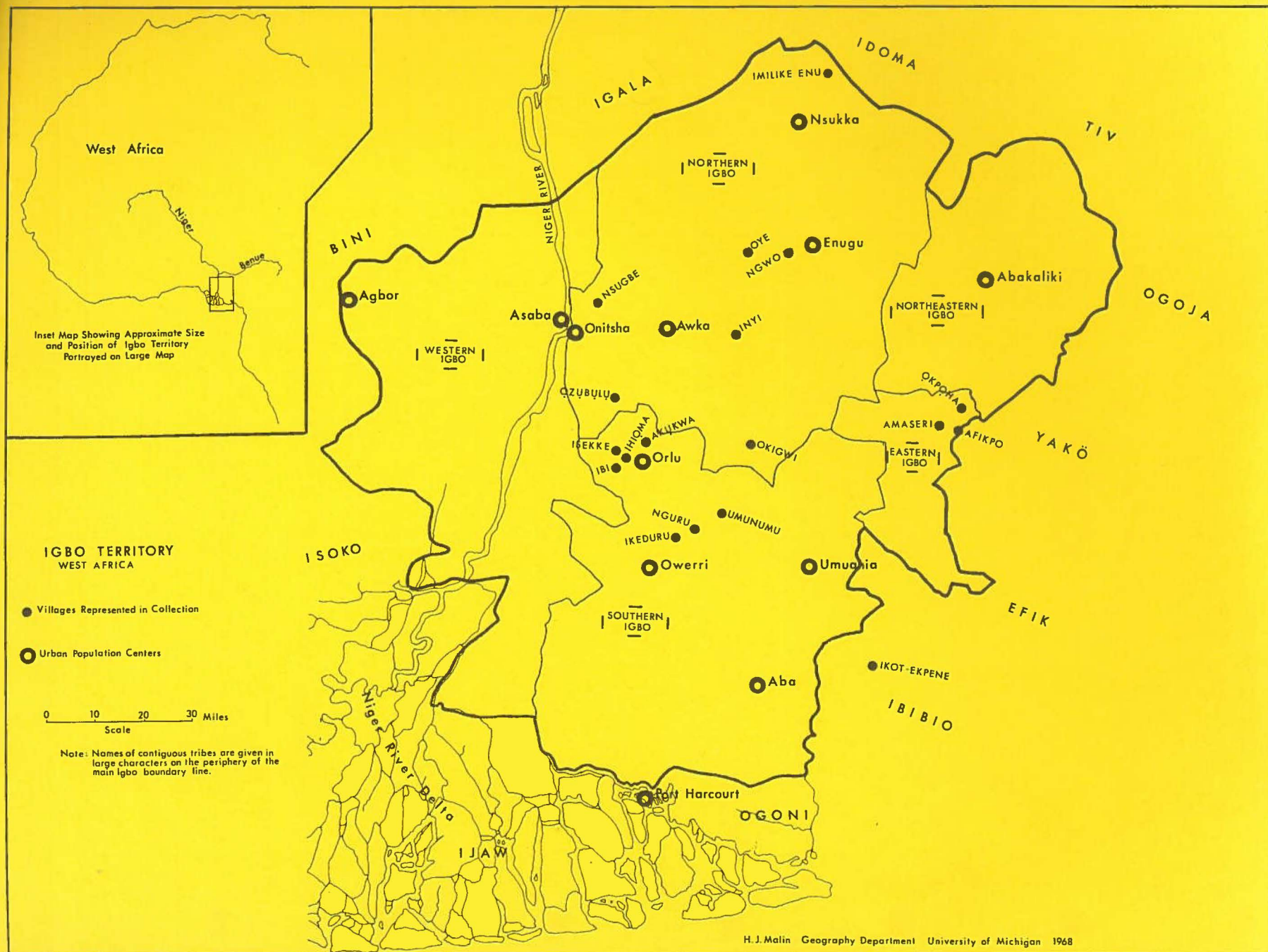




TRADITIONAL
IGBO ART
1966



TRADITIONAL IGBO ART: 1966

An Exhibition of Wood Sculpture
Carved in 1965-66
From the Frank Starkweather Collection

August 15 through October 27, 1968

Museum of Art
University of Michigan

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FOREWORD

Nigeria, a young African nation, is in violent civil war at this time of writing. Famine and bombs beset the people of eastern Nigeria, who have named their landlocked secessionist state Biafra. These people are mainly Igbo; most Biafran leaders are Igbo. Together with other African peoples, the Igbo are caught up in the travail of the modern world. The coming year is a fateful one. It may determine whether they face extermination as a people or achieve a viable existence, either through reconciliation with other peoples of Nigeria or as a separate state.

To know the agony of Biafra we need only read each day's news. But there is a lamentable gap between our knowing these appalling events and knowing the fundamentals: who the Igbo are, how they live, how they view their world.

To narrow this gap somewhat, the Department of Anthropology and the Museum of Art have joined to sponsor this exhibition on Traditional Igbo Sculpture: 1966 at the University of Michigan. The undertaking is joint, on the premise that each field - anthropology and art - contributes something to enhance the materials of the other. The wood-carvings on exhibit, produced by Igbo craftsmen, illuminate their outlook on each other and on the world with a directness unmatched by any outsider's interpretation. Yet their outlook is expressed in idioms unfamiliar to us, idioms in harmony with their own traditional society. To catch what they are saying we should know who the carvers and their audience are, when and how these works play a part in their lives, and what premises lie behind their creation. The function of this catalogue is to provide this information, to furnish a key to the unfamiliar aesthetic idiom represented in the masks and figures on view in the Museum. Catalogue and exhibition are two inseparable parts of a whole: we scrutinize the society to understand its art, while we examine the art to comprehend the society.

A fortunate opportunity makes this exhibition possible. Most of the pieces are from the collection of Mr. Frank Starkweather, who sought out carvers while he worked among the Igbo as a member of the Peace Corps, 1965-66. Permission from the Nigerian

government enabled him to bring specimens to the United States and to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he has continued his research on the arts of West Africa while enrolled in the Anthropology program of the Graduate School of The University of Michigan. This exhibition and its catalogue are among the products of this research.

African arts are increasingly represented in museum and private collections of the United States. Notable among others in Michigan is the collection of former Governor and present Ambassador to the Philippines G. Mennen Williams, of which he has recently donated large portions to the Detroit Institute of Arts and elsewhere. Such collections gradually familiarize us with the enormous range of African arts, especially in wood and metal. A particular asset of the present small collection on exhibition is its careful representation of the entire range of work within a single, fairly homogeneous community of a single people - the Igbo town of Afikpo - although the exhibition also presents works from a wider area for comparison.

Costs of the exhibition and catalogue have been met by the Department of Anthropology and the Museum of Art, supplemented by a grant from the University of Michigan Office of Academic Affairs. This exhibition, though intended like others for public information and enjoyment, is an exercise in research and training. Mr. Starkweather has worked under supervision from both sponsoring units. Staff members have given attention, assistance, and advice most generously. Appreciation of financial support and other assistance is acknowledged, especially to Professor William D. Schorger, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, Professor Charles H. Sawyer, Director of the Museum of Art, Professor Paul L. Grigaut, Associate Director of the same Museum, Mr. Donald Walters, and to Professor Allan F. Smith, Vice President for Academic Affairs. For technical assistance in catalogue design, we are indebted to Mr. Stanley K. Graham, Director of University Publications and Alumni Records.

Richard K. Beardsley
Department of Anthropology

July 15, 1968

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INTRODUCTION

Ibo is the English word for Igbo, the name of a West African people and their language. The digraph "gb" represents a single sound, an implosive "b" in Igbo speech as distinct from the explosive "b" of English. English speakers usually substitute their normal "b" pronouncing the name "Ee-bow", plural "Ee-bowz".

The Igbo People

The Igbos live in the forest and meadowland immediately north of the Niger River Delta. Their numbers are estimated to be over seven millions, ranking them with the Yoruba and Hausa people of Nigeria as the most populous in Africa. Over one million Igbos live west of the Niger River where they have been historically influenced by the Kingdom of Benin. The majority of Igbos live east of the Niger, however. They occupy a territory known in 1965 as the Eastern Region of Nigeria, and in 1966 as the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. In May 1967 the peoples of this area, mainly Igbo, declared themselves the independent Republic of Biafra, a declaration still being contested militarily by Nigeria at the time of this writing (July, 1968).

Historically the Igbos never developed centralized kingdoms as in Benin or large urban centers as in Yoruba country. Before the British Colonial Government (1900) the highest Igbo political authority was the village group, numbering as large as 5,000. The Igbos consist of over 200 autonomous groups with significant variation in dialects, customs, and social institutions from place to place.

Dwelling in the forest, or in zones where the forest has been cut, most Igbos come from families of farmers. The major staple is the root crop known locally as yam. Igbos have developed such skill in the production of yams that they export large quantities to their neighbors. From the ubiquitous palm tree the farmers harvest the palm fruit. This is processed into palm oil, the major cash crop, exported in large quantity to Europe.

Before European contact the Igbo people had constructed no cities. The population was widely dis-

tributed throughout the land. But with the opening of trading stations and Pax Britannica, Igbo urban development began in earnest. By 1966 several modern cities over 100,000 in population had emerged. In the intervening years Igbo men and women founded trading networks which extended beyond the bounds of Nigeria into other West African nations. This call to trade was due in part to the pressure on the land. Population densities of over 800 per square mile exist in a zone extending through fifty miles of the Igbo heartland.

Christian missions entered Igbo land more than a century ago. Their influence has changed the society deeply. Hand in hand came the development of missionary primary and then secondary schools. Perhaps no other people in West Africa are so committed to a belief in formal education today. Where other peoples are producing trivial numbers of primary and secondary graduates, the Igbos have turned out surpluses. Igbo university students in Britain and America literally number in the thousands. They had dominated the technical and professional jobs in Nigeria by 1966.

Trading, Christianity, Western education and urbanization have undermined the old customs and beliefs. In the main, traditional explanations of the forces in the universe are no longer held to. The challenge mounted by Christianity on the one hand and science on the other has shredded the traditional religion into unintegrated fragments of belief which many challenge as superstition. Among the oldest generation there can be found many who adhere to their old ways as is true anywhere, but among the young educated generation these ways hold little influence.

As the religion changed so has the men's secret societies and the role of the masquerades they produced, which used masks of the type displayed in this exhibition. The following is a description of this society in an older traditional state based upon the major ethnological sources listed in the bibliography.

The Secret Men's Society: Mmọ

Membership. In traditional villages Igbo maintained a cult of the dead called Mmọ, a secret men's society. Mmọ is the name typical in Northern Igbo territory. In other locations other names are used. Recruits for the society were actively sought from influential families. No slaves or women were permitted membership. Candidates paid an admission fee and made appropriate sacrifices. Initiation into the lowest grade began with young boys around age ten. Their initiation ceremony revealed that the masqueraders, who were generally believed to be spirits, were really members in costume.

Membership in the lowest grade of the society allowed a youth to join the other members in the procession which followed the society's presentations. The masqueraders or their guides and guards would often chase or assault non-members, but they would not abuse members. Even though women were forbidden to see the masquerades they occasionally viewed them from a safe distance.

Not all of the secrets of the society were revealed to every member. The lowest grades were given probationary tests to see if they could keep certain secrets. If they proved trustworthy they were taught additional secrets such as special songs, names of the men in the costumes, and how the false voices were produced. Men retired from active membership in their early thirties, in part because the masquerades require the vigor and stamina of young men. The society maintained a lodge where ceremonies were held and where masks and costumes were stored.

Mmọ Society Functions. Because its members were young the society represented a considerable portion of the village's most strong and vigorous men. To these young men special tasks were assigned according to their grade. The most senior grade acted as the village police. The second grade performed at funeral ceremonies. The third grade performed at festivals while the junior boys pantomimed the main masquerades with masks and costumes of their own, out of the way, to serve as practice for the day when it would be their turn.

The Mmọ Police and the Ozo Society. There is a title society in most of Igbo land called Ozo which confers recognition of achievement and natural leadership upon the outstanding men of the community. To receive this Ozo title one must pay a large initiation fee which is distributed among the several members. By the time a man was able to accumulate such wealth and prestige he would be too old for active service in the Mmọ society. The council of the Ozo men was an influential one indeed. The responsibility for orderly observation of traditional custom and law was theirs. They ruled by decree, however, and it was the Mmọ society which carried out their bidding as the village police. This amounted to collecting fines, and punishing offenders of local law and order by beatings, damage to property or expulsion from the village. Mmọ were also the village executioners for capital offenses. In this regard they were the highest authority in the village.

These tasks of social control, including ridicule, violence and destruction, were carried out by the masquerades in traditional times. In the old context then, theirs were acts of the spirit world, and were tolerated as such. The victims did not dare unmask the masqueraders or call out his real name for that would be the most serious offense of all. A very violent death would follow immediately. This police function was the special domain of the highest grade of the society. They performed at night using unique noisemakers to signal the villagers to remain at home, so they would know where the offender was, and so their own movements would not be observed.

Burials and the Spirit World. The second Mmọ grade presented the masquerades for the induction ceremony into the spirit world. At death the physical body was buried amidst great mourning, but the soul is believed to remain among the villagers. A spirit wandering aimlessly about would cause mischief. If so, its descendants would be anxious lest it be damaged or driven off, and so deprive them of a crucial link with the spirit world. For this reason the family must see the spirit of the deceased inducted into ebe mmọ, the place of the spirits, as

soon as possible. This induction ceremony, erroneously called the second burial in English, is a time of great celebration and opulent feasting. Being a costly affair, it is reluctantly postponed after the burial until the family can afford it. When it is held the family spared no expense and incurred heavy debt. For wealthy families who have the money on hand to spend, the induction would be held with the burial.

The funeral is a matter of the flesh, so no masqueraders appear. The induction ceremony, however, is an affair of the soul. It is at this time that the masqueraders appear for the ceremonies of members of the society and for non-members if a fee is paid by the family. A mask described in this catalogue as serving for "burial" or "funeral" should be understood as actually appearing in this induction ceremony which permits the recent dead to join previous ancestors in the spirit world.

Festivals and Celebrations

Traditional Periodic Celebrations. Igbo festivals and celebrations are held for a great variety of reasons. The schedule of traditional annual festivals is geared to the crop cycle, which in turn hinges on the seasons. Since both men and women farm, the time of the villagers is consumed by planting once the rains of March to September begin to return. Clearing and burning brush, digging mounds and planting seeds is very strenuous work. There is little time or energy left over for other activities until the crops begin to grow. Traditional annual festivals punctuate the various stages of this seasonal-crop cycle. Once the crops begin to grow well and require less weeding, many villages hold wrestling matches, games, and dancing contests, but no masquerades.

Then, toward the end of the rainy season, the food from the previous harvest runs low. During this hunger period the village activities are greatly reduced. But once the farm work is completed and the food stores are replenished the festivals begin in earnest.

