Buffalo Helmets of Tussian and Siemu Peoples of Burkina Faso

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Tussian and Siemu peoples living west of Bobo-Dioulasso in southwestern Burkina Faso are relatively unknown in the West. This article focuses on a type of sculpture rarely found in Western collections: a wooden helmet surmounted by a stylized representation of a buffalo with a pair of curving horns projecting from a flat, rectangular head, a tubular body standing on four legs, and a vertically projecting tail (Figs. 1–2).[1] The helmets shown here also carry two large, curving horns which are attached to the helmet with a fiber cord or leather strips, a feature that is absent on most other examples of this type of Tussian helmet. One or two peglike figures are inserted into holes between the buffalo's horns and sometimes also on both sides of the animal's tail. These schematically carved images—which Christopher Roy (1987:367, Fig. 316) describes as "spirit figures"—can be identified as representations of the cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis* or *Ardeola ibis;* see Kramer 1972:204–7, Alden 1995:658–9), as recorded by Haselberger (1969:218), or the yellow-billed oxpecker (*Buphagus africanus;* see also Benson 1972:475, Alden 1995:883–4), or perhaps a combination of both. According to Susan Cooksey, the doubling of images may refer to the pervasive theme of twinning; there is much power attached to twins, who are feared and revered at once.[2]

Art scholars and collectors are probably most familiar with the striking Tussian plank masks, like the famous example in the Barbier-Mueller Museum in Geneva (Fig. 3), a reproduction of which was juxtaposed with a photograph of Max Ernst's *Bird Sculpture* (1934–35) on the cover of William Rubin's *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art* catalogue of 1984. Other plank masks of this type in a number of public and private collections in Europe and the United States, like the example at the New Orleans Museum of Art, are topped with a hornlike superstructure which refers to the buffalo (Fig. 4).

Tussian buffalo helmets—sometimes called helmet crests or cap masks—are related both formally and conceptually to certain helmets and masks among neighboring peoples. Buffalo imagery occurs in other Tussian art forms, most notably miniature brass pendants that are often attributed to Senufo artists in the literature, even if their attribution to Tussian makers is usually not questioned in the field. Still, it should be pointed out that for some Senufo farmer groups, all non-farmer groups, including artists and artisans, are viewed as "foreigners."[3] Indeed, here, like

(opposite)
1 Helmet
Northern Tussian or Siemu, Burkina Faso
Wood, fabric; h. 54cm (21¼").
Afrika Museum, Berg en Dal, Netherlands (105-2).
PHOTO: FERRY HERREBRUGH, AMSTELVEEN; AFRIKA MUSEUM, BERG EN DAL

(this page)
2 Helmet
Northern Tussian or Siemu, Burkina Faso
Wood; h. 67cm (26½")
Acquired by Herta Haselberger in Bobo-Dioulasso in 1967. Ex coll. Hans Wolf, Zurich, Switzerland. Private collection.
PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S, PARIS

elsewhere in Africa, ethnicity is a complex matter and to some extent arbitrary, and as Allen Roberts writes with reference to Tabwa and Luba peoples in southeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: "Who one says one is, is a matter of social process and local-level politics, and is reckoned differently according to circumstances. Identity is dynamic, not static and *certainly* not genetically determined" (1985:7). However, what follows is not so much based on my personal and all-too-brief encounter with Tussian people in Burkina Faso as it is derived from research in the literature. The present note is obviously an introduction to the subject, awaiting further and in-depth research.[4]

3 Plank mask
(Northern?) Tussian or Siemu, Burkina Faso
Wood, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, cowrie shells, raffia; h. 67cm (26½")
Ex coll. Robert Duperrier, Paris (to 1968). Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva, Switzerland (1005-11).
PHOTO: ARCHIVES BARBIER-MUELLER, STUDIO FERRAZZINI-BOUCHET, GENEVA

4 Plank mask
(Northern?) Tussian or Siemu, Burkina Faso
Wood, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, raffia; h. 63cm (24¾")
New Orleans Museum of Art (museum purchase, 1973.43).
PHOTO: JUDY COOPER, NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART

The buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) holds special cultural significance in many parts of Africa. Like other powerful animals, such as the leopard, elephant, and ram, the buffalo is often associated with ideas of leadership and prestige. Allen Roberts (1995:22-25) has pointed out that both the animal's behavior and its anatomy have captured people's imagination. The fact that buffalo live in herds and cows usually bear a single young has led to an ideological linking of the animal with humans. The buffalo's extraordinary strength and violence, especially when provoked or injured, underlie its fearful reputation. Communities that live in the vicinity of buffalo know of their ability to suddenly disappear and reappear, even during daytime, which makes them an extremely risky prey for hunters, a point made clear in certain proverbs among Yaka and Suku peoples of southwestern Congo. Among Tabwa of southeastern Congo, the paradoxes or dichotomies of the animal's behavior and anatomy provide a metaphorical bridge between buffalo and humans that has specifically contributed to their association with culture heroes and chiefs (ibid.). Like buffalo, Tabwa chiefs are perceived as both good and evil. Beloved because they provide support and guidance, they are also feared as suspected practitioners of malevolent sorcery and witchcraft.

While Roberts's discussion of the Tabwa context pertains to the large savanna buffalo type, it should be noted that the African buffalo encompasses three subspecies (Klös and Wünschmann 1972:349, Alden 1995:509–10, Kingdon 1997:348–51). Relevant to our discussion of buffalo imagery in Tussian arts is the grass or Sudan buffalo, *Syncerus caffer brachyceros*, sometimes also referred to as the "black buffalo" (Convers 1998:80). Medium sized and rather long legged, it stands between the Cape buffalo or African buffalo *senso strictu* (*Syncerus caffer caffer*), whose habitat is confined to the savannas of East and Southern Africa, and the dwarf or forest buffalo (*Syncerus caffer nanus*), which ranges from Senegal via Benin to northwestern Zambia. With the latter subspecies the Sudan buffalo shares the shape of the horns, which are directed backwards and curve upwards and to the outside. Richard Fardon indicates that for their famous buffalo helmet masks, Chamba have also sought inspiration in either the Sudan or the forest types.[5] For Chamba, the behavior of the latter two types, especially the forest buffalo, makes the bush-cow a very appropriate image of maternity. Highly social and more sedentary than the savanna species, bush-cows live in small groups composed of females and their young.

As a result of the animal's cultural connotations, buffalo imag-

ery is prevalent in the arts of many sub-Saharan cultures. Its behavior and anatomy have served as a special source of inspiration in many of the subcontinent's masquerades. In Central Africa, in addition to the realistically rendered depictions of buffalo heads in the helmets of Tabwa people, one finds a large number of carved buffalo heads especially among the so-called Kwango cultural complex in southwestern Congo—including Yaka, Suku, Pende, and Holo (see Bourgeois 1991). Here the buffalo is also visualized in a much more abstract manner in an impressive genre of colorful constructed masks made of fibercloth on a twig framework. Moving northward, one encounters the rather realistic buffalo mask traditions of the Cameroon Grasslands, where masks are either carved of wood entirely or consist of a wooden core that is wrapped in a piece of cloth to which a multitude of colored glass beads are attached. West of the Grasslands is a widespread tradition of so-called three-part horizontal masks that depict generally composite anthropo-zoomorphic images, in which buffalo features are one of many animal-derived elements. It is to this kind of helmet-shaped mask that Patrick McNaughton devoted an elaborate two-part article in this journal (McNaughton 1991, 1992). Among the most striking of West African horizontal masks that more literally represent the buffalo are those of Chamba, Mama, and Mumuye peoples in the Benue River Valley of Nigeria, and of Ligbi and related peoples in the Bondoukou region of Cote d'Ivoire (McNaughton 1991:Figs. 4, 8; 1992:Figs. 3, 4). Buffalo masks of Bwa and related peoples are culturally and geographically more closely related to the Tussian examples, though they are stylistically and formally quite distinct.[6]

Published information on Tussian culture and art is rather limited. Most recently, some original data based on firsthand field research were included by Susan Cooksey in an entry on the Tussian plank mask from the collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art (Fig. 4; Cooksey 2005). Of the numerous writings on Tussian culture by the ethnologist Franz Trost, director of the Institutum Africanum in Vienna, only some contain data on Tussian art and, despite the wealth of ethnographic and other information in the publications Professor Trost has released so far, masks are mentioned merely in passing. The only illustrations one finds in his writings are those of mask dancers made in 1972 by Father Louis Faivre-Rampart in the Northern Tussian village of Bandougou and his own photographs taken in Toussiamba in 1989 (Trost 1993:photos 20–21; 1999a:201, Fig. 1).

