i.e. head of the land-hjolding sib, or 'town chief'
5. 'leader of the warriors'
6. 'warriors'
7. 'the warrior going to battle first, wearing a headdress with a ram's horn'
8. 'head of the lineage'
9. 'council of elders'
10. 'head of the land-holding sib'
11. 'praise singers for the warriors'

¹⁹² These are probably Schröder/Seibel's nyaribo

c t'ba daù brè ('under top')
 d daù ('top')

3. bø 'army'

bø jidu
 bø nyènè jidu
 bølibø

4. sèn jidu tantao 'elders'

The bølibø were a special body of military leaders consisting only of village jibadios and kpatwas and formed the supreme war council in each section, and in times of coordinated action for the whole bloa, then presided by an overall jibadio.

The jeja tugba bu , or council of elders, was another governing body ruling on inter-tribal questions such as the secret society or wars against neighbors. When informed by the bodio, the jibadio of each village informed the sib elders to send their representatives to the assembly. Each section had to send at least one representative from each sib tugba , theoretically the oldest man. The speaker of the council, wuluo, came from jèèkô, introduced the representatives to the council, and states the matters for which they were called; he further comments the arguments brought forward by each speaker , and announces the final verdict by the bodio. Following the council a concluding ritual ended with the slaughtering of a bullock which was divided to all the sib elders and officials , before they left (81) for their respective villages .

The fact that the Jedepo are one of the few groups which has never suffered from a military intervention by the Liberian army may be responsible for the still vivid memory of their traditional form of government , which is still maintained in part. bodios and wuluo are still selected from the respective sibs and councils are held, while formal power has been transferred to the Clan Chiefs and a Paramount Chief, and actual authority is held by the few literate men living in the area.

Nemopo

The Nemopo in Nomo chiefdom, the largest of the Sapo groups and forerunners in their thrust towards the coast must serve as a sample case for the former political organization of the Sapo (Wejah, Juaryon, Kabade and Sikon). They now consist of 4 sections each recognized as a Clan (administrative Liberian unit) which has resulted from differentiation during the past eighty years. Each section is composed of several patrilineal sibs (çè or taho). Since field work could only be done in 2 sections (Clarnia Doe and Gbardia çè), it is not known which sibs are represented in the other 2 sections.

Tebo and Jipo (Geepoh). I contrast the list from my own field work with that of Schröder and Seibel.

¹⁹¹ Massing
trobo

Schröder/Seibel ¹⁹⁰
tuobo

¹⁹⁰ ibid.

gbepo	tubapo	krapo swaçipo	wøløkøn
jelapo	slapo	swapo -	tieblikø
potokø jáápo			
woipo			

These sibs were represented in all villages of their sections and sub-sections . Each of the sections seems to have had its own bodio and jugbedio, and most offices were inherited in particular sibs.

	Lower	Central	Upper
bodio	pètèkø	jáápo	çèçipo
jugbedio	gbepo	jedekø	plokø, swaçipo, toipo
kpatwa	woipo	?	krapo

As we see, upper Jedepo had a jugbedio for each sub-section.

The only pan-tribal office was that of the kroba who, during his reign, had residence among the three sections.

The responsibilities and characteristics of the different offices were

- the bodio was considered as peace-maker in inter-tribal disputes or the betrayal of secrets e.g. from secret societies (kwi). The three bodios would call meetings important for all sections and decided appeal cases brought before them by the jibadio. The bodio's house (ji kau) and the space around it were considered sacred. It was surrounded by a fence which should not be trespassed but which provided protection and safety for anyone escaping from persecution. The leopard was the sacred symbol of the bodio, it was their taboo, and they were prohibited to eat its meat.

The jibadio, the man selected from the sib in which this office was vested, could function as judge in minor cases; more important cases, however, were referred to the bodio. The insignia of the office were a war horn, blown before and after fighting, and a ladder in front of his house.

The kpatua was referred to as assistant of the bodio and as speaker in war councils. In the memory of my informants he was associated with the jibadio, and received the same staff (trø) as the speaker in council meetings of ordinary men, the tewlui or wuleø. Like in other dakè, the kpatwa had to observe the moon and announce the beginning of the farm season. His insignia was a spear planted in front of his house.

In case of war, each village chose a drummer (bla wule po) for the war drums to rally men to battle and transmit messages to the warriors.

Similarly, the age grades and the militia were organized according to village. Each village knew 4 grades which were organized into sub-classes.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. boa-po | young boys |
| 2. kofa | boys from 12 to 21, who are initiated into the 'society' |
| a kofa jidu | |
| b kofa nyènè jidu (women) | |

29. The Sapo (Jedepo, Putu, Nemopo, Juarzon, Wajah, Sikon, Kabade)

Thanks to the work of Schröder and Seibel, the Sapo are now better documented than was the case in 1968 when we all started out field work.

This is a cluster which has intruded from the interior and migrated down the Sinoe river - when or for how long we don't know - and which is closely related to the Krahn in Grand Gedeh County than to any of the Kru . They have been described by Schröder and Seibel and we draw on these descriptions to some extent in order to draw our own comparisons with the Kru.

Sch/S. discuss in detail the tribe - which is called bloa instead of dakø - the sibs, the lineages and the age-grade organization. In so far as structure is concerned there seems to be little difference with the Kru. However, as far as political offices are concerned, they have concentrated more on present case without going so much into the history. I was able to conduct my own investigations among the Nemopo, Wejah which resulted - because of a different and specific focus - in data resembling more those presented above for the Kru and Grebo groups.

Jedepo

However, my research among the Jedepo - who share a common border with the Putu who live north of them and were formerly called Sapã - who are today included in the Juarzon district show that they have little in common with the other groups (now called Sapo) but that there traditions link them rather to the migrations of the eastern Kru groups, such as the jra, gbeta, siklio. The Jedepo are in closest contact with the mythical place of origin of all Kru migrations, Mount Jede, the seat of the pan-tribal oracle of Ki Jiroplè in Putu.

(I have observed similar myths among many segmentary tribal groups across the world, who claim to have originated in one cave or village on the highest mountain in the area, from which they migrated and to which they will return after death as it is the dwelling place of the ancestral spirits. Religious rule is by a tribal oracle which forecasts the future and to which sacrifices are brought, and which reminds the tribes of their ideological unity. I suspect that such was also the nature of the oracles of the Hellenic (Dorian, Ionian) tribes (Delphi, Delos), the Italian and also of the Germanic tribes.)

They claim - and affirm it by their name - to be the last group to leave Mt.Jede and settle on the upper course of the Sinoe and Dugbe rivers. In contrast to what we know about the Sapo groups - as described by Schröder and Seibel - the Jedepo show a quite differentiated and complex political system . (maybe there was less focus in Schröder's research on this).

They are divided into 3 sections corresponding to location, each of which has sub-sections which consist of a number of sibs (tu gba) and a body politic of its own with little cross-tribal authority

section	Lower	Central	Upper
sub-section	<u>sapo</u>	<u>dbu</u>	<u>kpokpô</u> <u>jèèkô</u> <u>toèkô</u> <u>jelekô</u>
<u>sibs</u>	pètèkô	jedekô	plokô çèçipo toipo

himself stays out of the battle. The town drums which are under his protection are sacred and protected by special messages. Should they be captured a serious calamity will befall the tribe, as the enemy can enter the town which is no longer protected ritually (in practice that means also that the communication system of the town with other settlements is put out of operation, and help can no longer be summoned). The tibawaio's sib is in charge of the tribal gods and fetishes, who are under the supervision of the kana, another official.

The jugbadio seems not to play a role in warfare, unlike in other groups: he is rather called upon as a judge and peace-maker in inter-tribal disputes. The kolu ble nyo is his speaker (or court clerk if you will), who directs meetings of elders and officers held in the palaver yard bli di or bolu.

The Troh show a marked deviation from the political structures exhibited by other tribes and more similarity to the Tajuazon and Sapo groups which we will now describe. We believe this to be linked to the fact that all three have moved from the interior along the Sanguin river and are different from the Jedepo group to which most of the Kru tribes trace their origin.

28. The Tajuazon

This so-called Tajuazon group, named after the ta jua zô hill were described briefly in other accounts,¹⁸⁹ none of which contain sufficient data to reconstruct the traditional political structures. Only Zetterstrom gives a brief description of former offices, based on one interview among the blao.

The other groups (seø (Shaw), nyâ (Nyarn), kulu (Kulu), kau and boo have not been studied at all. This becomes all the more important as the operation of timber companies and the civil war have eroded the traditional system, and led to outmigration so that these groups have lost population and little knowledge exists among the young.

According to Zetterstrom, the head of the tribe was the bodio, who had an assistant in administering law in the person of the Diebedio who executed the sentences and collected fines.

The young men were headed by the Derbo who also settled disputes among them and handed over fines, coming from offences of disturbing the peace, to the Diebedio.

Schröder-Seibel give three titles which seem to indicate status rather than office:

<u>blødru</u> or <u>bløkø nyu</u>	'head of the tribe'
<u>biø</u>	'great warrior'
<u>sibo wunû</u>	'the oldest man of the quarter'

The blo dru is called a descendant of the founders lineage and the 'owner of the land' and resembles the office of the klø kø nyôn Grand Cess and other coastal Kru groups.

¹⁸⁹ G.Schröder and H.D. Seibel, *Ethnographic Survey of South East Liberia: The Liberian Krahn and Sapo*, Liberian Studies Monographs no.3, 1973; G.Periot. *The Night of the Tall Trees*, London, 1960

9. gbao
10. pao
11. nikwea
12. extinct ¹⁸⁸

(according to Zetterstrom, all members of the gbao left the town in which he conducted the interview, which makes that there are only 11 sibs left, but we are missing another name here).

According to Z. the most important post in traditional government was that of the krøba but the characteristics of his office rather point to the bodio: namely that he was dismissed in time of famine or disease, or if he did not listen to the advice of the elders. Supposing Z. informants were correct, then the krøba's role resembles that of the Kabor and Klepo from Cape Palmas, where a similar reversal of bodio and krøba roles could be observed. Z. refers to the bodeo simply as the 'speaker of the krøba', which however, in the light of my observations of other Kru tribes sounds pretty unlikely. (rather the other way around).

The 'Dona Ponyo' " who maintained law and order at meetings attended by the krøba" seems to fit the role of 'speaker' better than the bodio (see bati poyon in other groups, closely related to the jugbedio).

27. Troh (trøø)

For this group inhabiting the big bend of the Sanguin River, which turns northward, my information comes from informants in Monrovia. Zetterstrom's Ethnographic Survey which covered this area, unfortunately does not yield information on lineages, age grades or political offices.

The dako is divided into two sections by the river on either side of which settle (theoretically) six mutually exclusive sibs (as we see on one side it is 5 on the other there are 7 thus making the full up to 12):

<u>West Bank</u>		<u>East Bank</u>	
kløu		suøu	ji bâ
sealø		juou	kolu ble nyo
seou		kalø	
kwiou	tibawaio	gbàlù	
bodu	jugbadio	tao	bodio
		meakô	
		pâtokô	

The pattern of offices and responsibilities resembles that in our limited information by Z. on the Toto: namely the ji bâ was referred as the 'supreme king' and ritual maker of warfare, whilst the bodio or bio was the actual leader of the warriors, the blø nyø, who were members of both age groups, kafa and gbau. The 'seniors', men above 75 years, gbai, were quasi veterans.

Now however, the bodio selected the warriors according to what was revealed to him through visions and oracles as their fate and their chances in the actual war. Drum messages are sent to the warriors in the battle by the drummers, which are formulated by the tibawaio, who

¹⁸⁸ K.Zetterström, Preliminary Report on the Kru , 1968, 25

After 1915 the sno-jarø were completely dispersed either among the Americo Liberian settlements or among the Butaw on whose land they were driven.

25. Butaw (butøø)

The two sections of the Butaw tribe are glao (Grand Butaw) and pleo (Little Butaw). Since information on the traditional government only comes from secondary sources, it is difficult to interpret.¹⁸⁴ The source states that the Glao provided the kings while the pleo family provided the vice-kings. (Does this mean bodio and kroba ?) . The king had to approve of the selection of the vice-king and received all fines collected from convicted parties. The information that the king led the army in battle, seems rather to indicate that the 'king' was the jugbedio, and the 'vice king' the tugbewa.

The king, it is said, was aided in government by the leaders of the four Butaw 'kindreds' (sibs?) who were otherwise employed in the day-to-day administration of their own. "They judged matters (assisted by their council of elders) and provided leadership in the kindreds. Their position was a hereditary one."¹⁸⁵

"In the absence of the king, the Tibewayor (a political functionary) served as interim king. The Tibewayor was appointed by the elders. The elective nature of his office prevented the Tibewayor from becoming arrogant and extortionate."¹⁸⁶

On the remaining Kru groups west of Butaw (i.e. between Butaw creek and River Cess) we have virtually no information, as we did neither visit them ourselves nor obtained reports of other researchers. They are Tasu,¹⁸⁷ Toto, and Deo, the latter inhabiting a cluster of 4 villages on the middle Sanguin.

26. Toto

They consist of 12 patrisibs settling in the hinterland of the Kabor at Sanguin, and the Klepo at Rock Cess. Like other tribes, nominally 'owners of the land' at the coast, they permitted the 'Fishmen' tribes (i.e. kabor and klepo) to inhabit the beach.

The Toto pâtê are

1. noma
2. niaplo
3. tøkpo
4. sita
5. bùù
6. sú
7. gmano
8. tuo

¹⁸⁴ Liberian Educational and Cultural Research Project Dept. of Education, Monrovia (mimeograph), 1970, 272 ff. This project seems to have been ill-prepared, as the oral data collection was done by Liberians and Americans unfamiliar with local culture and history and therefore was a waste of money; the data are extremely sketchy, local-language terms rarely recorded in favor of English terms such as 'king' or 'vice-king' which are misleading

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.* 239

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, here the local terms probably refers to tugbewa

¹⁸⁷ The Tasu are called Jao by the Toto; Zetterström's report contains no info on the Tasu

Monrovia government; and it was part of the governor's (J.J. Roberts A.M.) to provide for its execution.

By this ingenious policy (connecting the murder of a mate from an American ship with their interest to get rid of the Fishmen A.M.), the Bushmen were induced to provide their aid in ridding the settlement of its troublesome neighbors while the Fishmen, overawed by the presence of a friendly force to the colonists, submitted to their expulsion with a quietude that could not, under other circumstances, have been expected.

Doubtless, they had forfeited their claim to the land by non-observance of the conditions on which they held it; yet in some points, the affair had remarkably the aspect of a forcible acquisition of territory by the colonists no time was lost in carrying the decree of the palaver in execution..... Governor Roberts, Mr. Brown, Dr. Day, late government agent, together with a few colonists, repaired to the place and directed its demolition and the Governor left directions to burn every house if the Fishmen should attempt to occupy the town." ¹⁸⁰

The Kabor 'Fishmen' withdrew to the opposite site of the Sinoe River where they also had a settlement at Blubarra Point, on Du land, and stayed there until this too was destroyed after the 1915 Kru revolt.

Thirteen years later, in 1856 the Sinoe tribe itself was evicted by the expansion of the colonists, who used the deed of cession as a property title for as much land as they needed; despite a clause in the original (73) document which gave the indigenous population the right to cultivate that land they needed. The local groups, apparently the Sno-Jarø allied with the Butaw and Blubarra (Kabor) attacked the settlements of Bluntsville, Readsville, Farmersville, Lexington and Louisiana, of which the first was completely burnt while the others suffered substantial material damage.¹⁸¹

On Jan. 31, 1856 President Benson sent the 1st, 2nd and 3rd regiments from Monrovia to Sinoe against the Grand and Little Butaw, Sinoe and Blubarra tribes, which drove them into the interior, before leaving on Feb. 26. On June 11 a peace accord was signed between the Government and Grand and Little Butaw; Pres. Benson himself concluded the peace agreement with the Sinoe and Blubarra tribes a few days later. The latter were given a fine of 1000 \$, the government knowing well that the settlement had residents who were able to pay as many worked as deckhands and stevedores on European vessels.¹⁸²

In their document of 1915 which served as a declaration of war, the Kabor stated that they had waited for more than 40 years to take revenge on the American settlers. The Blubarra Kabor and their leader Jagba were the leading elements in the uprising which involved all Kabor and Klepo settlements of the coast (except Nana Kru as we have seen), and which was known as Jagba-tø.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ H. Bridge, Journal ..., 64

¹⁸¹ Alexander Cowan, Liberia as I found it in 1858, Frankfurt, 1858

¹⁸² *ibid.*, Annual Message of the President to the Legislature, Dec. 3 1856, Despatches from US Consuls to Liberia, 1856 (Lib. of Congress reel 1, no. 135)

¹⁸³ W. and M. Williams, Adventures, ***

23. Dou - Blubarra:

The notes on this formerly strong Kabor group which presently only inhabits one major village and a few hamlets along the Sinoe river, were lost during the field trip.

24. Sinoe

Across the Sinoe river from the Du (i.e. its western bank) lived the sno, whose land is now occupied by the settlement of Greenville, founded by the Colonization Society from Mississippi and Louisiana.

According to one Kabor informant the Kabor had a village at the site of the present Greenville. The legend goes that one of their warriors, Tagbe, made contact in Freetown with the agents of the American Colonization Society and invited them to come and settle at Cape Montserrado and in Grand Bassa. It is said that the same Tagbe arranged later with the jarø - another name for sno - to grant land to the above Colonization Societies. When the settlers from Louisiana and Mississippi later expanded their settlement at the expense of the jarø, these blamed the Kabor for having brought the settlers to their land and wanted to remove them from their former site. The Kabor tried to impose trade sanctions on the sno-jarøø. We have a number of documents which show how the Americo-Liberians tried to intervene in this conflict and succeeded to get rid of unwelcome neighbors (the Kabor) who were competing with them for the middlemen role in coastal trade.¹⁷⁹

(72) Horatio Bridge, purser on U.S.S. of the African Squadron visited Sinoe in 1843, when it had a population of 78 colonists, and witnessed a case between two local groups and the colonists who appealed to the American marines to evict the "Fishmen" from their settlement in the vicinity of Greenville as it constituted an obstacle to their trade. (these were probably the Kabor we talked about above):

"it seems that the land originally belonged to the Sinoe tribe whose headquarters are about four miles inland. Several years ago, long before the arrival of the emigrants, this tribe gave permission to a horde of Fishmen to occupy the site but apparently without relinquishing their own property in the soil. Feeble at first, the tenants wore a friendly demeanor against their landlords and made themselves useful, until, gradually acquiring strength, they became insolent and assumed an attitude of independence. Setting the interior tribe, of whom they held the land, at defiance, these Fishmen put an interdict upon their trading with foreigners, except through their own agency. Eight or ten years ago, however, the inland natives sold their land to the Colonization Society, subject to the encumbrance of the Fishmen's occupancy, during good behavior, a condition which the Colonists likewise pledged to the Fishmen to observe, unless the conduct of the latter should nullify it."

Considering themselves now adequate to act on the offensive they (the colonists) determined to drive the Fishmen. In this purpose they were confirmed by the

¹⁷⁹ Commodore Perry, Colonial Settlements on the Western Coast of Africa, US 28th Congress, 1st session, House Documents no.244, 1844; Horatio Bridge, Journal of an African Cruiser, London 1845, 62

gieo	
tueo	tugbewa
nableo	jidio, wulapo, jide
tuesao	jugbedio
trao	bodio
ploo	wule blaio
pluo	kroba

With the exception of the speaker of council, trôbleô, (named after his staff, trô), all offices are vested within a particular sib.

The bodio and kroba seem to have been inherited in the lineage, because it was said their sons followed them after their death. Both offices were not popular, since the bodio could not even go to farm and the kroba could not leave town, and therefore the recruits had to be captured and forced into office.

The council of elders met in the bodio's village and house (ji sla) while the council of adult men met in the tugbewa's village in his house (tugbe sla). From the ranks of the younger men's age group, kafa, were chosen the warriors (bèo or gbè) after drinking a certain 'medicine' which supposedly proved them worthy.

22. Wueli

This groups consists of 3 sub-sections settled along Petu creek, one on the upper course, the second on the middle course, in Panama, and the third by the seas-side. It has the following pâtê and offices

<u>jedeo</u> (seaside)	<u>fô</u> (Panama)	<u>bokli</u> (Petu creek)
jio bodio	setø jubèdio, kløkøi køu	krøba
sreo	sreo	tueo
wèwea	too	troo
jowuleo	piao	keao
		nikwea
		niatio
		tajidin
		jebea

(71).....The latter ranks above the jugbedio ... who gives orders to the tugbewa. Thus in law cases, for instance, the tugbewa calls the parties together on orders of kroba and jugbèdio. The meeting place is usually the house of the bodio, bodio bao. The jugbedio, with his speaker's stick (trô) usually presides these meetings, introduces the parties, and makes final judgments. Inflicting penalties is usually done by fixing the guilty party within a circle of ash until the fine has been produced. Before court meetings, the bodio summons the kroba asking him to call all the elders and officials to a meeting and stating the reasons.

The 'native doctors' (jedeo) here do not come from a particular sib but consist of people representing every section. The warriors (ta wa, to fwè or bèo) also do not form an incorporated group but are drawn individually from the rank and file of the adults.

governmental body, at least during the lifetime of our oldest informants. Most of the offices were inherited in particular sibs.

Wøø (Wor)	Kpanyan	Jebea
information		
not available	tao	bodio, kroba, singer pokû
	sadro	jugbedio
	taju	nyaneo
	nebleo	jidio
	niawleo	singers
		bodio
		nua
		o kroba, nyekoi
		çiao jugbedio
		jido batiponyo
		gbalao nyano, çeji

The office of tugbewa was found but not inherited in either group. He was in charge of the war drums (wule).

The offices of nyaneo or ya sönø, some sort of announcer or town crier, who takes the place of the bodio at his death, until a new one is elected, was only found in this group of tribes. The kpanyan also mention him as their principal war leader..

The nyekoi was responsible for the entertainment of strangers, and for the announcement of village meetings for which he had to beat the town drums (tuku). The cheji was said to have been responsible, a long time ago, for the ritual of butchering killed leopards and distributing the meat to the gbo while reserving the teeth, claws and skin to the bodio.

As for the Wor (wøø) some notes were collected and published by a cultural project.¹⁷⁸ Their traditional government is said to have consisted of four ranked chiefs selected by the elders (without mentioning any of the corresponding titles in Kru). The chief (kroba ?) was said to be the judge and collected all fines; at the same time he was the wealthiest man, but did not participate in warfare nor touch any weapons nor ammunition. At the death of a chief the next one in rank was to succeed him while a new one was elected at the lower ranks. In addition to these there were village heads who were selected by the elders, with the advise of the chiefs.

A High Priest 'Ku popayaw' (probably to be read as Ku po pa nyo) with mystical powers (probably the bodio, A.M.) was the intermediary between the people and the 'Devil' (probably the fetish or the oracle at Ki Jirople A.M.). He made war medicines and prescribed the taboos to be observed in order (70) to catch ? witches in the town?selected by the devil himself..... by receiving a revelation of the devil in his dream.

