

# THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF GHANA FIGURATIVE ART—OCCASIONAL PAPERS 1 — 5

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# NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

- i. Contributions are invited on subjects pertaining to the collections in the National Museum.
- Prospective authors can obtain "Notes to Contributors" from The Editor, P.O. Box 3343, Accra.
- Contributors will receive ten copies of the Occasional Papers in which their articles are published.

#### NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mr. R. B. Nunoo is the Director of Ghana Museums and Monuments, and the rest are Assistant Curators of the same institution.

#### PUBLICATIONS OF GHANA MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS BOARDS

- Reports on Forts and Castles of Ghana.
- 2. Museum Handbook

The drawing on the front cover is that of a brass weight used for weighing gold dust. It shows the figure of a man scraping the bark of a tree, to be used for medicinal purposes, and at the same time collecting the scrapings in a bowl on his knee. It symbolises the Akan saying Biako were adure a egu: If one person does the scraping and the collecting at the same time, he is bound to lose some of the scrapings (free translation); and so the significance of this saying is that one needs the assistance of other people.

### CONTENTS

I	Page		
INTRODUCTION			
By R. B. Nunoo	3		
SOME TERRACOTTA FIGURES IN THE GHANA NATIONAL MUSEUM			
By Barbara Priddy	6		
FLUTES FROM THE NORTH- ERN AND UPPER REGIONS OF GHANA			
By Dzagbe Cudjoe	8		
EUROPEAN - INSPIRED AKAN GOLDWEIGHTS			
By Allen Bassing	15		
SOME WOODEN FIGURES IN THE NATIONAL COLLEC- TIONS			
By Kwasi Myles	23		
NOTE ON TWO TOBACCO PIPES FROM ASSIN, CENTRAL REGION			
By Kwasi Myles	28		

#### INTRODUCTION

THE ARTICLES contained in this publication are an attempt to high-light some of the objects to be found in the National Museum and other places which have played or still play a significant role in the life of the community. It is an effort made to satisfy the long-felt need of the scholar, the research student and the general public. It is rather unfortunate that there has been such a long delay, but there have been many factors that have militated against the accomplishment of this task; the most telling one concerns the staff situation, the absence of adequate competent staff, and the vast amount of curatorial work there is to be done in a museum which is still quite new. With the situation beginning to change, it has become possible to give expression to our burning desire to start the 'Museum Occasional Paper'. The first issue for one or two reasons has had to take this present small format, but there is every hope that the subsequent issues will be an improvement on this one, thus becoming an indispensable paper to scholars interested in the fields of study with which this periodical is concerned. Some of the objects dealt with in this issue have been in vogue since the 17th century, if not earlier, for example the terracotta figures and the tobacco pipes. In discussing certain aspects of such objects therefore the authors have had to rely on oral traditions and the few scanty and sketchy literature they could lay hands on. The effort taken is worthwhile and these discussions should undoubtedly go a long way to shed some light on the history and the cultural life of the community which used the objects.

For the general public the 'Museum Occasional Paper' is meant to underline the importance of the message or the history which specimens in the Museum have to tell: it shows that such a message or history is just as important as the specimen itself. The Museum stands in dire need of the co-operation of the general public in the task of collecting both objects and information to make the publication of the 'Museum Occasional Paper' and other similar documents possible. Past experience indicates that such co-operation will be forthcoming.

R. B. NUNOO

Director,

Museums and Monuments.

ACCRA. 1ST OCTOBER, 1970.



A Chief and Queenmother, Ohene and Ohemaa.



Attendants (Left to Right): Linguist, Okyeame; Horn-blower, Abentyenni; Drummer, Okyerema; Announcer, Esen.

# FLUTES FROM THE NORTHERN AND UPPER REGIONS OF GHANA

The Ghana National Museum possesses an assorted collection of flutes from the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana. These instruments are to be classified as 'notched flutes' i.e. the breath is directed against a 'U' or 'V' shaped notch cut in the upper rim of the instrument. (Baines, 1961: 48). In many cases the tribe of origin has unfortunately not been recorded. However, the museum collection includes examples of flutes and signal whistles from the Isala, Builsa, Gurunsi, Dagari, Dagomba, Kusasi and Wala areas. The forms which these musical instruments take are by no means typical only of Northern Ghana and occur over a very much wider area. 1\*

Flutes enjoy more popularity as musical instruments in the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana than anywhere else in this country. (Nketia: 1962a: 94). They are most commonly constructed out of bamboo or reeds, or are carved out of a solid block of wood.