In addition to Christopher Roy's valuable summary in his 1987 book on the art of Burkina Faso and his updated contribution in a book on the Thomas G.B. Wheelock Collection (see Roy 2007), the many articles by Father Jean Hébert (1912–2005), a White Father Catholic missionary who worked in Burkina Faso from 1937 to 1968, have proven extremely useful. However, as in the case of Trost's publications, art is barely mentioned in Hébert's writings—some of which were coauthored with Brother Marcel Guilhem (see Hébert and Guilhem 1967, Guilhem and Hébert 1964, 1965).[7] The only earlier published source on Tussian sculpture and some of their other art forms is an article by Herta Haselberger (1969), who had field-collected the helmet that is illustrated in Fig. 2. Moreover, it is important to note that all of the authors mentioned conducted most of their investigations around Toussiana in the Southern Tussian region, whereas the helmets seem to be confined to the Northern Tussian region.

TUSSIAN AND SIEMU

According to a 1991 population estimate by Michèle Dacher, some 32,000 Tussian occupy the southwestern corner of Burkina Faso between the towns of Orodara and Banfora (Hébert 1997:183, n. 1).[8] According to Bakary Traoré (2004:7–8), Siemu people—sometimes also called Siamu—are one of the smallest ethnic groups in Burkina Faso, estimated at 24,000 individuals. It is believed that their original name was Seymin, and that Jula are responsible for its deformation into Siemu. Their language is called Seme. They inhabit seven villages, including the town of Orodara, the capital of the Kenedugu prefecture in Burkina Faso.

Judging from the available literature, the distinction between Northern and Southern Tussian seems to be endorsed by the peoples themselves. The major town in the Southern region is Toussiana, on the road from Bobo-Dioulasso to Banfora. The center of the Northern Tussian region is the village of Kourinion.[9] While Southern Tussian call themselves Win (sg. Wine), Northern Tussian call themselves Tento, but are called Pentobe or Pintonbe (sg. Pentone and Pintone) by the people of Toussiana (Trost 1999a:190). The collective ethnonym Tussian—which is generally used by both Tussian groups (see also Roy 1987:360; 2007:69)—was introduced by Jula with reference to the people of Toussiana.

Not only do significant cultural differences exist between the two divisions, such as in the use of certain mask types, but they speak profoundly different languages that are mutually unintelligible. Nonetheless, both groups recognize their common ancestry. Northern Tussian people, who are considered to be the area's earliest inhabitants, have more in common with Siemu people than with their southern namesakes. From the little documentation we have, Siemu art simply cannot be distinguished from that of their Tussian neighbors, which is why both groups are discussed here, even though we know next to nothing about artistic creation among the Siemu.[10] Other Tussian neighbors include Bobo, Sembla, Senufo, Karaboro, and Tyefo; the latter two peoples are sometimes considered to be Senufo subgroups.[11] Tussian and Siemu are closely related to their Senufo neighbors (Roy 1987:360; 2007:32, 69). This is particularly obvious in their social and political organization and in their religious beliefs and practices, but it can also be seen in some art forms, including the above-mentioned helmets and the miniature brass figure pendants.

In the villages I visited, Tussian and Senufo were said to be one and the same, and Tussian were presented as a Senufo subgroup.[12] Similarly, referring to the centrality in Tussian culture of Do (see below), Roy writes that "[w]ith the northern Senufo, or Tagwara, who have adopted *komo*, they are another example of a Senufo people who have adopted a religious idea that is fundamentally Mandé in origin" (2007:68). Obviously, René Bravmann's concept of "open frontiers" (1973) is readily applicable to this part of West Africa. With regard to the southwestern corner of Burkina Faso, Roy also underlines that "the frontiers between peoples are very porous and constantly changing" (2007:32). Nevertheless, whether or not Tussian and Siemu peoples should ultimately be assimilated with the Senufo group of peoples, it appears that