This seems to be a reference to the so-called 'devil doctors' described above.

The only age-grades mentioned for the wèppo, were the kafa and gbo probably both of minor importance; the beopø or warriors were selected in case of outbreak of wars from the gbo.

21. Nyanno

The social structure of this group is similar to that of the other wèppo groups corresponding to the same settlement pattern of localized sibs which are the following

¹⁷⁸ Liberian Educational and Cultural Research Project Dept. of Education, Monrovia (mimeograph), 1970, 272 ff. (sponsored by USAID with San Francisco State College contract Team and MCSS)

Tribes). While they did move to the north-west, the Pete , who were also driven back , moved to the east.(67)

The other groups included in the Matro Chiefdom belong to a group collectively referred to as wèppo, after a certain species of monkey, called we who claim to be the forerunners of the tatue on their way down toward the sea.

This included the wòtè, or wòò, the kpanyan, the jebea, as well as the du (Blue Barrel or Blubara), nyapo and wuli.

20. Weppo

The wèppò, formerly a large group are now dispersed, probably as a result of the war of 1915, in which the wòò assisted the Americo-Liberians, while the kpanyan and jebea supported the revolting kabor and du. While the du and wuli had formerly occupied places along the coast, they were then removed as a result of the 1912 kpanyan war, in which they were defeated by the wòò (assisted by their 'brothers' kpanyan and their 'children' tatue). The wòò moved to the mouth of the Sinoe river and occupied the former du territory, while the tatue occupied the former wuli land, leaving them a narrow strip of land around Panama; when the wòò helped the Americo-Liberians against the kabor in their 1915 uprising, they gained full confirmation of their previous conquests while the kabor and du were eliminated from their coastal positions, and their allies, kpanyan and jebea resettled in the interior, along the middle Plahnsohn river.

These resettlement strategies by the Americo-Liberians and its representatives in Greenville aimed at better military control and tax collection by the creation of central villages. Thus most of the wèppo groups are concentrated in one major village, which is usually the seat of the Clan Chief. Formerly each sib had occupied its own farm land so that settlements were quite small and dispersed. The oldest foundation was usually the meeting place of elders and officers. The sibs for all three Weppo groups are given below

<u>Wòò (Wor)</u>	<u>Kpanyan</u>	<u>Jebea</u>	
		nikwea batiao	
çiao	tiao	çiao	çiao
gbalao	gbalao	-	gbalao I,II
tuèò	-	tuèò	
-	tao	-	tao
wèsleo	-	-	wèsneo
	nableo	nièò	
	taju	totao	jido
	sadro	kweiju pokû	
	sewuleo	poo	nuao
	niawleo		

as we can see, the first 4 sibs, perhaps the eldest ones, are almost synonymous in all the groups (tao and tuèò perhaps even being variants of the same name).(68)_____

Some of these sibs also occur among the (nyanno or nyampo ?) which points to mutual inter-relationships between them and the wèpo.

As far as the memory of the older men from these groups was reliable, they could not remember any former common government; each group seems to have had a separate

fè wâ	"beard society"	founded in appr. 1860
sawuli wâ		
bètè wâ		
Nigeria wâ		
tukui wâ		around 1900
pani wâ		around 1910
waka wâ		around 1920-30
jolly	present kafa	since 1950

(66)

The last group characterized by a special dance and song is found among all the other groups in the region i.e. in the Weteo, Nake and Nomo Chiefdoms. Local groups of singers travelling around and performing song and dance enjoy great popularity among young men and women.

18. Drèpo

There is not much to say about the remaining groups of the Tatuwe cluster. We have already mentioned the affiliation with the drèpo claimed by the drèo. However, the drèo contest the alleged seniority of the drèpo. Today they are a small group squeezed in between the territories of the Tatuwe and Jedepo, occupying 8 villages in which the following sibs were represented.

kpèssô
 ji kô bodio
 didao
 tatrokôjugbèdio

A krøba was not mentioned, however a gbøbi and a bati pønyø, who can both be elected from any sib.

19. Tatuwe

This large tribe of about 3000 souls live in the upper basin of the Sinoe and Plahnsohn rivers must have some territorial organization different from the smaller localized groups. They refer themselves to 3 sections to constitute the entire group. But in contrast to other large groups, theirs are only 6 sibs which are, however, represented in any important village .

1. kao
2. gbèkô jugbèdio
3. jábo
4. twèsao
5. jibó bodio
6. toao

Here, too, the office of krøba, but the gbøbi represents the same functions, a kind of civil assistant to the bodio, who is the peace-maker and guardian of spirits and idols as elsewhere.

The tatuwe claim that originally they settled in the area now occupied by niampo but were driven back in 1909 by the combined forces of niampo, wètè (Settra Kru) and krao (Five

sakø	kalu	nyøø
solou	gbèlèo weao	
nyanuan	petetèô	çogbèo
nagbèo		
wèsègbèo		
sogbao		
sauigbe		
kasøu		

(67)

Each of these sections has its own bodio, which made them autonomous political units, and each of the major towns had its own krøba. For the Pete- Gbegbeo and Kunwea for which I have data on traditional systems, both offices were vested in a particular sib, and even today these prominent sibs are still relevant, since the actual Clan Chiefs are selected from them

<u>Pete-Gbegbeo</u>		<u>Pete-Kunwea</u>	
teju	bodio	wèsèkû	bodio
sakø	jugbedio, tewlui, jide	dømø	<u>krøba</u>
sakø	tugbewa, chø je	bøwnø	jibèdio
sikrø	<u>krøba</u>	jeo	tèwulio

Other offices for the Kunwea were those of the bati çè, the butcher, and the krøba gbè, 'small kroba'.

The respective age sets for the two groups were:

<u>Pete-Gbegbeo</u>	<u>Pete Kunwea</u>
kafa	kafa
beø 'warriors'	gbø-po or tawa
bø (or <u>nyiplepo</u> or <u>kukunyo</u>)	

Unlike the rest of the Pete, according to my understanding, the Kunwea never practised group initiation but only individual promotion to the rank of warrior. This may be due to insufficient numbers in such a small group as kunwea.

However, identification and affiliation of Kunwea men was established through the age-sets of neighboring groups on the basis of a more or less vaguely defined peer-group identity: members of the older generation have different songs from those of the younger generations, a common phenomenon throughout the Kru coast. In political affairs, age clearly sets apart the more important officers and elders - who meet in ji-sla - from those of the minor ones (commoners) who meet in tugbedia.

A widely observed process among the Kru is the continuation of former age-grades in the form of voluntary associations: since the formal age-grade system has disintegrated since the wars, a hierarchy of voluntary groups ordered according to age exist. Thus, in Pete, a series of age-based voluntary associations (wâ) was observed throughout the last century.

1. kèbèao	tou	
2. doniao	wasao	
3. wuabuisō	dou	
4. wèsèo batipoi	wèlèo	
5. bièswèō jibèdio	jiu	kroba
6. sao	tabèo	bodio
	doswèō	

The kroba office was said to have been a recent introduction and replaced that of the bodio: the first k. was selected upon consultation of the oracle of Ki Jiroplè, where a delegation from Siton was sent. The kroba's house is the meeting place of the elders . Only during wars were the meetings in the bodio's house, the ji-wō. In both types of meetings the speaker was the batipoi, corresponding to the gbowulio , or tèwuli, elsewhere. The only office not vested in a particular sib was that of the wurapo, the butcher of cows, which were taken by the gbo as fines from other people. (66)

16. Niampo

The formerly settled along the Plahnsohn headwaters in a area now occupied by the Siton, but after moving along the river they now occupy the eastern bank of the lower course, and have established one village even at the mouth. Like many other Nake groups , they are made up of two sections, niao and klaklø.

	NIAO		KLAKLO
1.	jableo	jubadioboteao	bodio, kroba
2.	?		kobo
3.	?		boao

The batipoi, speaker of the gbo at meetings could be chosen from any sib, while the other offices were hereditary.

17. Pete

Not all the groups have a common tradition of migration from Jedepo. The so-called Pete tribes have a tradition of common origin and migration with the Tatuwe, on the upper part of the Plahnsohn river, at the beginning of the XIXth century . After which they migrated south to the lower Dugbe, where they met the Seo-Siton and were scattered into different directions. Eventually the Pete crossed the Dugbe, and one of their groups reached the coast between Ka and Sobo. Formerly, the Pete said to have had 12 tribes of which only 6 still exist today:

				makekpo	
<u>gbegbe mènìe</u>	<u>kûwea</u>	<u>jigbekpo</u>	<u>bolokpo</u>	<u>sikrø</u>	
at coast	s.of dreo	s. of menie			
<u>nyøø</u>	not avail.	jeo	dalu	gbotieo	<u>nyakøø</u>
<u>weseo</u>	wèsèkû	nalekû	wèsèkû	wèsèkû	
<u>teju</u>		dømø }	tau	tau	<u>jièo</u>
<u>salekû</u>	bøwnø }	nyakøableo dio		bøwnø	

The three age-sets of the tuo , kafa, gbø, and fêwâ (beards or old people) had each their leaders called bi (i.e. father). Under the direction of the gbøbi, the gbø performs public duties, cleaning the roads (i.e. cutting grass and branches from overgrown paths after each farming season so that travellers may pass without having to hack through their bush), recruit laborers for the government, appoint a town crier and drummer (tuku bla).

13. Twa

They occupy six hamlets south of the Tuo, along the Road to Nuon Point, and comprise presently 4 sibs

1. wèjideo
2. salu
3. siwo
4. sèkolea

They seem to belong to an older population than tuo and siton but seem to have dispersed due to frequent migrations and fissions. Unfortunately I had no opportunity to obtain oral information about their history and traditional form of government.

14. Seo

They belong, along with the Siton and Tuo to immigrants from Jedepo and seem to have split only quite recently. The seo claim to have come from a still existing village in Jedepo, Seblea, and settled in Treboken (Jedei) before moving into the headwaters of river Dugbe, which is also infiltrated by Jedei today. Their four sibs are

- | | | |
|-------------|-----|----------------------|
| 1. nyamapo | ___ | <u>kroba</u> |
| 2. krøgbepo | | <u>bodio</u> |
| 3. jedebeo | | <u>tèwuli</u> |
| 4. wuleo | | <u>jugbèdio</u> (65) |

15. Siton

They claim to have formerly held a territory bordering on Jedepo and to have separated from Kwiatuo only recently - a fact which seems to be supported by the fact that their principal towns bear the same name, namely Joany, i.e. 'cotton tree' - today occupy three major villages and eleven smaller ones (as against 25 formerly). The government has made efforts after 1915 to concentrate and control the people in larger villages. In 1921, the Siton established a coastal settlement, Bannah Beach Town near Kroubar, from where they were removed again in the 30's.

My suspicion is that this loss of population in all of these tribes is due to strong outmigration - for over 100 years - first to find work on the coast, and then escape the Liberian government. I suspect that the Liberian civil war has even extinguished many of these former tribes, not in that they were killed but that most of the families moved to neighboring countries.

The Siton are divided into two sections, çeø and brøkwea, altogether they had 6 sibs each to which there is now a 13th

The jugbèdio was the army leader and his privilege was therefore to claim the best part of any black deer killed by the hunters. The tukpewø had in Dreo the same role as the je cho elsewhere: he had to reckon the lunar calendar and announce the new moon. When this was done, the bodio would make the sacrifices to the spirits and idols (fetishes) to bring prosperity to the crops and people.

Like the bodio, tukpewø had to be caught by surprise, as the restrictions of the office on normal life made it difficult to find any volunteers among the men of the towns. Anyone chosen who would know it beforehand would try to escape and run away to the coast.

According to Zetterström three of the offices were inherited in certain kwâ, while that of krøba was filled after consulting an oracle.

12. Tuo

The kwiatio claim their origin from the jedepo and said they moved into the upper Plahnsohn area several generations ago only. During the end of the XIXth century, one of their age sets, the kafa, left that area and moved to a new spot in the hinterland of Setra Kru where they are now, known as lower tuo (nisebø tuo), consisting of one village and three hamlets.

The upper tuo (kwiatio) are composed of two sections with 6 pâtô each.

1. jèdèo	jedeo
2. troo	kameakõ
3. çèjibo	toèkõ
4. gbèçinao	bwa
5. wøø	trao
6. kebu	(now extinct)

Since I was prevented from returning to kwiatio I could not find out anything about their former political organization.

Lower tuo consists of only 4 sibs (or 3)

1. gbalao
2. çeao
3. pofon
4. bowiõpø

The latter may be the section of the 'doctors', and gbalao has become extinct. The krøba who was chosen from there, is now being selected from pofon, likewise as bodio and gbobi. The tèwuli onli is chosen from çeao.

Despite their minimal population the Tuo have resisted attempts to combine them with other dakø into one single administrative unit: in 1962, they were included in the Twa-Tuo amalgamated chiefdom, but after the death of the Twa Clan chief in 1966, they split again into two units choosing each one its own clan chief, who together control less than a hundred people each.

They consist of two sections on the north and south bank of the upper Dugbe river, doèjede (Duaehjaedae) and bøkøjede (Boken Jaedae), both sections being of recent origin.

(63)

First, both sections were administered by one Clan Chief but during the last decades (in the 50's or 60's they succeeded to have each its own). Formerly both sections, of 8 sibs (here called kwâ instead of pâtô) each, were ruled a by a sole set of officers. I was only able to obtain the set of doèjede sibs.

døkreo	krøba, baticeo I
numetrø	
tuègbèø	gbøbelø (jidio)
tuao	jibèdio, tuba bla
niao	baticeo II
sèlø	bodio
bleo	

The role of bodio and krøba are the same as elsewhere; the two baticeo were the meat dividers in both sections; the tuba bla is simply a drummer and announcer of messages (also beating the war drums - war is announced and accompanied by drums) , while the gbøbelø is the leader of the gbo and leads it in battle.

The age set organization is quite interesting, it comprises four corporate groups:

kafa
gbø jidu
gbø
gbø kuluko.

They had the functions of vanguard, led by the jugbedio, the warriors , the assistant warriors of the rearguard, and the old men (kuluko) guarding the town against surprise attacks. Each group had a head warrior, beo, all of whom obeyed the jibèdio.

11. Dreø

This tribe occupies a territory on the eastern bank of river Dugbe - its middle course and a small section, Niplèpo, belonging to Jloh chiefdom. Their traditions narrate that they migrated together with the large tribe of Tatue, but separated later and moved south-east while the former stayed in the west. Some sibs claim to be descended from others in Tatue or Drèpo, e.g. saio from jikô in Drèpo, and tao from tao in Tatue. Its eight sibs (7 according to Zetterström) are the following: (64)

wasao
 tuo
 gbanyineo
 sôseo
 jido (in Niplepo)
 kenipo
 gbalao.

- 11.niagbepo bodio
- 12.manegbepo jugbèdiø
- 13.plotiepo

Given its former importance on the kru coast (Crousestre in the 17th century) and its singularity, Settra Kru deserves more research on origins and former political organization.

8.3. Nuohn Point (Noao)

The last polity of the Five Tribes we deal with is today a separate chiefdom with 197 inhabitants in 1962 (Population Census). The inhabitants claim origin from Drowin ' bank of river Dro' which was probably Nifu or one of its 'Fishtowns'. Its pâtê show close relation with Klepo and other Fishtowns (cf. Wlokli above)

nømlø			
woo	upper and lower section		
wèçapo	"	"	"
çèmlèpo	"	"	"
puèpo			
bèlakpo			
niata			
tietikpo			
tèkrèpo.			

In contrast to other settlements of the area, the krøba is consistently elected for lifetime and from one pâtô only (like a bodio in other groups; on the other hand, the post of bodio alternates between two sections of çèmlèpo, and is considered less important . In consequence of the small population, the duty of announcing the new moon is here given to the bodio, elsewhere the task of a special assistant to the bodio.

The office of jugbèdio alternates between the two sections of wèçapo: his civil duties, like training the young men and giving them the important news, are more stressed in N.P. than his military ones and he was compared to the gbobi in other dakè. The tugbewa, in charge of the ceremonial butchering of fish and distribution to the gbø was held in woo, one of the founding klepo sibs.

It is clear from the preceding that Nuon Point represents a typical Fishmen settlement, from the setup of sibs as well as from the political organization, and contrasts quite clearly with the other more land-oriented sibs.

9. Nake Chiefdom

The 10 groups in the present Nake chiefdom, situated in the interior of the Kra (Nana Kru) chiefdom are today fragmented into many small groups probably due to later immigration from peoples between the Sino and Plahnsohn (plâsô) rivers. Their traditions of origin were reported in another paper.¹⁷⁷

10. Jede

¹⁷⁷ Massing, Socio-Political Relations Among the Kru, Kalamazoo, 1972

same time, repeat the name of the person. If Jlorpeh approved of the person, the elder would strike a rock on the ground. If not they had to make another choice or try to contact Jlorpeh again."

Zetterström indicates for Nana Kru the following hierarchy of offices: bodio, krøba kle ji su nyo (Klejitsunyo) assistant of bodio, jugbedio (Djugbe Dio), a war leader, and wurapo (Wrappo) a messenger for the bodio.¹⁷⁴

Where as bodio was appointed for life time, the krøba was chosen for 4 years (renewable), the kle ji su nyo for 8 years, the jugbedio for 4 years renewable. .

Williams also mentions a 'governor for the tribe' who was six years old when appointed; this might have been the new bodio, since no other appropriate person could be found from that sib.¹⁷⁵

8.2. Settra Kru (Wètè)

Settra Kru was one of the first Kru settlements to have an American mission: a Presbyterian church headed by the Rev. Connelly was established in 1843, after a Liberian trader had been murdered and the Americo-Liberians forced Settra Kru into a deed of cession as reparation. In 1866, Settra Kru had to recognize the authority of the government in Sinoe county. The Port of Entry Law which was passed in 1865 did not consider Settra Kru as a legitimate Port of Trade. In 1905 the Legislature, on demand of Pres. Coleman, granted again the privilege of Entry Port, but by that time most male labor had already emigrated to Freetown or Ghana.

The events leading to the destruction of S.K., Little Kru and Kroubar in 1915 is still unclear. In the twenties S.K. was sacked again, after Senator A. Ross had fined it \$ 3000 for failure to comply with demands for Kru labor, and these were not paid. At that time, Bafu Toe was said to have been the first krøba of S.K.¹⁷⁶ The six after 1915 do not show a pattern of preferred sibs for the election of kroba.

The age grade system seems not to have been formalized, the beopo (bio po), or warriors, are said to have been organized on an ad-hoc basis, and other groups appear unknown.

Settra Kru's set of patrisibs seems unique and does not to show a definite relation with any other tribe, while Wrukli (wløkli), Settra Kru's Fishtown show a definite klepo origin.

Settra Kru	Wlokli (called Big Fishtown)
1. toe	fenpo
2. wita	jobo
3. sèbato tugbewa	pluka
4. jibédé	niapo
5. wea tiepo	woo
6. nemanepo	nømlø a) tigbepo
7. çewuleao batipønyø	b) køglepø
8. jabi tiepo	c) kepo
9. dosakøpø	
10. çìèwulèpø	

¹⁷⁴ K.Zetterström, Preliminary Report on the Kru, 1968, 24-26

¹⁷⁵ W. and M. Williams, Adventures, 53

¹⁷⁶ probably a confusion by our informants with an office introduced by Liberian Interior Department (perhaps Clan Chief), because the office of kroba is much older.

settlements with an Americo-Liberian trading community. Little Nana Kru was probably identical with the Fishtown mentioned by Davis.¹⁶⁹

Very little is known on the former political organization of Nana Kru and neighboring Fishtown King William's Town, besides some remarks by the Rev. Williams and K. Zetterström. Common traditions of migration exist with the Kabor and Klepo, with whom they also have many sib names in common:

Nana Kru	King William's Town
taapo (first immigrants)	nømlø of gbeta klepo origin
sieçapo (first people from Jira-ni)	pluka of gbeta klepo origin
wèçapo (last people from Jira-ni)	jemapo from Jira-ni
kabø (from Sanguin)	dopo
batiè (from Bètu Kabor Fishtown)	
maniè (from Pete)	

King Williams town is, in view of its many klepo immigrants, considered a Gbeta settlement. I assume that it was not independent but a fishermen settlement under Nana Kru. Williams speaks repeatedly of the 'king', 'governor' and chiefs of Nana Kru, King William's Town and Nure (Nero), which might imply the existence of one common bodio ('king') and krøba ('governor').¹⁷⁰

As already mentioned, these settlements did not take place in the 1915 uprising and were spared by Liberian troops. The 'king' of Nana Kru was ready to fill the power vacuum left by the destruction of Settra Kru, Krouba, and Little Kru and the ejection of the Kabor. In 1917 it became the seat of the newly created Kra Chiefdom with a Paramount Chief and a tax collector responsible for all the groups in the area. Also a detachment of the Liberian Frontier Force was placed here.

For a short time even, it became the center of traditional religion as the Nana Kru 'devil doctors' and their fetishes had proven to be superior to those of Settra Kru in averting the war. Until the death of the main 'doctor', Depi, human heads and hands were constantly brought to Nana Kru. But the missionaries had a decisive influence in the war, too, and mass conversions followed, and finally, on June 4, 1919, the destruction of the 'fetish-house' (ji-wō), to which the Kru 'gods' did not retaliate.¹⁷¹

(60) As most missionaries, Rev. Williams transformed the old religious shrine into a church: "not far from the juju house, the Ashbury Methodist Church stands today"¹⁷² on the site of the holy tree from which for centuries the town's juju had hung, and brass bells from the jiwō were used as church bells in the new building.¹⁷³

The 'Devil Doctor Depi' mentioned by Williams was the bodio, guardian of the juju house. He was always elected from the same pâtô, was the ultimate protector of life, guardian of the spirits and peace-maker. The oracle of Ki Jirople was to be consulted before a new election " if the elders were unable to get in contact with Jlorpeh, the bodeo was chosen in the following way. After a person had been agreed upon, one of the elders would walk backwards and, at the

¹⁶⁹ R.Davis, MS, and W.and M.Williams, Adventures, 104

¹⁷⁰ W. and M. Williams, Adventures, 105

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ Walter Williams, "Christian Krus who have stood the Test", Missionary Review of the World 52, 1929, 118

Our only information about this interior group comes from K. Zetterström¹⁶²: the tribe had two sections, upper and lower. The most important officer, kroba, was elected for lifetime. Next to him was the bodeo, who was secretly elected and grabbed before he could escape, because the ritual restrictions did not make this office very popular. He was the first to plant rice and thereby gave the sign of opening the farm season. The jley (ji de), his wife had similar ritual duties.

The army was led by the Bobbi (gbøbi) in peace time, and the Djugbe Deo (jugbedio) during wars. All of these important offices were elected from particular sibs. The badeo seems to have been the tribal butcher to slaughter the sacrificial animals.