Professor Nketia has pointed out a tendency to use certain instruments (including flutes) in what he describes as 'homogenous ensembles' or in 'limited combinations' in which one form of instrument predominates. They may also be employed to produce 'noises-off'. The range of these flutes is not likely to exceed an octave in practice and some instruments can only produce from two to four notes. (Nketia: 1962b: 44).

Flutes and whistles are frequently mentioned in the older literature on this area but almost always without any nearer definition as to the type of flute or the occasion of its use. But questions such as whether the instrument was used on secular and/or ceremonial occasions, whether it was played by both sexes or was the prerogative of only one sex and whether there is any mythology surrounding the instruments are questions of great importance. (Hornborstel: 1933: 277).

Although musical instruments from the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana are now receiving the attention of musicologists they have seldom been described in their sociological or historical context. One is perhaps apt to overlook the fact that all musical instruments belong to the sphere of both material and mental culture.

Flutes are used for both personal as well as community music-making and are played either as solo instruments or as an accompaniment to the voice and/or dancing. The Builsa are known to employ ensembles of six or seven flutes and drums in certain of their dances. (Nketia: 1962b: 48). Professor Nketia mentions that the Frafra (more accurately known as the Nankanse) and the Kassena play pipes for their own personal enjoyment, (Nketia: 1962a: 6) and Klages (1953) describes the young boys in the area around Navrongo as riding on the backs of their cattle and playing upon self-constructed bamboo flutes.

Flutes in this part of Ghana are not solely employed in music-making but are also used as a means of signalling among the Nankanse, Kassena and Builsa. Among the west Dàgbámbá (popularly known as Dagomba) signal whistles are called wihé whilst among the east Dàgbámbá they are known as yù hé. (Benzing: 1969: 39).

The Kassena and Builsa can whistle by pipe as well as by mouth and are able to convey such messages as 'I am going to market', 'bring me my pipe' and 'I have lost my white cow'. (Cardinall, 117) Rattray (1932: 173) mentions that among the Gurensi (often referred to as Nankanni or Nankanse) whistle-blowers sound the praises of a successful hunter which is considered to be a great honour.

<sup>(1) \*</sup> I am grateful to Professor Kwabena Nketia of the Institute of African Studies, Legon for identifying these intruments as notched flutes.

# SOME TERRACOTTA FIGURES IN THE GHANA NATIONAL MUSEUM

In the Akan-speaking areas of Southern Ghana it has long been the custom to make, for the funeral of an important person, terracotta heads, pots with lids surmounted by figures or free standing terracotta figures. Reindorf, in his History of the Gold Coast and Asante, tells the story of Nyako Kwaku, King of Agona, probably in the late eighteenth century, and his mother's funeral: "It is customary before the funeral ceremony to make figures or statues of the deceased, either of clay or wood, which are placed under a shed outside the town, and honoured by daily meat offerings. But these meals are devoured by mice and lizards. Nyako objected to this placing the statue of his mother and the meals on the road; he said, 'Spirits are like winds, and therefore the spirit of my mother can enjoy the meal anywhere else than on the road'. He accordingly ordered wooden pegs to be fixed in a large silk-cotton tree near the town, by means of which the tree could be ascended and the statue and meals placed on top of the tree."

These figures are always made by old women, past the age of child-bearing: for a young woman to do such work would impair or destroy her fertility. There are a few old ladies, whose family duty and privilege it has always been, still working. One of the last was Madem Abena Gwu of Agona Asafo, who is known to have been working in the late 1930s. Her work is represented in the museum collections by a group of large scated or standing figures, some over 50 cm. high, representing members of the royal family and their attendants: Ohene, the chief: Ohemaa, the queenmother: Okyeame, the linguist: Esen, the announcer: Okyerema, the drummer: Abentyenni, the horn-blower. These were made in 1956 specially for the museum and are identical with those which would actually be used in the funeral rites of a chief. Two other figures, collected in 1955, are of a company chief, asafohene, and a chief's sister's son, heir apparent to the stool.

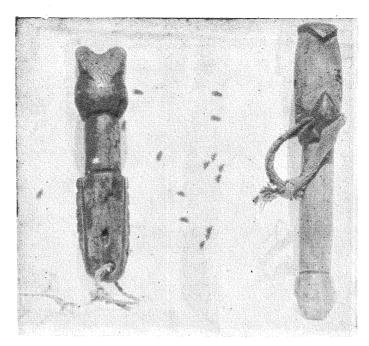
The typical costume of each figure is minutely reproduced: for example, the chief's sandals, necklace, armlets, head-band, state sword and state chair.