The tempo returns with the harvest feast, called the New Yam Festival which serves as a traditional

New Year's celebration. Masqueraders do appear in certain New Yam Festivals but not those in Afikpo town. Several harvest festivals may be held depending on the importance of various crops to different areas. It is at this time that the most elaborate masquerade plays and skits are performed.

A dry season festival is celebrated after the harvest festivals but before the Christmas holidays. As the rains begin to return a festival marks the passing of the dry season and the coming of the planting season. A few festivals are held on cycles much longer than one year.

New Annual Celebrations. Examples of annual celebrations introduced recently are Christmas and Easter. In addition certain national holidays are important and may bring out the masqueraders. Nigeria Republic Day, October 1, was such an occasion. The day of Biafran Independence, first declared on May 31, 1967, is almost certainly celebrated in a similar fashion. Previous to declaring the independence of Biafra, the Igbos also created a nationwide holiday which was an outgrowth of their growing ethnic identity. Igbo National Day was once celebrated in all of the cities of Nigeria by Igbo Improvement Unions. Such times were characterized by speeches, toasts, and dancing.

Life Cycle Celebrations. Traditional celebrations related to the life cycle are also important. Birth, burying of the umbilical cord under a tree especially planted for the child, and the first public viewing are examples. Others are naming ceremonies, puberty rites, initiation into the various grades of village societies, and marriage. Taking of titles in middle age, and reaching the status of elder in later age are also important points in the Igbo life cycle. At death the body is buried immediately but, later on, a feast is also held marking the entry of the soul into the spirit world. Masqueraders appear at this induction ceremony.

Celebrations are also liable to be held at random or spontaneous times. Offenses against the land deity, whenever they occur, require ceremonial attention. Election results or times of good news are

sure to be punctuated with festivities. A time for joy which is common in Igboland is the return of a village son from university training abroad. The completion of his education has been a joint financial investment, returns from which can now be expected. With a son in high places the family and village can expect to see government and private development money diverted for their benefit. For such spontaneous occasions the men's society is likely to bring out a masquerade enacting typical scenes from village life, the underlying theme of which is continuity and progress.

Some Annual Igbo Festivals. To demonstrate the great variety of periodic celebrations which the Igbo people hold, a few will be described here. In Onitsha, the large trading city on the Niger River, the Obi (King) makes his annual public appearance at the Ofala Festival. It serves as a joyous homecoming celebration for Onitsha people who return from all over West Africa.

Near Umuahia city the Qha Nkwu festival is held to harvest the ripe palm fruit. Families with their migrant employees compete with one another to see how much fruit can be collected from the trees in the community forest which has never been cut. Each family must donate half of its proceeds from the Qha Nkwu activities to a common fund which is used for rural development schemes, buying new masquerade costumes, or financing the local defense system.

South of Onitsha city in the village group of Okija the Mgbuli festival honoring two great idols is held every thirteen years. The spirit of Ulasì is believed to guide the people and give them their riches. The second spirit called Ngwu is noted for its calmness and contributes to the peacefulness of the village. The celebration includes extensive masquerading, dancing, and feasting requiring one month's preparation.

Igbo Masquerades

The Masquerade Procession. The dwelling place of the spirits is underground. The masqueraders, represen-

ting spirits, are believed to come out of the ground through an ant hole the night before they appear. Cries and chants from the nearby bush signal that spirits are about. A messenger masquerader may enter the village in the morning to indicate that a play will be held in the afternoon. A typical costume for this character is ragged, baggy pants and shirt with a flappy fibre hat. At his waist and ankles may be rows of seedshells which make a clatter. When the time comes the Mmo members meet in their lodge or in a secret spot in the bush to help dress the masqueraders.

As the procession enters the village in the afternoon a few strong youths run ahead to warn the expectant crowd to make room. Behind are musicians who shuffle in rhythm to their playing. Typical instruments are a wooden whistle, a clapperless bell played with a stick, and a hollowed wooden log known as ekwe, the slit gong. Each masquerade has its own special music and songs to set the mood and enhance the emotional impact on the audience. Very close to the masked characters themselves may be two or three youths carrying big whips which they use to beat the ground in dramatic cracks. This rapidly clears a pathway and keeps the people at a safe distance. Then comes the masquerade itself. Some are solo dancers or singers, others are elaborate teams involving several different characters. Behind follow the members of the Mmo society with intense expressions on their faces, moving to the rhythm of the music and singing chants or choruses of the songs. Igbo crowds are always very animated, anyhow, but in the presence of a masquerade they approach bedlam. The driving beat of the music combines with the shuffle of the procession, the syncopated songs, the flashing color and graceful movement. The spectators are pushing, sweating, excited, shrieking at the top of their voices. It is an experience that overwhelms the various senses. The group circulates through the village for all to see, pausing momentarily for some to perform an elaborate dance step, or to push the crowd back. After several minutes the spirit returns to the deep bush.

Some Masquerade Skits. The Igbo have a large number of masquerades but probably none is known throughout the entire society. Each village group

has several, adding new ones learned from neighbors and dropping others as they lose popularity. Some masquerades act out scenes from the typical life. The Hausa man driving his cattle down from the north is an example.

In 1965 the people of Inyi hired a famous troupe from Udi town, 25 miles away, to act out a lively military play. In the lead was the officer, medals on his chest, swagger stick in his hand. Behind followed the soldiers carrying wooden rifles and wearing masks including helmets which were really miners hats from the regional coal mines. They stalked along in a deliberate step as if ferreting the enemy from the bush. Upon command from a sergeant they would leave their ranks and spread out toward the crowd. Society members fired old muzzle-loaded guns into the air creating a great cloud of smoke and nervous excitement. Last in order were the mother and father, who were at the end of the procession because parents remain at home while their sons are abroad. The lady wore rich cloth and carried an umbrella. The father wore a suit, a gold watch, and spectacles. The wooden face mask was carved complete with a shiny bald head.

Prominent Igbo Masquerades. Other more traditional masquerades emphasize a set of qualities which are recognized as important by the Igbos. The maiden spirit represents the fine delicate qualities of beauty appreciated by everyone.

A high-stepping spirited masquerade called Ogolo is performed in many Northern Igbo villages. Each masquerader wears a bright mosaic costume and a tall pointed hat. Several of these appear in the Otite Feast in September at Nsugbe village. They carry whips, chase small children, gallop about and symbolize youthful exuberance and impulsiveness.

To act out strength, masculine vitality and stamina the fierce Agagba-idu masquerade is performed. The masks are complete with several pairs of large curved horns taken from wild game and a threatening face with large teeth.

Talking masquerades may tell tall stories, recite tongue twisters or sing slanderous songs. Clowns may cause mischief and stilt dancers perform extraordinary acrobatics.

In the Onitsha area the Ojionu masquerade wears a headdress with a beak. It sings or dances and is the children's favorite. A similar mask combining human and animal features is Ulaqa, which used to administer punishment with whips to offenders of traditional law and eventually was suppressed by the colonial authorities. There are masks for the spirits of dead liars, and the spirits of troublesome people. The spirits of little children are sad because they are away from their friends.

The Ijele headdress is an immense platform up to six feet in diameter with tiers of carved people and animals representing life in the Igbo village. There is the schoolboy, the priest, and the policeman all in uniform. There may be hunters and leopards, women with baskets, national flags and miniature statues of masquerades. The presentation of this masquerade brings great social prestige and symbolizes continuity in village life. Examples of additional masquerade characters are given in the exhibition list.

How Masquerades Have Changed

Christianity and Colonial Government. Mmo Societies are no longer as potent as when they were the supreme authority in the village. Before Christian missions entered the Igbo interior, these people lived by the beliefs and dictates of their religion as the inevitable nature of things. One's personal success and the fortune of the village as a whole was considered to follow directly from the ability to manipulate the spirit forces. The white man entered the rain forest with technology, hardware and organization which made a great impact on the people. The Igbo, assuming that white men acquired power in the same way they themselves did - through successfully manipulating spirits - apparently concluded from the superior technology and wealth of Europeans in their midst that the strangers had superior gods. Whether for this or other reasons, large numbers of Igbos turned as converts to Christianity in the early years of this century. Needless to say the Christian missionaries could not tolerate a cult of the dead which it considered to be pagan. The converts

had to renounce the Mmọ society and zealots among them began to reveal the secrets. This created one embittered struggle after another across the land, with the traditional religion gradually losing out.

The downfall of the power of the Mmọ societies was assured when the British Colonial Officials entered the picture. The Mmọ had functioned as the village police through a system of ridicule, destruction of property, punishment and execution. Revealing the identity of a masquerader was a very serious crime punishable by death. When the early Christian converts began to attack the Mmọ society by unmasking the masqueraders, some met violent death in traditionalist retaliation. British missionaries could not stand idly by and watch their converts be destroyed, especially when it was such a violation of British justice. British missionaries called in British colonial officers and the British Army, who refused to tolerate any other authority besides themselves using force and violence. They came to treat the Mmọ societies as bands of renegade criminals and in many places prohibited membership and banned the society.

Igbo Masquerades in 1966. Mmọ societies have lost their role as traditional police. Violent masquerades have been withdrawn or modified, but many of them are still successful in creating the impression of potential violence held in check. The influence of Christianity and civil authority varies considerably throughout the rural areas of Igboland. It would be no more accurate to make generalizations about that area than it would about America. In some places the processions are still honored in their traditional context.

Children being raised in Christian homes are taught that masquerade spirits are not real, yet they cannot help being awed by their presence. The security of the masquerade today relies on implied threats, fierceness, and the good sense of the audience. Youngsters chase and tease the procession as they have always done but they are careful not to get caught. Their fear is not of a beating but rather of disgrace in the eyes of the villagers. Women, once forbidden to even view the masqueraders, now are the most curious. They would not miss a

masquerade for any reason, yet they observe the taboo on not getting too close. They huddle in groups and keep an excited eye out for an unexpected change of direction of the procession. Since they are very prone to stampede to get out of the way it is wise for a visitor to stay clear of the women as well.

Masquerades come out in full force for the funeral ceremonies of induction into the spirit world of elders and chiefs. Many of these old men were not raised as Christians, but have gained prestige through natural leadership and achievement. Though their sons and daughters may be Christian, they respect their parents' sentiments enough to observe the traditional ancestral induction ceremony. Friends of the deceased make certain the masquerades appear out of respect. At this point they ask who is to say there may not be something to it all anyway?

Even though they had to conduct themselves as active Christians in order to get their secondary education, many young Igbos getting their university education abroad have second thoughts. For one thing they see that the white society is by no means solidly churchgoing, and they can begin to put their traditional masquerades and societies in perspective. Many of these technically and professionally trained people return to Africa with a renewed sense of identification, and actively champion their own traditions. Masquerades are already appearing at Christian funerals.

Mmọ societies have taken on the characteristics of social clubs today, committed to the perpetuation of the rich traditions of masquerading. Even in the old context the plays maintained a social aspect at the festival or funeral. Evidence that masquerading remains part of the fibre of modern Igbo life is that they were the first to modify their traditional masquerades for the Christmas and Easter celebrations. In fact, one of the masquerading societies in Okigwi town requires a man to be a good Catholic before permitting him to join.

At Christmas and Easter and on Igbo National Day and Independence Day the citizens put on their finest clothes and greet their friends in the street. The masquerades jam the intersections ma-

king the celebrations a combination of Mardi Gras and the Easter Parade. Young boys don masks and costumes to visit from house to house. They dance for pennies not unlike our own Halloween. The evidence in 1966, when the Igbo knew much more of the outside world than in the missionary-colonial officer days of 1900, suggests that Igbo masquerades have survived in the modern context.

Igbo Carvers

Finding the Carvers. As of current years, the view apt to be held authoritatively by British technical assistants, Irish Catholic priests and African government officials who have lived for years in the area is that there are no Igbo carvers left. All of this is a tribute to their lack of grass roots contact, for the fact is that traditional Igbo carving is still vital, but somewhat underground.

In the days when the highest political authority was the village group, inter-group relations were primarily marked by continuous border raids. Trade was known but not extensive. It appears that most of what a village group consumed it had to produce for itself. This included carvings. To support this craft, youngsters had to be trained in the traditional skill. Traditional ways lasted in many villages in the face of Western impact at least into the 1920's - in some places as late as World War II. Thereafter, to be sure, missionaries and the influx of Western commodities tended to put carvers out of work. But long after the demand dropped, one could surely anticipate finding, among older men, some who had been ready to begin a carving career twenty, thirty, or even forty years earlier with traditional skills in their hands, albeit rusty and unpracticed. A search through any number of villages proves this supposition correct, and reveals not a few still active carvers, assurances from the "authorities" notwithstanding.

Active Carvers in 1966. There is, indeed, a generation of old carvers still alive in most Igbo villages. They are men who were raised in a thoroughly traditional fashion relatively undisturbed by Christianity and western education. They speak the deepest dialects, usually in proverbs, and may be the

last generation to know the ancient texts and oral history. They have witnessed their culture being profoundly changed by outside forces for which they have little regard. It was this generation of carvers which first felt the decline of demand for their trade.

Most active carvers today are middle-aged men. Older ones are too old to work regularly. The number of carvers in Igbo country must be much smaller than it once was because of the reduced demand. However, a carver who stays active and becomes known is usually kept busy because he must carve for a larger area. Some men develop a reputation within the circles of men's societies and draw customers from a great distance.

There are signs that a young generation of carvers is developing. One of the finalists in the carving competition for the 1966 Eastern Provinces Festival of Arts was a teen-ager, for instance. In areas where masquerading is very active, carving can be a paying career. Talented young men with primary school educations are being drawn to it. Many of these make commercial carvings of human heads and animals for Europeans. Whether the traditional forms will continue to exist depends upon how many of these young men can be apprenticed to the elder carvers before the latter join their ancestors and take their ancient skills with them.

Young men are more mobile than the older generation and can be expected to borrow designs from a wider circle than was done before. Men's societies in the frontier zones of Igboland have borrowed several different masquerade plays from their non-Igbo neighbors over the years. With present day mobility high, it seems reasonable to predict that Central Igbo men's societies will borrow plays from distant neighbors as well.

The Training of Traditional Carvers. The Igbo style of learning is informal and based on observation and participation. As a child develops he tries his hand at what other members of his family are doing. This is true for farming, gathering firewood, dancing, drumming, and even carving. For this reason, Igbo carvers tend to have sons who become carvers. Everyone in the traditional setting was a farmer.

Only after the farm work was done did a man supplement his work by being a native doctor, or storyteller, or carver.

If a child among non-carvers showed natural talent for using his hands, an older person in the family would arrange for him to be apprenticed to a master carver for a fee. The boy might even move in with the carver's family and help pay his way by working in the fields. By observation and participation the youngster learned which trees were best suited for which objects and how to prepare the traditional stains and paints. Gradually he would learn the various stages between blocking out a design and the final detailing. In time the apprentice could give a mask its general shape for the master to finish. The youngster would then paint it. Apprenticeship lasted for several years and the training was very thorough. Self-taught carvers were known but rare.