8. The Five Tribes (Krè mu)

Geographically, the next in line going from east to west, are the 5 tribes. They have traditions of origin related to those of the Gbeta-Klepo:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. King William's town | (Weah) |
| 2. Nana Kru | (kra-nyèmala) |
| 3. Kroubar | (nyingbi) |
| 4. Settra Kru | (wètè) |
| 5. Little Kru | (jidufa) |

Nyingbi is the mythical town, where the first immigrants settled and from where all later settlements are derived. Kroubar, situated on a river of the same name (Nyingbi), appears on the XIXth century maps, but was probably destroyed in 1915.¹⁶³ This may have been the Krou of earlier maps from which the entire coast received its name.¹⁶⁴ Koelle calls the inhabitants of Kroubar - perhaps it was identical with the Krou Settra of earlier maps - Nimbeo or Niegbi.¹⁶⁵

Nuon Point, located one mile from the Kroubar river - formerly called Neatano or Newer Point - seems to have been the Kabor or Klepo fishing settlement of Kroubar, similarly as Wlokli (Wrukree) was the fishing settlement for Settra Kru, and Kg. William (Kg. Weah's) town the (Kabor) fishtown for Nana Kru.¹⁶⁶

Little Kru (jidufa or Irufa in Koelle) was likewise an important settlement before 1915 harboring a British palm oil factory.¹⁶⁷ Some Kabor elements settled in a fishtown 2 miles - referred to as Déré Krou on XIXth century maps¹⁶⁸ - probably took part in the 1915 revolt, which was the reason that Little Kru disappeared from the maps.

Nana Kru assumed the important position of Settra Kru after 1915, because the missionary Rev. Williams counselled its chiefs to abstain from the revolt. It was one of the first Kru

¹⁶² Kjell Zetterström, *Ethnographic Survey of Southeastern Liberia: Preliminary Report on the Kru*, Robertsport, Liberia, 1968, 26

¹⁶³ cf. the nautical descriptions of the coast in sources cited in n.131

¹⁶⁴ Pieter de Mareez, *Beschryvinghe ende historisch verhael vant Gout Koninckrijk van Gunea*, Amstelredam, 1602 and map therein

¹⁶⁵ Siegfried Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, London, 1854, 4

¹⁶⁶ cf. the maps and toponyms in n.131, also Teixeira da Mota, *Toponimos de origen Portuguesa en na Costa de Africa*.

¹⁶⁷ S.H.S. Johnston, *Liberia in 1906*; *African Pilot*, 1873, 222

¹⁶⁸ cf. A.M.Castilho, *Descrição e roteiro*, Lisboa, 1866, 286

Great Wappi	Wisepo
	Wøpø creek
Little Niffou (?)	Dioh (Diu)
Middle Niffou	Botra
2 small rivers	Nifu Creek
Grand Niffou ¹⁵⁹	Nifu
	Dubo or Dro river (57).

Davis' Wouli is , in my view, Nero (also pronounced Niwuleo or wuliu) (or William's Nuroh ¹⁶⁰; therefore, Nero (Wuli), Ka and Sobo are well documented since 1915, while in earlier times, their proper names were suppressed in favor of the main town. Thus, Sobo and Wisepo formed part of the Wappi (Wappo) complex (named after the river Woppo) , while Diu and Botra were part of the Niffou (named after ni fuè = big water) complex.

Rev. Williams states "they talked the palaver in the palaver house of the Woppi people, our Sobo and Wissipo friends."¹⁶¹

Informants from Sobo told me that the Wisepo people had been brought from the the interior by the Wopi people to assist them in war against neighbouring group, particularly against the Pete, which pushed toward the coast in 1914 and conquered a coastal strip between Ka and Sobo. The Wapi people were identified with (part of the) inhabitants of Diu and Sobo. It seems that formerly Sobo, Wisepo and Diu (and probably Nero) formed one polity (Wappo), who claim their origin from Bobo Jede , like the Jiao (Sastown) people. Ka appears to be a subgroup of Nero. Nero was burnt in 1915 taking part in the revolt, and people were exiled to Nana Kru, but later permitted to return. We present here, for completeness sake, the sibs of Nero and Sobo (not having those of the other villages).

<u>Sobo</u>	<u>Nero</u>
boianpo	bèla
jikao	bo
wulipo	junu
slakumepo	kao
jaapo	sõ
bèwunu	nuio
juo	nyøkû
wloboao	
nemelopo	
flã	

7. Bolloh (Bølø)

Their attempts to gain the coast, which started earlier with conflicts with Diu and Nifu and sparked the 1930 war, were thwarted by the 1932 truce.(58)

¹⁵⁹ African Pilot, 1873, 57

¹⁶⁰ cf. W. and M. Williams, Adventures with the Krus, 62, 65, 70

¹⁶¹ ibid., 62

attacked Sobo, perhaps an earlier Nifu offshoot. We suspect that these incidents were connected to the Sasstown revolt: they were settled, in any case, by the peace-making mission of Dr. MacKenzie of the League of Nations. The Bølo were accused of having made war on the government, they were permanently denied access to the coast, while Dio, Wisepo and Sobo (56) were permitted to stay in their coastal settlements¹⁵⁶ but it seems the Nifu port was never opened.

We have little information on the pre-World War I governmental organization, but present here the lists of pâtô, our own and Davis', which exhibit a division into two sections, like in other tribes.

Section I		Section II	
Massing	Davis	Massing	Davis
dulipo	Dulepo		Sao
-	Juobo	tuepo	Twehpo
napo	Napo		Jabwapo
jitu	Jrutu	gbagbo	Gbwapo
trawunu	Tranwrun	tawunu	Tanwru
kleniao	Krinyaon	doplepo	Dopwepo
	Jabo	tuèo	
dupo	Dopo		
	Numwapo		

According to Davis Dopo has produced most of the krøba and suggests that it preceded the other Jlo-immigrants.¹⁵⁷

He further reports that at the time of the original immigration the settlements of Sobo, Kao and Wouli were established, while Botra, Sabo (?), Kao, Wouli and Nero were recent offshoots established by the Niffu-Bètu people and replaced the Borroh (Bølo), Diu and Wisepo towns after 1930.¹⁵⁸ I disagree with this as well as with the identification of Wouli as 'Middle Nifu'. A comparison of the XIXth century settlements with my own itinerary of 1969 shows that some settlements have disappeared.

African Pilot

Massing (1969)

Nana Kru
 King William's Town
 Neroh (Niwulo)
 river Wõ gba
 Ka
 Blo creek
 Pete settlement
 Sobo
 Wlo river

Subono (Little Wappi)
 Coro river

¹⁵⁶ League of Nations Official Journal, Committee to Liberia, Dr. Mackenzie's Mission to the Kru Coast in Liberia, dec., 1932, 2045-46

¹⁵⁷ R. Davis, MS, 130

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

before the beginning of certain 'moons' and therefore kept asking the monapru for his advice. (55)

Two other offices, both assistants to the faka dio, seem to be peculiar to Betu: their incumbents, recruited from both sections of the town, from pluka and trapo pātô respectively, were responsible for butchering and distribution of the animals, which were shared among the members of the gbø and the other townspeople: they were said to have the rows of 8 plate-like boards (fubu) one for each pātô, in front of them, onto which they placed each pātô's respective share of the communal meal.

6. Nifu - Taro

Nifu was one of the more important settlements on the Kru coast during the XIXth and the early part of the XXth century. It consisted of three major settlements: Little, Middle and Grand Nifu,¹⁵¹ plus Sankprukpo, a Kabor Fishtown, which was destroyed by the Monrovia government in 1915. Davis suggests that some of the Nuao, now living on Nuohn Point, who are of Kabor or Klepo stock, came from Nifu or rather Sankprukpo.¹⁵²

The Taro traditions report common origin and migration with Jirepo and Jrao from Bobo Jede, first to Topo and from there across the Dubo (or Dro) river to their present area¹⁵³.

Due to the association of the Nifu towns with Kabor and Klepo who were the leaders in the 1919 uprising against Monrovia, their recent history was one of turmoil. Already in 1862, conflict broke out between Nifu and the Fishtown, probably Klepo over employment on European vessels.¹⁵⁴ In 1907, Kabor and Klepo fishermen engaged in a dispute over middlemen trade, as result of which the Nifu Port of Entry, opened in 1885, was closed by the Monrovia government. Following that the kabor Fishermen from Nifu sent a delegation to President Arthur Barclay, who was inclined to grant a new Port of Entry Privilege.¹⁵⁵ It would be interesting to find out the events which resulted in the deterioration of Kabor relations with the Americo-Liberians, so that the Kabor became the leading elements of the 1915 general Kru revolt - we can only suspect that it was the particular interests of the families of the Senators Ross from Sinoe County, and Yancy, from Maryland County, who were trading in Kru laborers, and wanted to have better control over embarkation in the ports of Sinoe and Cape Palmas, and were not interested in free ports on the Kru coast. The League of Nations has accused Ross and Yancy to engage in slave trade from 1930 to 1932, but these men had been pursuing their traffic for at least 15 years previous to the LN enquiry.

In 1913, Bølø attempted to gain access to the coast and burnt Niffo town but was repulsed, but in 1917 it continued. In 1931, the attempted to gain possession of a coastal strip where they had established a "beach-town" and recruited Diu warriors against Nifu, while Wisepo

¹⁵¹ Bouët-Willaumez, Description nautique des côtes de l'Afrique Occidentale, 1849; William Lynch, Report to the US Navy Department in Relation to his Mission to the Coast of Africa, U:S: Senate Documents, I, 1853

¹⁵² Davis, Ph.D.Diss. rev. MS, 128

¹⁵³ *ibid*, 127-28

¹⁵⁴ Message of the President of the Republic to the Legislature, dec.1862, Despatches from U.S. Consuls to Liberia, ***

¹⁵⁵ Annual Message of the President to the 32nd Legislature, 1909

Whereas Davis reports that the population is scattered in tiny hamlets, there seem to have existed at least three larger settlements before the 1931 uprising: one of them Bati, the Kabor Fishtown, and the other Betu or Batu whose name is derived from the river called Gbatu. This Potanym seems to explain the many references, in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries to a place called Baddoo or Batou¹⁵⁰ which probably was a large klepo-gbeta settlement.(54)

Traditionally, Betu consisted of two sections - krø wakè - sides of town - named døkrèpø(from Sasstown) and seepo each with eight pâtô which are listed below according to their size:

Dokrepo	Seepo
1 matu	flâpo
2 botrokpo	taapo <u>bodio</u>
3 gbaklepo	joapo
4 gbedao <u>gbedio</u>	kièpo
5 nyaweapo	kaapè <u>jugbedio</u>
6 plâka	gbuepo <u>kpatwa, monapru</u>
7 wenaò	tropo
8. saapo <u>tugbewa</u>	weao

The gbedio (bodia) was Invariably appointed from taapo; he was priest and diviner responsible for the well-being of the crops and the townspeople as well as that of the warriors; his wife, jede, had the same function among the women. The office of gbedio (Jugbedio) who was referred to by my informant Mr. Michael S. Nimley, as the 'bodio's deputy' was inherited in gbedao sib. His responsibilities included the assurance of abundant supplies of fish, game palmoil for which purpose he had to make medicines in time of famine and scarcity. One of the insignia of this office was a special stick which enabled its owner to locate food in the forest.

The krøba could be selected from any pâtô except from taapo. This seems to ensure a balance between the sib which holds the highest religious office and all the others which are excluded from holding that office.

Unlike in Sasstown the krøba from Bètu was not killed, according to our informants, even though he was exiled after seven years of rule. It was mentioned also that this office was introduced from the Grebo area later and had replaced the older office of krøkø which symbolized the ritual ownership of all the farmlands surrounding the town.

The gbøbi leader and speaker of the gbo was elected by the gbo members, in rotation from the pâtê of the town. During tribal warfare, the jugbedio took command over the army, another column being led by the tugbewa who is the announcer of meetings and warfare on the large town drums kept in the tugbedia. The kpatwa functioned as the official messenger of the government.

The role of monapru resembles that of the je cho in other conditions he was responsible of the lunar calendar i.e. he had to count the days of the month and informed the villagers how many days remained until the beginning of the new moon. People were forbidden from farming

¹⁵⁰ cf.note 131, and Davis Ph.D.Diss. rev. MS, 126

legitimate origin of the krøba despite Jekwipo's attempts to break lose from Filokli's domination.¹⁴⁶

Like the kroba, his representative the gbobi may be chosen, in theory, from each pătô. For the Interregnum Davis mentions an office not mentioned by our informants, that of doobwe-fue, who was chosen from swapo, the only pătô forbidden to furnish the krøba¹⁴⁷ This may have meant some representation for the fishermen- population of Sass, swapo meaning nothing else than fish-people. (53)

When a new krøba waw found, he simply stepped down rather than being exiled and executed like the actual krøba. Given the long interregnum described by Davis, the doobwefue held office almost as long as the krøba which further confirms our suggestion at alternating rule between the Jrao proper and the fishing people. Further research should attempt to answer these question. Those pătê which did not produce krøba and also do not hold any other traditional offices, except weapo, may be linked to the fishing population and/or earlier populations. Otherwise all the other offices are held by pătê which also produced krøba, according to Davis' list.

<u>bodio</u>	<u>swapo</u>	<u>jugbedio</u>	<u>weapo</u>
<u>krøkø</u>	<u>dekrepo</u>	<u>ji kpa mu</u>	<u>nowapo</u>
<u>tugbewa</u>	<u>nowapo</u>	<u>swaje</u>	<u>nyønøwapø</u>
		<u>je cho</u>	<u>fipø</u>

The following offices are filled by members from any pătô

kpa ti che nyo
nma
yandebo di nyo

The offices correspond very closely to those of the Kabor polities; only the swa je nyo, "meat-seeing-man" represents an addition, informants referred to him as 'tribal meat examiner' who presumably cast oracles to find out whether sacrificial animals would be acceptable to the spirits. In difference to the Kabor the ji kpa mu was refereed to as the leader of the younger ageset, the kafa, who trained the boys for their future tasks as warriors. The pătô bowiapo was referred to as the quarter of the 'native doctor' who were herbalists, diviners and main mediators between the oracle of Ki Jirople and the tribespeople. These bowiapo seemed to be of special significance in Betu (Jilepo,) where special reverence was given them on the basis of the alleged power of their charms and medicines.

5. Bètu (Jilèpo)

Jrao and Jilèpo claim common origin from two brothers, Doe Wulu and Doe Jea¹⁴⁸ and were included together with Diu (Diyu), Bolø (Gbolo) and Bwa (Boa) in the first Liberian chiefdom in the area, the Buah Independent Chiefdom,¹⁴⁹ which may have reflected a grouping according to a common ethnic origin: bètu, jlao, bwa and bølø claim to derive from the Pâ group in the interior.

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Tonkin, who did research on Sasstown, oral information

¹⁴⁷ swapo was the fishing group and of klepo or kabor origin; information collected in Sasstown 1969

¹⁴⁸ Davis, Ph.D.Diss. rev.MS, 126

¹⁴⁹ B.Holas, Mission, 67

of River Ferrowah, followed to the east by Picanniny Cess and Wayako on the Picinness River.

The Jrao claim to have migrated from Bobo Jede together with the people from Nifu, Bètu, Nero etc. all belonging to the the Jrao group but which later split into separate units. Davis mentions a tradition according to which the jrao broke away from the siklio when both still lived in the interior. But both claim to have occupied their present area when the gbeta groups entered the land. Davis quotes two traditions, one which mentions the klepo already in place when the jrao arrived, the other claiming both groups to arrive at the same time.

The only jrao settlement on their route from the interior which can be documented historically is Filokri, Old Town, in the interior section; other villages in that section are Sloyen, Wesa, Nowa and Numokwia, which have never been investigated. In the lower section, the main town is Jekwipo, founded in 1896 by younger educated men following the factionalism in the old town.¹⁴³ (52) Both sections consisted of the same number of sibs, originally twelve, later augmented by four:

Filokli	Jekwipo
1. dekrepo	1. tiepo
2. swapo	2. klapo
3. panipo	3. bawepo
4. sakrepo	4. palopo
5. weapo	5. koiao
6. tugbepo	6. bowiapo
7. nowapo	
8. sanepo	
9. wulupo	
10. fipo	
11. napo	
12. swepo	

Before the introduction of the Liberian Interior Administration with government- appointed Paramount and Clan Chiefs in 1910,¹⁴⁴ the highest secular office of Sasstown was that of the krōba, who could be selected from almost any sib. His term of office was limited to 7 years, after which he was exiled. The following year he was recalled and given a reception, after which he was apprehended and put to death. His property was divided. My informants said that this was to prevent the accumulation of power.

Davis says that long interregnums - up to 15 years - could be expected between the removal of one and the appointment of the next, so that such lists are not useful tools for estimating the age of Sasstown.¹⁴⁵ However, the kroba list shows that only 6 out of the 18 sibs furnished the highest officer namely , dekrepo, napo, sanepo, fipo, wulupo and nowapo, all in the upper section. Tonkin reports that the older settlement of Filokli was always accepted as the

¹⁴³ M.Fraenkel, Social Change at the Kru Coast; the elders I interviewed in 1969 gave 1898 for the foundation of Filokli.

¹⁴⁴ Ron Davis, Ethnohistorical Outline of the Kru Coast, Ph.D.Diss. revised MS, 1948, 114

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.* 117

This group today inhabits the Hinterland of Grand Cess and Picnicess, the area around Barclayville. It has the tradition of migration from the interior together with Gbeta and Jirao, into an area already occupied by the Topo, an earlier group. Before the Liberian government intervened in 1932 in wars between the gbeta and kplepo, the latter consisted of four groups, named by the chief source of that time -the Rev. F.A. Price: Flenekpo, Gbalopo, Suehn and Topo, respectively.¹³⁸ Holas in 1940 reports that the following traditional groups had jointly settled In Barclayville: Flenekpo, Gbalopo, Siton, Topo and Kpliopo.¹³⁹ According to the Letter of the then District Commissioner for the Kru Coast E.C.B. Jones reprinted in Price, the Kplepos were prevented access to the sea by the gbeta, to whom they also paid annual tributes. One of the gbeta chiefs, Bonyono Juwule attempted to oust the Flenekpo chief (krøba?) by creating alliances with the chiefs of the other sections and accusing him of participation in the 1931 revolt of Sasstown. However, chief Tugbe Bloh from Flenekpo countered the machinations of Bonyono Juwle (who according to Mrs. Agnes Nebo v.Ballmos from Grand Cess was chief in Grand Cess rather than Picnicess) by siding with the government. Juwule apparently attempted an attack on Flenekpo against the will of the District Commissioner in 1932, but the attack was rebuked and Bloh became the leading chief of the area.

The Liberian authorities decided to hold peace councils and settle populations from different groups in one large concentrated settlement later named Barclayville. In 1934, Sita in Belakpo became the location of a Methodist Episcopal mission station and Barclayville became the headquarter of Kru Coast District. It was decided that from now on chieftainship should rotate among the different sections of the newly established chiefdom.

Holas in 1948 found five clans: Flewe, Wapwepo, Keyke, Sito and Topo with the recognized Paramount Chief residing in Filokri, Gbelapo, but the administrative Paramount Chief coming from wa-pwapo. Flenekpo apparently had been split up into two clans, Flewe and Keyke. Presently the main settlements are Barclayville and Workpeken, with a Clan Chief residing in Barclayville; Big Flenipo and Siton in Gbalakpor (Belakpo) Clan; Keaken in Flenipo Clan; Big Suehn in Topo Clan; all of them are administered by the Paramount Chief of Barclayville. (51)

The only references to the traditional system of government come from Price,¹⁴⁰ who is however, not clear is his use of the term 'chief' which presumably refers to the bodio of the Klepo. A recent comparison by Jefferson Taplah¹⁴¹ of the system of Kplepo and Wedabo deals only with present administration and leaves out traditional government.

4. Jrao - Sasstown

Even though one of the largest settlements on the coast, Sasstown seems to be of comparatively recent origin and presumably replaced an earlier Kabor population which lived in a settlement called Drowin (or Jro-win, i.e. on the bank of river Jro). The Katø or Katupo, whose name is preserved in a promontory and fishing settlement a mile west of present Sasstown called Kata Point and Kata, also represents an earlier population element. British and French sailing directories of the XIXth century mention a native town Kateo,¹⁴² on the bank

¹³⁸ F.A. Price, *By Hammock and Surfboat: Liberian Odysseys*, New York, 1954...***

¹³⁹ B. Holas, *Mission dans l'Est Libérien*, Memoire IFAN, Dakar, 1952, ***

¹⁴⁰ F.A.Price, *Liberian Odysseys*, chapter 3

¹⁴¹ Jefferson Taplah, *Tje Political System of the Kpliopo and Wedabo Tribes*, MS, Monrovia 1967

¹⁴² as for Katu Point cf. footnote 131

jidèwèpo
têpo
koo (also called pusaa).

The last claims origin from an aboriginal group, called pâ nyo which was defeated by the immigrant gbeta.

However, since Pa nyø only means 'plenty people', this may only be a generic term applied to all the people settling in this area. Two other Gbeta sibs claim to have later immigrated from the South-East: niapo and tuèpo. All the above sibs are represented in Belakpo and Sobebo¹³⁶ while in Chinakale only kapo, fenpo, and koo are represented.

Formerly each of the Gbeta settlements, such as Belakpo, Jiratekpo, Chinakale in the lower section, and Jakakpo and Nowakpo in the upper section had their own kroba and gbobi which means that village headmanship and army leadership were represented in the main settlements. Each section each had its own bodio. Presently, the Paramount Chief in Belakpo from tekepo and his Clan Chief from jomapo are the principal officials of all the Gbeta towns. Davis mentions that "Chinakale exercises authority over Jiratekpo; Balakpo is less influenced, in Tobo near Balakpo, the Picanninny Cess Paramount Chief resides".¹³⁷ In fact, the relationship between Tobo and Belakpo, which was always referred to me as 'Big Town', whereas Davis mentions Balakpo as a offshoot of Chinakale and Tobo (or Togba-kri) as the major town is not quite clear. According to Davis, Sobebo had its own ji wõ and tugbeja which indicates that it was autonomous and independent of the settlements of Belakpo and Chinakale; the "ji-wõ" of the upper Gbeta section was located in Nowapo on the left bank of the Picnic River (jrø gba). For Belakpo the following composition of the governing council was given:

bulio	.inherited in taapo, or tuepo
çeji	inherited in taapo
jugbedio	kaapo
ibadio	kaapo
tugbewa	tekepo
Je Cho	fêpo

The following offices were according to my informants, not vested in particular sibs: krøba, gbøbi, gbøwuliø, kpatwa, je sê and kle ji. The latter three and che ji were considered as supervisors of the ji-wõ; to symbolize their function, they were only dressed in leopard skins, during wars, the kle-ji had to protect ji-wõ by invoking the idols and spirits, which he did by prostrating himself as long as the warriors were out in battle. These officers were assisted in their duties by ji de, the bodio's wife. The je sê was a "day watcher", counterpart of the je cho, was to announce the first daylight.

(50)

According to informants from Belakpo, the Gbeta did not know the office of krøkõ, as the assignment of farmland to the sibs was made by the pâte nyèfuè. who apportion land to the households from the common land holdings of each sib.