The style of the sculpture is columnar—long cylindrical limbs and bodies, with long slit mouths and eyes. In them can be seen the stylised ideals of Akan beauty: oval heads tilted backwards to show a high wide forehead; long, heavily wrinkled necks; prominent buttocks. The style is, as far as is known, unique to the potter, and can be recognised in several figures from Eastern Region in the possession of the museum, collected in 1967 and 1969. The history of these is not certainly known, but it is perfectly possible for a potter with a wide reputation to receive orders from a distant town.

The details of funerary rites vary from area to area, but in general the terracottas are displayed during the preliminary rites. In the final rites on the 40th day, they are taken to the part of the cemetery known as the *asensie*, or place of pots, where offerings of food and water are made to the ancestors at the annual ceremonies.



Company Chief, Asafohene, and Chief's Nephew, Heir to the stool.



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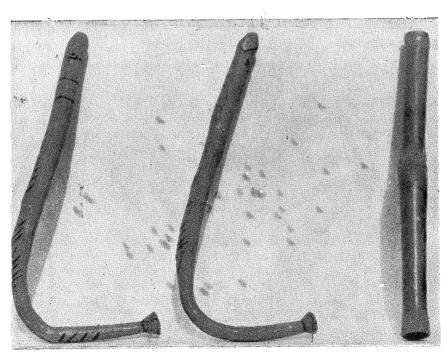
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Flutes decorated with carved patterns. L-R 62, 1330B, 54.20.5



Drumstick-whistles and Reed Flute. L—R 1776, 1787a, 1777.

I have mentioned these various uses of 'flutes' 'pipes' and 'whistles' (terms which are often used interchangeably) to show some of the various contexts in which these instruments are played.

Whistles can also be assigned an important role in religious life among the Nankanse. It is believed that before birth every man and woman has an audience with God at which he or she is allowed to choose his or her own fate. After the person is born into this world the decisions taken at that meeting are revealed by a diviner. It is then important to try and gain control over the divine spirit which is in a way the persons destiny. To achieve this end shrines known simply as *yini* (god) are erected. They are extremely common and almost everyone erects one. A *yini* shrine can be almost anything: a tree, a stone, a pot, a wild animal, a fish or even interestingly enough a wooden whistle. (Rattray: 1932: 288).

For the sake of convenience I have divided the Ghana National Museum's collection of notched flutes from the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana into the following categories:

- 1. notched flutes without decoration of any kind.
- 2. notched flutes decorated with 'burnt-in' patterns.
- 3. notched flutes decorated with carved patterns.
- 4. drumstick-whistles and reed flutes.
- I. notched flutes without decoration of any kind. (Plate I)
  - (a) acces. No. 1773. Tumu-Isala, Upper Region. Length 12.4cm. approx, 5 inch.
  - (b) acces. no. 62.1497. Northern Region. Length 17.2cm. 6 ins.
  - (c) acces. no. 54.357. Wa, Upper Region. Length 20.3 cm. approx. 8 ins.
  - (d) acces. no. 54.1548. Upper Region. Length 24.1 cm. approx. 9 ins.
  - (e) acces. no. 62.1277a. Paga, Upper Region. Around the middle of the instrument is a band of woven strips of hide to which is attached a loop made out of the same material. A removable bunch of bird's feathers has been inserted into the mouth of the instrument to prevent the entrance of dust and dirt. The feather brush is also used for cleaning puposes. Except for the mouth-piece the instrument has no other opening. Length 32 cm. approx. 12 ins.
- 2. Notched flutes decorated with 'burnt-in' patterns. (Plate II).
  - (a) acces. no. 1713. of unknown origin, possibly Kusasi. This flute is said to be used for producing dance music. Length 25.2cm. approx. 10 ins.
  - (b) acces. No. 1771. Gurensi. Length 21.0 cm. approx. 8 ins.
  - (c) acces. No. 1772. Builsa. Length 16 cm. approx.  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.
  - (d) acces. No. 62.1414a. Bolgatanga, Upper Region. Length 15.6 cm. approx.
  - (e) acces. No. 64.1216. Tamale, Northern Region. Length 16.6 cm. approx  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.
  - (f) acces. No. 1712. area of origin unknown. Length 14.2 cm. approx. 5½ ins.
  - (g) acces. No. 66.1039. Tamale, Northern Region. According to catalogue information this flute is played for dancing at festivals. It is known as Yua. Does Yua=Yuwa? in which case it was also probably used as a signal flute. (Benzing: 1969: 39). Length 13.9 cm. Approx. 5½ ins.
  - (h) acces. No. 54.404. Burufu, Upper Region. This instrument is used for signalling particularly when hunting. Length 10.3 cm. approx. 4 ins.