The Role and Status of Carvers. It is interesting to note that carvers do not occupy any special position of status or prestige within the village. In fact many people are not able to identify the carvers since they work in secret. By their own claim, a carver is but one of several men who contribute to the success of the masquerade. There also must be singers, dancers, drummers, and costume makers, all with skills equal to the carver's. They are surprised but personally pleased when a foreigner shows an interest in their work.

To the Westerner, African sculpture is mysterious, exotic, and valuable. To the Igbo carver, it is his contribution to the masquerades. It is part of an obligation he has to use his natural talents for the benefit of the village.

Traditional Igbo Carvings

Household Items. Before the coming of Christianity and western consumer goods, Igbo carvers made items for the household, musical instruments and ritual objects. For the household, stools were carved for everyday use. Intricate stools, which served as symbols of office or status, were made especially for members of title societies such as *Ozọ*. Small

doors carved from stout panels of African oak were placed at the entrances to compounds and houses. Examples of their chipped geometric designs can be seen in the exhibition.

The kola nut is ritually offered as a greeting in Igbo country. These nuts were traditionally served on a wooden tray with a special compartment for the accompanying relish. Large mortars and pestles were made in African oak for processing palm oil. The palm fruit is a kernel covered with a thick oil-bearing skin which must be pounded off and boiled. Mortars and pestles were also made for the kitchen where they were used for pounding yam into the consistency of mashed potatoes. Tool handles, mainly for yam hoes, were also made by carvers.

For relaxation and enjoyment carvers produced boards for the game of *ayo*, which is a count and capture game played by moving seeds around a series of cups. They also carved dolls from soft white wood for little girls, and handles and frames to hold small mirrors.

Musical Instruments. Besides drums, carvers made *ekwe* slit-gongs. These instruments were from six inches to two feet in diameter and from one foot to four feet in length. The carver opened a slit in one side of a special wood and working through this slit, cut out the heart of the log leaving two thin sides which rung when struck. One side was shaped with a little more thinness than the other so that two tones were produced allowing the players to "talk" on the instruments in the tonal Igbo language. Immense ritual war gongs called *ikoro* were maintained by every village. They were giant *ekwe* measuring over three feet in diameter and six to eight feet in length. At the ends were carved several animal and human figures. So large and well tuned were these gongs that the war call could be heard over five miles. Other musical instruments made by the carvers were the xylophone, using tuned wooden sticks, and small flute whistles.

Ritual Objects and Masks. For the village's religious and ritual needs the carver produced an-

cestor figures, divination pieces and masks. In traditional times every village maintained a central shrine which was often on the land of the original founder of the village. In addition, individual families maintained shrines to their ancestors in which they placed large statues commemorating the male line, their wives, children and some of the spirits which were helpful to them.

Since sickness, death, bad luck, abomination and natural disaster were all attributed to spirit forces in the universe, a host of native doctors, fortune tellers, shrine priests and rain makers were found in the typical Igbo village. In their dealings with the spirits they required a wide variety of ritual items. These divination pieces were supplied on commission by the carvers.

Lastly, but of central concern to this exhibition were the men's society's masquerading masks. The society would approach the carver and order a certain type of mask. Rarely if ever did a traditional carver have masks already made, waiting for some future unknown purchaser. His work was and still is custom-made on commission.

For the mask which the carver delivered, he received a certain amount of payment in the form of vegetables, livestock or palm wine. This exchange did not establish a "price" for the mask or end the carver's connection with it. It is quite common for the masks to be hung in the rafters of the men's lodge where the termites cannot reach them. [That is the major reason why non-members are not allowed in the lodge, where the secret of the masquerades would be discovered.] Through the year the masks are covered with a fine layer of soot from the fires in which the members roast their yams. When it is time to use a mask in a masquerade a society member returns it to the carver who repairs any damage and repaints it. For this service the carver again receives some payment in kind. For as many years as the society uses the mask, the carver receives a small income from its maintenance. To him the mask represents a gradual flow of income in a sort of traditional social security system. Repairing several masks a year makes a substantial contribution to his household.

Traditional Igbo Carvings in 1966

Household Items in 1966. Chairs made by carpenters had nearly put an end to stool carving by 1966. In the few places where they were available they were intended for Ozo titled men, and could be commissioned for large sums. The so-called English door and shutter has replaced many of the traditional carved doors. Panels of classical design gently weathered over the generations are being lightly cast into the bush or the fire as soon as a farmer is able to afford a carpentered replacement. So lucrative has this local carpenter trade become that many carvers have dropped carving to make furniture instead. Yet some wealthy elite have made it fashionable to place large doors, carved with traditional designs by the Awka Carver's Co-operative, in the gateways to their mansions.

The kola nut is still offered for the traditional greeting in Igbo country but the old kola trays have largely disappeared from use. In some cases they are cared for by the grandsons who cherish this symbol of long-standing good hospitality in the family. Since the trays have no particular religious significance they were not harmed so much by the decline of the old religion as by the influx of cheap English china and enamelware.

Modern Pioneer mills and hand presses now dot the countryside. These machines have taken over the bulk of palm oil processing. They have not completely displaced traditional mortars and pestles, however. Since pounded yam is the major Igbo staple and a favorite food, every household has a mortar and pestle to prepare it. These kitchen necessities are among the few products a carver will make ahead of customers' orders, because he knows he can always sell them. The most efficient way known to build yam heaps is still by using a broad bladed hoe, for which the carver fashions handles from branches.

The ayo game board can still be ordered from certain carvers today, but it is likely to be of much simpler design than older ones. Inexpensive plastic dolls from Ikot-Ekpene town in neighboring Ibibio territory have probably put an end to most Igbo children's doll carving. Mirrors in plastic

or metal cases were a common sight in every rural market in 1966. The carving of wooden mirror frames has probably been extinct for fifteen or twenty years.

Musical Instruments in 1966. The production of musical instruments is still a major contribution of the carver to village life. The bodies of drums are still being made at the village level, to be sure, but they must now compete with ready-made drums available in the market which come from the Ikot-Ekpene Carver's Co-operative.

Ekwe gongs are still being carved and many are available on the open market. The giant ikoro signal gong has fallen into disuse, however. Few villages bothered to keep them protected from weather once the impact of Christianity was fully felt. These once proud drums are rotting in the tropical rain. Where they have been preserved they are used as signal drums to assemble the elders. In Afikpo town and in Inyi village they are still in use for traditional ceremonies, but in other locations there is little evidence that new ones are being made.

As favored an instrument as the xylophone is, nonetheless, it is now rarely being made and in danger of becoming extinct. The major problem is scarcity of the wood, which comes from a tree that flourishes in the dense forest. As the Igbos have cut the bush to expand their fields, xylophone wood has nearly disappeared. One master xylophone builder and player was offering a course at the University of Nigeria in 1966, however. Small wooden whistles used by dance troupes and masquerades were readily available in the market.

Ritual Objects in 1966. Traditional ritual and religious figures have been the most modified by exposure to the West. Ancestral shrine figures are being protected by non-Christian families but converts usually destroy them. It is hard to believe that in 1966 certain White European missionaries were still encouraging citizens of a Black African nation to burn their traditional art. The Department of Antiquities' attention was drawn to several reports centered around destruction in the Owerri area especially. Advocates of destruction argue that these are false idols in the eyes of the Church, and

that the individuals who own them can do what they want with them. On the other hand, they are national treasures and ought to be better protected by the law.

Medical hospitals, patent medicines, dispensaries and maternity clinics have greatly decreased the influence of the native doctor. In many cases, however, the rural Igbo people do not settle for a scientific, Western explanation of cause and effect. Understandably, they wish to know what "else" protects one person from harm by a disease that attacks another. To the extent that the native doctors and fortune tellers are kept busy with pleas for help, they need small divination pieces that are supplied by the carvers.

Mask Construction in 1966. Igbo population has expanded greatly in the last fifty years. New cities grow daily with arrivals from rural areas who congregate together and form clubs. In many cases club members come from one village group and use their club as an improvement union for the home town. Clubs are economic, political and also social. Some of them produce dance teams for urban festivals and many have begun to present masquerades on public holidays. It is possible to see representative masquerades from a wide area in the cities. Sons of one village, admiring a masquerade from another locality, may spend money to have similar masks and costumes made for themselves. They have their musicians and dancers trained as well, then at some village homecoming they present the new show as a gift to the "home people". In this way the traditional masquerades of Southern Igbo country are spreading northward and vice versa.

Producing masks is a very time consuming task, especially when the mask is a large one. In traditional times a large composite mask would be made from a single huge log. Today trees of such dimension are scarce and the carvers have resorted to carpentry to build up large pieces. Nails and glue have become standard in the carver's tool kit. So has the paintbrush.

Few men have the time these days to collect all of the necessary leaves, barks, earths and insects necessary to produce traditional stains and paint.

Every market has a stall where little cans of bright enamel are sold, and the carvers use them regularly. This has caused a change since enamel colors are glossy and come in shades different from the old paints.

Besides enamel, carvers use European bright blue and orange tinting powders for paint. Colors that are applied with water flake off easily but those mixed with egg yolks form a better bond. Tempera paints were available in the markets in 1966 and were used by a few carvers.

Traditional Paints. Native chalk called nzu once was the favorite source of white. School blackboard chalk, if not enamel, is preferred today because it gives a brighter white. Such white materials are extensively used because white symbolizes the spirit world. Several different blacks have been used on pieces in this exhibition. On the Afikpo masks the soft wood was actually charred in fire and then wiped with a pot black and palm oil mixture. In Okpoha village a carver has used selignum, a tar-like wood preservative which is the British equivalent of creosote.

The cam tree bears a bright red pulp which is ground into a powder and applied for coloring. Depending on what else is mixed with this red, cam wood color appears as orange, red, maroon, or brown.

A yellow clay is ground into a powder and appears on several Afikpo masks. Other traditional colors include a deep blue called uli and a black called inyi which also serve as paints for body decoration.

Many people still know how to make traditional colors but their production has been greatly reduced. A majority of pieces in the exhibition were commissioned with "native paints".

Types of Masks and Headdresses

Igbo carvers supply masks and headdresses of several different types to the men's societies. Most people casually use the word mask to indicate any face-like figure worn about the head. It would be more precise to make a distinction between mask and headdress. In this catalog, mask denotes a carving that literally covers the face, whereas a headdress is designed to be worn on the forehead or top of the head with the wearer looking out through holes in the neck or chest of the masquerade costume.

To say something definitive about Igbo art one should conduct a comparison survey of mask types. At this stage of our knowledge based on limited observation, four categories of masks can be identified.

Small Face Masks. This mask is so small that it does not cover the entire face. Examples are the agbogho (maiden spirit) masks from Inyi and the mmaji masks from Afikpo. The wearer looks out through slits in the eyes, and sometimes through holes in the ears as well. These masks, covering the mouth and nose provide very poor ventilation. The dancer often waves a fan to keep fresh air flowing against the mask.

Face Covering Masks. These larger masks cover the entire face and front part of the head. This type usually has eye holes large enough for decent vision. Examples of this type would be the okonkpo mask of Afikpo and the ekpe masks of Ozufulu.

Three-Quarter Helmet Masks. The helmet variety is so called because it covers not only the face but part or all of the head as well. The maiden spirit mask with the crested top from Imilike Enu village is an example of the three-quarter helmet style, rising to the top of the head.

Full Helmet Mask. The full helmet mask covers the entire face and head including the back of the neck. A version of the odugu mmuo mask, common in Northern Igbo country is frequently of this design. The maiden spirit mask from Ngwo on display can be called a full helmet mask, although it is very unusual to find a maiden spirit mask carved as a full helmet.

Forehead Headdresses. Three or four sub-types of headdress can be identified. Prominent is a class of animal and human heads which are large enough to cover the face but in fact are not worn there. Instead they are placed turned upward on the front part of the head. They do not have pierced eyes, and are held on by being sewn to a stocking cap. The okelohia and ojionu headdresses from Inyi are good examples.

Erect Headdresses. A second type of headdress employs a human-like face erected on a long neck. The headdress is strapped securely under the chin with the face forward. Examples are the nwanza headdress from Inyi and the nwa okpata from Okpoha. To wear them also involves a bit of balancing, at which West Africans are adept from their everyday practice of head-carrying.

Platform Headdresses. A third headdress type is the giant platform style of the Ijele, known in Northern Igbo country but not exhibited here. A large number of human and animal figures are positioned on tiers creating a great weight that requires a mighty man to support and balance it.

Miscellaneous Head Coverings. A hat or headdress that might qualify for a fourth type is the tall pointed cane and cloth structure worn by the ogolo masquerader. It is not a carved object at all. Its dunce cap appearance can be seen in the exhibition on a statue carved in Nsugbe village.

Additional types of head coverings are in fact masks but not carvings. An example is a woven stocking cap made of twine or wool, pulled down over the face and frequently worn with a hat.

Types of Costumes

The masks you see on exhibit, displayed by themselves, never appear among the Igbo except as one feature of a more or less elaborate masquerade costume. By costume we mean any of the clothing, decoration and jewelry worn by the masquerader. Certain masquerades demand very elaborate costumes which require lengthy and careful preparation. Just as there are men who specialize in instrument making, singing, dancing, or carving, there are men who make their contribution to the presentation of the masquerade by constructing the costumes. Men who have special skill in tailoring colorful costumes are well known to men's societies throughout a large territory. To meet the demand a special class of tailors in the cities command top wages for their work.

Applique Costume. The maiden spirit (agboghọ mmụọ) wears one of the most famous Igbo masquerade costumes. It is a suit of pants and blouse covered with intricate applique mosaic, usually in felt. A short wrapper skirt in bright and decorated cloth is secured at the waist by seed and bead belts. Mittens cover the hands and stocking slippers cover the feet. The face mask or helmet mask is embellished with ostrich feathers, bright yarn, pom-poms, small cloth flags and even mirrors. Perhaps more admiration is expressed by the crowd about this costume than about the mask or dancing. The maiden spirit statue from Nsugbe village in the exhibition gives only a partial impression of how elaborate this costume can be.

Other Cloth Costumes. At the other extreme is the masquerade which wears typical clothes. Baggy British shorts and summer underwear shirt is the style in some areas and so a masquerader is liable to wear them as well. The drummers dress this way for the Ogu masquerade at Edda town. The colorful jumper with pants to match, often unkindly called pajamas by Americans, also appears. This would be common in Afikpo town along with the full embroidered robes worn at the festival where the masqueraders pantomime typical local citizens.

Some masquerade costumes are built up to house size proportions over a wooden frame. This type appears in the play of a rich man who owns cattle. The costume for the bull is shaped like a roof of a house with a carved head at one end and a tail with outsized testicles at the other. Two men carry the costume and periodically charge the crowd while the owner dressed as a Hausa man protects his bull from imaginary wild animals.