4. Kplepo or Kpliopo

¹³⁶ except numenèô

¹³⁷ Ron Davis, Ethno Historical Studies of the Kru Coast, Revised Doctoral Thesis MS, 149

later gbeta immigrants from the west

jobo

wo

bowulepo

later gbeta immigrants from the interior, Mt. Jede

tekepo

jomapo

gmawunu

taapo

fêpø

kapø

In total there are presently between 11 and 15 pâtô in Big Fishtown.¹³⁴

(48) The offices of kroba and gbobi were hereditary in jobo while that of bùdio was held by niapo which also had the office of bløkkø 'owner of the land'. The klepo always had separate kroba and bodios from the gbeta. On the other hand, the gbeta do not know the office of bløkkø. The other offices of the klepo are not vested in particular sibs, contrary to those of the gbeta, but filled on the basis of personal qualities of the incumbent.

3. Gbeta (49)

The amalgamation of this group with the Kabor and Klepo was mentioned above, The oral traditions report frequent movements of people and wars which may account for the great diversity of peoples in this area. Dako names are therefore often only labels attached to people settling in the same area, rather than to groups of common origin.

One part of the Gbeta claims to have travelled together with the so-called Five Tribes, from the headwaters of the River Cestos to its mouth, and then southeastward along the coast. However, the major part of the sibs represented in such towns as Belakpo, Sobobo, Chinakale, Jiratekpo, Jakakpo, Nowapo etc.¹³⁵ reports to have come from a mountain in the interior, Bukujre (bokon jede, or Bobo Jede, i.e. Mount Gedeh in present day Grand Gedeh county), along with the jrø (Sasstown) group. Both groups of the Gbeta, of which the former are probably klepo, met in the area between Ferrowah (Campbell) creek and Nuon Gba (Grand Cess river); they fought with and drove away some of the original tribes settling in the area. Davis mentions 12 tribal groups settling in the area, of which I could identify about four (wayako, klipapo, satu tannepo and katupo).

The original sibs of the interior group were

tekepo

jomapo, with 2 sections, tietanepo and kanepo

gmawunû

taapo

fêpo

kapo

¹³⁴ my informants, Hon. Jakob Nma and Mr. Nyenati Wampru, did not agree on the number of sibs: the sibs of fêpo, kapø, mawlèpø, tuèpø and nepepø are not included in Wampru's list

¹³⁵ we have no information on the sibs in the Upper Gbeta Section

Some groups referred to as Wunahau and Kankean (Kankiye, mentioned in Mekeel and Davis); and a group called Pa nyø which might have come from the interior. Most of these groups were driven to the siklio who by then still settled somewhere on the middle course of the Grand Cess river (i.e. in the interior). Often amalgamated with Kabor fishing settlements the klepo likewise established a chain of settlements along the coast, their main center lying west of the Gbeta with whom they had been allied from almost the time of the latter's arrival from the interior. Therefore, both are often called gbeta-klepo. Their settlements are represented administratively by four chiefdoms: the Gbeta-Klepo Chiefdom west of Picnicess, the Sanguin Chiefdom near River Cestos, and two Gbeatar Kru Chiefdoms in Grand Bassa County and River Cess Territory, Klepo settlements are found in Timbo, Little and Grand Cola, Rock Cess, in Toto, Butaw and Tasu Chiefdoms, at Settra Kru, Nuohn Point Nana Kru. They probably also had settlements in Nifu and Betu before the revolt of 1915.¹³² More research is needed on the former and present political status of the klepo settlements in Grand Bassa County and River Cess Territory, especially on their relations to the mother-settlements in the areas of Grand Cess and River Cess. In the Picnicess area, the traditions of the gbeta say that, at the time of (47) their immigration from the interior to their present area, they found the klepo occupying the coast, but initially there were no relations. Only when the klepo who occupied a middle role in European trade assisted them with guns and ammunition in one of their frequent disputes with the jrao, they allowed the klepo to settle in the agricultural town of Belakpo; today none of these sibs is found in Belakpo anymore, only in Chinakale and Sobebo. On the other hand, several gbeta sibs "sent their sons to the fishermen to learn deep sea fishing".¹³³ Those sibs which settled at the coast were taapo (now extinct in Big Fishtown), tekepo, jomapo and gmawunu.

The original pâtô of the Klepo in Fishtown (Picnicess) were:

original Kabor inhabitants

weslø (katø)

numeneo

pluka

nepepo

mawlepo (pusaa)

(of the latter 4 we do not know whether they were original or later settlers, they seem to have joined the klepo after settling with the siklio for some time)

later immigrants from Glebo

niapo

toao

tuèpo

wo

l'Afrique Occidentale, Paris, 1849; Alexandre Magno de Castilho, Descrição e roteiro da Costa Occidental de Africa, parte II, Lisboa, 1866

¹³² Ron Davis, The Kru Coast, mentions that Picanniny Cess was a haven for many of the Carbor Fishermen expelled from Nifu, Betu, Nana Kru and Blue Barre after 1915. President Howard ordered the Carbor of Nana Kru to resettle in the Gbeta Klepo Clan near Picnicess, probably taking into account information claiming that the Klepo originated from Picnicess

¹³³ information by Mr, Nyenati Wampru from Gbeta Klepo Fishtown

kept, among them the idols of 'gods' such as Jlopâ or Jlo Nyepâ and Fêtø, the latter a war idol. The wife of the bodio, is like elsewhere, considered the guardian of these medicines, particularly in case of war when she has to prevent the house from catching fire by pouring water on its roof. During town councils of the elders, ji sra serves as a general meeting hall. Meetings of the assembly of men, however, the gbo, are held in the house of the jugbedio.

Other offices connected with warfare were that of the ji kpam, i.e. "the leopard carries us", a man who made ultimate decisions concerning the beginning of war; he was probably a diviner who cast lots and asked the oracles.

The nyadio, the main warrior, known for his bravery and outstanding achievements in war. During the battle he has to step forward and attract the gunfire of the enemy; he was protected against bullets by particularly strong charms made by the 'doctors'. He was entitled to the head of each sacrificial animal slaughtered in town. These animals were butchered by the kpa ti che nyo, who distributes meat to the officers according to their rank.

The Kabor have a je cho, a 'moon seer', who announces each new moon (month) and the beginning of the farming season (when the 17th century say that they celebrate the new moon, this probably meant sacrifices and dances to propitiated the evil spirits for the coming month).

The gma serves as messenger, and receives for his services the best part of sacrifices or fishing results. The tè wulió, the speaker of the council and assembly, is like a court president, introducing the parties and making opening and closing statements. He can be chosen, like the bodio, from any pâtõ. (46)

The Kabor age-grade system had three major classes- wula kro ti, kafa and gbõ, however, without any subdivisions unlike that of Grand Cess.

At present, it is unclear how the political system functioned for the entire Kabor, as their settlements were strung along the coast and formed loose village-confederations. I suggest that in the seventeenth century a continuous chain of settlements extended from the Sanguin River to Nifu Point. For this argument I assume that the Zeguebos mentioned by the Portuguese (Pacheco Pereira) and the Quaabes mentioned by O. Dapper- were the ancestors of the Kabor, and that the Quaabe, defeated in the seven-teenth century, withdrew from the Cestos to the Sanguin. Such a hypothesis would explain the political unity implied in Dapper's remark that the "King of Sanguin controlled the coast and had in each place his representatives or deputies".¹³⁰

2. Gbeta-Klepo

Another group which claims that it originated on the coast aam the Kle-po i.e. 'fish(er)men'. Their traditions say that they left their home-area around Cape Palmas and migrated north-west along the coast because of recurrent wars at home. There, they first affiliated with the Kabor, with whom they settled around Grand and Picnicess - they also claim to have fought and expelled certain indigenous groups to that area: the Katø (also called weslø) who settled in the area later known by European sailors as Katu Point.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Olfert Dapper, *Nauwkeurige beschryvinghe der Afrikaenschen gewesten*, Moers, 1668, 427. translated from the Dutch by the author

¹³¹ *African Pilot, or Sailing Directions for the West Coast of Africa*, I, 1873; II, 1875, Dept. of State, Admiralty, Hydrographic Department; Edouard Bouët-Willlaumez, *Déscription nautique des côtes de*

and migration; it is assumed that these groups which are historically related and often have sibs and lineages in common are also similar in their political system which often evolved one from the other (by fission and segmentation).

The general system of a *dakø* with its constituent sibs and age classes as given for Grand Cess and the Grebo applies to most other *dakès*, too; the distribution and origin of the supreme political offices like those of *bodio* and *krøba* was just described above.

As the political system of Grand Cess seemed to be the most complex of those encountered in the Kru area and quite similar to that of the Glebo as described for the nineteenth century, we decided to take it as a starting point for the description of the institutions of other *dakès* which may conveniently be described with reference to Grand Cess.

1. Kabor

According to many oral traditions of the Kabor themselves, part of what forms the Kabor *dakø* today were original inhabitants of the area of Grand Cess and Picnicess; they were later expelled from these areas by immigrants from the south-east and the north-west, or partly absorbed by them. Those who left their original homeland seem to have settled in the area around the mouth of River Sanguin (*senk wehn*, *sangwoin*; *wê* in De or Bassa means 'on the bank of') and Rock Cess where they gradually superseded the resident coastal population. During the later part of the nineteenth century, some Kabor elements built some towns between Betu and Nifu, called *Krø sōkpø*, *Sampru kp ø* and *Batiè*. Other Kabor lineages had settled at Blubara Point (Sinoe or *s' no* River), Nana Kru and Nuon Point. At present, it is often difficult in many coastal settlements to distinguish the Kabor elements of Kibcw origin from the Gbeta-Klepo. In the so-called Fishtowns, settlements of mainly fishermen extending on the beach in front of the agricultural villages of other *dakè*, the two groups are often amalgamated on the basis of similar occupational specialization in fishing, canoeing and trading as middle-men between Europeans and Africans.¹²⁹

The Kabor *dakø* in the Rock Cess and Sanguin area consists of nine or ten *pâtè* represented in their main villages: *Belakpo*, *Jiratokpo*, *Bafu*, *Bamekpo*, *Korkpo*, *Wisebli*, *Matukpo*, *Panwen*, *Nibio*, *Kueabli*; their political system differs slightly from that of the *gbeta* and *siklio*. A list of *pâtō* and officers is given below:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>togbepo</i> | <i>krøba</i> |
| 2. <i>dagbè monapo</i> | |
| 3. <i>jibipo</i> | <i>jugbèdiø</i> |
| 4. <i>wononapo</i> | <i>gma</i> |
| 5. <i>dugbenapo</i> | <i>yande bodio</i> |
| 6. <i>depewulepo</i> | |
| 7. <i>wètèou</i> | |
| 8. <i>wulipo</i> | <i>gbøbi</i> |
| 9. <i>pluka</i> | <i>tugbewa</i> |

The highest ranking officer here seems to be the *kroba*; in regard to the *bodio* who was only referred to as 'field marshal', no mention was made of super-natural powers attributed to him. However, some informants mentioned that in his house - *ji sra* - the towns' medicines were

¹²⁹ cf. George Brooks, *The Kru Mariner*, Univ. of Delaware, 1971 who has compiled the sources on the Kruman-Fishman distinction.

A complementary hypothesis may be proposed for this phenomenon: for all those groups whose economy is based on agriculture ritual specialists concerned with the fertility of the soil, the benevolence of weather and the general integrity of the land and tribal territory, seem to be of highest importance. The bodio as peace-maker, guardian of spirits and guarantor of fertility was such a specialist. His role in warfare, for which some but not well documented evidence is given by the Troo, Toto and Butaw, seems quite inconsistent with the pattern emerging from the other Kru groups. Evidence for this differential importance and seniority attributed to the krøba and bodio offices comes from the pattern of role allocation prevailing among different groups: inheritance of the krøba title in particular patè, preferably the senior ones, prevails among the coastal groups such as Kabor, Klepo, Nuohn Point; but (The paper entitled 'Religion' should form no.2 of the present chapter)

unrestricted selection or rotation in several pātè prevails among the interior (*coastal?*) groups e.g. gbeta, sekelo, jrao, kra, wete, etc. The reverse pattern occurs for the bodio, inheritance in particular sibs, among the agricultural and territorial groups; rotation or unrestricted selection among the coastal fishing groups.

Assuming that special knowledge considered as crucial for group survival not only confers particular importance to those individuals or groups but is also believed to be vested in special groups, then the allocation of those roles in such a way that succession is immediate and almost automatic - i.e. by inheritance in a particular sib - while choice and election - which may take time - occur where immediate succession is not necessary or the knowledge required is less important. The fact that special knowledge and skills should be transmitted, increases the likelihood that these roles will be allocated within particular kin groups.

Where, however, individual skills and experience are primordial, while accumulated knowledge is considered secondary for the role fulfilment, role allocation will be more likely by choice or election. (e.g. war leadership).

We may say that the offices of bodio and jugbedio are allocated in the former way (inheritance) among the agricultural and territorial groups, since the knowledge required for the care of the idols, the manufacture of medicines, and the communication with the spirits all are crucial to the fertility of the crops, animals and women and ensure the survival and welfare of the tribe. This knowledge is more difficult each time to acquire by new individuals (from different groups) than stored and accumulated within a particular group.

The krøba office is allocated in this way among the coastal groups, because his skills - or governing large almost mercantile settlements - may likewise better be accumulated over generations in a particular group; whereas among the groups from the interior a village headman does not require much specialist - in particular ritual - knowledge, but is only rather a labor foreman.(44).

Chapter VI. Particular Political Systems

The following account of other political systems - about thirty out of approximately fifty to sixty traditional polities¹²⁷ - proceeds along the ethnic lines established in an earlier paper¹²⁸ there, certain clusters of dake were established on the basis of oral traditions of common origin

¹²⁷ cf. map II

¹²⁸ A.Massing, Socio-Political Systems of the Kru prior to their Integration onto the Liberian State, Paper read at the 4th Annual Conference on Social Science Research in Liberia, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1972

junior class of elders and warriors is symbolized through his insignia : a string of large fruit pit (bobu) worn over the iron anklet around his ankle (klobawitye).

The sources agree that despite the ceremonial importance assigned to the office, the krøba did not have much actual power. Mekeel says "his actual powers were much limited". Wesley stresses that he has no special authority over the people". Exception was made in war and during judicial councils.

Lynch reports about wars: the "worabank becomes commander-in-chief of the army" and Wesley that he becomes "a sort of generalissimo", during wars. Mekeel further mentions that his main duty was to maintain peace between Grand Cess and neighboring tribes, which probably means that a strong and powerful krøba did much to deter neighboring groups from attacking the town. Nowadays judicial cases are heard in his house (Fraenkel) and formerly he was always asked for a final decision in cases involving both the senior and junior council. Given the data from the other dakè it is disputable as Mekeel has done, to call his office a spiritual one and associate him with the priestly class. He is supposedly selected by supernatural authority, or at least approved by it, and can wield supernatural sanctions, but other functions are secular such as presiding and judging in councils and leading the army in wars.

Several groups, particularly in the hinterland of the 'five tribes' mentioned explicitly that they received the office of kløba only recently, either in response to influences from eastern groups or to the introduction of the Americo-Liberian rule: all the local chiefs installed under their rule are then referred to as krøba (42)

4._ Summary: The offices of bodio and krøba.

The main result of the cross-societal analysis of political hierarchies is the emergence of a crucial difference among Kru groups of coastal and those of interior origin regarding the importance of the offices of krøba and bodio.

Much of the evidence speaks for the following interpretation: those dakè which claim a coastal origin, particularly from the area around Cape Palmas, seem to attribute primary importance to the post of krøba which is their main political office. Those groups which migrated from the interior toward the coast and came under the influence of the former groups (e.g. wee, kraa, sekleo, gbetas, siton) adopted this officer often after consultation of their main oracle, while some of the interior groups (e.g. tatuoe, tarjuarzon, trøø etc.) still have not adopted the office at all.

An alternative hypothesis which takes account that such interior groups as jedepo, bølø, kwiatio, some sapo groups e.g. putu, nemøpø show this office might be, derived from a careful analysis of the traditions of origin and migration, associated with those Kra groups belonging to the so-called pã-group, which have the office, while all the others do not. (see my papers held at the Annual meetings of the Liberian Studies Association 1970 and 1972): This hypothesis seems, at present, to take full account of the distribution of the krøba office. It does not take into account, however, the records of later adoption by some of the groups belonging to the pa-section. It also does not explain the general distribution of the bodio office which is important among all agricultural groups but rather unimportant among the fishing groups.

Continually, drums were beaten and guns fired while messengers were sent out to the neighboring settlements to invite his relatives and his age-group members to the funeral. On the third day, the corpse was brought out into the open air and placed under a shelter. Here all of his personal belongings were displayed. Then, the members of his age-grade, all old warriors, performed a war dance around the body. They were dressed in war costume i.e. all types of phantastic and supposedly frightening pieces of dress - such as monkey skins, headdresses of bird feathers and beaks. This went on from about ten A.M. to 1 P.M. while guns were fired continually, in order to chase away evil spirits. Often a bullock is slaughtered by the head of the deceased; the blood is cooked and sprinkled over his personal belongings; the meat is distributed -to the officers and warriors of the gbo; a fowl with palm-oil and rice are likewise prepared as offerings at the dead man's grave.

Afterwards, the warriors carry the coffin with the corpse on their shoulders to the grave where part of the food has been deposited. The graveyards are situated mostly coconut and cocoa groves but, in the case of the coastal dakè, on off-shore islands. Here the body is entered in the sand or, before coffins were used, was placed under a turned-over canoe. Besides food offerings, pottery and other utensils belonging to the deceased's household are deposited. Flags, and nowadays paper stripes, are put up, of which the nineteenth century author says that they are the exclusive mark of honor for kings, chiefs and warriors. During the first nights, a fire is lit to keep the spirit of the deceased warm and formerly even chairs were put up to seat him. The burying of a man's personal belongings is believed to secure him respect and a status similar to that which he occupied in life before he entered the world of the spirits.

Some of the ritual practices surrounding the office of bodio were mentioned by informants from Jedei, Nyannon, Siton and Dreo during the collection of field material: the burial of the bodio always had to occur at night, and he had to be buried with the face turned down towards the ground and only covered with leaf. Whenever a leopard was killed, the bodio had to cry for his death; however, at the death of villagers he was forbidden to cry. The bodio was also forbidden to eat at night or take a bath. His election, mostly by force, also took place at nights and his particular duty was to make offerings to the spirits and idols during the nights of the appearance of the new moon preceding the farming season. (41)

the krøba.

There are fewer descriptions of this office. It seems that the krøba or. I.e. 'the town's father' was, in contrast to the bodio only a local Trather than a regional or pan-tribal authority. This is suggested by his name which in all sources is consistently translated as 'town's father'.

The few accounts we have are fairly consistent even though they refer to Grebo as well as Kru communities. In the former the title is wørába, in the latter it is krøba. His rank is slightly below or even equal to that of the bodio.

Connelly refers to him as 'governor' as opposed to the 'king'. In that he follows the adaptation of titles to English which the Kru adopted themselves. Johnston calls him 'perpetual prime minister or mayor of palace' (H.H. Johnston, Liberia, p.1073).

Along with the bodio, the krøba belonged to the class of senior officers as opposed to the officers of the commoners, or the gbø. Like the bodio he was mly installed after the oracle of Ki Jirople had been consulted. However, he was the nominal president of both councils, the jiwõ and the tugbedia (cf. Mekeel, 83). His intermediary position between the senior and the

But his people began to look at him with suspicion ... The truth is that they wanted to have a share in the earnings that the kings' sons brought home, and were jealous of his fortune.

This year there had been a great deal of rain and the rice crop was poor. So they declared that Yaba (the bodio A.M.) had witched the rice. For two days they quarreled; and on the third day I ... went over ... (and) found the people in a great rage, the warriors gathered together in council, and the king sitting in the door of his house looking very sad... They had accused him of witching the rice and making it rot, and were determined to give him sasswood or else drive him away from his home. They had taken the ring off his foot and had stripped him of everything he had in his houses. The bowls and plates had all been taken down, and they had even compelled his family to give up many things of their own in order to atone for the harm done to the rice by his witchcraft.

The people had already eaten a bullock and a goat and were now cooking a dinner of chicken soup, rice and vegetables. The warriors had been through the town and caught every fowl they could find that belonged to the king or to any of his relatives... These cruel people had taken her (the bodio's wife A.M.) cassadas for their dinner." ¹²⁴

The missionary was pleading and the bodio was eventually exiled rather than subjected to the poison ordeal, and was allowed to return some years later. Occasionally, a bodio or kroba, after being driven away, has even been reinstated after a number of years. ¹²⁵

According to Mekeel, the power to remove a bodio from office rests with the kroba, gbobi or the 'other priests', e.g. the kpatwa, je cho, tugbewa or jugbedio. It may happen that the next one chosen is worse than the one driven away, which gives rise to his reinstatement.

Accusations of witchcraft are levelled against anyone to rise above the average economic standard or gaining high prestige "when any new man began to acquire property and power and to wax strong, jealousy began to wake up in the hearts of the reigning kings and chiefs. Presently they would cast around some plausible lies to fasten on that man."¹²⁶ Witchcraft accusation seems to be a typical mechanism in egalitarian, segmentary lineage systems, designed to ensure equality. In pyramidal chiefdom systems, where lineages are unequal to begin with, the prestige of one man is, on the contrary, the pride of his subjects, and witchcraft accusations may be a mechanism to press claims among rivals.

Funeral ceremonies of chiefs are described variously in the African Repository, the journal of the African Colonization Society, the Liberian settlers' sponsoring agency: we are not certain whether the descriptions - speaking of 'chiefs' and 'kings' - refer to kroba or bodio.

The funeral described below began on the third day after the death of the man in question.(40) Previously, all the women related to the deceased had been called and performed a ritual mourning: rolling in the sand, tearing up their hair and making lamentations. During the three days mourning period the dead body had been laid in state in his house, naked but painted with white chalk.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, 92-95

¹²⁵ mentioned for example for the 'king' of Grand Cess, Nyaffar, by W. and M. Williams, *Adventures with the Krus in West Africa*, 1935, 22-23

¹²⁶ *ibid.* 21

diseases were explained by witchcraft on the bodio's part, or rather by his incapacity to fight the evil spirits which cause these.

Among his duties is to take care of the idols, feeding and asking them for the fertility of the crops and the women; at each new moon, sacrifices of boiled rice and palm oil were in order; special sacrifices consisting of chickens, goats or even bullocks, had to be made to placate the spirits in case of epidemics. He was the first to give the signal to the planting, fishing and harvest season after

(38)receiving information about the rising of the new moon. He had to keep in touch with the local and inter-tribal oracles and send delegations to them which carried sacrifices. In his house the sacred Ji-w^o where an eternal fire and all the dako-idols including the sacred brass-bells are kept, has always to remain open and either he or his wife, the ji-de i.e.'leopard's mother' have to attend the fire continuously. Within the house, the bodio has to abstain from sexual relations in order not to pollute the idols; his and his wife's common food taboo prohibits the eating of leopard meat.