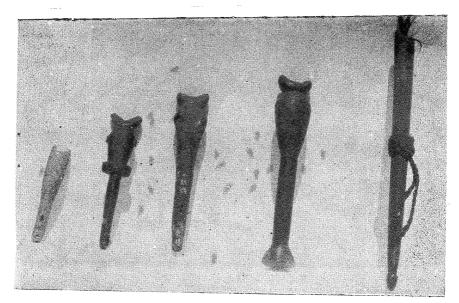
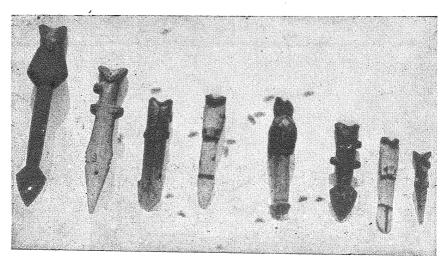


PLATE I. Notched flutes without decoration. L—R 1773, 62.1497, 54.357, 54.1548, 62.1277a.



Notched Flutes decorated with "Burnt-in" patterns. L—R 1713, 1771, 1772, 62.1414a, 64.1216, 1712, 66.1039, 54.405.

- 3. Notched flutes decorated with carved patterns. (Plate III).
- (a) acces. No. 62.1330b. No details as to the origin of this instrument. The decoration is very simple and consists of carved lines more or less emphasizing the shape of the instrument. The lower edges are slightly notched. Length 17.3 cm. Approx. 7 ins.
  - (b) acces. No. 54.205. No information as to the flute's origin. Donated by the Bawku Naba. This flute is decorated on the upper portion by carved geometric patterns to which no application of a red-hot instrument has been made. The loop is of locally woven cotton material. Length 21.6 cm. approx. 8\frac{1}{2} ins.
- 4. Drumstick-whistles and reed flutes. (Plate IV).
  - (a) acces. No. 1776. Builsa. Length 36.5 cm. approx.  $14\frac{1}{2}$ ins.
  - (b) acces. No. 1787a. Builsa. Length 35cm. approx. 14 ins. These instruments are both drumsticks and notched flutes. The flat knob-like end is used to beat the drum. At the opposite end is the mouthpiece of the flute. The drummer uses the instrument as a drumstick occasionally blowing into it to produce a few notes of flute music. This is thus a 'dual-purpose' instrument. They are both decorated with geometric designs which have been blackened by the application of a hot instrument.
  - (c) acces. No. 1777. Upper Region. Length 34 cm. approx. 14 ins. The flute is made from a section of guinea corn stalk. A semi-circle has been cut out of the upper end. On the lower front of the instrument are three finger holes. According to catalogue information both ends are blocked with soap (this has since disappeared) but it was apparently more usual to employ guinea-corn or millet flour paste for this purpose.

It is to be hoped that in the future more attention will be paid by musicologists to the criteria employed by the people themselves in judging what constitutes 'good' playing and composition when employing flutes or any other instruments for that matter. It is only when such criteria are known and understood that one will be able to successfully incorporate these instruments in new types of music which will be truly Ghanaian in essence.

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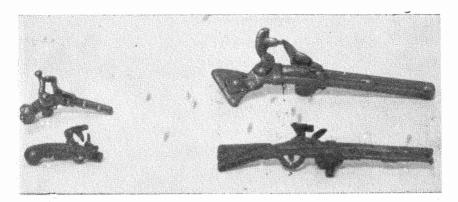
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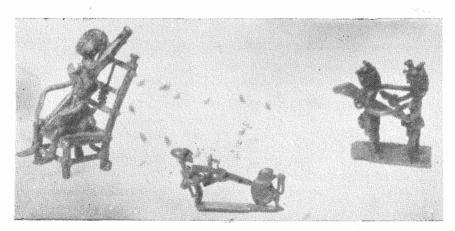
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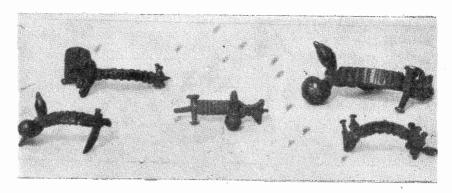
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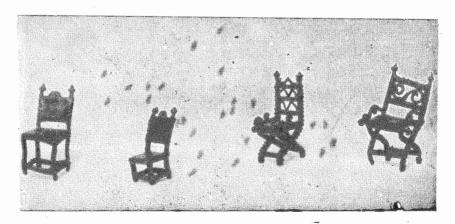
Flintlock pistols and muskets