The Agagba-idu masquerade, symbolizing youthfulness and vigor, wears streamers of gay cloth in Aguleri town. Sewn to the arms and ankles are dozens of small mirrors which gives the masquerader a flashing quality as he moves.

Long tender leaves of the young palm frond are strapped to the waist in a sort of hula skirt for some costumes. The mkpi, "he-goat" masquerade at Afikpo wears such a skirt. In some cases the same long slender leaves are built into a man-sized hay stack on which is perched a headdress on the dancer's head. The Ulagu masquerade is an example of this type.

A skirt of palm leaf or raffia is usually worn with a shirt as well, although it is not always what one would expect. Numbered American football jerseys and fraternity sweatshirts are beginning to find their way into the used clothing market in Igboland, having been sent there by church clothing drives here. Some of these discarded bits of Americana are finding their way into Igbo masquerades.

It is most common for masqueraders to be completely covered. Not even hands and feet are left bare in some areas. In Afikpo town singers for the Okonkpo masquerade wear raffia skirts but their upper bodies are bare. Crisscrossing their chests is a cord wrapped in colored cloth. At their biceps are worn tufts of fur.

Ekpe masquerades have been borrowed from the Igbo's semi-Bantu neighbors to the South-east, (Annang, Ibibio, Efik, Ekoi). In these regions the messenger masquerade character can be seen wearing a close fitting costume knitted from native cord or raffia. It covers the dancer from head to foot and he enters it through a hole in the back. At the ankles and wrists are tied giant pom-poms, and under the chin a pom-pom necklace sticks out like a ruffled Elizabethan collar. Around the waist may be tied seed shakers, assorted small branches and a large bell. These costumes have no wooden masks but many have eye and nose openings for the convenience of the wearer.

A men's society may use the same mask with different costumes to represent different characters throughout the masquerading season. Two neighboring villages may use the same mask with different costumes to represent the same character. Costumes in Igboland are as varied as the masks and may be even more numerous.

PREFACE TO THE EXHIBITION

Nigerian law forbids the exporting of antiquities. An antiquity is defined as any object which has been used in a traditional ceremony. Under this definition a mask or a musical instrument made last week and used today becomes an antiquity even though it is new.

The carvings in this exhibition were commissioned personally from traditional carvers or purchased new in the markets by the author in 1965-66. All of the pieces have been inspected by the Nigerian National Museum staff and exported with the permission of the Nigerian Department of Antiquities.

The exhibition is extensive and varied enough to suggest how many different masquerades the Igbo people have. In viewing the collection one should examine closely the differences in detail between two copies of the same figure. Igbo sculpture forms are not rigidly fixed. Each type of carving has a small number of distinctive characteristics which assist the Igbo people in identifying what it represents, but beyond that the carver is free to put in his own details, just as a folksinger might make up his own verse.

The exhibition and the catalogue are designed to facilitate such comparisons. Observe how the same type of mask carved by two men of the same village group can be interpreted so differently. Even one mask type made twice by the same man will exhibit differences. This lack of standardization and uniformity stands as testimony to the great individuality which permeates Igbo life. The framework is there but it is broadly defined. The individual can exercise his choice within the context freely.

In a way we do these masks an injustice by showing them on the walls of a University Museum. They were produced for masqueraders who wear intricate costumes and are accompanied by a procession that plays traditional Igbo music and sings special songs. We must try to imagine them in their African context. To assist the exhibition visitor in that regard we have tried to follow the recommendations of Kenneth C. Murray, the retired Nigeria Director of Antiquities. To suggest costumes, typical West African cloth or raffia has been affixed to the back of the masks and tropical plants have been placed nearby. These efforts obviously fall far short of seeing the masquerade in an Igbo village.

Since the exhibition is located in a museum it is most likely that people will view these sculptures as art in the Western sense. It is not likely that Igbo people would do so. Many of the pieces will appear pleasing in some aesthetic sense but our understanding of them is bound to be far from the African mark.

The sculptures were not primarily designed to please or to explore some form for its own sake. They were intended to assist a larger masquerade in enacting the essence of some concept. Features were emphasized or diminished to help demonstrate power, vitality, serenity or foolishness, or to help create fear, sorrow or a sense of continuity. The exhibition viewer will have to struggle with an unfamiliar system of non-verbal communication.

It should be kept in mind that the Igbo carver is an inconspicuous man with a family and a farm. He is producing a small part of a village event for people he knows. He is not much different from the rest except for the keenness of his eye and the special skill in hands. We must be careful not to read into his work too many of our prejudices about what we think Africa must be like.



Field Photo.
A men's society and masquerade from Okpoha,
Eastern Igbo. The standing masqueraders
are wearing the yam knife mask, called

mmaubi. Notice the guards carrying old
"dane" guns in the lower left, and the
musicians in the lower right. Photo by
DE. LAW PHOTO STUDIO, Ikom, Dec. 26, 1965.

AFIKPO

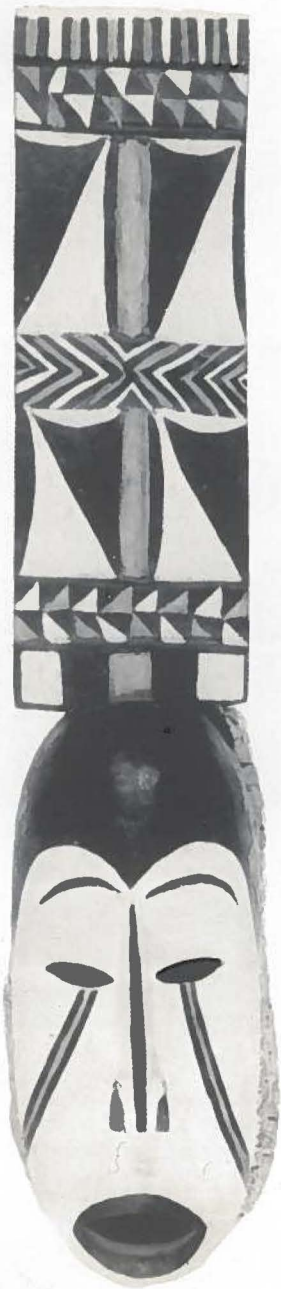
One section of the Eastern Igbo people, as reported by Forde and Jones, 1950, is made up of the following village groups: Afikpo, Amaseri, Okpoha, Akaeze, Edda (or Ada), Unwana, and Nkporo. Certain Afikpo masks are well known in the literature. This exhibition presents representative samples of Afikpo masks alongside masks from Amaseri and Okpoha.

Afikpo has developed into a metropolitan center of over 40,000 and enjoys the same modern amenities as other major Igbo towns. It has grown up from several clustered villages, most of which still support an active carver. The features given to each type of Afikpo mask vary widely from carver to carver, as the examples displayed here demonstrate.

Afikpo, like other Igbo communities, has a vast number of feasts and festivals. The most important festival is the New Yam Festival, (called Iriji) in August. This harvest festival serves as their New Year celebration, and not one masked dancer appears. In the slack season after the harvest the Ogo Men's Society presents its plays. One such play comes out for the Mbe Festival in October where tortoise (mbe) is ceremonially eaten. Most interesting for its masquerades is a Dry Season Festival put on before Christmas, frequently called the "Native Christmas" celebration. One senior village initiates this festival in late November, or early December, and celebrates for four days, one Igbo week. The men's society of that village presents a masquerade which tours all of the villages of Afikpo performing every afternoon for four days. The following week the second group of villages celebrates, and so on until all have participated, making nearly a solid month of afternoon masquerades!

Christmas; January Pantomime: Christmas Day in Afikpo as in the rest of Igboland is a day of general masquerading. In January the Okonkpo pantomime is put on to the great delight of the townspeople. This is a masquerade of social comment. Highly talented masked men sing out songs calling attention to the acts of pomposity, greed, poor judgment or foolishness of specific people in the town. The younger initiated men act out skits which vividly elaborate upon each song. There may be two dozen skits and scores of masked players who entertain the excited crowd for several hours. The masks in the exhibition are mainly from these two major masquerading events.

The names for these masks were acquired from the carvers who made them, and in some cases do not match those published elsewhere. Obtaining names can be a confusing undertaking. Custom provides that certain masks be made from the wood of certain trees. When asking for the name of a mask, you may receive the name of the wood. Some masks may have a name of their own, but in certain cases a mask can be used with different costumes to produce different masquerade characters, each with a different name. (Until we know more about these things it is dangerous to generalize.) The name of a mask may indicate that it is a female. Our conclusion might be that she must enact certain female roles in skits or pantomimes. In reality the mask could be worn by the drummers. Even the Afikpo themselves may not be able to explain why each masquerader wears the specific kind of mask he does.



Mba Mask. The human faced mask with a tall decorated rectangle on the top of the head was called mba by three carvers in Afikpo in 1966. According to G. I. Jones, 1939a, these masks are called akpara oba or nwabogho. He says, "They are usually in pairs and are worn by young men, made up as girls admiring themselves." Those masks were from Ngusu Ada of the village group neighboring Afikpo. In the same article is pictured a mask called mba from the Nkporo village group, which in Afikpo would be called mmaji: the yam knife mask. A possible explanation might be the fact that certain masks in this Eastern Igbo area are carved from a wood called mba. The mba masks as they are known in Afikpo appear in the Iko Okochi dry season festivals and the Okonkpo satire plays in January. In Amaseri the mask of this design is amachiriri a dancer in the Okonkpo masquerade.

1. Mba Mask, ht. 19 1/4", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black and cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.
2. Mba Mask, ht. 15 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black and cam wood red, traces of enamel. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.
3. Mba Mask, ht. 15", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood red, yellow clay. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.
4. Mba Mask, ht. 15 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, yellow clay, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.
5. Mba Mask, ht. 22", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

6. Mba Mask, ht. 14 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange, yellow clay. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

7. Amachiri Mask, ht. 16 1/2", wood; tinted chalk, black stain, maroon paint, yellow clay. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo. A young man dancer for the Okonkpo festival in January.

8. Npkere Mask, ht. 18 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, red enamel. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. A ceremony mask for the Omume title.

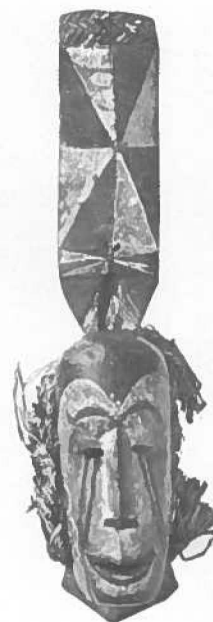
9. Mba Mask, ht. 8 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. The rectangle is reduced to a knob.

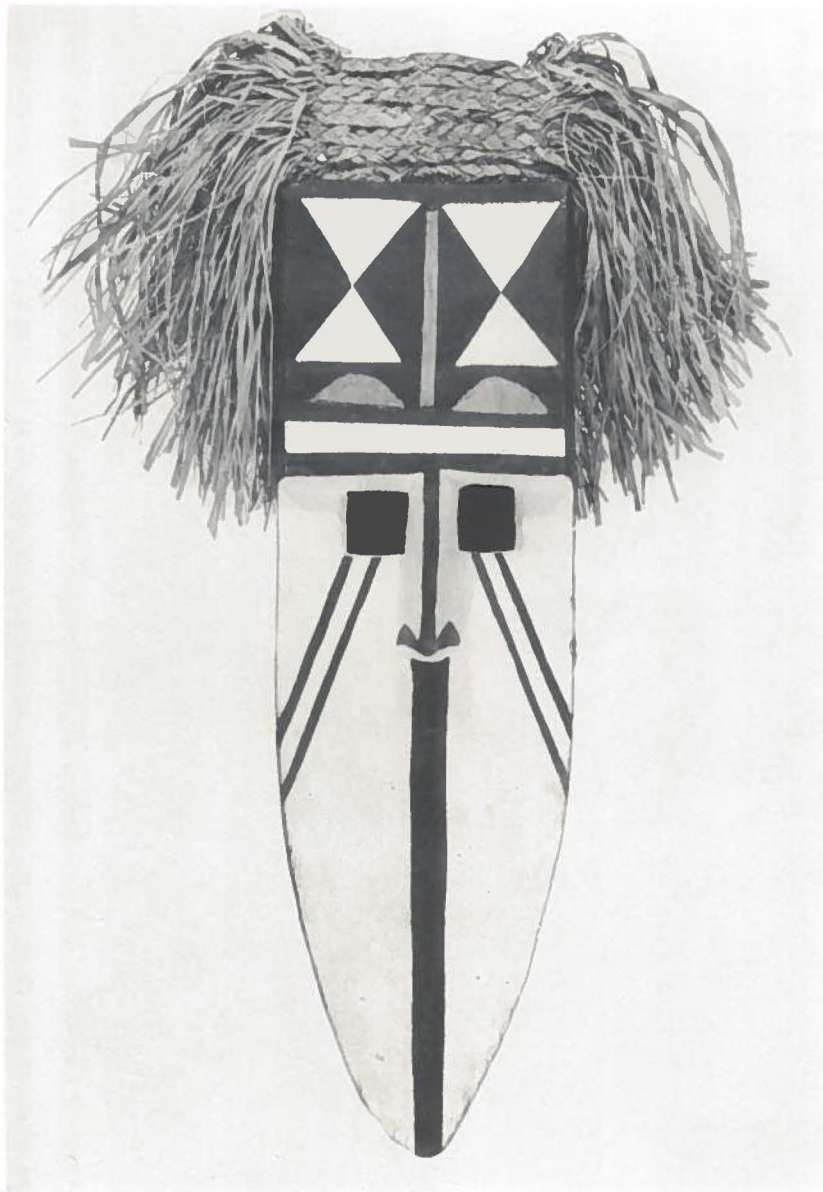
10. Mba Mask, with second head, ht. 16", wood and raffia; white chalk, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. Identification uncertain; this has the face of the mba, but the second head may classify it with the opanwa (see below).

11. Achali Mask, with second head, ht. 12", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. Identification uncertain; the face is that of the achali mask (see below).

12. Achali Mask, with second head, ht. 13 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. Identification uncertain.

Field Photos at right, Two Mba Masks, approx. hts. 16" and 18", wood, raffia; traces of chalk, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. Donated to the Nigerian National Museum, 1966.





Okonkpo Mask. The okonkpo mask is worn by the singers. Its day of glory is the Okonkpo play in January where it sings out the songs of witty social comment. Masquerades in Igboland are frequently thrown pennies and shillings by the spectators when they are pleased. This okonkpo singer is one of the most popular, and coins literally rain down around him when he sings out a brilliant observation. This mask also appears in the Iko Okochi dry season festival. His costume varies. In one case he wears a floppy fibre hat, a shirt of rough cloth with seed-rattle bracelets, and carries a spear. In others he wears raffia ropes criss-crossing his chest, arm bands, a skirt of long palm leaves and carries a bell. In Afikpo there is another mask of similar appearance called egede which has a much taller forehead. In Amaseri, where okonkpo is also known, a second similar mask in red and black is called okondem.

13. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 15 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black and cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

14. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 15 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, red tempera. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

15. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 15 1/2", wood; chalk white, pot black, yellow clay. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo.

16. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 16 1/4", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

17. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 16 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

18. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 15 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

19. Okonkpo Mask, ht. 16", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange, yellow clay. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

20. Egede Mask, ht. 19 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, black enamel, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

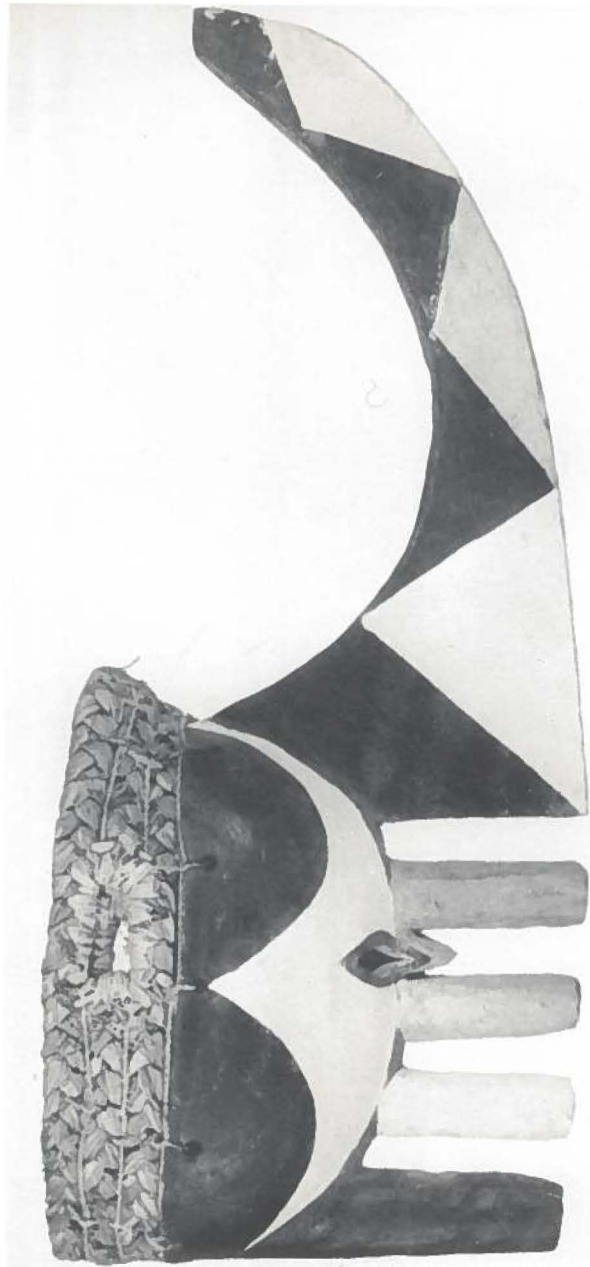
21. Igiri Mask, ht. 17 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo.



22



22. Okpasu Umyuma Mask, ht. 9 1/4", wood and raffia; black enamel, chalk white, red tempera. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo. A mask for scaring children at the Okonkpo masquerade. The tubular eyes and puffed cheeks contribute to its fierceness. It seems to be the only black mask in Afikpo.



Mmaji Mask. Yam knife is the literal translation of this mask's name: mmaji. The reference is to the machet used in farm work. The blade is seen thrusting upwards from the mask. It appears in the Iko Okochi festival in the beginning of the dry season, on Christmas Day, and in the Okonkpo skits in January. Okpoha, the village group north of Afikpo, calls this mask mmaubi: farm knife, or mba, probably after the wood it is made from. It appears in the Okpoha Igurube festival from January to April. There the knife blade has been abstracted into a spiral or a closed ring. West of Afikpo in Amaseri this mask is called mba. It comes out in January for the Anya festival where the initiate's name is anya oche nkwa. There it dances for pleasure. These classical Eastern Igbo masks are not known in the balance of Igboland.

23. Mmaji Mask, ht. 15", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black and cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

24. Mmaji Mask, ht. 18", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange, yellow clay and crayon. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

25. Mmaji Mask, ht. 21 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

26. Mba Mask, ht. 14", wood; cam wood red, chalk white, black enamel. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo.

27. Mmaubi Mask, ht. 11 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange, yellow clay. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo.

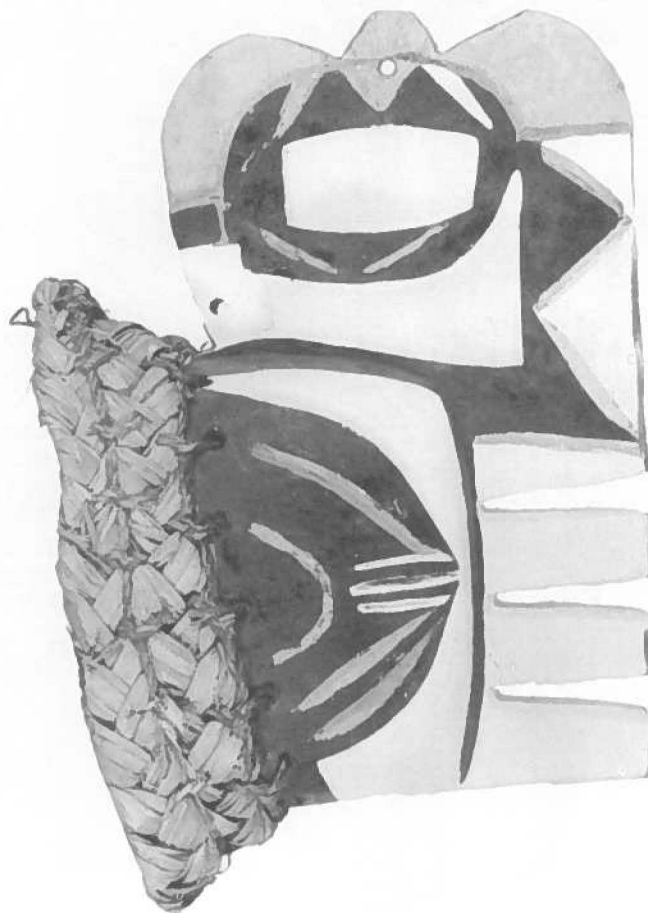
28. Mmaubi Mask, ht. 13", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black, cam wood red. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo.

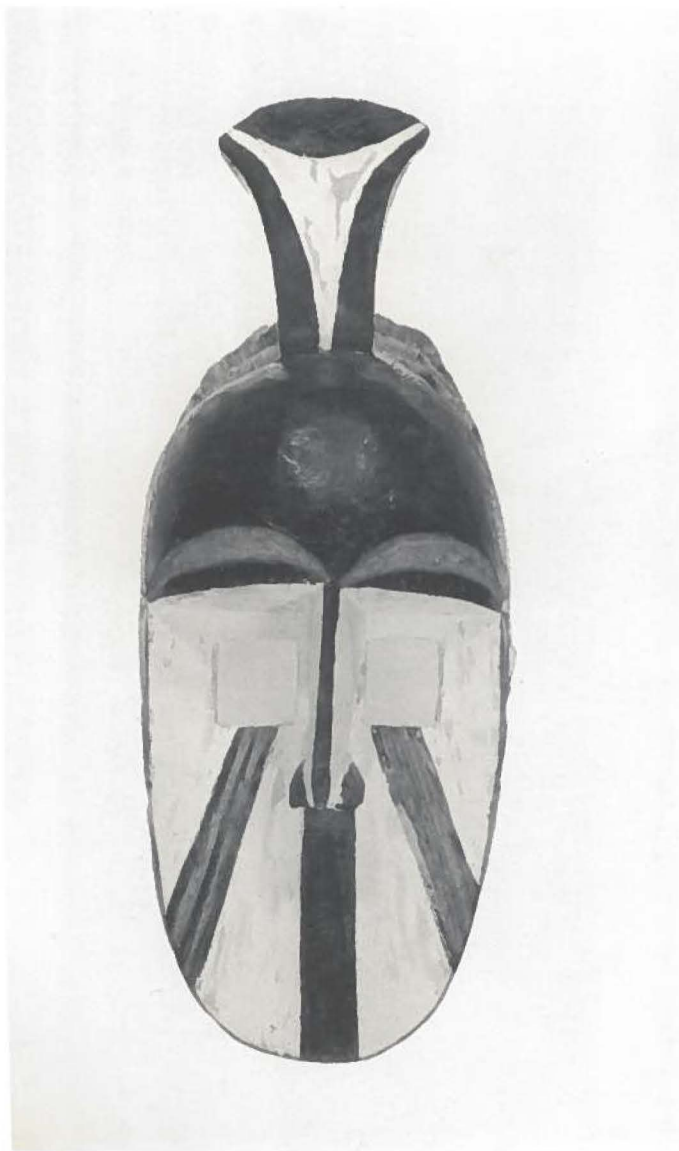
29. Mmaubi Mask, ht. 10 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black, cam wood orange, yellow clay. Ọkpọha, Eastern Igbo.

30. Mmaubi Mask, ht. 12 1/2", wood; unpainted and charred. Ọkpọha, Eastern Igbo. This piece demonstrates how a mask looks before it is painted.

31. Mmaubi Mask, ht. 12 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black, cam wood orange, yellow clay. Ọkpọha, Eastern Igbo.

32. Three Caps for the Mmaubi Costume, ht. 5", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black, cam wood red and tinting pigments. Ọkpọha.





Achali Mask. The achali masks can be seen in Afikpo at the end of October, and when all the other masks appear in the Iko Ọkọchi festival. Achali is worn by young boys in the Afikpo Christmas Parade. Young initiates are said to use it in acting out the Ọkọnkọ skits in January, and at the Lughulu games in May.

33. Achali Mask, ht. 10 1/4", wood and raffia; chalk white, black enamel, cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

34. Achali Mask, ht. 8", wood; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

35. Achali Mask, ht. 9 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

36. Achali Mask, ht. 12", wood and raffia; pot black, chalk white and orange pigment. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.



Opanwa Mask. Opanwa means "She is carrying a child." Since it is difficult to represent the child being carried as it normally is on the back, the carvers say they put it on the head. Masks of these types in Amaseri, called nfuebulu have been photographed at the Qkṛṇkpṛ festival, where an adult figure riding on the top of the mask, cradles a child. In Afikpo the headdresses built up with bamboo stringers, tissue paper, bright cloth and mirrors. Several of these masqueraders appear in a solemn line during the traditional celebrations which come before Christmas.

37. Opanwa Mask, ht. 23 1/2", wood, raffia and earring; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

38. Opanwa Mask, ht. 24 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood red. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

39. Opanwa Mask, ht. 20 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, black and red enamel. Afikpo, Eastern Igbo.

40. Opanwa Mask, ht. 20", wood and raffia; chalk, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

41. Nfuebulu Mask, ht. 20", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, orange and black enamel. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo.



Qtoqho Kpo Kpo Mask. Qtoqho is the wood pecker; kpo kpo is the pecking sound he makes. The woodpecker once boasted that his father was so mighty that he would never die; and if he died, the woodpecker said that he would personally cut the forest down. Of course his father eventually died, and the woodpecker has been trying to cut down the forest ever since. In Afikpo this masquerade is used to act out the man who is too boastful. It is a good example of how the Igbo masquerades can make use of an animal character from their folklore to depict a human quality. The woodpecker appears in the play called obu aja. Considerable variation in shape and decoration is found in this type of Eastern Igbo mask. It is known as otiekwe at Amaseri. In Okpoha the carving of a full bird is projected on wire legs above a face mask to represent qtoqho, which appears during the Lughulu dance in May.

42. Qtoqho Mask, ht. 6", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

43. Qtoqho Mask, ht. 8 1/4", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

44. Qtoqho Mask, ht. 8 1/2", wood and raffia, pot black, chalk white, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

45. Qtoqho Mask, ht. 8", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

46. Qtoqho Mask, ht. 7 1/2", wood and raffia, chalk white, pot black, red tempera. Afikpo.

Mkpi Mask. The "he-goat", ram mask is worn bare chested with a long skirt of fresh palm leaves. It appears at Logolo Ọkwụ, the dry season initiation for boys. The mba and opanwa can also be seen then. In the series of four day feasts which occur previous to Christmas, the mkpi comes out with all the others.

47. Mkpi Mask, ht. 12 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

48. Mkpi Mask, ht. 15 1/4", wood and raffia; chalk white, black enamel, red enamel. Afikpo.

49. Mkpi Mask, ht. 12", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.





Bekee Mask. (Pronounced bekay.) The white man mask. A medical doctor who worked to irradiate malaria in the last century was named Baikie. Since he travelled into remote areas where white men were unfamiliar, his name, transformed by Pidgin

English into Bekee, became the name for all white people. White face masks with parted hair and pointed noses were made to pantomime the British colonial officers and missionaries in the masquerades. These same masks are used to represent villagers in certain masquerades, but in those cases the whiteness stands for the spirits. Whether the mask represents a spirit or a white man depends mainly on the costume and presents no difficulty to the people of Afikpo.

50. Bekee Mask, ht. 8", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

51. Bekee Mask, ht. 8", wood and raffia; chalk white, pot black, cam wood orange. Afikpo.

Amaseri. Amaseri is the village group west of Afikpo. Several masks are found there which are similar to those in Afikpo. Among these are the "long face" okonkpo mask for the singer, and the face with the rectangle above, known in Amaseri as amachiriri. The costume for the yam knife mask is a brilliant red skirt and an ostrich plume fan. Several of these masqueraders appear in the last big dance before the farm work begins, when they build the yam heaps. In late August the initiation season begins. The Qkqkpo masquerade is played in January.

52. Opighu Headdress, ht. 11", wood; cam wood orange, black stain. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo. This dancer portrays a proud young man in the Qkqkpo festival in January. He is first in a series followed by nnemgbo and amachiriri.

53. Nnemgbo Mask, ht. 8 1/2", wood; tinted chalk, black stain, cam wood orange. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo. This is a young male dancer for the Qkqkpo festival in January.

54. Ogbune Qmoghq Mask, ht. 6 1/4", wood; black stain, maroon paint, chalk white. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo. This is a male dancer who the girls follow, singing at the end of January.

55. Agboghq Okonkpo Mask, ht. 5 1/2", wood; chalk white, black stain, maroon paint. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo. For a female masquerade at the Qkqkpo festival.

56. Nfuebulu Mask, ht. 7 1/2", wood; chalk white, black paint, yellow clay, cam wood orange. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo. This is a male dancer for the Nkwa festival in January. Twenty or more of these will be followed by twenty or more of the yam knife (mba) masqueraders.