Agnes McAllister living in Garaway, a settlement between Kru and Grebo, at the end of the last century, reports the enthronization of a young man whose father had been the previous bodio. All the chiefs met in council to discuss their choice; after that they consulted a diviner or 'devil-doctor' presenting him their candidate. When the diviner had approved of their selection and given him several new idols and charms, they were sent home.

In the following night, some of the principal elders and officers went to the candidate's house and told him and his wife to come with them to the village; they were both led on a secret path to the old bodio's house.¹²³ Gradually, all the relatives of the new bodio who had lived somewhat out of town, moved into town and settled next to him.

Through the manipulations of the 'devil-doctors', the bodio was in constant danger to be removed from office and even subject to a fatal poison-ordeal: witchcraft accusations or alleged advices of an oracle may serve as expression of popular discontent with the effectiveness of the bodio or as a disguise for the aspirations of other men to office and prestige. Often also the community reacted against the accumulation of power or wealth by particular officers and other individuals, by accusing them of witchcraft and either destroying or redistributing their property when they had been found guilty. Thus, the norm to share with one's townspeople was rigidly enforced and not even bodios escaped it.

McAllister reports further particular instances where the 'king' - I assume the bodio - of the Po-River towns (Wedabo), who was one of the men of outstanding wealth which he had earned in employment in other parts of West Africa was subjected to an ordeal by poison.

"The king of our neighboring tribe, the Po River people, was an enterprising man, who had been down the coast and seen more of civilization than most of his subjects. He had a large family of sons, who were often away from home with the traders, and would bring back to their father cloth, powder, fire arms, rum and numbers of plates and bowls... This king of (39) Po River, instead of wasting the money his sons brought home, put it carefully away ... and his quarter of the town began to assume a greatly improved appearance.

¹²³ Agnes McAllister, *A Lone Woman in Africa*, New York, 1895, 89-91

Anna F.Scott presumably following Bishop J.Payne, clearly distinguishes

"the bodiâ or high priest, who is a prince as well as a priest" from other Grebo dignitaries: he "lives in an anointed house" which differs from the other houses "provided by his people. To his care are entrusted the town gree-grees or idols, by him are offered up the sacrifices; and to his house.....criminals flee for protection and from it no one can be taken without his sanction. His people are bound to provide him with the best of food: but on the other hand he is subjected to many painful restrictions; one of the most foolish and inconvenient is that which prohibits the Bodia from tasting food in the town while a dead body is lying there. He is not allowed to become intoxicated on any occasion, or to mourn the death of any of his people.¹¹⁸ The office is hereditary and the badge, an iron ring worn on the ankle, is re-garded with much veneration by the people. It is a post of great danger from the fact that his people expect him to insure them success in all their undertakings; and when misfortunes overtake them he is regarded as the author and frequently loses his life by the dreaded gidu ordeal."¹¹⁹ (37)

One such ordeal concerning the bodiâ of the Cavalla towns following witchcraft accusation is described by Anna Scott (see chapter on religion).

On account of the many taboos surrounding the office, it was not desired by anyone and successors were often forcibly installed by the other officers, who capture in his sleep someone related to the old bodio, and put the badge of office on him during the night still.¹²⁰

Payne reported that the bodia and two other officers, the ibadia and tibawa were appointed by an ancient oracle consulted prior to selection. This probably refers to one o the Grebo oracles, presumably Bledé Nyema on a rock in the Cavalla river, near Blieron. He reports the installation process for a bodia

"sacrifice of a goat to the Kui (spirits) whose blood is sprinkled around and inside the door posts of the Bodia's house. The bodia is shaven and clad in a new garment, has a tiger's tooth around his head, has a monkey skin prepared to be placed beneath him when he sits, and he is anointed."¹²¹

Therefore his house is called ta kai, 'the anointed house', or also ji wô, 'the leopard's mouth'.

"During the ceremony the patriarchs of the several families in order give the bodia-elect their respective charges: 'let trade be active, cause the earth to bring forth abundantly, let health prevail, drive war far away, let witchcraft bbe kept in abeyance' etc."¹²²

The restrictions of this office attracted the attention of the missionaries:

the bodia could not sleep outside his house, he was not supposed to work on a farm or leave the tribal land; he was not to drink water while walking on a road; and he should be buried secretly at night before informing the public of his death.

If they died of a natural death, all Grebo bodias were to be buried on the island off Cape Palmas (Russwurm Island) - and probably all Grand Cess bodios on the island in the Grand Cess harbor. If they were killed, for example by ordeal, they were to be buried under running water. Misfortunes befalling the tribe e.g. bad harvests, bad fishing season, defeat in war,

¹¹⁸ Anna F. Scott, Day Dawn in Africa, 1858, 53

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ Anna F. Scott, Glimpses of Life in Africa, n.d./1857/, 16

¹²¹ Payne quoted in A.F.Scott, Day Dawn in Africa, 54-58

¹²² *ibid.*

Grand Cess had two, one called bulu bo, for the higher officials, and one for the lineage heads and the general assembly of men. The krokonyo, kroba, bodio, gbobi, gbowulio, wulio, gma and kpatwa were members of the first one, which meets in ji-wó, the bodio's house, situated behind the lower court in the center of town. The assembly meets in tugbedia, presided by the gbobi, tugbewa, jugbedio, gbowulio, wulio and gma. Some informants also mention the 12 eldest women of the sibs as members of the tugbedia.

Both councils have somewhat different spheres of jurisdiction. (36)

Chapter V. Offices of General occurrence Among Kru Polities

1. The Bodio

Since this is an office of general importance among all the Kru and Grebo dakè, apart from that of Grand Cess alone, the similarities and variations of the role within the various dakè shall be described here. An understanding of traditional religion is necessary to understand this role.

Some of the nineteenth-century missionary sources make mention of special rituals surrounding the bodio, who is always referred to as either 'king' or 'chief' (the missionaries did not consistently apply these terms to the bodio but sometimes also to the krobas. Often, however, the context of their description makes it clear that they referred to the bodio).

Dr. Savage, missionary at Cape Palmas, describes the funeral ceremony of Seah, successor of the present 'king' of the Greboes which took place in 1838.¹¹⁷ He mentions a recent change in custom, namely that Seah was only the third king to be buried in a coffin whereas former 'kings' were all buried under canoes on Russwurm Island off the Cape. His description, however, is ambiguous as to the function which the deceased person occupied.

¹¹⁷ "Journal of the Rev.H.Scott: Funeral of an African Chief", African Repository, Aug.1855, 243 ff. describes the funeral of king Weir of the Cavalla towns which took 3 days after death. All the women related to the deceased were called to perform a ritual mourning: rolling in the sand, tearing the hair, and crying. During that the body of the deceased is painted in white and laid out in state naked in his house. Drums are beaten and guns fires while messengers are sent to the neighbouring villages to call relatives and age-group mates. On the third day, the corpse is taken from the house and placed under a pavilion covered with coconut leaves. All his personal belongings are displayed around him. Then the members of the gbo in war dress perform a war dance, dressed in animal skins, with feathered head-dresses and horns, lasting from 10 AM till midday while firing guns continuously to prevent the evil spirits to take possession of the corpse. Then the dignitaries address the deceased chief. A bullock is slaughtered and the blood boiled and sprinkled over the coffin; the meat is then distributed to the officials and gbo warriors; similarly fowls and rice are prepared. Then the corpse is placed in a coffin (this most likely a Western innovation), and carried on the warriors's shoulders toward the grave. The graveyards were located for the coastal tribes on small offshore islands, but for the others are found at the outskirts of the village. Here a shallow trench is dug in the sand and the body (or coffin) is then lowered down. Before the arrival of the Americo Liberians, and coffins, old canoes were turned upside down and placed over the grave. By the grave, pottery, crockery, bottles, and other household items are placed along with food items, to allow the spirit of the deceased to 'eat and drink.' Flags are put up as marks of honor for chiefs and warriors. A fire is kept on during the first days in order to keep away evil spirits, and chairs are put out for him 'to sit down'. It is believed that the display of personal property increases his status and the respect by the other spirits when he enters their world.(i.e. the spirit world is a world of distinctions for the Kru).

3. The tugbewa, in contrast to the bodio, was in charge of protecting the rear of the army.¹¹⁵ The gbobi chooses him from jurepo and , at his death, replaces him with the next oldest man.

The tugbewa is the last of the soldiers to leave town - and the first to return after battle (according to Herskovits), and anyone passing after him is believed to get killed in battle. Today he occupies the last place in the line of war dancers and enters the tugbedia last.

During battle he keeps the record of wounded or fallen soldiers, as he did at the initiation of his age grade, by keeping the bag with palm-kernels (ta or tawa), filled at the time of initiation. It is said that he keeps this bag with him all the time and even uses it as pillow at night; each time a warrior is killed, the tugbewa takes out a seed and informs the gbobi. Before a man's death, it is believed, his palm-kernel will crack and thus inform the tugbewa about imminent death.

Tugbewa himself does not enter battle but remains in a safe, elevated place near the sacred town drums (tu-ku) in order to watch the battle. He has to defend himself with a sharp knife (su-kpè) against enemies, since the enemy will be able to roll up the battle from the rear, if he is killed. He therefore is near the drums which he will beat, when the enemy approaches him. They have to replace him immediately in case of his death, with a member from his sib or his sister's son (nowlo ju).

4. The Gbo wulio (Mekeel: Bowlio, Fraenkel: gbawwulio) serves as interpreter and speaker for the officials in ji-wô, and as speaker in tugbedia. Formerly, he could only be selected from the weslo sib; when this became extinct, they choose him from gmapo.

He conducts all court cases, leads public debates in the two assemblies and begins and concludes speeches. He has a stick, bati tu, as insignia with which he summarizes arguments by pounding on the ground exclaiming: (35)

'batina?', "do you agree"; whereupon the council members should answer 'bati', i.e. we agree". He will speak last in the debate thereby rendering the final sentence and dismissing the assembly; anyone daring to speak after him risks a heavy fine.

5. Some minor officials are the drummer (bla woli) who calls the men to the assembly by beating on a drum which consists of a hollowed out log which is placed horizontally and possesses two 'lips' to each side of the slot, one of which makes a higher, the other a lower sound. The drum is called wulé and accompanies the kafa and gbo during public work in town or on farms.

The town crier, wulió or wisayo (Mekeel) is selected by the gbobi from either klepo or nimeneo, alternating each year with presenting the incumbent. He announces messages to the towns, upon instruction from the high officials. He is excused from participation in public works, since his job is a public one. In Grand Cess, he is also held responsible for the apportioning of sacrifices, animals which he divides among sibs and officers.

The public assemblies or 'Councils'.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Herskovits and Tagbe, "Kru Proverbs", J.American Folklore, 43 no.169 (1930), 290 assert that the tugbewa also checks that no warrior remains behind during the battle or flees to the enemy during or after. They explain his title 'tugbewa', as 'the one who breaks a branch from a tree'.

¹¹⁶ Mekeel distinguishes 'government council' and 'high court' for judgments, *ibid.*

In the late morning, the warriors take the dead body, which today is often laid in state inside his house, and carry him to the graveyard at the edge of town where he is buried. Mekeel mentions a particular group within the gbø which my informants did not mention.

- the di-klau - (probably di-klø i.e. 'spears of town' A.Massing) - a group of six warriors chosen by the elders and the bobi, who have a prominent voice in tugbedia and gather intelligence in war time, such as determining the location of the enemy's army and carrying messages from the bobi to the front line .¹¹¹

The officers associated with the gbø are the gbøbi i.e. 'father of army', the jugbedio i.e. 'face eater', tugbewa, 'rear side', and, probably, the gbø wulio, i.e. army speaker'.

1. The gbøbi seems to be the patron or leader of the warrior age grade, similar to the sponsors of the younger boys' groups. Leader of the gbø in peace time, he acts as the representative of the whole group towards the other officials; he is selected by the krøba from any sib, except that of the krøkønyø (and according to Fraenkel krøba himself) - and must belong to a younger age-grade than the krøba himself.¹¹²

Together, with the tugbewa the gbøbi controls the warriors and in Grand Cess acts as second to the kroba. As the gbø has co-operative functions, the gbøbi supervises all public works carried out in town and is approached by anyone desiring to obtain labor from the gbø. He appoints the minor officials, and has to give his placet if the community intends to exile either kroba or bodio.

The gbøbi of Grand Cess is superior to that of the neighboring Matiye with its own gbøbi and tugbeja

2. The jugbedio (Mekeel: Dugbedion) who is referred to by Mekeel as 'low court priest', can be chosen from any of the three sub-divisions of niapo pātō. In case of war, the gbøbi hands over to him the command of the gbø; Kru often refer to him as 'general' as opposed to minor war leaders, bio. He is supposed to always fight in the front line and face the enemy whence his name. (34)

He is not supposed to turn back and retreat. Mekeel's assumption that he is a priest may be coming from his informant's report that the jugbedio's "special function is to keep the army in rapport with the supernatural powers."¹¹³ and that he had to care for an idol called pompan.¹¹⁴ My informants reported that he had to care for the lesser gods i.e. some idols one of whom was referred to as pèpâ, a 'war god'. His role was to inform the jugbedio about the war plans of other tribes; he was knept in the jugbedio's rather than the bodio's house wher the other idols were kept.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² Mekeel states that he is elected by the elders but must have the approval of the kloba. As badge of office he wears a similar anklet as the kloba but smaller around his foot. Mekeel, X (1937), 84

¹¹³ *ibid.*87

¹¹⁴ cf. the chapter on Religion

Table III

Date	Source Nyaa ¹⁰⁹	Hayden
		kønø gbø gbeta gbø pi wijla gbø I
1739?	ni fa gbø	
1756?	ni gbø "time of rain"	to
1793?	tø "time of war"	nifa
1822	ji "leopards"	sakro I
1839	sa pi "controllers of guns"	ji
1856	Sakro "free us from oppression"	sapi
1873	nyøsjl "men who nobody likes"	nyøsjlè " I
1890	weJila "cleared the Wedabo people"	wijla' II
1907	wø kwia "ended all suffering"	wøkwiye
1924	j ira tø "ended the war"	jla tø "
(acc. to Fraenkel:1916)		
1946	sakro II	sakro II 1950
(acc to Fraenkel 1950)		
1970		nyøsjlè II 1970

Surprisingly the intervals between two initiations, with the exception of the first and the last two initiations are consistently sixteen years, with an average of nineteen years. If we project back this average interval for the twelve - or Hayden's fifteen groups - we arrive in the year 1742, for the beginning of this list (or 1685 for Hayden); taking the most frequent interval of sixteen years, the list starts in the Year 1778, or 1730 for Hayden. The Kru themselves counted years by referring to the number of years passed since the initiation of the last Gbo.

Mekeel mentions some of the duties which were carried out, alternately by the two groups - bobi's and tugbewa's group - each year: "they repair or construct government buildings (for example, the bodio's house in, one day, A.Massing) carry out court sentences, collect fines, help harvest crops of individuals guard property and, in fact, do anything the government may see fit to order them to do."¹¹⁰

All members of the gbo constitute the assembly of adult men which meets in tugbe-ja by Mekeel referred to as the 'lower court', with the assistance of the sib-elders, the kðu-bu under the presidency of the gbøbi . (33) At the death of one of Its members, his gbø has to perform war dances in the morning of the burial all members dress in fantastic costumes, cover their body with leaves and vines, paint their face and take their spears or guns. Led by the je kpone gbø and followed by the tugbeva, they form a long line in front of the deceased's house; then they divide into two lines equally dividing the space in front of the house which they cross each time after having danced around the house. In the open space before the house a woman or man symboling a dead leopard, the leopard itself being a symbol for the dead warrior, lays down on the ground while another woman representing the ji-di i.e. leopard's mother' mourns and cries for the warrior jumping across his body with all the warriors following her.

¹⁰⁹ the first groups of Nyaa's list have different dates assigned with a gap of one hundred years to later groups

¹¹⁰ Mekeel, "Social Administration of the Kru," Africa XII (1939), 462

The Je kpone gbø is the man who initiates: he can tell the elders that he wants to be the leader and is appointed, after consultation by the elders with the medicine men (gbø ta nyø), who prepare medicine to ensure a successful initiation.

According to my informants, the Je kpone gbø is only the first boy initiated. At five o'clock in the morning of initiation day, the gbø ta nyø and 3 elders will knock at his door and present him with some medicine to rub across his eyes. Immediately after that he runs into town exclaiming "Mother, I have grown up and become a soldier".

Then they move on to the houses of the other initiates, rub the medicine on their forehead and do as their leader. For 4 to 5 days the boys do not return home but sleep outdoors in a naked state to show that they are capable of enduring cold. During that time each citizen has to give them food voluntarily as soon as they come to his door.

(31), To indicate that they are not present in their homes, the initiates place a branch from a certain tree (fuka) on the roof of their mother's house. In 1970, the initiation was announced at the morning of Sept.21 by the elders' drumming. The young men concerned were asked to bring with them some loin cloth to cover with during the next days. At the palaver yard, tugbeja "The Che Gbone Gbo anointed each initiate with a mixture of burned, dried snake skin and palm oil blessed by the high priest. First, they were anointed on the forehead, then the cheeks, nose, chest, shoulders and then the back. After this they were presented with a kle.¹⁰⁷ Following this, they were told the rules they were to obey during the initiation period."¹⁰⁸

Every day, they practised dancing war dances; in the evening they were sent to cut firewood for a large fire in tugbeja around which they slept during the night. On the morning of the fifth day, according to Hayden the sixth, the elders accompanied the gbo to the rock at the waterside (Ni-gbei) of Nuon-gba (Grand Cess River) called 'kete-le søbø i.e. 'haircutting rock', and shaved their hair; they also were washed from top to bottom, which symbolizes a new birth. According to Hayden, they also throw their loin cloths into the river in order to prevent non-initiates from death as a result of contact with the powerful medicine on the cloth.

After that day war dances are practised, theoretically for eight days but seemingly much longer in reality since Hayden states that, from Sept.27 until Oct. 11 daily practice was observed. Logs of five feet height were built up in tugbeja to form a circle into which the Initiates have to jump by crossing the logs. Whoever fails in that suffers a loss of prestige, and his family or sib have to pay a fine.

During this time, the initiates are invited by members of other sibs, mainly those of their mother, their father's mother and their sister's children -often a fictive relationship of mother's brother - sister's son is constructed between certain patō - who cook for them and present them with new clothes. After these days, eight more days are devoted to a display of the new clothes to the villagers particularly marriageable girls, and to the arrangement of marriage contracts.

At present, it is not clear, at what time formerly the war campaigns which gave often name to the new gbø, was started. These names distinguish the successive gbø sets with living members. Since the theoretical interval of twelve years for successive initiations is rarely maintained, the gbø lists are as unreliable an instrument for the computation of the age of the settlement of Grand Cess as are the kroba-lists. The dates given in the following list, which corresponds well with Hayden's list, are therefore only approximations.

¹⁰⁷ a crescent-shaped bell, *ibid.*, 5

¹⁰⁸ for example, not to enter any house during war patrols, not to speak or have contact with women, nor to bathe oneself, *ibid.*, 6

which applies equally to the bobi's division as to that of the priest. The name is chosen by some event of the times or by the name of the season in which the soldiers were anointed."¹⁰²

I will contrast here my Informants statements¹⁰³ with a recent report by Hayden on the initiation of an age-grade in 1970 in Grand Cess, more than twenty years after the last initiation took place.¹⁰⁴

The krokonyo who keeps records about births and deaths in the town, and the ages of all boys, informs the other officials that a certain number of boys has reached initiation age and should enter the gbø. Thereupon officers and sib-elders (pãntõ nyè-fuè) have a meeting in ji-wõ where they decide on a date for the initiation, which is kept secret. This is to prevent, according to Hayden, others from attacking the town while the gbø is in session: "even the young members who participated in the Gbo did not know the date of the Gba until they actually heard the beating of drums and the rattling of the kle (a crescent-shaped rattle) on the very day of the opening of the Gbo."¹⁰⁵

- 30 -

The panton nyefue (pãtõ nyèfuè) inform the eligible members of their sibs as well as the officials responsible about the expected number of boys entering the gbø; only eight members from each pãtõ are permitted for initiation, if there are less applicants, some boys younger than 21 years are taken from the kpé; if there are more boys eligible, they will be initiated at a later date.

For Grand Cess this would amount to 104 or 112 initiands, according to the number of pãtõ one wishes to count. However, according to Hayden, about 190 members participated in 1970, out of a total of 1013 eligible, but who only participated vicariously. Members in distant towns such as Monrovia, Accra or Lagos were contacted and asked to participate by turning in their names. They were each represented by a palm-nut in the bag of the high-priest (bodio?).

"The pãtê nyèfuè gave the high priest fifty cents for every member who made the Gbo",¹⁰⁶ a substitute for rice and chicken, the traditional 'fees'. These and the money were distributed among those constituting the new gbø.

After the exact number of new gbø members was known, the date of the initiation was planned, a time at which food should be abundant. In the past therefore, a date was set at least two years in advance in order for each sib to have sufficient food available to prepare for the celebration. After that, the 'native doctors' from tuniepo were consulted and asked to prophesize how many boys would die during the initiation or the war following it. If this number was considered too high, the date would be postponed. Otherwise the date would be fixed after the harvest. To determine the leader of the gbø, called Je kpone gbø (Che Gbone Gbo, according to Hayden), the lot was cast.

¹⁰² Mekeel, "Social Administration of the Kru", Africa, XII (1939), 461

¹⁰³ Mr. Timothy Nyaa, Rev. Thomas Moffat, Rev. Kra Juwle, interviewed in spring 1969

¹⁰⁴ T. Hayden, Significance of the Grand Cess Gbo, 1972

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 4

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 5

- kafa which includes young men from ages sixteen to twenty; this is a para- military organization in which young men are trained for warfare and communal hunting; during war, the duties of its members were to accompany the warriors to the battles, bring them ammunition and carry dead or wounded warriors from the battleground. They had to guard the town itself against raids by the enemy and fire thrown into the town. In peace time they had to clear the roads e.g. that from Grand Cess to Matiye, clean the town and build bridges across the surrounding brooks. One of our informants further subdivided the kafa into three groups:⁹⁹

jø	16 to 17 years
kaa çe	18 to 19 years
kpi	20 years and above.

Each of these groups was said to choose a leader or 'patron' called 'bi' i.e. 'father' who represents it to the community if, for instance, any of its members becomes involved in a quarrel with other persons. The leader receives the labor of the members of his group in farm work, particularly during brushing time. Furthermore, all of these groups are called together to perform festive farm labor for the kroba. The teaching of specific tasks required from the members of the group was usually done by the next older group. Thus, the kafa members were prepared for their military duties by the group of the warriors, the gbø.¹⁰⁰

Mekeel suggested that only this group is organized on a dakø level while the kafa is organized at village-level only, and the other groups at sib-level only. (29)

A formal initiation occurs into the gbø, in theory every twelve years; in reality, however, it seems that the occasion is much less frequent (see Table III). As a member of the gbø a man obtains the full status of citizen and warrior with the right to speak in the meetings of the adult men in tugbedia and to participate fully in public affairs.