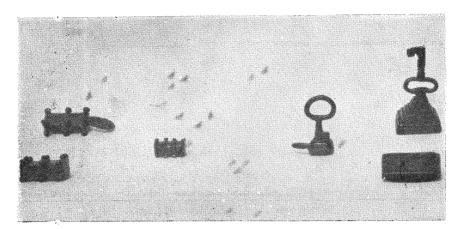
Hunters and warriors using flintlock weapons



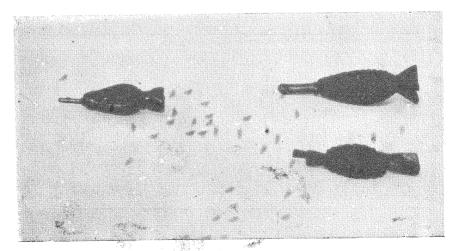
Cartridge-helts



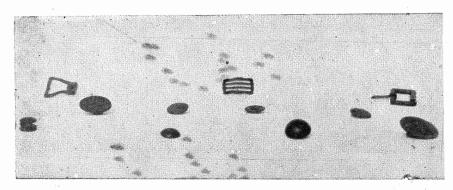
Chairs



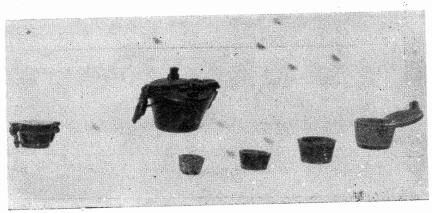
Chest, keys and lock



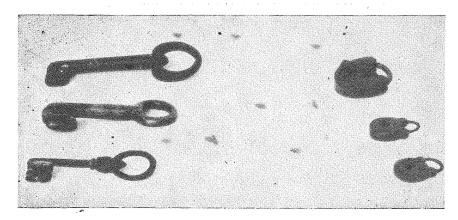
Bellows



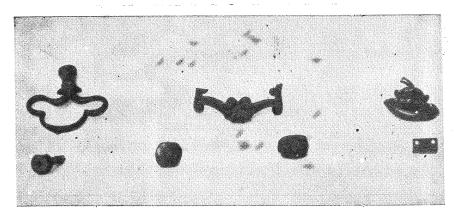
Top row — buckles
Middle row — buttons
Bottom row — a cufflink and buttons



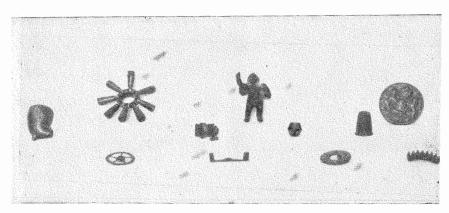
Nesting Weights



Keys and padlocks



Top row — furniture drawer handles. Bottom row — left to right, container-lid handles, a decorative mounting, a hinge.



Top row — umbrella spoke section, angel, medallion. Middle row — pipe bowl, ring, glass bead, thimble. Bottom row — watch and clock gears and parts.

#### (e) Chairs—(Plate V)

Wooden chairs, of two types, were made for royalty for the most part. One type was modelled on a European chair that had a square base and no arm rests. The other type, with an X-shaped base and armrests, took its design from sixteenth; century Portuguese, Spanish and Italian chairs. Both types had hide or wooden seats their backs were of hide or of wooden slats arranged in a distinctive pattern. Chairs were generously studded with brass or copper round-headed nails and decorated with thin sheets of brass or other metals that might be cut into a pattern or cover certain parts of the wooden frame.

### (f) Keys and locks—(Plate VI right side)

People of the then Gold Coast were intrigued by European locks, previously being familiar only with Arab locks of a different type. Locks and keys were highly prized as charms and were, of course, also used for what they were originally intended.

#### (g) Strong-boxes and travelling chests—(Plate VI left side)

Leather-covered wooden boxes fitted with locks and decorated with round-headed brass nails.

#### (h) Bellows—(Plate VII)

Of hide and wood, part of the goldsmith's equipment; it is possible that the type of bellows shown in the plate may have been based on European models.

#### II. Actual European objects that functioned as weights.

#### (a) Brass buckles, buttons and cuff-links—(Plate VIII)

Some can be identified as having come from England or Holland. Two of the buttons (second row, left side of plate) have the elephant and castle emblem of an English trading firm—the African Company. (This Company was started in England as a Company of Merchants in 1750 and it appointed agents to supervise forts and trade on the coast. It was abolished in 1821).

### (b) Nesting weights—(Plate IX)

These weights were specifically imported for weighing gold dust and nuggets.

## (c) Locks and Keys—(Plate X)

Very small and rather fragile in appearance, these locks were popular trade items. The keys are old door and strong box keys that had fallen into disuse.