57. Nfuebulu Mask, ht. 7 1/2", wood; tinted chalk, black stain, cam wood orange. Amaseri, Eastern Igbo.





Okpoha. Okpoha is the village group neighboring Afikpo to the north. Masks from Okpoha in the exhibition come primarily from two festivals: the Lughulū feast in May and the Okpoha Igurube play in January. Many of the masks bear at least a visual resemblance to those of Afikpo, but not enough is known about their masquerades to make a meaningful comparison.

58. Ehu Nche Ekwa Mask, ht. 10", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black, red pigment. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo. This is a lady masquerade which sings for shillings in the Lughulū play in May.

59. Nkitincha Mask, ht. 10 1/2", wood, unpainted. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo. This piece gives an opportunity to see what a mask looks like before it is painted chalk white and selignum black. It is a male dancer for the Lughulū dance in May.

60. Otopho Mask, ht. 17", wood, raffia, wire; chalk white, selignum black, red, yellow, blue tempera. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo. This is the Okpoha version of the woodpecker mask, which comes out for the Lughulū festival in May.

61. Drummer's Mask, ht. 7", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo.

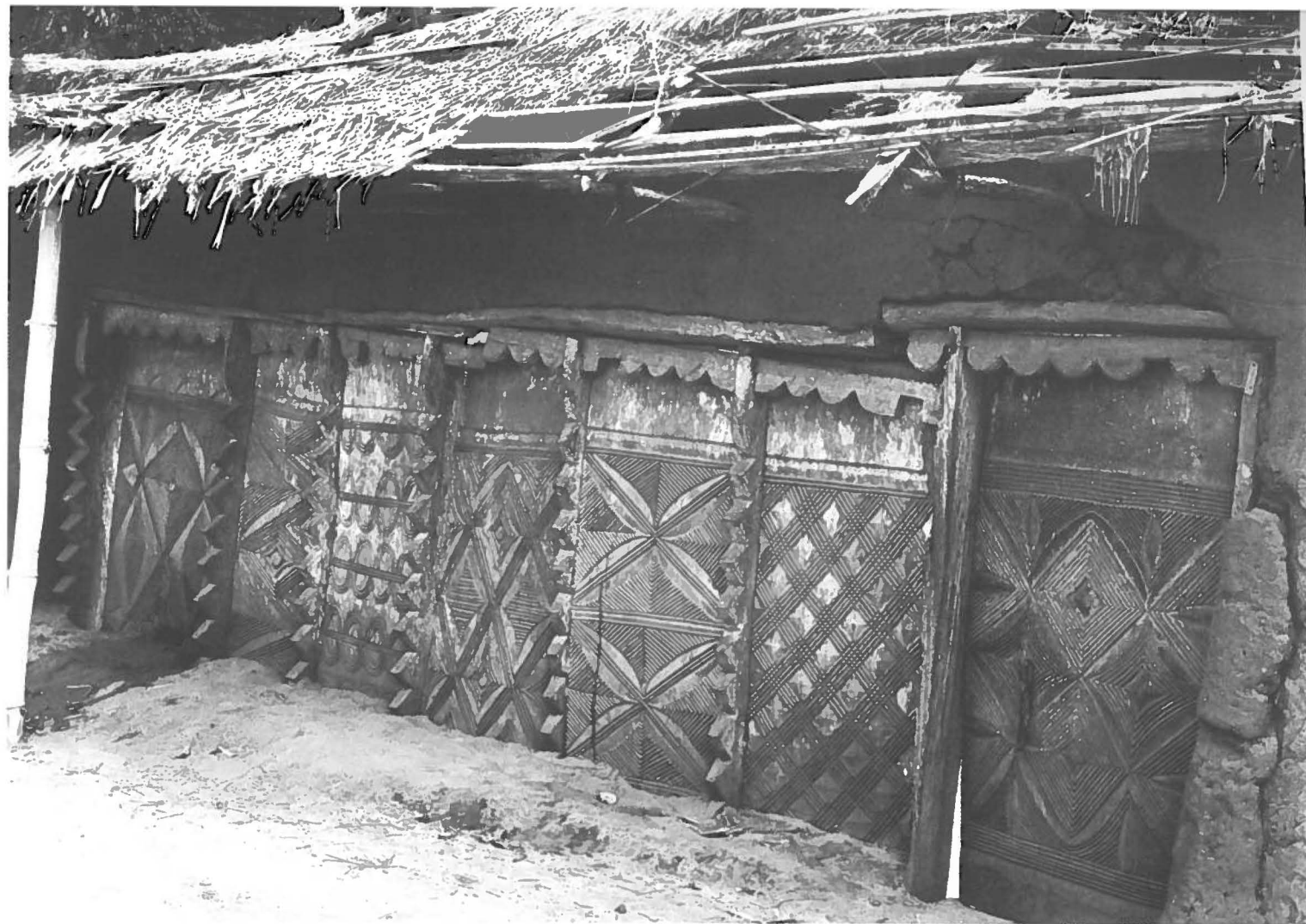
62. Nkpere Mask, ht. 14 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black, yellow clay. Okpoha.

63. Nwa Okpata headdress, ht. 16 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo. This is a child used in a game. People give it presents in the Lughulū festival in May.

64. Bekee (White Man) Mask, ht. 9", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo. For the Lughulū festival.

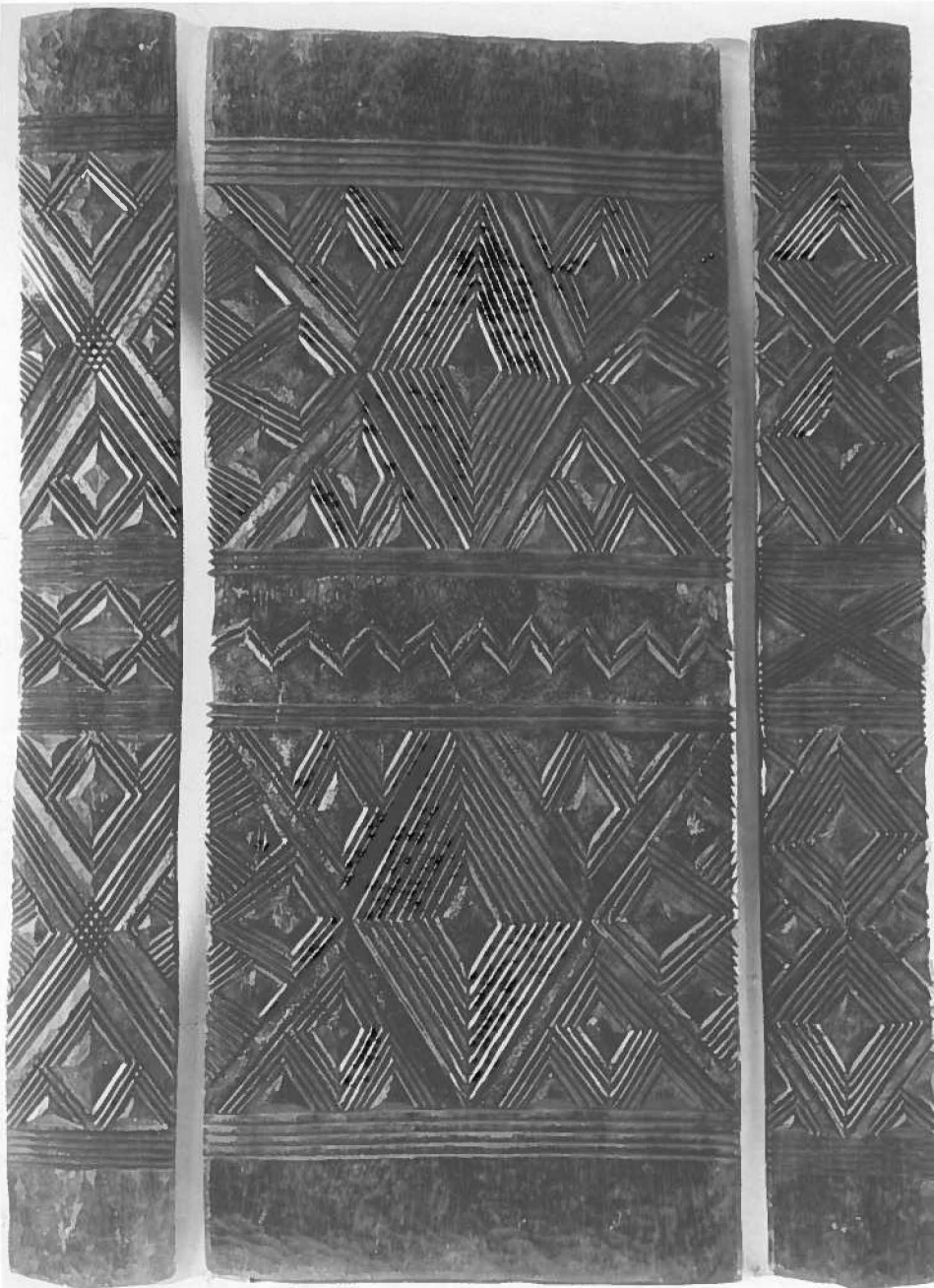
65. Drummer's Mask, ht. 8 1/2", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo. For the Lughulū festival in May.

66. Lughulū Mask, ht. 7", wood and raffia; chalk white, selignum black. Okpoha, Eastern Igbo.



Field Photo. Traditional Igbo Doors, from the entranceway to a compound in Enugu-Ukwu, along the Awka-Onitsha Road. The six panels on the left are stationary. The gate is on the right. These impressive panels are set

in a mud wall which surrounds the yard of an important family. The panels are over four feet in height and are carved from single pieces of African oak. Photo by Mr. Tom Cole.



Carved Doors. Doorways in traditional Igbo houses were seldom over four feet in height. Panels were hand sawed and adzed from the trunk of an iroko tree (African oak), a very hard wood impervious to termites and tropical decay. The frames and the door were erected in place as the mud wall was built up. Carved panels displayed at the gateway to the housing compound proclaimed the rank of the owner. They were also found on the walls of the men's sitting room and in shrines.

Door designs were geometric, employing "hatchings, cross-hatchings, lozenges, circles, and quatrefoils." Each pattern had its name but it is not known whether symbolism was involved. Occasionally, however, one finds a tortoise design, representing cunning, a characteristic the Igbos attribute to themselves, or the eke snake, the sacred python.

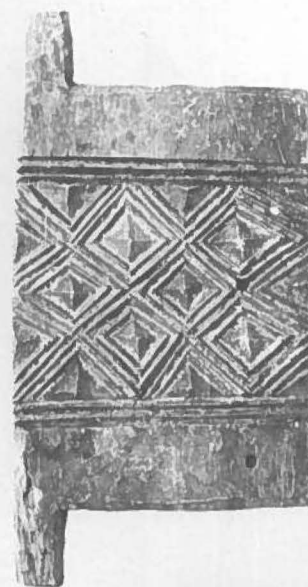
Chip carved doors are known throughout most of Igboland but they are most famous in the Northern Igbo area around Awka town. In the period of rapid modernization since WW II many new houses have been built. "English" doors have replaced these fine panels which have been destroyed or discarded. They are no longer being made in the villages because the demand has fallen, but the Awka Carver's Co-operative has developed a flourishing trade in furniture decorated with traditional patterns, primarily for expatriates and the new elite. By 1966 it had become fashionable for wealthy men and successful politicians to erect newly carved gate doors of great height from the Awka Co-operative. Perhaps this is evidence that carved doors will be revived in a modern context.

67. Carved Door, ht. 53", w. 22",
and two side panels, ht. 54",
w. 7", iroko wood, varnish. Inyi,
Northern Igbo.

68. Carved Shutter, ht. 18",
iroko wood, traces of black
paint. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

Field Photos.

Three carved shutters,
approx. ht. 18", iroko
wood. Inyi, Northern
Igbo. Donated to the
Nigerian National Museum
by the author, 1966.





69 front



69 side

Children's Dolls. On request the traditional carvers would produce dolls for young girls. They are an example of secular art in Africa. The carver usually decorated them with elaborate hair styles and jewelry. In pre-European times little girls wore rows of beads at the waist. Other jewelry might include beads at the throat and ivory (elephant tusk) bracelets.

69. Children's Doll, ht. 15 1/2", wood, dark patina. Ibi, Southern Igbo. The large bead at the throat, probably represents coral, indicates high birth. The protruding navel is common of children in the area.

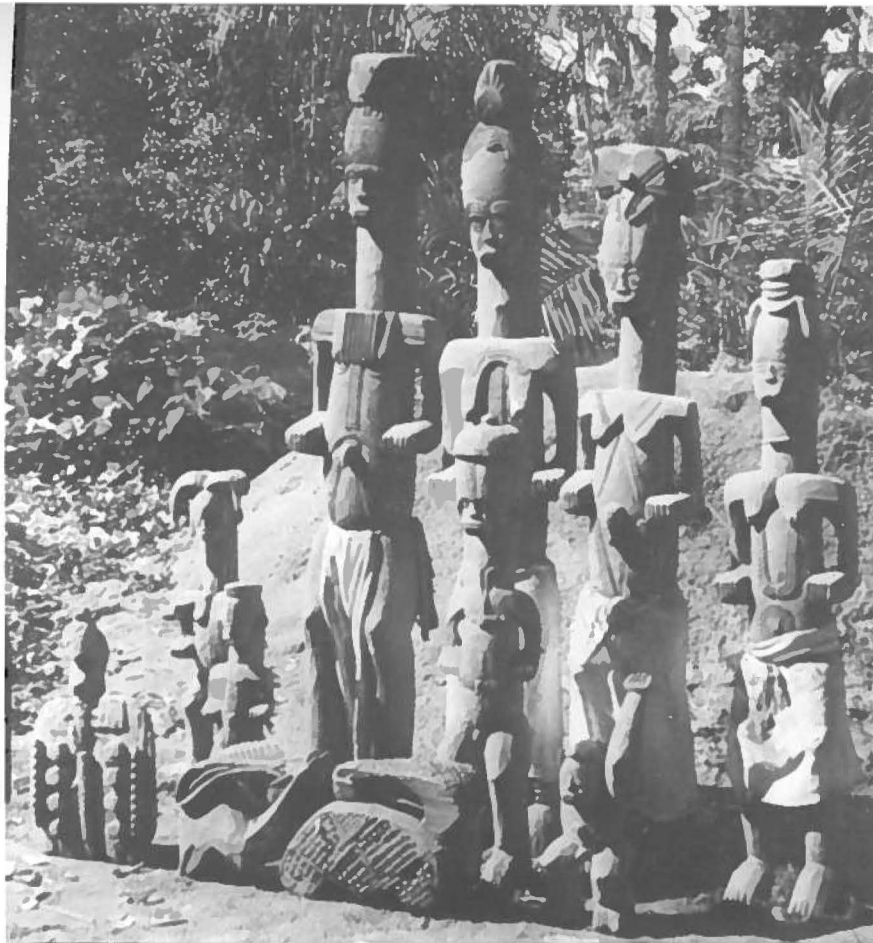
70. Children's Doll, ht. 18 1/2", wood, nails; cam wood orange, black paint. Isekke, Northern Igbo. The scarification down the front, called mbubu, is the traditional indication that this young lady is prepared for marriage. Isekke is about ten miles from Ibi.