"The initiation period seems to have lasted for about a week during which time the young men slept outside the town and came... to the town daily for food. Each brought a plate, which he placed outside the door of any relative but he might not enter the house." (it) ended with a ceremonial dance, and traditionally, a now gbau was expected to show its spirit by making war."¹⁰¹

Mekeel remarks that certain groups of boys (fubo) are sponsored at the next initiation by an adult man (fubo-bi), who supplies meat and rice at the festival to be held.). At initiation day, the boys "to be anointed line up and pass slowly underneath a stick held horizontally by the tugbewa at one end and by the bobi at the other. As they go under, the bobi announces the name of each individual. After passing under, the pairs divide - one individual turning to the right, the other to the left so that finally both the bobi and the priest (Mekeel means the tugbewa, A.M.) have an equal division of men standing behind them. Ever after, these soldiers have as their leader the man behind whom they stood after being anointed. For six days after this ceremony the new soldiers may not sleep or bathe or eat in a house. There are special regulations in regard to food habits during this period. On the seventh day they bathe at home, put on a fine dress and may eat inside. Also on this day they go to dance in low court both in the morning and evening.... These new soldiers as an age group are given a definite name

⁹⁹ according to Mr. Timothy Nyaa, oral information

¹⁰⁰ the spellings gbø or bo are used interchangeably with most Kru groups

¹⁰¹ Merriam Fraenkel, "Social Change at the Kru Coast", Africa XXXVI, (1964), 158-59

assists the bodio in certain of his functions such as heading the peace-delegation and dedicating the peace covenant to the Gods.

After homicide committed in town, the kpatwa has to free it from the pollution by leading a young goat through the town which is later sacrificed. Mekeel's informant reports that the kpatwa receives his office after he has served as Moin (nma i.e messenger) for several years. Then he is elected by the high court as a successor for the previous kpatwa and anointed in ji-wõ.

Mekeel sheds light on a very interesting fact without, however, being able to assess the significance of his finding - i.e. the relation of the Kru dakè to the oracle of Ki Jiropleh on Mt. Gedeh. He describes the composition of the delegation sent to the oracle for advice in important matters such as the selection or confirmation of a new krøba or bodio.⁹⁴ It consists of six men, each from a different sib and is headed by the Moin.⁹⁵ He is appointed by the gbøbi, the peace-time leader of the warriors, while the other five men are selected by the Moin himself. (On the basis of accounts from other dakø, I assume that they belong to a class of trained 'doctors' or medicine-men, the jidio or daabo. The commission sent out to determine a new kroba or bodio is sent to Ki Jirøplè. (Mekeel's kiglopi) the Kru god " who sends an iron ring with a fruit pit as a sign of recognition, likewise to the bodio and gbøbi.⁹⁶

Elsewhere Mekeel says that the commission was sent to the Kavali (Cavalla River), to the god bleye-pi and his priest Kantiye⁹⁷. In fact, another, widely known oracle was located among the Glebo at Dodolu, one half mile from the mouth of the Cavalla River, called bede nye pi (po standing for the pl. of -pi) or Bidi Nyema.

(38)

Before the roles of other officers can be discussed mention must be made of Kru age grade organization; the system of male age-grades seems to have been more complex than among other Kru dakè due to the large population. It consists of four main grades which are further subdivided

- wula krø-ti - 'the children about the town' wla kladi)

these are boys between the ages of seven and fourteen who are given small taslto such as carrying messages or cleaning up in town. The term refers to all the boys of that age rather than to a certain corporate group. When older, they are initiated, according to Fraenkel individually, into the

jira ka gbo -(Mekeel: glakapo) of twelve to fifteen years of age (seven to twelve, according to Fraenkel, and fourteen to seventeen, according to Hayden.⁹⁸ ' They are helpers in community tasks such as cleaning public places and carrying loads. They graduate into

⁹⁴ or decisions about war and peace, about sacrifices in case of famine and epidemics, and removal of officers, deemed responsible for failure

⁹⁵ 'Nma' or 'moin', i.e. 'messenger' is the generic term applied to men on special missions; Mekeel mentions there are groups of six men sent on missions who are all called 'namO

⁹⁶ Mekeel, Social Administration of the Kru, Africa X (1937), 82

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p.87, footnote 1

⁹⁸ Rev. Tom Hayden, "The Significance of the Grand Cess Gbo of 1970", paper read at the 4th Annual Conference on Social Science Research on Liberia, 1972 Kalamazoo, W. Mich. University

not allowed to leave the dakø or travel to another dakø. Since all contacts with foreigners are considered as detrimental to the society, he was chosen among those who had no contact with white civilization and cannot speak any other language than Kru (Mekeel, 86). Likewise contact with dead persons is forbidden to him i.e. he is not supposed to see the bodies of deceased tribesmen or -women. In theory, he is expected to look after the property of villagers while they are absent from the dako, and to reconcile quarreling couples (Mekeel,). According to my informants, he is the official host to strangers when they enter his land and the first person they have to contact. As a compensation for the restrictions imposed on his free movement, which prevented him from travelling, abroad and earning an income in European service, as was the practice of many young male Kru, he is entitled to a share of the income earned by Kru mariners and laborers abroad.

The krokonyo was responsible for the sacred objects and medicines guaranteeing the welfare of the tribe; these objects had to be removed from the section where he resided in case of death, lest they become polluted and ineffective; therefore informants from Grand Cess reported that the office was shared by two persons, one in the upper and one in the lower section of tuao. In case of death of one krokonyo or any other person in his section, the objects are removed to the other section; in case of simultaneous death in both sections they were brought to the sacred ji-won, the louse of the bodio.

Other offices mentioned by Mekeel among the priesthood are besides the bliyo (bodio) and klokonyon, that of the Dugbedion (jugbedio), Tugbebwa (tugbewa) and Djechau (je cho), and the Moin (gma) or Kpatwa. According to Fraenkel and our informants, Jugbedio and tugbewa can hardly be called priests, not even priests of the lower court as Mekeel suggests; they are officials within the class of warriors (gbo), and occur among most other Kru groups. The office of Je-cho i.e. 'moon-seer' is vested in lower klepo, the duty of its incumbent was to announce the beginning of a new moon and determine the start of certain seasons in the farming cycle e.g. Co brushing, planting, harvesting. Some days before the announcement, he lits a fire in tugbedia, the general meeting place for all adult men, and calls on the tugbewa, the officer in charge of this place, to inform the population of the coming event. Reference to this seems to be made in Ruyter's account of 1623, when he reports: "... and they celebrate the new moon: they have a (27) round dance and dance to the music, with which they have instruments, made from the stem of a palmtree, three and two feet long hollowed out, over which they have drawn a calf-hide, on which they beat with a stick in their hand."⁹³ Before this day and on this day no person is supposed to do farmwork lest he will call forth the destruction of his crops. According to Fraenkel it is the Je-cho, who is responsible for the tugbedia, meeting place.

At a person's death, the Je-cho, like the kløkønyø, has to observe certain taboos: he cannot eat and talk and has to lie flat on his face until the dead's body is buried; violation of this taboo will supposedly deprive him of his knowledge.

Mekeel reports another 'priestly' office, probably that of a diviner, that of the Kpatwa i.e. 'holy man' or Moin (nma) who is appointed by the gbobi for being responsible for the cleanliness of the two courts, especially at the beginning of a new moon. Besides he has to beat the drums to call for sessions of the 'high court' i.e. Ji-wō, deliver messages to the bodio; after wars, he

⁹³ D.Ruyters, *Toortse de Zeevaart*, Amsterdam, 1623 ed. by H.Naber, 1913; also Olfert Dapper, *Nauwkeurige Beschryvinghe*, 1668, 427, and S.Brun, *Schiffarten*, 1624

secular offices; on one hand, a priestly king and a priesthood and on the other hand, the army and a subsidiary secular chief. However, there is no Institutionalized and organized 'church' in Kru society which would justify the term 'priesthood' nor the sharp division between religious and secular offices. Sacred and secular aspects are part of most leadership roles and offices, some being more linked with supernatural forces than others. This however, varies itself with different Kru groups.

Only the krøba i.e. 'father of town' - Mekeel's 'King' - and the bodio - Mekeel's 'High Priest' ⁸⁹ - were appointed after consultation with the central Kru oracle, that of Ki Jirøplè (Mekeel's Ki glopi) on Mt.Gedeh in the Putu region ⁹⁰; all the other officials were selected and appointed either by one of these higher officials or by one of the councils.

Repeatedly, it was mentioned by informants that the office of Krøba the secular leader of a settlement, was not a Kru office ⁹¹ but was introduced by Grebo immigrants from the east. If we link this information to one of the later waves of Immigration into Grand Cess by Grebo immigrants, we may have here a solution to one of the problems encountered in establishing the origin of the settlement of Grand Cess.

Davis ⁹² found a discrepancy of about 200 years between the date he computed for the establishment of Grand Cess on the basis of krøba lists and early European -references to Grand Cess around 1600. The office of krøba may have been introduced at a later time, therefore krøba lists only date back as far as the eighteenth century; informants mentioned the office of bodio as the only traditional offices brought along by the immigrants which could be conceived as that of a 'supreme ruler'.

Interestingly enough, the bodio's office is vested in the niapø sib which is considered as the oldest immigrant group settling in Sikli, the first town of the siklipo, situated north-west of the present Grand Cess. The sib which arrived first from Sikli at the coast and took possession of the present land was, according to mythical traditions, tuao; accordingly it holds an office symbolizing the ritual ownership of the tribal lands, that of the krø kø nyø i.e. 'townholding-man'. (Fraenkel's klokonyon or kolo koniong). Mekeel lists this office among the 'priesthood'. Contrary to Fraenkel's belief, this office is not 'quite unknown' to other Kru dakè but occurs elsewhere.(26)

In Grand Cess, this office has the following ritual obligations: as nominal owner of all land its incumbent is expected to be familiar with the town's history especially the distribution of titles to land among the different sibs and has to mediate in any disputes arising over land within the dakø(Fraenkel,160). As a person on whom the well-being of the land in general depends, he is

⁸⁹ Even though Mekeel does not mention Kru terms for titles, we conclude that his 'king' or 'chief' corresponds to the **krøba** and 'high priest' to the **bodio** or **bliyo**.

⁹⁰ the oracle was located on Mount Jede (or Gedeh in Liberian administrative spelling), the highest mountain in the interior, a place surrounded by myth (such as the secret of iron smelting), and deemed the mythical place of origin of all Kru tribes. There are several accounts that regular delegations were sent to the oracle of **Ki Jirople**, a spirit, to consult it in matters of selection a new leader, **bodio** or **krøba**. Mekeel implies that the choice is known in advance to the major officials and that the delegation is sent only to obtain the supernatural sanction for the person-elect. However, even such a 'sacred' person may later be subjected to witchcraft accusations, to sasswood ordeal and deposition.

⁹¹ Kru here in the sense of the 19th century 'Krumen', as opposed to 'Fishmen' (Kabor and Klepo)

⁹² R.Davis, The Kru Coast, 115

as pruka and wèslø have traditions of belonging to an original population residing in the area before the arrival of the siklipo. Traditions of later immigration along the coast from the east are reported by tièpoø (Chiepor from Kpo River) and jilèpo, takrèpoø, duènèmlèpoø and nimlèpapø from the Grebo). This is corroborated by Davis who mentions three different streams of immigration.⁸⁷

Accordingly, the original sibs hold most of the traditional offices, the later immigrants being only represented by their elders and warriors in the courts; none of the offices inherited in particular sibs is held by any of the immigrant sibs.⁸⁸ Thus, at least symbolic if not real status and power are reserved to the original siklipo stock, according to seniority and membership.

Since those offices which are common to all other Kru Dakè will be discussed in a later chapter; here we will describe them only briefly and rather discuss the peculiarities of the Grand Cess System. The following table, no.II, shows those offices vested in particular sibs

Table II

Sib name	Office
niapo-	
botodopo	buliø, jugbediø
nitio	jugbediø
wulanimlepo	jugbediø
tuao	jugbedia
gmapø	kro ba, gbø wuliø
weslø	gbø wuliø,(originally)
klepø	je cho, wulio (alternates with the nimènèõ
nimenèõ	wuliø (alternates with klèpoø)
juwlepo	tugbèwa

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Traditionally, the krø-ba could only be selected. from gma-po but today he is chosen from any sib except tuao. The last krobas however, were always selected from the niapoø sub-sibs. The gbøbi also can be selected from any sib except tuao. Another, officer, the kpatwa can likewise be chosen from any sib.

Mekeel employs socio-political categories which seem insufficient to describe the social structure of Kru society since they are derived from earlier European political systems rather than from the Kru themselves; thus he suggests a division of society into priestly as opposed to

⁸⁷ Ron Davis, *An Historical Outline of the Kru Coast*, 13, 114

⁸⁸ Mekeel makes reference to an office held by an elder of **pluka** sib, whose responsibility was to host 'strangers' in the town and regulate legal disputes which might arise between them and citizens; this may be a representation of the historical belief that **pluka** was one of the original sibs which welcomed the 'siklipo' as strangers on the land. However, the office seems to have disappeared in 1969.

other Kru groups also. Mekeel and myself obtained information that Grand Cess originally had eight quarters; the fact that there are about 13-15 sibs was explained by the existence of 'back quarters' to the original ones, which probably means lineages and sub-sibs at various stages of fission and independence from the original sib. The main sibs, however, seem to be represented in both sections. They are: (I) information in brackets is taken from Mekeel.

1. niapo with at least four sub-sibs two-of which are represented in the upper and lower section, wulenimlepo and (botodopo) wedodopo
2. tuao in upper and lower section (twinon in upper and lower section)
3. pruka a Kabor panto represented in upper and lower section
4. duenimlepo and nimlepapo, two amalgamated sibs from Grebo-Fishtown of which the latter is represented in upper and lower sections the former only in the upper section (downemlipo, nemlipapo)
5. klepo in upper and lower section
6. julepo from KPO-River (djuwlepo, three quarters, of which two in the upper and one in the lower section)
7. takrepo (taklepo in the upper and lower section)
8. tuniepo (tuwiepo, in upper and lower section)

Sibs only represented in one section are according to Mekeel:

9. Glepo in upper section
10. Nemliyo in upper section
11. Weslao in lower section
12. Tchiepo not represented in Siklipo but in Matye and Tunkro.

The lapse of time between the state of the town as remembered by Mekeel's informants and my own fieldwork, and changes in population may account for the differences between Mekeel's and my own data. Discrepancies, which may be due to further differentiation arise with regard to the following patèn

no. 5 Klepo according to Mekeel two, according to my informants already four sub-sibs
no. 7 Taklepo according to Mekeel two, according to my informants only one of them left

no. 9 Glepo according to Mekeel only one, according to my informants represented in upper and lower section.

Two sibs omitted by Mekeel but mentioned by Fraenkel's, Davis' and my informants are: gmapo and wurapo both occurring in the upper as well as the lower section. (24)

Table I contains lists of sibs as available from various sources; the final number of sibs seems to be twelve, if we decide to exclude tiepo (Chiepor or tchiepor) on the grounds that it is not represented in Grand Cess itself, and weslo or weslao, a sib of the pre-Siklipo population derived from a group called Ka-tø or Wèslø which has given its name to Katu Point, a nearby promontory mentioned in the nautical sources; at the same time we decide to count the amalgamated duenemlepo and nimlepapo as one pātō.

The sibs arriving with the first ways of immigrants seem to have been:

niapø, tuão, gmapø, wrapø, klepø, tunièpø, nimenèð, and juwlepø. Sibs such

Price also speaks at some length of the military organization and its functions; he chooses Western terminology related to army organization, speaking of a 'general', the 'Bubby' (gbøbi) of martial law and a military court. (22)

Allusion is made to the co-operative functions of the *gbø* in communal 'hunting'⁸³, in farming, and town-clearing.- "Like other tribes most animals killed in this bush belong to Gboh and are usually cooked and eaten outside the village. If a house is to be quickly built, a rice field immediately cut, or any kind of work completed with the least amount of delays all that one has to do, is to interview the 'Bubby", and if he gives his consent, there will be at one's disposal a whole regiment of Gboh. Of course it is understood that a square meal for the day must be provided by the one for whom they work".⁸⁴ The ritual functions of the *gbø* at the death and the funeral of warriors are mentioned in passing, and a set of photos showing warriors during war dances are included in Price.

Grand Cess, the main town of the *seklepo*, once the largest Kru community at the coast and one of the principal ports of trade with the Europeans, known as Grand Cestos or Paris from the seventeenth century on, was the first place whose social system became described in detail, first by Mekeel, later by Fraenkel and others, among them some Kru authors. Mekeel or rather his informant in, the U.S., give an account of what seems to have been one of the most complex polities among all of the Kru *dakø*; much of this description was confirmed by my own Investigations in 1969 and by those of others. Since World War II and the closing of the German trading houses, Grand Cess has been in decline; the whole Km Coast became likewise unimportant as a source of ship labor, since the Liberian Government required foreign companies to hire laborers only in customs-controlled ports, while increasing automatization on ships reduced the required labor.

Mekeel refers to the 'state' of Grand Cess' as federation of patrilineal sibs - Mekeel calls them 'gentes' - with high state offices being hereditary in particular sibs. Its government consists of two courts, one 'high court', composed of 'officials of state' and a council of sib-elders, and the other a 'low court'; "both courts function as legislative, judicial and executive bodies."⁸⁵

Other organizations cutting across the sibs are the "army, secret society and police force"⁸⁶, members of which are recruited from the populace at large. Descent being usually in the paternal line while inheritance may be through the maternal line, a sib (*pātō*) consists of several lineages which recognize descent from different wives of a common ancestor, have patrilineally inherited food taboos - Mekeel calls them "totem" - and share a common sib-name. Each sib is represented normally in all villages of the *dakø* - at Mekeel's time six, today five - and (located in a different section of the town, *krø*). Traditionally, i.e. before 1924, the *seklepo-dakø* consisted of a large town, *Siklipo* and several villages, among them a semi-independent offshoot, *Matiye*, with its own 'low court', (23) and its own body of officers. *Matiye* still has not reached complete independence even though it marked a progressive state of fission from Grand Cess having its own clan Chief under Liberian administration

Noted by Mekeel, or his informants, but ignored by Fraenkel and others, is the division into an upper" and "lower" section of a *dako* as well as of the sibs, a fact which is of significance for

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ S.Mekeel, Social Administration of the Kru, Africa X (1937) 77

⁸⁶ by 'army' Mekeel refers to the age grade of Gbo, while police force' probably refers to the 'kafa'. By 'secret society' he either means the 'kwi' or the 'deyabo' i.e. 'native doctors' i.e. medicine men

Price quotes from a letter of the then District Commissioner E.C.B.Jones who had inquired into the causes of inter-tribal conflict between Gbeta and Kplepo.⁸⁰ This reveals that the Gbeta, probably only the Fishmen, settled the area from the sea-coast, whereas the Kplepo group had migrated from the interior; their first quarrels were over the access to farm land, for the Gbeta, and the access to the sea, for the Kplepo.

"here the contention commenced and continued through the reign of many different tribal rulers, and was successfully kept from Government intervention for many years. They afterwards reached an agreement under the rule of Paramount Chief Nyaplu⁸¹ of Gbita, the Kplepoes recognizing his sovereignty over the land and agreeing to pay him tribute and toll annually and prior to commencing any farming operation. This practice continued throughout the reign of Nyaplu and after his death, when Donyono Juwule, his chief Warrior succeeded him as Paramount Chief. In the meantime, (21) the Kplepo tribes grew in numbers and strength in arms.

Chief Juwule, a very clever man, foreseeing greatness in his tribe, soon decided on a policy to divide and rule. Consequently, he proceeded to set up younger and ambitious tribesmen of the four clans against the recognized chiefs and they became successful with Juwule's support in seizing authority from the regular chiefs, which naturally brought dissension and the once United and strong Kplepoes were divided into four separate and independent tribal groups with four Paramount Chiefs, namely (will say chiefly territories A.M.) Flenekpo, Gbalopo, Suehn, and Toopo. Flenekpo and Gbalopo being the two located on the west bank of the Grand Cess river and near Sita, became easier prey for Juwule's scheme to exploit.

It soon turned out however that in the reign of Tugbe Bloh of Flenekpo, who was also a strong man, Chief Juwule's plan for that tribe was always interfered with as Bloh would refuse to take his orders. Chief Bloh had somehow learned that there was a higher authority than Juwule which was the Liberian Government or the District Commissioner, whose orders he was supposed to obey and to whom all impositions would be referred to for intervention. So year after year, Juwule's authority with the Kplepo people weakened. As a revenge Chief Juwule seized the opportunity at the time of the Sasstown rebellion (i.e. 1932 A.M.) to impress the government that Paramount Chief Bloh was in alliance with the rebel Chief Juwah Nimley of Sasstown. He sought in every way to prove his point. And it was at this time when I succeeded District Commissioner Wellington Diggs as Civil Administrator of the Kru Coast District, Maryland County, and, on my first official tour that the clever Chief Juwule sought to stage his last spectacular political intrigue - a veritable vendetta."⁸²

Commissioner Jones relates the attempts by chief Juwule to gain political edge over his opponent from the Kplepo section. When those attempts were found too obvious by the Commissioner Juwule planned an attack on Flenekpo after the Commissioner had returned to Grand Case. But this attack failed and twenty three warriors from Gbeta were slain and its forces were defeated. In the following, the Liberian Government intervened and arranged a peace treaty, and the two groups agreed to build a village in the midst as a buffer consisting of families from both sides. This village, later called Barclayville, was built in 1933-34 and made headquarters of the District Commissioner as well as of a Methodist Mission.

⁸⁰ Rev. Frederick A. Price, *By Hammock and Surfboat: Liberian Odysseys*, New York, 1954

⁸¹ **-(Probably a traditional, not Liberian-appointed ruler)-**

⁸² *ibid.*,

the only informative sources are missionary accounts, which are not too impartial in many points, and only one by an professional anthropologist Mekeel, is of interest, who, however, had not been to the field himself but constructed his account with a Kru informant in the US.⁷⁶ Sapir, Herzog and Herskovits edited collections of proverbs from Kra groups including occasional remarks on social and political institutions⁷⁷.

H. Taylor, a British trader residing at Garaway from 1913 to 1915, mentions a chief or 'king' for the tribe who resided in the interior, and 'palaver men'. A 'soldier king' administered tribal law, but his wife had the right to suspend this thus saving "any native accused of a crime by finding her and touching her feet."⁷⁸

The Rev. W. Williams and his wife, who lived from about 1909 at the Kru Coast, mostly at King William's Town among the Five Tribes, witnessed the gradual submission of the independent Kra polities to the Liberian administration and the changes from the old to the new structures; in advising the local rulers not to take part in the 1915 up-rising of the 'Fishmen' - the Kabor and Klepo - he played an important role in the shift of power from the latter to Nana Kru which became the first district and chiefdom with administrative powers extending far into the interior. The Klepo and Kabor who had controlled as middlemen, all trade and commerce with the Europeans ... (20) were forced to abandon their coastal settlements, many of which were destroyed and were resettled at the mouth of the river Sanguin.