# (d) Brass drawer handles, furniture hinges and decorative mountings and container handles—(Plate XI)

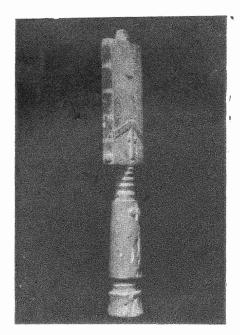
Most of these had originally been attached to European manufactured imported furniture. The handles (bottom row, left side) were part of the lids for brass storage receptacles.

### (e) Miscellaneous objects, mainly of brass—(Plate XII)

Medallions, pipe bowls, watch and clock gears, thimbles, glass and metal beads, umbrella parts, rings, hair brush handles, coins, magnets, gun flints.

#### (f) Unidentified objects, mainly of brass-

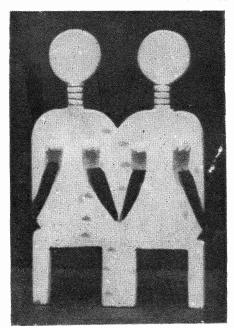
Their European origin is obvious from their design and method of manufacture.



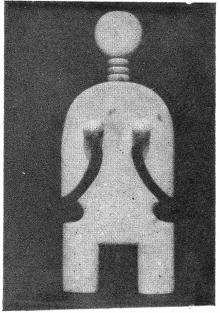
Akuaba doll from Nkukuabuoho, Ashanti Region



Doll from Adonkwanta, near Kukurantumi, E.R.



Twin doll from Accra



Single doll from Accra

III. Figures of Europeans.

Examples of this type are rare. The only two figures published have been identified by Mrs. Margaret Plass. These are male figures with sharp noses, wearing broad-brimmed hats rather in the style of the Australian bush-hat. One of the figures is seated on a European-type chair with one hand on his hat. The other is standing holding a blunder-buss.

#### IV. European ships.

Only one example of this type is known, according to Mrs. Plass. A small ship, simplified in details, looking much like a dugout canoe, but having a bow, stern, ladder, crow's-nest, and lines for sails.

# SOME WOODEN FIGURES IN THE NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

Wooden objects usually do not keep long in tropical climates; and the figures under discussion have not been excavated, but collected from people. This does not mean that wooden objects cannot be preserved in the soil, they can, under certain soil conditions. These conditions must be total and stable, and can be either wet or dry. In spite of their comparatively short age, these wooden figures help us to understand some aspects of the past. For example, some of the artistic styles such as flat heads and long necks embellished with circles found on clay figures also occur on wooden ones. And, as in the case of clay figurines, some of these wooden figures are used in connection with shrines.

It must be remembered that wood as a raw material for carving presents its own peculiar problems. In the first place, it is cylindrical in form and has to be shaped into the form the carver desires. In the second place, carving involves the use of sharp iron tools. Compared with clay figures which can be moulded by a potter with the aid of relatively simple equipment, beautiful wooden carvings can be regarded as a mark of technological progress.

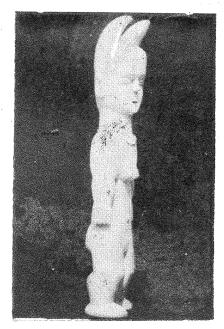
#### **DOLLS**

One of the objects by which the art world has known this country is the akuaba doll. (Plate I, A & B). A tradition explains how the objects got their name, once there was a woman who for a long time had no child, and wanted one badly. The medicine man she consulted asked her as part of his prescription to have a beautiful wooden doll made which she would carry on her back. She did this and had a baby; the woman was called Akua, hence Akua-ba which means Akua's child. There is a general belief that a pregnant woman should not look at anything that is ugly or awful; thus if she had a beautiful wooden doll to look at she is likely to have a child as beautiful as the doll. It is very easy to understand the Akuaba legend which was perhaps later developed into one of helping a pregnant woman to have a pretty baby.

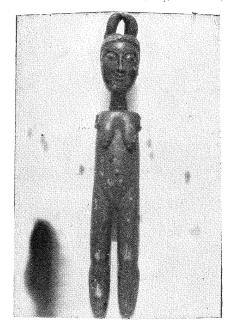
The traditional Akuaba (Plate IA) has a flat, oval head with a relatively long neck decorated with circles, the arms are short and outstretched and the rest of the body is stylized and roughly cylindrical. Only details of the face are shown; and it is adorned with beads. This type of wooden statuette is in form similar to ankh, the ancient Egyptian symbol of life: T-shaped with a loop above the horizontal bar. It has been argued that this similarity in form indicates that the Akuaba was derived from Ancient Egypt. Even if this interpretation seems far-fetched, there is the question of the wooden stool which has a rectangular base and a concave seat and is similar in form to the headrest found in Anciant Egyptian tombs, and until



Kla figure from Osudoku



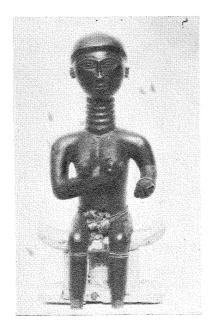
Kla figure from Osudoku



Prosperity figure from Koforidua, E.R.