Upper Photos: Doll, from Oye, Northern Igbo. This doll was made by the carver for his first daughter in 1938. Notice the ichi facial scarification indicating title rank. Donated to the Nigerian National Museum by the author, 1966.

Lower Photos: Doll, from Oye, Northern Igbo. This doll was carved by the same carver as above for his second daughter in 1944. Notice the subtle changes in design. Oye is over sixty miles from Ibi and Isekke. Donated to the Nigerian National Museum by the author, 1966.





Field Photo. Ancestor Shrine Figures, ranging in height from six feet to ten inches, wood with cloth, unpainted; from Nguru/Owerri, Southern Igbo. These extraordinary pieces are over forty years of age. They were photographed before being moved into a newly erected shrine. In the back row can be seen the ancestral head of the family, his first and second wife and the unmarried daughter who carries the baby. The shorter male figure in the front of the first wife has been called both the son and the court messenger. The small figure with raised arms next to the goat was said to be an ikenga. The other pieces represent minor spirits.

Ancestor Shrine Figures. Around Owerri, in Southern Igbo country shrines to the family ancestors are found in almost every compound. Since the population density is very high (over 800 per square mile) there is a large number of shrines, perhaps over a hundred per village. Similar shrines exist in other areas, but one large shrine may serve the entire community.

Ancestors occupy a middle position between the living and the spirit world in traditional Igbo belief. Prayers, offerings and sacrifices are presented to the ancestors at regular intervals to keep the relationship fruitful to those presently occupying the family land. It is very common, for instance, to see an Igbo man pour a few drips of palm wine on the ground for the ancestors before he empties the glass.

Shrine figures typically represent the hereditary head of the family, his wife (and perhaps a second wife), his son who will inherit the headship of the family, and a beautiful unmarried daughter. Also present may be statues to a variety of minor spirits who have been helpful to the family. Examples are the ikenga, the spirit of self-actualization, the medicine spirit, and the ram who accompanies the warrior into battle, and runs ahead to butt the enemy. Names for the various pieces vary considerably from one location to another, as do the powers associated with them.

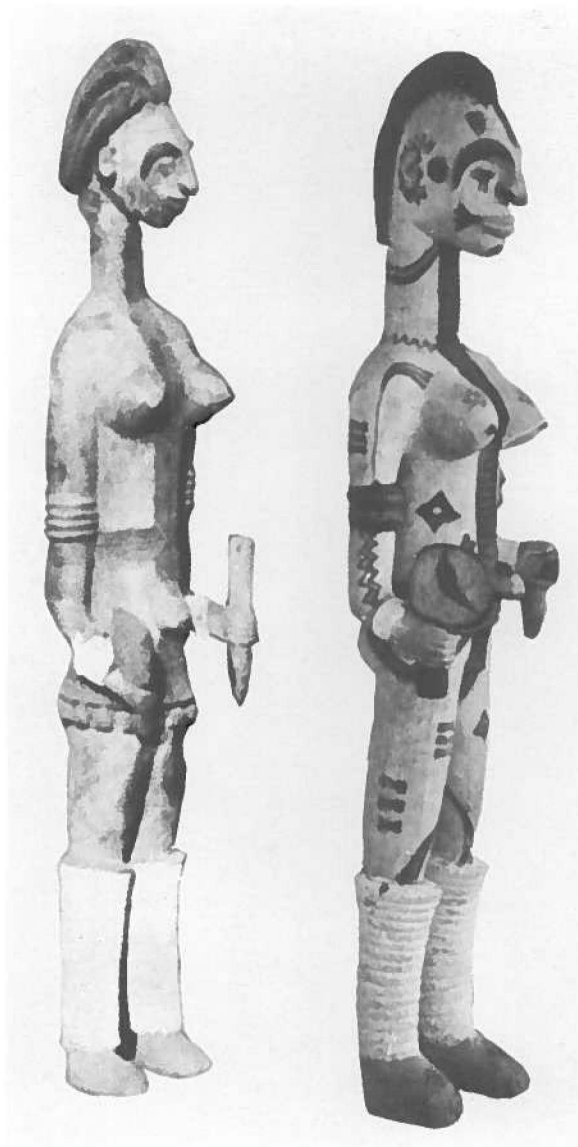
Family shrines are usually small mud and thatch structures within the family compound. They are very dark inside and are often kept locked up. Shrines for a village are usually in a larger, more open building and are attended by a shrine priest. Single shrine figures to the ancestors, called okposi or okpensi are also found in the gate houses to the traditional compounds where men sit and receive their visitors.

71. Ancestor Figure, ht. 26 1/2", wood; traditional black dye. Ikeduru/Owerri, Southern Igbo. This is the beautiful maiden who has completed the nkp marriage preparation ceremonies and has received the mbubu scarifications down the front (no longer practiced.)

72. Ancestor Figure, ht. 30", wood; black from a burned inyi tree, brown uhie paint. Nguru/Owerri, Southern Igbo.

Field Photo at left. Young Maiden Ancestor, approx. ht. 48", wood; yellow stain, chalk and black leaf dye. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This figure was photographed outside the impressive Umuaja-Inyi shrine, and was carved more than thirty years ago.

Field Photo at center. Young Maiden Ancestor, approx. ht. 48", wood; yellow stain, chalk, black leaf dye, uli blue body paint. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This statue was made in 1966 by the same carver as the previous one. By this time he was very old and no longer very active. He named it agbogho ugo na acho mma, considered in Inyi to be a very beautiful girl. The leg bracelets are called ebeje, or nja. She holds a fan: nku and an elephant tusk: okuke or odu. At her waist are beads: juid or jigida. Down her chest are mbubo marks. The arm bracelets are mgba-aka. The carver had the women decorate the body with traditional Inyi beauty designs. Commissioned by the author, and left in Enugu.





Divination Pieces. In an Igbo village where the traditional religion is practiced a number of people deal with the spirit world. Among these are native doctors, herbalists, diviners, fortune tellers, cult and shrine priests and rain makers. These specialists possess a variety of small carved figures which represent certain spirit forces in the traditional belief system. These are miniature iken-gas representing the spirit of effectiveness, small dog figures representing the medicine spirit, small male figures for the spirit of the first born son, and figures for the first born daughter. Additional geometric shapes insure that everyday will be good, that money will come, and that a man will not stub his toe in his travels. Some statues tell the future and explain which spirits have caused illness or death. The specialists offered sacrifices to appease their spirits in the client's favor. Individuals may obtain certain divination pieces for regular use on the advice of their native curer.

These various religious and medical carvings are available in the market. They come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Objects which have a common name may have several acceptable forms. Very little has been written on the use and shapes of divination pieces on a comparative basis. We can say, however, that a piece with one name in one area may have another name ten miles away. Pieces with the same name may have entirely different shapes or uses. Neither the quality of the craftsmanship nor the quality of the design limits or enhances an object's effectiveness in representing a spirit force. Ugly designs with sloppy workmanship function equally with masterpieces.

73. Vulture Ikenga, ht. 8", wood; yellow stain, pot black, chalk white. Awkuzu, Northern Igbo. Note the small figures around the body.

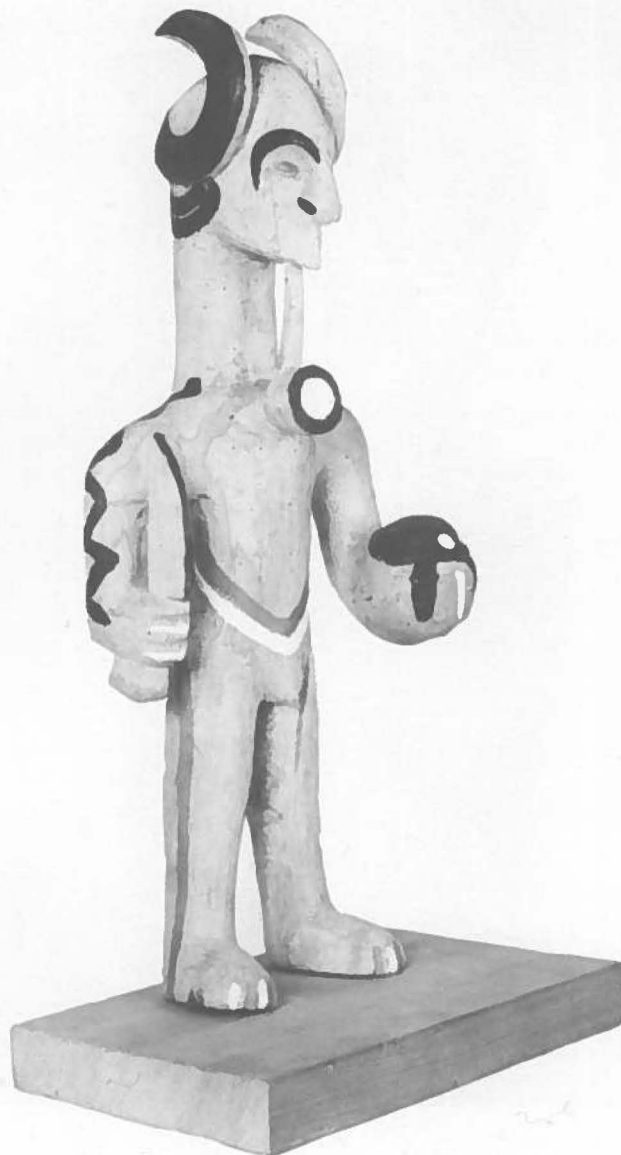
74. Vulture Ikenga, ht. 7 1/4", wood, yellow clay, chalk white, cam wood orange. Uga, Northern Igbo.

75. Three Divination Pieces; left: ufo, the grail with four faces which receives the blood of sacrifice, ht. 9"; center: agwunsi, the dog medicine spirit, length 8 1/2"; right: ikenga, ht. 8". All in unpainted soft wood. Isekke, Northern Igbo.

76. Ezumezu, ht. 7 1/2", wood; black stain. Ikeduru/Owerri, Southern Igbo. Sacrifices are made to this piece by fortune tellers so that they may tell what will happen tomorrow.

77. (Not a divination piece)
Statue of the Ogolo Masquerader, ht. 17", wood; polychrome enamel. Nsugbe/Onitsha, Northern Igbo. This masquerade appears in numbers at the Otite feast in September. It is a high stepping, chasing player which is closely followed by high spirited young men, some carrying whips which are used to threaten the crowd to keep its distance.





Ikenga Statues. I-ke means strength or power. N-ga means place of strength. Ikenga literally means place of strength. In the case of the Igbo man that is the bicep of the right arm. If a man has a strong right arm he can achieve success and become self-reliant. The ikenga, then, is a statue dedicated to a man's ability to make his way in the world. The spirit of the ikenga could be considered the manifestation of the Igbo's high need to achieve.

A traditional Igbo man makes a sacrifice to his ikenga for "success in trade, war, hunting, and farming". (Talbot, 1926) The sacrifice may be a kola nut, but more commonly a chicken, whose blood and feathers are ceremonially applied to the statue.

Unlike most Igbo carvings which must be commissioned personally, ikengas are readily available in the market. A typical time for a male to acquire an ikenga is as a village youth moving into his own house in his father's compound, or when having difficulty making his fortune in the city. The statue gains strength when it is taken home by the purchaser and consecrated with palm wine and kola nut.

Field Photo on left. Ikenga, large shrine size, approx. ht. 36", wood, nails; polychrome enamel. Nsugbe/Onitsha. N. Igbo. Donated to the Enugu Mbari artist's club in 1966.

The main attributes of the most common ikengas are its two curved horns suggesting strength and vigor. Indeed, the simpler models are hardly more than horns protruding from a base. The full form however is a man seated on a stool. He carries a sword in his right hand, the head of a defeated enemy in his left, and perhaps a pipe in his mouth. They may be elaborately painted or left undecorated.

Ikengas come in several sizes, but all are equal in potency for religious purposes. Large statues may be found in village or compound shrines. Smaller versions, with many attributes omitted, would be the typical ikenga for the owner's sitting room. Miniature ikengas, some in crudest outline, and others in finest detail, may be carried by individuals in their pockets, or employed by diviners and native doctors along with a host of other smaller carvings of special function.

In 1966 ikengas were still being used by men of traditional upbringing but being ignored by Christians. Any assertion about how widely ikengas are used is bound to be challenged by educated Igbos. However the Onitsha market still supplies what must be thousands of ikengas annually, many designs being remarkably similar to the ones collected over fifty years ago. Ikengas are most prominent in Northern Igboland but are unknown among the Eastern Igbos.

78. Ikenga, ht. 25 1/4", wood; yellow stain, black paint, white and blue tempera, cam wood orange. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This piece includes pipe, knife and skull.

79. Ikenga, ht. 16 1/2", wood; black paint, chalk dots, yellow and red stains. Inyi, Northern Igbo. Compare to No. 78. This piece is unusual since a titled man's stocking cap has been substituted for horns. A ram's horn drinking cup and an *qf̣q* staff (for swearing oaths) have been substituted for sword and skull.

80. Ikenga, ht. 23", wood; blue, white, maroon and black enamel. Okigwi, Northern Igbo. A complete figure including stool.

81. Ikenga, ht. 15 1/2", unpainted brown wood. Onitsha area, Northern Igbo. Notice the forehead scarification indicating the traditional *Ndichie* title..

82. Ikenga, ht. 15", yellow wood; chalk white, black. Onitsha area, Northern Igbo.

83. Ikenga, ht. 11 1/4", unpainted wood. Onitsha area.

84. Ikenga, ht. 9 1/2", wood, unpainted; *Q̣ẓuḅuḷu*, N. Igbo.

85. Ikenga, ht. 8". wood, unpainted; *Q̣ẓuḅuḷu*, N. Igbo.

86. Ikenga, ht. 8", wood, brown stain. Onitsha area.





87. Ikenga, ht. 7", brown wood, Onitsha area, N. Igbo.

88. Ikenga, ht. 7", wood, black paint. Umunumo, Southern Igbo. Note the small scale divination figures around the body, and the second face.

89. Ikenga, ht. 6", wood, black stain, Nguru/Owerri, Southern Igbo.

90. Ikenga, ht. 5 1/2", wood, white and blue tempera, cam wood orange. Inyi, N. Igbo. An ikenga in a derby hat.

91. Ikenga, ht. 5", wood, tinted chalk, black paint. Akukwa, Northern Igbo. Divination or portable size.

92. Ikenga, ht. 4 1/2", wood, blue and white tempera. Inyi, N. Igbo. Elongated ears serve as horns.

93. Ikenga, ht. 4 1/2", wood, yellow clay stain, black paint, chalk. Onitsha area, N. Igbo. Despite its small size this ikenga has a pipe.