Williams, too, speaks of traditional 'kings' and 'chiefs' without specifying the local categories to whom those titles applied. He sheds some light on the important role of the 'devil doctors' and the Kru oracle located in the interior for matters of intertribal warfare. Nana Kru did not only become the seat of power at the coast because the Liberians wished so, but also because its main 'devil doctor' had proven, in the eyes of many people to possess superior 'medicine' than other groups whose oracles and 'doctors' had ill-advised them to revolt. For many, however, the defeat only proved that the Christian religion and its missionaries at Nana Kru were more effective; mass conversions and destruction of traditional fetish houses and idols followed in the aftermath and initiated the establishment of indigenous Christian churches which can be found among the Kru today.⁷⁹

The Rev. F.A. Price first stationed in the Cape Palmas area, and later transferred to Barclayville in the hinterland of Grand Case, gives valuable details about the social organization of the Kplepo 'tribe'. During three years he resided in Garaway and later moved to the Kplepo thus being able to give an account of the situation of settlements in the area when intertribal warfare caused much turmoil and the ultimate establishment of Barclayville.

⁷⁶ Scudder Mekeel, Social Administration of the Kru: A Preliminary Survey, Africa, no.X (1937), 75-96; XII (1939), 460-68

⁷⁷ Melville Herskovits, and Sie Tagbe, "Kru Proverbs", J.of American Folklore, vol 43, no.169 (1930); Herzog George and Charles G.Bloah, Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, London, Oxford University Press, 1936; Edward Sapir and Charles G.Bloah, "The Voice of Africa: Some Gweabo Proverbs", Africa II, (1929) 183-85

⁷⁸ H.R. Taylor, Jungle Trader, Leipzig, Albatross Library, 1939, 39

⁷⁹ Walter and Maude Williams, Adventures with the Krus in West Africa, Vantage Press, 1955

The next class was called the Sedibo or sidibo, the "house of representatives" the popular house, composed of all males beyond the age of eighteen or twenty except the patriarchs."⁷¹ (18)

"The third class into which every Grebo community is divided is the Kedibo.. composed of youths and boys between the ages of eighteen and eleven to twelve." "The Kimbo includes children from six to eleven years of age. Theirs is a separate organization although their rights and privileges are of more limeted character."⁷²

This is a description of the age-grade system usually consisting of three separate age classes upon which further elaboration will be made below- Besides the age-grades, Payne mentions two 'societies' to be discussed in the section 'Religion' : the Kwi-jiru or 'children of the spirits', and the deyabo or 'devil doctors'.

Of the political offices mentioned by Payne, two are taken from the Nyekpade that of the woraba and bodia , while two others are occupied by members of the Sedibo namely the offices of Ibadia and Tibawa. The two former offices most likely correspond to the 'king' and 'governor' mentioned by the sources (Connelly), while at least one of the latter probably that of the Ibadia corresponds to the "soldier king' of the sources (cf. Wilson).⁷³ Accordingly, they are associated with the two different 'houses* or councils, that of the elders and that of the adult men, and function within these groups. Their preroga-tives, obligations, regalia etc. will be discussed in Ch.IV under the respective offices.

Payne thus describes the basic structures of Grebo - and I claim also of Kru-societies - later accounts, until the mid-twentieth century only add minor details and information from other groups. In fact some authors such as S.W. Seton return to a categorical framework influenced by classical studies and the categories used for description of Greek and Roman societies.⁷⁴

The Rev. U.L. Walker who lived among the Garraway 'tribe' (Yao) as a missionary adds to our knowledge more information about the institutions of that group. "They live in tribes varying in number from a few hundred to some thousands. In civil order,, the chief or king is called Blokan or land-master. The tribes are composed of families each looking to one old man as a chief who (19) holds the family wealth and to whom all pay their earnings.The chief pays mall the important bills. The 'Rabah' (woraba A.M.) is the head of the town, and his office is a little lower than that of the Blocan.(blo is land). In his name all tovn questions are discussed and verdicts given."⁷⁵ .

IV. Twentieth Century accounts.

Until the thirties, little further information about the Kru peoples is forthcoming, which is partly due to the route of conflict on which the Kra - exclusively, the coastal groups - and the settlers had embarked, which led to general economic neglect of the Kru coast by the government. The European ships were made to take laborers in the few Liberian ports which had been left open by the Port-of-Entry Laws rather than at the coast itself. Until the sixties,

⁷¹ J.Payne, quoted after Anna F.Scott, 56

⁷² *ibid.*60

⁷³ Mr.J.L. Wilson, "Journal", African Repository no.13, August 1837, 242

⁷⁴ S.W. Seton, "The Hinterland of Cape Palmas", Cape Palmas Reporter, 1899

⁷⁵ Rev.U.L. Walker, "The Blackman in Hinterland Liberia", African Repository 1903, 77

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|------|
| - Tuobo | | - Tadebo | Cav.&R.T. | - Nyedebo | Cav. |
| - Yaabo | Cavalla & | - Budu Yibebo | | - Siebo & | |
| - Gobo Fishtown | | - Mano Wodebo | | - Taubo | R.T. |
| - Siebo | | - Puobo | | - Yaabo | F.T. |
| - Wodeabo | | - Kla Yoabo | | - Nema Hnebo | |
| | | - Tiebo | | - Duenemlepo | |
| | | | | - Belo Wadebo | |
| | | | | - Yulebo | |
| | | | | - Masambo | |
| | | | | - Mle Nyemabo | |

Yidebo (Judebo)NyaboPodaboTiebo

(not represented in Kudemowe section.....)

Nyomowe section

no sub-divi- not repre-
sions in Nyo- sented in
mowe Nyomowe

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| - Wa Glebo | - Glee Budubo |
| - Tane Judebuo | - Kpaa Doebo |
| - Siabo | - Budu Mlebo |
| - Semlebo | - Siebo |

The patrisibs are referred to by E.Becker-Donner and J. Martin as clans ⁶⁶, but I have decided to follow Murdock and E.L.Schusky and use the term 'sib' in the sense of a consanguineal kin group with patrilineal descent.⁶⁷ Mekeel, in his description of the Siklipo has decided to use the term 'gens' (following the Roman patricians) for the same kind of grouping in order to distinguish it from matrilineal sibs⁶⁸, but this distinction has now become obsolete. The political structure of the Glebo has been described by J.Martin on the basis of the nineteenth century sources as one of a loose village-confederation.⁶⁹ The age-groups and associations are cutting across the Kudomowe and Nyomowe sections, the settlements, sibs and lineages.

Payne refers to the age-groups as classes and distinguishes the following:

the patriarchs nyekbade ⁷⁰, who collectively constitute an upper court or Senate in the body politic... in all matters of grave interest, whether domestic or foreign, the voice of the patriarchs must be heard".

⁶⁶ Etta Becker-Donner, "Über zwei Krüvölkerstämme : Kran and Grebo", Koloniale Völkerkunde I, Jg.6, 1944, 65; Jane Martin, "The Dual Legacy" unpubl.Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University, 1969, 10

⁶⁷ E.L. Schusky, Manual of Kinship Analysis; G.P.Murdock, Social Structure

⁶⁸ Scudder Mekeel, "Social Administration of the Kru", Africa X, 1937, 75-96, and XII, 1939, 460-68

⁶⁹ cf. J.Martin, The Dual Legacy, 10 ff.

⁷⁰ *nye kp̄la* means 'old man' in most Kru and Grebo dialects

At one of the 'palavers' held in 1844 at Sinoe between the colonists and members of the Sino tribe and the Fishmen, on the other hand, about -twenty 'kings' and headman were present. (16)

Fleuriot de Langle, a French naval officer who actually travelled along the Kru coast to conduct a hydrographic survey remarked about the Grebo at Cape Palmas:

"La nation se divise en douze familles; chacune d'elles est gouvernée par l'homme le plus agé. Ils ont un trésor public qui s'alimente des retenues exercées sur les gages des jeunes gens employés sur les navires de commerce au les bâtiments de guerre" ⁶¹

The Rev. and later Bishop J.S.Payne of Cape Palmas, describes in detail the government of the Grebo employing for the first time native categories for social groups and ranks. He, too, reports the division of the Grebo into 12 'families' each one being headed by a patriarch living in a certain area of the village with each family being represented in one of the principal villages.

"The constitution of the Grebo tribe is patriarchal although their government is almost purely democratic."⁶²The population of the seven principal towns of one such tribe under a common government, or at least with a common tradition - he estimated at 25,000 people; Bacon in 1842, estimated it at 24,000 with one of the sections, the Cape Palmas tribe (Gbenelu or Buemle-lu) comprising 3000 souls in its four settlements in 1858. ⁶³

In the nineteenth century, six sections which were probably regional divisions, were distinguished: Rocktown(Taake), Fishtown (Wa), Half Cavalla (Gbede); the inhabitants of those settlements each consisting of several villages were called Kudemowe-Grebo; the other half, the Nyomowe-Grebo lived in the settlements of Grand Cavalla, Graway ⁶⁴ and Cape Palmas(Gbenelu).

Originally, there were six patrisibs later augmented by a seventh, and they are represented in both sections of the Glebo: Yidabo, Tibebo, Glebo, Judebo, Podabo, Nyabo and Tiebo ⁶⁵). When Payne later mentions that twelve families can be distinguished, this is probably refers to this segmentation of the patrisibs into two halves, or minor lineages which are often made up by the sons of different mothers in a polygamous union and hence are matro-nymic. And, due to differential reproduction of these patrisibs there are some with five lineages while others have no lineage at all and are not even represented in any section.- Tidabo for instance,and Tiebo are only represented In Kudemowe while Podabo is only represented in Nyomowe section. Below, a list is given of the differential distribution of sibs and lineages in the settlements and sections. (17)

Yidabo

(no sub-divisions in Kudemowe section)

Yibebo

Glebo

Nyomowe section

⁶¹ A.Fleuriot de Langle, "Croisière à la Côte d'Afrique", Tour du Monde, no. XXVI, 1873

⁶² Payne, quoted in Anna F.Scott, Day Dawn in Africa, Philadelphia, 1858, 55

⁶³ Dr.F.Bacon, Cape Palmas, 1842 and Alexander Cowan, Liberia as I found it in 1858, Frankfort,1858

⁶⁴ S,M. Jangabaa Johnson, Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe, Monrovia, Bureau of Folkways , Dept. of Interior, 1964, 29

⁶⁵ ibid. 29-34

Captain William Allen and Dr.T.R.H. Thomson acquired some knowledge about society at the Sinoe river, where they distinguish between Kroomen and Fishmen, a division common in the nineteenth century sources⁵⁵, who though differing in their subsistence base have the same history ,and domestic and religious customs.

"Each tribe has a king or Bullioh, as well as a grand palaver house. That for the Kru country is held at Krubar; the Bullioh, residing at Nana Kru, while Grand Sesters is the headquarter of the Grebus or Fishmen's king, and the grand palaver house".

Each separate town has a chief and little palaver house,where minor disputes are settled; but every two or three years, a grand palaver is held, to which deputies are sent from the little palaver houses and the more important matters of each town arranged by majority."⁵⁶

(15)

The Rev. J.N. Connelly, one of the first missionaries on the Kru Coast - since 1842 in Settra Kra - reports about the so-called Five Tribes living in the villages of Krubar, Nana Kru, Settra Kru, Little Kru and King William's Town which formed a federation under one government. This was "probably at first patriarchal but at present is a self-perpetuating oligarchy, though one of the headmen has the title of king and another that of governor"⁵⁷. Thus, Connelly uses the term 'headman' as a general term among which he distinguished a king's office, a governor's office, a 'soldier king', their assistants and six or eight headmen called 'palaver men' ". All of these constitute the "general council of the nation"⁵⁸.

The families (pâtê) of the original tribes hold the office of 'king' in rotation. Thus, a 'king' holds his office by heredity, by virtue of belonging to one of the principal families, whereas "the governor's office is secured to his family for past services rendered by his ancestors in conquering the country;the soldier king is elected for an indefinite time by the headmen and is general and the officer commanding in war"⁵⁹, and arresting and executing those condemned to drink the sassy-wood. Horatio Bridge, purser on the U.S.S. Saratoga of the African Squadron under Commodore Perry which helped the American colonists to settle difficulties with the coastal population, too, gained some glimpses at Kru society. " The government of these people (i.e. the Kroomen, Fishmen and Bushmen, insert by author) and of the natives generally is nominally monarchical but democratic in substance. The regal office appears to be hereditary in a family, but not to descend according to our ideas of lineal succession. The power'of the king is greatly circumscribed by the privilege which every individual in the tribe possesses of calling a palaver... The headmen sit in judgment, and substantial justice is generally done. There are persons celebrated for their power and copiousness of talking who appear as counsel on behalf of the respective parties. The more distinguished of these advocates are sometimes sent for from a distance of two or three hundred miles to speak at a palaver"⁶⁰.

⁵⁵ W.Allen, T.R.H.Thomas, A Journal of the Expedition to the River Niger, 1841 ***

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Rev. J.N.Connelly, "Report of the Kroo People", New York Colonization Society, 39th Annual Report, 1856, 38-39

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Horatio Bridge, "Journal of an African Cruiser", London 1845, repr. 1968 at Dawson's of Pall Mall, 55

and possessed 'neither character nor wealth.' The 'king' was said to differ not much from the others except that he had 'a larger number of wives and consequently a greater number of houses,as each woman must have her own house.'⁴⁷

Wilson was received by the Bolobo 'king' and his headmen, a bullock was presented to him and slaughtered at the occasion. 'One portion was set aside for our company, another for the king's family, a third for the soldiers,and the remainder for the town's people at large.'⁴⁸ To this distribution and sharing of sacrificial animals more will be said below.

From a report on the death and burial of one of the headman at Cape Palmas occupied by the Glebo, who had been designated successor to the 'king', we learn about the ritual surrounding an important man's death and funeral.

The 'chief of the tribe' himself gave a dress to the deceased. Thereupon a man described as soldier-king" or 'commander of the military' issued some order to the 'soldiers and warriors' to form a procession to the Cape and fire a salute in honor of the deceased. Then, they took the coffin and proceeded to the 'king's' house, and from there to the beach in order to prepare the transport of the casket to a neighboring island. On the island they deposited the casket and with it food offerings and the material belongings of (14) the deceased.⁴⁹

More information on funeral-rites of chiefs is provided by an article in the Journal 'Carrier Dove"

"Hundreds of soldiers dressed in the African war costume (viz.: the body painted and partly draped with furs, the head decked with feathers and horns of wild animals performed military evolutions peculiar to themselves around the corpse wildly firing over and upon it."⁵⁰

And often "after the last honors are paid to the corpse they proceed to find the enemy who has caused the death. Some suspicion rests upon some unfortunate individual; a devil doctor is consulted, and the poor wretch is forced to pass through the dreadful ordeal of sassa-wood."⁵¹ More about the role of these devil-doctors, or jidioh or deyabo in the section on religion.

Around the mid-nineteenth century, more information on the Kru proper⁵² can be obtained from the sources. Bacon still calls the people around Cape Palmas and along the whole coast Kroomen and Fishmen or Mena⁵³ and notes about them:"their political constitution is very purely republican, the sovereignty of the different communities being generally exercised by four elective chiefs (this may apply to the Cape Palmas region only A.M.) of different functions constantly checked and liable to removal by popular will." And "they are divided into about twenty tribes speaking as many languages."⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Journal of Mr. Wilson in an expedition from Cape Palmas to Bolobo performed in the latter part of October 1836, African Repository XIII (August 1837), 241-2

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Death of a Chief - Funeral Ceremonies, African Repository XV (April 1839) 105

⁵⁰ The Spirits Home or King Weir's Grave, African Repository (Dec.1855), 371

⁵¹ Native Africans, African Repository, (Dec.1855), 375

⁵² the Krao, or Five Tribes, living to the west of the Grebo, Wedabo and Garaway (Jao)

⁵³ Dr.Francis Bacon "Cape Palmas and the Mena, or Kroomen!", J.Royal Geographical Society, no.12 1842, 196-206

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 205

⁴¹Here again the picture obtained from the evaluation of the pre-nineteenth century sources, namely of independent village-communities is confirmed.

In regard to all the peoples of the Pepper Coast until the Cavalla River, called Cavally by the French, he remarks: "Leur gouvernement est une espèce d'oligarchie et le commandement reside dans une assemblée de chefs qui exercent sur tous les habitants un pouvoir souverain."⁴²) Their Chiefs, he says, can dispose of their subjects however they like and can demand the product of their labor in order to pay fines or obligations for these individuals or court-fees for the settlement of disputes between individuals.

The role of the ritual center, the seat of the 'Grand Devil' at the river Cavally which according to Robertson is important for all the people of the Windward Coast, has been dealt with elsewhere at greater length.⁴³

Th. Ludlam, former governor of Sierra Leone noticing the remarkable frequency of Kroos in Freetown - about 800 were employed in the colony by 1809 - gave a tentative description of their country, their mores and their government; in regard to the latter, he confirms the impression given by Robertson, but unfortunately relies only on European concepts when he speaks of a 'monarchical government checked by the great influence of the aristocracy.'⁴⁴ Each of the towns is said to have one superior chief and several sub-ordinate ones who can wield power in their district. The main chief is only considered as a representative and symbolic head rather than having actual power. It was not clear to Ludlam whether authority was transferred to new chief by inheritance or election. A short article describing the government of the Kru as patriarchal, in the African Repository of July 1829, does merely repeat Ludlam's findings.

Mssrs Wilson and Wynkoop, making an information tour along the coast in 1833/34 investigating possible locations for missionary establishments visited several places between (13) Cape Mount and Cape Palmas and "conversed with the kings and headmen of all the intermediate towns of any considerable importance of the coast." In certain places they found "the towns on the sea-coast connected with others further back in the country under the same government, and speaking the same language. Generally, however, the towns on the coast are separate from and entirely independent of all others. The kingdoms in the interior are commonly more extensive and are more formidable than those on the coast"⁴⁵

In a later book, Wilson remarks about these 'kings' that they are "generally the representative of the largest and strongest family in town, "and that their authority is less than it appears to the European outsiders. About the 'headmen' he says that they represent the other families."⁴⁶

In 1836, Wilson actually travelled in the hinterland of Cape Palmas to the Bolobo 'tribe'. At this occasion, he speaks of their 'tribal king' and his viceroy who reigned after the king's death

⁴¹ G.A.Robertson, Notes on Africa particularly those parts which are situated between Cape Verde and the River Congo, London, 1819, quoted from Walckenaer, Voyages, 423

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ *ibid*.

⁴⁴ Th.Ludlam, An Account of the Kromen on the Coast of Africa, African Repository, I (1825-26), 45-46

⁴⁵ Mssrs.Wilson and Wynkoop, Missionary Herald, in African Repository, X (1834), 178-81

⁴⁶ L.Wilson, Western Africa

In 1906, Johnson estimates at 150 the total number of American-Liberian settlers in the Kru towns of Nana Kru, Settra Kru, Nifu, Sas Town and Garawé.

Even though he claims that in 1846 already a stretch of " eighty miles of the Kru coast (and later on the coast of Settra Kru and Grand Cesters) were purchased from the natives", he cannot publish the deeds of purchase.³⁶

Settra Kru was forced in June 1868 to sign a document acknowledging the cession of its territory to the Liberians, in compensation for the murder of a Liberian trader by locals and following an embargo by the Liberian fleet.³⁷

It is convenient to consider in first place the sources relating to the Grebo political institutions, not only because they were documented earlier than those for the Kru but also because they show much similarity to the Kru systems and the oral traditions report migration and influence from the eastern to the western part of the Kru coast.³⁸

The largest traditional political unit was the dako (often referred to as 'tribe' in English) - consisting of a number of exogamous patrisibs called pātō, kwa, or tu-gba which occupy a common territory, have a common language and a common tradition of migration. The name of the dako and of the patrisib usually contains a proper name - that of the real or fictitious ancestor - and a suffix denoting people: -po or -bo. Each of these patrisibs might be further divided into lineages: (kwa , sg. or kwè, pl.), comprising three to four generations. For each individual, his father's lineage (bi-kwã) and his mother's lineage (di-kwã) are recognized with different obligations and responsibilities towards the individual.³⁹

A dako may receive and absorb members from other than the original sib or lineage who have emigrated from their homes for various reasons . The identification of these lineages or sibs of different origins provides a means of tracing migrations and quite frequently also wars and conflicts with other groups. The characteristic set of patrisibs distinguishes one dako from the neighboring ones. Other distinguishing institutions are a distinct number of male age-sets, and a unique set of socio-political offices vested in particular patrisibs or patri-lineages. The aspects of common tradition and linguistic differentiation will be dealt elsewhere.⁴⁰

- 12 -It can be assumed that these units were the same formerly as today and that they formed the basis for a traditional government which we shall attempt to reconstruct here in its nineteenth-century form.

Robertson, in his Notes on Africa remarks on the Krous (Krews) or Courous that they are divided into tribes, represented by several villages on the coast between Trade Town and Grand -Sisters (Grand Cess) which are governed by the chiefs of these towns. To him the different towns seem to be ,administered separately rather than forming one or several states.

³⁶ S.H.S. Johnson, Liberia, London 1906, 195.

³⁷ Annual Message of the President 1868, publ.in African Repository XLV, feb.1869

³⁸ cf. Ron Davis, A Historical Outline of the Kru Coast from 1500 until present, unpubl. Ph.D.Diss, Dept.History. Indiana University, 1968; A. Massing, Socio-Political Relations among the Kru groups prior to integration into Liberia, papers at 4th Annual Conf.on Social Science Research in Liberia, Kalamazoo, 1972

³⁹ terminology differs from group to group, some employ the term kwa for the entire sib.

⁴⁰ a recent lexico-statistical analysis based on Swadesh word lists from dialects in S.E. Liberia established some distinct linguistic clusters, cf.F.Ingemann, paper read at 5th Annual Conference on Social Science Research in Liberia, Iowa City 1973

area around river Cestos which had developed into an important port-of-trade this seems to have started at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Snoek still reports that the beech village has half the size as the inland village, while Barbot, Loyer and Mr. U. some years later already give it the same size as the latter.³² While voan der Groeben still reports in 1694 that the king can not, outwardly, be distinguished from his elders, the king's attire became more distinctive and his relation to his subjects became more distinctive and more autocratic in later years.³³ Thus, despite the increasing importance of the beech village the main authority at river Cestos still seems to have been with the inferior ruler and his councillors'. These latter may have been only the elders of the lineages like in the nineteenth century.

Chapter III. Nineteenth Century Sources

During the nineteenth century, the political systems of the Kru-speaking groups were confronted with developments which led to the most profound changes since the first contacts with Europeans. These changes did not become fully effective until the twenties and thirties of this century when they lost their independence to Liberian military terror. Some of the interior groups maintained de facto autonomy and traditional structure till the fifties.

Our information on the coastal and interior peoples for the XIX th century is still very limited, as a result of the pattern of contact, namely by ship trade, established centuries ago for the Malaguetta coast. The coastal people preserved their middleman position. Physical conditions - no safe natural harbors like at Cape Mount or Cape Mesurado - played a role, but the main reason for the lack of permanent European establishments seems to have been the low value of the trade, unlike at the Gold Coast. Only by the middle of the century, did some British and German trading houses extend the palm oil trade to this coast, supplemented by ivory, camwood, piassava and later rubber.