Male figure from Wechiau, N.R.



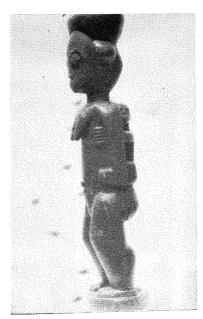
Mother feeding Child (Th**e chi**ld carved separately is missing)



Mother feeding child, probabiy from Krobo, E.R.



Mother feeding child, from Awiobo, Eastern Nzima, W.R



Mother carrying child from Zuarungu, U.R.

recently known to have been used among some communities in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa.

There is another type of doll (Plate IB) which has an oblong head, a long neck and the rest of the body cylindrical, but this has no arms. Like the one with a flat head, this type has only the facial details shown and is also adorned with beads. Though some of this type must have been used with a shrine, many of the two types were used by little girls as playthings. In some rural parts of this country little girls start with a plantain finger, usually a twin one, as a doll. Later they have wooden dolls made for them, not always by professional carvers. Some of these dolls show adaptations of the traditional form, being carved in greater detail and having legs and arms.

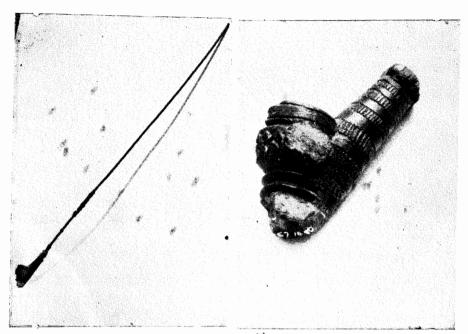
From Accra district three very interesting wooden figures were collected some years back: (Plate I C & D.) They are all flat with the arms hanging down on the sides of the body, and the lower limbs astride; they are stylized: no details—not even facial such as eye-brows—are shown except the breasts. They are not adorned with beads. One of them (Plate IC) is a twin doll, and the other two are single, and they are all said to have been played with by children. Two Osudoku figures (Plate II A & B) called kla meaning soul were also collected some years ago. Both of them have their arms adhering to the sides of the body. One of them has its plaits of hair arranged on the sides and back of the head, leaving the top part of the head bare. It has three horizontal marks on each side of the mouth, and on one of the cheeks a group of marks roughly in the shape of the letter E. The other one has two plaits of hair like horns pointing forwards, and has no facial scarification.

So far I have been describing some of the main features and uses of little wooden figures from some parts of Southern Ghana. All these figures are single and represent females; their average height is about one foot or thirty centimetres. There are a few large figures, and others representing a group. Among the large figures is one over two feet or sixty centimetres high, hair arranged in four vertical tufts tied together at one end, and the entire figure is painted blue (Plate IIC). It was acquired at Koforidua and it is said to have been used by a 'medicine' man who claimed that anybody who played with it would become prosperous.

From Wechiau in the Northern Region comes a male figure about two feet or sixty centimetres high (Plate IID). It has a longitudinal crest representing hair and a bulging fore-head with the eyes more towards the temples. There is another large figure about one and a half feet or forty-five centimetres high, consisting of a mother seated on a chair feeding a child on her breast. (Plate IIIA). The mother's hair has been arranged in horizontal plaits and has an apparently mourning expression on the face. There are two other carvings of a mother seated on a stool feeding a child: they are both smaller than the one just described, being about nine inches or twenty-two centimetres high. One (Plate IIIB) is painted black, has the dansinkran hair-style, a typical Asante hair-do, and three horizontal marks on the cheek. The other Plate IIIC mother's head is painted black and all the other parts of the body and figures are painted white, and the mother and child are wearing beads including white beads. On each cheek of the mother is a group of four little marks and on the cheet are four groups of marks, each group consisting of five little marks.

There is another carving from Zuarungu of a mother carrying a baby on her back. Plate IIID. This is a large figure over two feet or sixty centimetres high and standing on a pedestal. The mother is carrying something like a pot, and the details of the baby's hands below her armpits are shown. These groups of mother and child figures may not be dolls, but perhaps represent the world-wide idea of Mother-Goddess: a typical example of this is the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis feeding her child Horus.