Agbogho Mmuo. The Maiden Spirit Masks. Maiden spirit masquerades are widely known throughout Igboland but they are most prominent in Northern Igbo country. Many Igbo masquerades bring forth strong, fierce or vigorous images, but the maiden spirit represents delicate beauty and feminine character. The masks come in two forms: a helmet type which fits over the head, and a small mask which barely covers the face. The carvers give the faces fine features and light coloring, usually chalk white. Traditional scarification or cosmetic markings appear at the ears, on the forehead, and above and below the eyes. The hair is represented in the traditional manner, a crest built up or hair, clay and charcoal. In the cases where small face masks are used, the costume designers add an elaborate headdress made of tassels, streamers and mirrors. This masquerade dresses in a suit of bright applique felt in geometric design. The costume is so elaborate and difficult to make that a professional class of tailors specialize in their production.

Maiden spirit masqueraders are the special domain of a middle grade in the men's secret society. In preparation for the festivals at the beginning of the dry season they practice extensively. They also appear throughout the year for appropriate burial ceremonies.

These masqueraders dance and pantomime as a group and individually. They display the feminine activities of the village: working on the farm, haggling over prices or property, and being concerned with their own beauty. In certain areas the masks appear as pairs, male and female. The male masks may also be the crested helmet type or the white face mask, but with a traditional masculine hairstyle.

These masquerades are very popular and draw large crowds which comment on the beauty of the costumes and the skill of the miming. By 1966 Christianity had taken most of the traditional religion out of the burial ceremonies. The men's societies have tended to become more social yet many are determined to perpetuate the pagentry of the masquerade.



94. Statue of a Maiden Spirit Masquerader, ht. 26", wood, polychrome enamel. Nsugbe/Onitsha, Northern Igbo. This carver was worried that we would not see the full beauty of the masquerade if we saw only the mask, so he carved the full character, calling it nwagbo mmuo : young girl spirit.



95. Nne Mma Helmet Mask: Beautiful Mother. ht. 14", wood, plastic screen in the eyes, metal earrings; chalk white, pot black, indigo, yellow clay, cam wood orange. Ngwo/Enugu, Northern Igbo. Masks of the old style were being retired in this village in 1966. This carver, a young man, gave this new mask a modern hair style and jewelry.

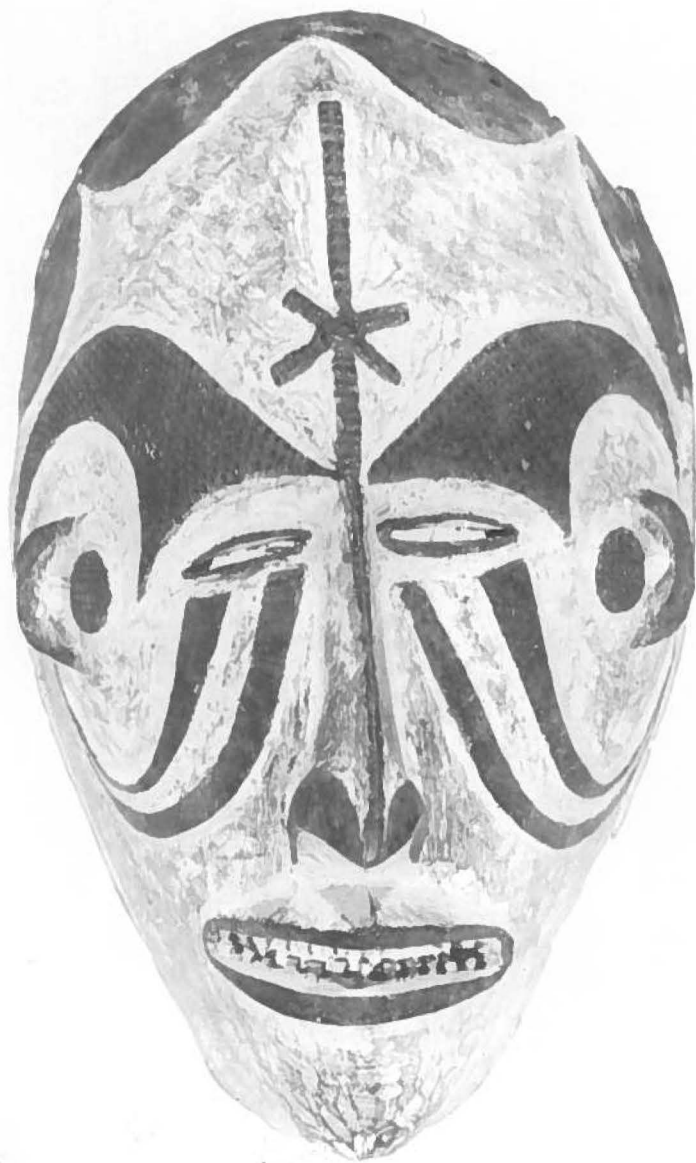
96. Maiden Spirit Helmet Mask, ht. 18", wood; chalk white, traditional black paint, yellow enamel signature. Imilike Enu, Northern Igbo.

97. Maiden Spirit Helmet Mask, ht. 17 1/2", wood with leather hinge; black inyi paint, yellow dye, red tempera, silver enamel. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This is called agbogho ehi referring to beauty as delicate as the young calf. It dances in the dry season festival called Ajaani, in October.

Field Photo. Maiden Spirit Helmet Mask, ht. 18", wood; orange and black enamel, unusual articulated jaw. Onitsha market, Northern Igbo. Left in Enugu, 1966.



Field Photo. Male Spirit Helmet Mask, ht. 18", white, black, pink and yellow enamel. Imilike Enu, N. Igbo. This is the mate to No. 96. The leopards are called oko-oko. Left in Enugu, 1966.



98



101

98. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 8", wood; chalk white, black paint. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

99. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 8", wood; chalk white, black, red tempera. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

100. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 8 1/2", wood, polychrome. Inyi, Northern Igbo. An unusual highly decorated version.

101. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 8 1/2", wood; tinted chalk, orange, black paint. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

102. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 7 1/4", wood; chalk, orange, black paint. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

103. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 6 1/2", wood, chalk, black, orange paint. Inyi, Northern Igbo.



104

105

104. Maiden Spirit Mask, ht. 9", wood; white, black and red enamel. Ihioma/Orlu, S. Igbo.

105. Male Spirit Mask, ht. 9", wood; white, black and red enamel. Ihioma/Orlu, S. Igbo. This is the mate to the above mask. Note the difference in hair style.





106 front



106 side

Inyi. The village group of Inyi, in Northern Igbo country, is located at the cross-roads of several rural trade routes. In its large market can be found some of the finest pottery designs in Igbo land. In 1966 Inyi maintained a traditional shrine (see section on ancestors) and a well tuned ikoro signal drum. One middle-aged carver produced most of the lively and highly decorated masks in this section of the exhibition. A second carver of advanced age was less active. He did manage to produce copies of a few masks which makes an inner-village comparison of styles possible.

Nwanza. This is the little bird which announces to the village that a female has committed an abomination, such as giving birth to twins, which is an offense against the land deity. The facial decorations reflect the uli cosmetic designs which the women used to wear, and the top recalls an old fashioned hair style. It is a singing and dancing masquerade which moves gracefully and is accompanied by musicians. Some say its original use has changed, and that it now appears at the Ajaani dry season festival in October and in the Christmas parade.

Field Photos at right.

Nwanza Headdress, front and side view, carved by the older Inyi carver. Notice the great differences in detail between this one and the nwanza on the opposite page.

106. Nwanza Headdress, female, ht. 14 1/2", wood, mirror eyes; yellow dye, traditional black. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

107. Nwanza Headdress, female, ht. 10 1/2", wood, mirror eyes, traditional black, yellow clay, orange. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

108. Nwanza Headdress, male, ht. 9 1/2", wood, mirror eyes, yellow clay, traditional black, orange. Inyi, Northern Igbo.





109



112

Ula Onu -The Animal Spirit Headdress. It represents the idea that when you do bad things people talk about your misbehavior. This is a solo masquerade worn by a vigorous young man who does not dance, but rather races through the village gardens and pathways. It also comes to feasts and to burials without being invited. Even though this looks like a mask, the eyes are not pierced. It is worn on the forehead, sewn to a stocking cap.

109. Ula Onu Headdress, ht. 14 1/2", wood, mirror eyes; chalk white, traditional red, yellow, black dyes. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

110. Ula Onu Headdress, ht. 15 1/4", wood; tinted chalk, black paint, yellow, red tempera. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

111. Ula Onu Headdress, ht. 15 1/4", wood, mirror eyes, traditional dyes, tempera paints. Inyi, Northern Igbo.

112. Ula Onu Headdress, ht. 13 1/2", wood; black paint, chalk white, yellow paint. Inyi, N. Igbo. Made by the older carver.

Oji Onu Headdress. This is the Inyi version of a headdress type common in Northern Igboland. The abstract design is placed on the head which has a snout and eyes. The full name was said to be oji onu egbu oji - it fells the giant iroko tree with its beak. This is a way of saying that all of its particular power lies in its ability to outwit people. It can be seen in the Christmas festivities. For additional information see the article by K.C. Murray.



113

113. Oji Onu Headdress, ht. 12 1/2", wood; black paint, chalk white, cam wood red, traces of red enamel. Inyi.

114. Oji Onu Headdress, ht. 12 1/2", wood; black paint, chalk white, red tempera, Inyi, Northern Igbo.



115. Ichoku- Parrot Headdress, ht. 16 1/2", wood, mirror eyes; tinted chalk, red and yellow tempera, traditional black. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This is a talkative masquerade which can appear at native feasts, burials and in the Christmas parade. It was originated in Ogbunka, a neighboring village group.

116. Ana Ahu Agu Headdress, (Begging the tiger to not misbehave), ht. 11 1/4", wood; chalk white, black, red tempera. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This is another running masquerade with a whip to dissuade people from misbehaving.

117. Obodo Akuzu Headdress, ht. 11 1/4", wood, mirror eyes; chalk white, black. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This appears whenever a male commits an offense against the land deity. It was said to be the mate to the nwanza masquerade.

118. Mbara Uguru; Aza Eruchie Headdress, ht. 17 1/4", wood, mirror eyes; blue, orange, and white tempera. Inyi, Northern Igbo. This masquerade comes to the New Yam festival at the beginning of the dry season. Its name translates, "If the compound is swept, the harmattan winds cover it up again", referring to the coming dust-bearing winds from the north.

119. Okelohia -Bushrat Headdress, ht. 12 1/4", wood; tinted chalk, traditional red and black dyes. Inyi, N. Igbo. This masquerade comes out alone, and doesn't dance, but runs wildly through the compounds jumping over things and doing some damage. It reminds the people that their lives are filled with forces which are unpredictable.

120. Egbe Any Ozo Headdress, ht. 12", wood, black paint. Inyi, N. Igbo. Its name implies, "Once he has begun his attack, the hawk never pays attention to the farmer who is trying to protect his chickens. It plays for fun, coming to any festival.

Field Photo, far right, opposite page. Egbe Any Ozo Headdress, donated to the Nigerian National Museum by the author in 1966.





Ozūbulu Carvings. In the town of Ozūbulu about 20 miles south of Onitsha, is a family of carvers which maintains a stall in the Onitsha market. Their specialty is ikengas and large ceremonial masks. Examples of their ikengas are nos. 84 and 85. The large masks measure over three feet in height. They are painted black with red eyes and teeth. The jaws are movable and hinged with inner-tube rubber. Included among these are a black leopard mask called ozō and an ekpo mask called iyakōdikwo nwanshi, used for funerals and feasts. A large human face with two large arching horns called okpolumkpi appears at the Christmas masquerades. The masquerade common to the Onitsha area called oji ony is made in Ozūbulu. It employs a face with human features and a long animal snout. It was once dangerous because it punished offenders of traditional law by whipping. It was suppressed by the colonial authorities, but has now been revived in a harmless form to join the other masqueraders at Christmas. This family of carvers produced a modern version of the mask by nailing a silver angel on top.

121. Okpōka -Bat Headdress. ht. 13", wood; black enamel, red tempera. Ozūbulu, Northern Igbo. For the funeral of a teenage boy, a very unhappy time since he was not able to reach manhood and have a family. From the collection of Dr. Harold Lockett, Ann Arbor.

122. Odogu Mask, ht. 11", wood, horse hair; selignum black, red enamel, silver enamel. Qzūbūly, Northern Igbo. For funeral ceremonies of brave men, and the traditional festivals in December. From the collection of Charles Thomas, Jr., Ann Arbor.

123. Odogu Mask. ht. 10", wood; black selignum, red enamel. Qzūbūly, Northern Igbo. A less fierce version.

124. Odogu Mask, ht. 10", wood; black selignum, red enamel. Qzūbūly, N. Igbo.



Field Photo. A large ekpo mask, approx. ht. 36", wood, horse hair, articulated jaw hinged with inner-tube rubber; black selignum, red enamel. Qzūbūly, Northern Igbo. Used in festivals and burials. Left in Enugu, 1966.





125



126

Ngwo Carvings. The village group of Ngwo is located on the top of Millikan Hill overlooking Enugu, and extends to the highway intersection known as Nine Mile Corner. The masquerade society is very active there and a wide variety of funeral ceremony masks are in use. In 1966 many old masks were being retired. They were being replaced by new masks carved with a "modern" interpretation and painted in enamel. The masks in the exhibition are copies of traditional masks and have been painted with traditional paints. They are the extraordinary work of a single teenage carver who was learning the traditional designs of his village in 1966. Also see no. 95, his version of the Beautiful Mother Mask.

125. Ozọ Enyanwu Headdress, ht. 9", wood, chalk white, traditional black paint. Ngwo/Enugu, Northern Igbo.

126. Agụ Na Egbu Efi Headdress, -the leopard is killing a cow. ht. 11", wood; traditional black and white paints. Ngwo/Enugu, Northern Igbo. A male funeral masquerader from which the crowd runs.

127. Ikwokị Headdress, ht. 10", wood; chalk white, black paint, blue tinting powder. Ngwo/Enugu, Northern Igbo. A male funeral mask.

128. Ułaga Headdress, ht. 15", wood; chalk white, black paint, blue tinting powder. Ngwo/Enugu, Northern Igbo. A new interpretation of a traditional masquerade.

129. Ike Ibagwa Headdress, ht. 11 1/4", wood and cloth; chalk white, black, blue, purple tempera. Ngwo/Enugu, Northern Igbo. A male masquerade appearing at the funeral of any man or woman. A new copy of the mask in the field photo on the right.

Field Photo at right. Two views of the Ike Ibagwa Headdress, ht. 11", wood; chalk white, and pot black. Ngwo/Enugu, N. Igbo. Donated to the Nigerian National Museum by the author, 1966.



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