The implantation of the Liberian settlements at the Kru coast, in 1834 at Cape Palmas and in 1839 at Greenville, did not have much impact on the Kru coast at first; indirectly however, the Krutowns at Cape Mesurado, Grand Bassa and River Cess may have wielded some influence from the main Americo-Liberian establishments. However, in the train of the colonists, missionaries from the US and Europe established missions at the Kru settlements.³⁴

Only the Grebo, in the Maryland Colonization Society's colony at Cape Palmas, came in direct contact with the settlers; yet the most reliable information comes again from missionaries and not from Liberian settlers.³⁵ The Kru settlements on the Liberian and Ivory Coasts remain practically independent until the XXth century, and deal on their own terms with the trading companies.

(11)

³² Barbot 128 ff., Loyer 150; Mr.N. 81; Atkins 63; Labat 137ff.

³³ Atkins 64-65

³⁴ A Presbyterian Mission was established at Settra Kru as early as 1842, and a Methodist Mission at Garaway, presumably in 1887. A letter by James Priest, dated 1848, United Presbyterian Mission Library, African Letters 1, no.80, and a report by the Rev. Connelly contain the first information on the history and social structure of the local Kru groups.

³⁵ for example, the publication in the New York Colonization Journal of 1851 by the Rev. John Payne "On Grebo Customs in Liberia", and some of his articles in the Cavalla Messenger. Some of this is reproduced in Anna F. Scott, "Day Dawn in Africa", 1858 and S.H.S. Johnson, Liberia 1906

continuing their voyage to Cape Palmas, they visited two or three other village-heads and were surprised at their poor appearance.²⁹ The interpretation of the sources as it can be based on the ethnographic present or rather a reconstruction of traditional society from oral accounts - yields the following picture: during the sixteenth until the middle of the seventeenth century the settlements at the Malagueta Coast were independent units and only occasionally united in village confederacies presumably based on a common ethnic membership, and origins. The frequent occurrence of the name Thaba or Dabo suggests that this was a title added to the name; in fact, among some Kru and Sapa groups of today 'tabo yu' refers to the oldest man of a sib, or in the plural, to a council of elders.

Assuming, that the title Thaba in the sources similarly refers to lineage or sib-elders we can assume that the headmen of these villages even though addressed as "Kings" by the Europeans were in fact only superior by age rather than being specialized rulers.

Increased trade seems to have differentiated this situation toward the end of the seventeenth century with the headmen or captains in the beach-villages engaging directly in the trade and communicating with the Europeans while the kings were the symbolic overlords. They often lived some miles inland and had allowed some of the fishing-groups to settle on the beach, a situation which is documented for the nineteenth century but only indirectly for the earlier centuries. The "king" was the nominal landlord and the Europeans still had to exchange gifts with him in order to get a permit to trade. The arrangements for the supply of ships with fresh-water, firewood, pepper and rice as well as the transport seems to have been in the hands of the beach-villages directed by the headman or 'cabiceers' (caboceiros).

(9). They also carried goods through the surf to the European vessels where where could not go ashore because of reefs or a heavy bar. It is difficult to say from what time on some of these headmen were employed on the vessels as pilots or interpreters, as it is indicated by John Snoek in 1701. Atkin testifying to the fact that some of the coastal people 'who produced certificates by Suroean traders for which they had worked, indicates that there had been relationships of quasi-employment between these traders and those people.

Thus particular effective power became concentrated in the hands of the headmen as middlemen between Europeans and inland people, while the 'king's' or landlord's position was strengthened by the tribute he could exact from the beach people. During the height of the slave trade, special safeguards against forceful abduction into slavery, so-called panyaaring, had to be taken and some of these headmen required an oath-taking-ceremony consisting of dropping-water in the eyes of the headmen and ship's captains.³⁰ Later, however relationships became worse and hostages were kept ashore as long as the locals traded aboard ship; occasionally, also some nation whose ships had forcefully abducted people faced attacks of their ships as revenge.³¹

Ultimately, however, the advantage the beach-villages had from the direct contact with Europeans and the trade they conducted seems to have resulted in a shift of population; for the

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Pieter van den Broecke, *Reizen naar West Africa 1605-1614*, ed. K. Ratelband, Linschoten Vereeniging, vol. LII, 1950. von der Groeben mentions the word "guypo" in the context of this ceremony, which means "white man", 1694, 33.

cf also Mr.N., p.97 and Labat, p.161. The gesture could mean

³¹ cf. Atkins, 58

great submission to them. These kings go about with much gravity and seeming state."²³

Godefroy Loyer speaks of the 'Royaume de Sestre' in 1702 and its 'Roi Pitre' ou Pierre, in a large village called Sestre 2 miles up the river, who was distinguished from his subjects by a royal insignia of a cow tail. The village consisted of one hundred houses, square, with 2 stories, elevated 3 ft. above the ground and accessible by ladders. In the center (of the village) was a stone platform on which a perpetual fire was entertained.²⁴ Mr. N., de la Compagnie des Indes who made 2 voyages prior to 1712 describes the same house type particularly for (7) the beach-village which consisted of a hundred houses; some morning, however, after some unsuccessful attempts to open trade, the whole village had been removed.²⁵ W. Smith, too, anchored at river Cestos for taking on wood and water supplies after making some payment of acknowledgement to the king.²⁶ His next stop was at Settra Krue where they inquired for provisions from the chief man of the town, "a sort of petty king" and for a payment to trade. This they obtained after a meal and an exchange of their dishes but the trade was too small to make their ship's stay worthwhile. Another visitor to river Cestos, the Marquis des Marchais, lists three villages on the right bank of the river and the king's village about five miles upstream.²⁷ At one place the Marquis speaks of the "Roy" who receives a share in the fish caught in the beach-town. At another, he refers to him as the 'prince' who has the power to ban criminals from the land i.e. sell them into slavery. At another place again he reports the death of the 'captain' of the trading village. It is not entirely clear whether all these titles refer to the same person but it appears that the latter refers to a headman of the beach-village while the former two refer to officials of the upper village. "maitres des villages" and the "gens de quelque distinction" all bear Christian names which are considered as a sign of distinction. Furthermore there is reference to a "maramu" p a priest or diviner who administers a funeral ceremony.

The last eighteenth century source yielding information on the Malagvetta Coast and its rulers is John Atkins from the "Swallow" : Cabooceers are the principal trading Men at all towns: their Experience or Courage having given them that superiority all acts of Government in their several Districts are by their Votes. They came off to us with some English Title and Certificate; the favor of former Traders to them for their Honesty and good service; and were they done with caution, might be of use to ships as they succeeded in the Trade."²⁸

Again, at river Cestos Atkins notices the elevated two-story houses, the large meeting halls on a platform, where strangers and natives meet and where the trade goods are displayed. (8) The king called "Pedro" living five miles up the river appeared clad in a red boy's gown, a top hat, shoes and stockings, and a black uncombed wig. He was preceded by a horn blower, attended by a 'hundred naked nobles' and followed by a train bearer. He discussed the acceptance of his visitors' presents with his 'ministers'.

The visitors in turn, had their own way of dealing with this "king": they bestowed one of his sons with the title "Duke of Sesthos" and another with the title "prince of Baxos"; this procured them the goodwill of the king and the permit to get provisions wherever they wanted. Before

²³ *ibidem*

²⁴ G.Loyer, *Relation du Voyage d' Issinie*, 1712, 149f.

²⁵ *Voyage de Mr.N. aux Côtes de Guinée*, (Leiden Archives of the ITLV), 1719, 82

²⁶ W. Smith, *A New Voyage to Guinea*, 1744, 476

²⁷ Père Labat, *Voyage du Chevalier des Marchais*, 1730, 137ff.

²⁸ J. Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea ... (made in 1721)*, 1737 repr. Frank Cass, 1970, 59

(River Cestos). There from the beach village consisting of sixty houses, a chain of villages extends along the river up to the King's village which has some hundred and thirty houses. The king, Pietor, a very old man claims that all the inhabitants of the village are his servants. He told Snoek that despite a general peace in the country some interior people had raided and burnt the village some time ago, but that most of them had been caught and sold into slavery.

At Boffoe (Bafu) east of Sanguin, they obtained the visit of a certain James who claimed to be the captain of Boffoe, and his son. The ship further stopped at places such as Bottewa (Butaw), Sino, Sestre Crou (Settra Kru) and Wapo where Snoek could not gather more information due to the unintelligibility of the language. However, he did not observe visible differences to the above-mentioned places.

Barbot, who largely copies from Dapper and Snoek, nevertheless seems to have visited the river 'Sestre' in 1712 and reports it to be a much frequented anchoring ground for European ships taking on provisions or trading in Ivory, pepper and rice.²⁰ He mentions the typical Kru houses in the beach-village, consisting of sixty houses, 'built on timber, raised two or three foot from the ground, each house being commonly of two or three small low stories.'²¹ One of these houses is used as a guest house where the captain called Jacob, led the visitors and welcomed them with palm-wine. Then, the king one Barsaw or Peter who lived in a village one mile upstream was informed about the visitors and sent some of his sons down in canoes to receive the party. Some of the king's officers conducted them from the landing to a large half round building "standing a few paces from the enclosure of his village and raised on timber."²² This building was used as a hall to receive strangers and there they met the king, an elderly man, attended by 20 or 22 of his counsellors sitting in a semi-circle to his right and left on mats. After gift-exchange, both parties agreed on the opening of the trade in the beach-village for the next day. This went on for eight days during most of which the 'king' himself was present while returning to his village every night.

His sons were distinguished from the commoners by the same sort of cap as their father had, but otherwise there was no outward sign of distinction.

According to Barbot, the lands of Sestro extended from the river Saint John to Croe, and inland to the east and north-east. The fact that, in retaliation for the enslavement of 13 people from Sanguin by a Dutch ship some time ago, the people of the beach village of Sestro prepared an attack on an incoming Dutch vessel, indicates some degree of relationship and solidarity with Sanguin, probably of ethnic origin, namely Kabor or Klepo.

Barbot calls the dialect of the area Quaabe (in copying Dapper) and states that the people of the area were circumcised (thereby probably indicating Bassa w. of the river Cestos).

Sanguin is mentioned as having a ruler or 'king' said to pay tribute to the king of Rio Sestro. At Barbot's time the trade at the British 'port of trade' of Sanguin was considered 'spoilt' by rising prices, a consequence of too many ships calling. Barbot further notes, quoting Dapper wrongly, that on the Malaguetta Coast

"the Tabo Seyle or Taba Seyle, or by others Fabo Seyle, that is their kings, are very arbitrary having an absolute authority over the people and the people paying

²⁰ Jean Barbot, A description of the Coasts of South Guinea, 1712, 128

²¹ this description is also found in Snoek, and probably copied from there

²² Barbot, 138

society and circumcision practices. ¹³his boundary still exists today (between the Bassa who are circumcised and the Kru who are not). (4)

While referring to territorial units under their respective lords in the area north-west of river Cestos, Dapper (or his sources) give a number of village names which suggest again a chain of politically independent village polities.¹⁷

Dapper, probably following de Marees, defines the Grain Coast as extending from river Cestos to Cape Palmas and locates some miles in the interior, the kingdom of Mellegette or Melli, and behind this the kingdom of Bitonin.(this is not as absurd as it may appear, if we look at Mande influence in the larger sense - especially of southw. Mande like Dan and Mano - extended into the upper St.John rivers and Konyan (see Dapper's Quoja account, and herein the Konde-Quoja ¹⁴in the Konyan - and Bitonin certainly refers to the Bamana kingdom of Biton Coulibaly).

The Mellegette coast is ruled by a king or Tabo (assuming this to be a title) Seyle, who rules over the population of different villages. According to Dapper, the people differ not much from those of Cape Mount, except that they offer more sacrifices to the 'devil' and pray to their deceased ancestors for prosperity, and celebrate the new moon with dances and merry-making.¹⁵

The ship James anchored in the river Cestos in July 1675. The captain or king of the village sent a bundle of 150 sticks to the ship indicating that he had the same number of elephants' teeth for trade. The captain sent his mate on shore to the beach village, while the king spend time aboard the ship (this presumably to prevent abduction and slave-taking), but apparently no agreement about ivory trade was reached as little as in other places. ¹⁶

At the end of the XVIIth the sources document a continuity of 'kings' at Cestos: in 1694, van der Groeben reports a King Peter, an old man who came from his village 3 miles up river and adressed him in Portuguese (this is remarkable since the Dutch had pushed out the Portuguese probably by 1625)¹⁷ Phillips apparently met the same Peter in his village 8 miles up the river in 1693/4, while the beach settlement - of 30-40 huts - was under one captain Dick Lumley.¹⁸ Jan Snoek who wrote from the Guinea Coast in 1702 "made his first stop three miles of river Cestos at Corra on nov.1701. He takes a coastal pilot who showed hik his houses in two little beach villages - of 12 and 6 huts respectively - which had been set up for salt-boiling.¹⁹

(5) He is entertained there by an old man,apparently the headman of the place. They agree on meeting again the next day in order to barter Ivory However the ship continues to Rio Sestre

¹³ Olfert Dapper, *Nauwkeurige Beschryvinghe der Afrikaenschen Gewesten*, Moers 1668. I am using the German edition at Moers of 1672 of which I own a copy.

Dapper's source for the Malaguetta Coast and his Quoja account was, according to the foreword, Samuel Bloemert, agent of tje West India Company at the Guinea Coast (from *Nieuwe Nederlandsch Geografisch Wordenboek*). I have not been able to find the original of his reports, in which he may have written what he heard from the locals when he was at Cape Mount.

¹⁴ I suppose this has something to do with the settlement of the Konde in the Sankarani, around Kankan, in the 17th century.

¹⁵ Dapper, 430

¹⁶ Voyage of the ship James, Public Record Office (London), TC 70/1211

¹⁷ Groeben, *Guineische Reisebeschreibung*, Leipzig, 1694

¹⁸ Miles Phillips,

¹⁹ Jan Snoek's account in William Bosman, *Beschryvingvan het Groot Beninse Koninchrijk*, 1704, 266

In addition to the earlier references to Places called 'Crou' or 'Crua', now for the first time, the Dutch give reference to a Croa-mán, possibly denoting his, ethnic identity, who was picked up with his canoe by a ship trading on the coast on Feb. 6, 1645.⁹

Ruyters who limits the Grain Coast from Cape Mesurado to Cabo do San Clemente -near Garaway - and calls the people from the latter Cape to Cape Palmas 'Signorebo' does not know anything about an ethnic group called Kru or similar, but he seems to have been on land since he describes a ceremony of celebrating the new moon whose significance we (3) will discuss in chapter III.

Samuel Brun, a German doctor on a Dutch ship, observed that the languages south-east of River Cestos change each 30 miles. By the time of his travelling there seems to have been considerable French influence, since the king of Cape Mount "Thaba Flamore" (Faran Bure) addressed them in French language.¹⁰

Forty years later - 1666 or 1667 -, the Frenchman Villaut Sir de Bellefonds anchoring in various places at the coast gives a description of the kingdom of Sextos and its ruler. The main residence of the 'king' was situated three leagues up the river where the British supposedly had had a trading station. In order to show that there were trade goods on offer the "king" had some guns fired before trade could begin. The Europeans had to exchange the customary gifts with the king.¹¹

Further down at Sanguin, according to Villault, at the beginning of the Malaguetta Coast¹² a brother of the 'king' addressed them in Dutch which he had learnt in the Netherlands. While staying on board over night he told the French that here too, the British had maintained a trading station until four years ago i.e. 1662 or 1663. The next day, the 'king' himself a white-haired old man clad in a blue gown came aboard in the company of ten to twelve 'other Negros' where he stayed with his brother until evening; they returned after having exchanged gifts with the captain.

Villault made a remarkable observation which is still correct today namely that the settlements of this coast were established at the banks of rivers from which they take their water and their names:

thus the trading places Cestre-Crou, Brova, Baffoe, Zino, Crou, Crousestre, Wapo, Batou, Grand Cestre, Petit Sestre and Goiane, in the majority can still be identified today on the basis of the river names: Brova probably at the mouth of Blo-ni (river Blo), Baffou at Bafu creek, Zino at Sinoe river, Wapo at Wopo creek, Batou at Ba-tu creek.

Dapper whose description of the African coasts was published about the same time as Villault's, had compiled other sources, probably mainly from agents of the Dutch West India Company who were stationed at Cape Mount and observed events in the area quite carefully. On the basis of their information, Dapper suggests a cultural boundary at River Cestos : according to him it forms the eastern limit of the area of distribution of the Belli-Poro secret

⁹ D.Ruyters, 1623 , ed. Linschoten Vereeniging 1913

¹⁰ S. Brun, Schiffarten, 1624, ed. Linschoten Vereeniging, 1913,

¹¹ Villault Sieur de Bellefonds, 1669, 137

¹² Most Portuguese sources place the beginning of the malaguetta coast at Cape Mount, but the Dutch sources usually give its beginning at river Cestos; Sanguin seems to be an exception.

order all boats which had come to the ships for barter had to leave again whenever he held that the price offered was too low.⁵⁾

The description of houses corresponds to the present-day Kru house, as far as it still preserved on the coast: a scaffold made of poles and bamboo of about 3 ft. with walls made of mats plaited from mid-ribs of the fronds of the raphia palm and a roof made from palm-leaves.

The expansion of the Dutch seaborne empire which took place at the West African Coast at the expense of the Portuguese seems to have led to a more detailed knowledge of this part (2) of the coast which had hitherto received comparatively little attention from the Portuguese anyway. They appear not to have had any permanent establishments there, but only traded from their ships at several places above Cape Palmas. The Dutch as well as the French and British interlopers seem to have taken advantage of this situation and started trading at less guarded places such as the Malaguatta Coast avoiding the places where the Portuguese did regular trade.

The first detailed and reliable Dutch source (P.d.M.) for this coast calls it Grain Coast a translation of 'Pepper Coast' or more specifically of Malaguetta (pepper) coast.⁵ The similarity of names makes him to locate, on this coast the kingdom of Melli, and, within it Bitonin; due to the confusion with Leo Africanus' list of kingdoms at the Niger we cannot take this as a definite reference to any existing political unit. But in contrast to his statement about territorial kingdoms Marees lists a number of villages along the coast which figure as the main places for Malaguetta trade: Rio Chestes, Sanguin, Bofoe, Bottowa, Synno, Goayva or Goyaua.⁶ All of those, which probably received their names from neighboring rivers, can still be identified today - in rivers as well as settlements - and might be an indication for a chain of independent or loosely confederated settlements. Furthermore, he notices that the dialects differ slightly from place to place and that their 'kings or headman of their places rule them with severity and hold their people in great subjection'.⁷

In the year following de Marees' account, the Dutch West India Company, founded in 1600, seems to have operated the ship trade in ivory and pepper from its trading post at Cape Mount and, possibly later, from a fort at River Cestos.⁸

⁵ Towerson "so that this day we tooke not by estimation above one hundred weight of Graines, by means of their Captaine, who would suffer no man to sell anything but through his hands and at his price; he was so subtile, that for a bason (pewter) hee would not give 15 pound weight of Graines, and sometimes would offer us small dishfulls, whereas before we had baskets full, and when he saw that wee would not take them in contentment the Captaine departed, and caused all the rest of the boates to depart, thinking belike that wee would have followed them, and have given them their own askings."

J.Hakluyt, ed. 1904, The first voyage made by Master W.Towerson to the Coast of Guinea in the Yere 1555, 184-85

⁶ Pieter de Marees, *Beschryvinghe ende historische Verhael vant Gout Koninckrijk van Guinea*, Amsterdam, 1602, Linschoten Vereeniging Ed. vol V, 1912,

⁷ original text "de Inwoonders staen onder hunnen Oversten, die sy noemen Taba, ende seyn seer onderdanich, om zyn gebodt naer te komen. De Coninghen ofte Oversten van hunne Vlecken, houden seer hunne graviteyt ende regieren seer strang ende houden hun gemeente in groote subjectie; hun tael die sie spreken is op d' een plats ongelijker als op den ander", Marees, 12

⁸ Vijf Dagregisters van Elmina 1645-47, ed. Linschoten Vereeniging 1953, Intro. LXXIII, indicates that there was a trading post at Cape Mount, from where one traded at Cestos, cf. *ibid* p.11 footnote

I. Introduction

In Kru society the following levels can be distinguished:

- the household
- the lineage, a group of households settling in the same place
- the patriclan, (pātō) a group of lineages, extending over a non-contiguous territory
- the sub-tribe, a more or less autonomous tribal segment of several clans
- the tribe, (dakō) as a linguistic and political entity
- a confederation of tribes, sharing the same tradition origin and migratory history

Socio-political control is vested into household heads and elders for the first 3 levels, and into a assembly of elders and officers at the tribal level. At the confederation level control is largely religious and vested in oracles and their priests. Nevertheless, to each of these levels corresponds a set of practices associated with supernatural forces protecting and preserving the members of society. The following chapters are concerned with the composition and history of the various Kru tribes (dak), whereas the last chapter is concerned with the beliefs which hold several tribes together at the local but also at the supra-tribal level.

II. Pre-Nineteenth Century Sources

The early sources show an apparent lack of reference to polities and political organization for the area which is today inhabited by Kru speakers, formerly called the Malagueta, Grain- or Windward Coast. Where there are such references we are often left in doubt about the ethnic identity of the groups referred to. Therefore, we have to assume that the references in fact do refer to the ancestors of the present Kru-speakers.¹

The first such reference to peoples inhabiting the coast is in Duarte Pacheco Pereira': from River Cestos on the area is inhabited for about 25 leagues (ca. 150 km) by the Zeguebos while the area around Cape Palmas is inhabited by 'Egvorebos'² The latter appears again on slightly different spelling as 'Signorebo' in other seventeenth century sources.³

Ethnographic information from those sources teaches us that the inhabitants of this stretch of the coast are "uncircumcised and go naked, are idolatrous without any doctrine or belief; they are great fishermen and fish 2-3 miles out in the sea in their boats. 4)⁴

The commercial relations between the early Europeans and the coastal peoples will be dealt with in another paper.

Towerson, anchoring with his ship in River Sanguin in 1555 remarks that all barter had to go through the hands of the 'Captains' called Diago or also Dabo, who fixed the prices. Upon his

¹ The common traditions of migration of the Kru tribes have been summarized in chapter VI

² Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, ed. by R. Mauny (1956), R. Mauny, *Côte Occidentale d'Afrique vers 1506-1508*, Bissao 110-111

³ Otto von der Groeben, D. Ruyters, Pimentel

Bp. Payne (Payne 1851) attempts an etymological explanation of the name:

" the Greboes emigrated probably 150 years ago to the territories now occupied by them on the Leeward Coast. The point of their debarkation was just below Grand Bereby. They lived a short distance from the coast and constituted part of a tribe still living in that region, and known as the Worebo", which he derives from wore, 'to capsize'.

⁴ 667, 669

Andreas Massing, not to quote without author's permission
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