Wooden figures used as symbols and to express proverbs.



Clay tobacco pipe with wooden stem from Asin Damongo, Central Region.

The bowl alone



Brass tobacco pipe with wooden stem from Assin Worakese, Central Region.

Wooden figures frequently in groups and representing human beings, animals, birds, plants and other objects are often used as symbols or to express proverbs.

These figures appear on the following:

#### (a) Clan Staffs:

The Akans have seven main clans with sub-groups; and each clan has its own animal or bird which according to clan myths gave help to the ancestor of the clan or may symbolise a characteristic of the clan. For instance, members of the Anona clan represented by the parrot are believed to be as eloquent as the parrot. The clan staffs are painted and are often seen with the clan-head at funerals.

#### (b) Linguist staffs:

These have carved figures often decorated with gold foil which represent sayings. Two examples may be given:

- i. the figure of a man with the left hand holding the ear, and the first finger of the right hand beneath the right eye: this symbolises the saying "if you have not heard, can't you see?"
- ii. a figure of one man climbing a tree and another pushing him: this expresses the saying that if you do something worthwhile you always get supporters. It is said that on certain occasions a linguist staff is selected to convey a message.
- (c) Wooden figures are fitted on the top of the canopy of the large royal umbrellas to express sayings.

This use of wooden figures as a medium of expression is very important in a community which did not know how to write. Moreover these animals, plants and birds tell us the type of physical environment in which the human beings lived and the way in which these animals may have influenced the lives of the human beings.

# NOTE ON TWO TOBACCO PIPES FROM ASSIN, CENTRAL REGION

Tobacco pipes are one of the interesting groups of objects that throw light on trading relations between this country and the outside world. There are, broadly speaking, two main types: the imported pipe which is normally of a fine white clay and in one piece, and the locally made pipe which is in two pieces and often ornate. Some of the imported excavated types can provide useful dating material. Paul Ozanne, who studied tobacco pipes in this country, has classified those excavated in the Accra area and discussed the origins of the smoking habit in West Africa.

The two tobacco pipes under discussion are locally made and were collected during Museum field work in the Assin District. One interesting point is that in some of the Akan dialects there is a distinction between an imported tobacco pipe abua or abrobua and the local one taasen, literally tobacco vessel. The decorated clay pipes are said to have been used quite recently in some of the Akan-speaking areas by great chiefs on ceremonial occasions.

#### 1. A Clay tobacco pipe. Plate I A & B.

Clay bowl and stem is 9.01 cm or about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long; the stem and its terminal have panels of impressed decoration, apparently combpoint. The bowl which is partly broken has a diameter of about 2.5 cm. Below the rim is a shallow groove,



Tuvere from Assin Worakese, C.R.



Remains of brass working furnace at Assin Worakese, C.R.

and on the body of the bowl is an elaborate excised decoration. The bowl has a double base. The bowl and the stem make an acute angle and both are on a common base which is partly broken. The clay is dark grey and well-fired.

The wooden stem 98.5 cm or about 40 inches long has a diameter of 4 mm; the surface is smooth and there is a split towards one end. On the opposite end which is presumably for inserting into the clay stem, are finely-woven local fibre, traces of cloth and imported cotton thread; these are said to have been gilded.

According to the donor, Nana Ata Kwaw, head of the Asakyiri clan of Assin Damang, this ceremonial tobacco pipe belonged to Nana Nyako Antwi. A list of Damang and Foso chiefs provided by Nana Nyako Antwi Ababio, a great nephew of the owner of the pipe, puts him (the owner) fourth of the ren chiefs who have ruled in these two towns. Until more information from oral traditions is obtained, it is not possible to date this pipe. However it is interesting as the first find in the National Collections of a tobacco pipe with its wooden stem.

#### 2. A Brass Tobacco Pipe. Plate I C

The brass bowl with stem, 5.8 cm or about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, is made of cast brass. It has decorations of three embossments, panels and lines. The wooden stem is 8.7 cm or about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and a little under 1 cm wide.

It is significant that this brass tobacco pipe, one of two in the National Collections up to date, comes from Assin Worakese where there are remains of a furnace for brass working. The other one comes from Akan Asafo in the Volta Region. A tuyere, plate II A, a clay pipe used in smelting, 26.5 cm or about 10½ inches long with diameter of 4 cm was collected from here; and an old man in his eighties said when he was young he assisted his grandfather who used the furnace. Plate II B.

Ozanne, P. C. 1969, The diffusion of smoking in West Africa, ODU, 29-42.