5a–b Helmet
Northern Tussian or Siemu, Burkina Faso
Wood, fiber, rattan; h. 59.1cm (23¼")
Ex coll. J.J. Klejman, New York; Samuel Dubiner, Tel Aviv, Israel; Maureen Zarember, New York. Collection of Mark Groudine and Cynthia Putnam, Seattle
PHOTOS: ADAM L. WEINTRAUB, COURTESY MARK GROUDINE

the type of buffalo helmet which is the focus of this article constitutes an original contribution of Tussian artists, and possibly also Siemu artists, that should not be confused with any of the sculptures which are usually attributed to one of the (other) Senufo subgroups, regardless of their stylistic and formal commonalities. It should be stressed that the suggestion by Father Michel Convers (1998:80) that Tussian buffalo helmets would actually be stylistically derived from (Fodönrö) Senufo examples cannot be substantiated, and that his assertion that they must once have had the same function as their Senufo counterparts is not confirmed by the available documentation either.

Among Siemu people, and the same seems to be true among Tussian, political leadership is shared between the "Chief of the Village" and the "Chief of the Earth." The former is the administrative head and the representative of the prefect, the latter is the traditional chief, the founder of the village or a direct descendant of the first family to inhabit it. It is he who holds religious knowledge and therefore also acts as priest; he is in charge of the ceremonial calendar and is responsible for the village power objects, known as *bizien* in Seme. Among Northern Tussian, at least in the village of Kourinion, the Chief of the Village is called *kuten*, and the Chief of the Earth, *suaten*. Both are said to be hereditary titles. The *suaten* holds responsibility over the land, hence his title "Master (or Chief) of the Land/Earth" or "Earth Chief." Siemu society consists of four professional groups: the farmers, a noble class that includes the Chief of the Earth; the *kolin*, who hold magical powers and have knowledge of medicinal plants; the griots; and, finally, the blacksmiths.

The ancestors play a dominant role in Siemu and Tussian religious beliefs and practices; they are honored and consulted through periodical animal sacrifices at the altar, known as *kure* in Seme, which consists of a scoria heap. The skulls and legs

6 Three buffalo pendants
(Northern?) Tussian or Siemu, Burkina Faso
Brass, leather; h. 6cm; 7.5cm; 5.5cm (2¼"; 3"; 2")
Ex coll. Jef Vanderstraete, Lasne, Belgium. Private collection
PHOTO: HUGHES DUBOIS, PARIS/BRUSSELS; ARCHIVES MUSÉE DAPPER, PARIS

of animals that have been sacrificed for the ancestors are often hung along the eaves of houses or in vestibules where they guard the home. As in many other sub-Saharan societies, the ancestors primarily act as intermediaries between man and God, creator of the universe and its inhabitants. While many Siemu have converted to Islam in the last half-century, pre-Islamic religious rituals and beliefs remain vigorous.

Aside from masks and helmets, other forms of Tussian art have occasionally been recorded and collected. In wood carving, Tussian artists have produced staffs of office topped with a carved human head (see Haselberger 1969:226, Fig. 47). Rather roughly carved male and female images, called *tase* or *tasie,* have been recorded in connection with divination, serving as insignia for the highest-ranking diviners and bearing a proper name (see Haselberger 1969:227, Fig. 73; Trost 1986:106, Fig. 30; 1999b:215; 2001:319–21; Cooksey 2004:chap. 8; 2007:Figs. 13, 17). Regarding metal arts, Tussians have made and used different types of brass pendants to be worn around the neck or at a belt. In addition to the zoomorphic miniature pendants that are conceptually related to certain helmets and masks (Fig. 6), some anthropomorphic examples have been documented by Haselberger, one of which in particular can barely be distinguished from a type that is often identified as "Senufo" (1969:239, Fig. 27; see also Trost 1993:photos 15–16; Roy and Wheelock 2007:pls. 350–53).[13] Mention also should be made of bracelets, examples of which are published in Frobenius (1911:pl. 2 facing p. 8—attributed to the Bobo), and anklets, examples of which are preserved in Germany in the Linden-Museum Stuttgart and the Museum Haus Völker und Kulturen in Sankt Augustin near Bonn (Haselberger 1969:216–17). One may assume that art forms similar to the above have been made among Siemu people as well.

Like most all of their neighbors, Tussians have also produced a range of pots and vessels in fired clay. Interestingly, both the general shape of Tussian houses and the relief embellishments applied to their outer walls were noticed by Leo Frobenius during his travels in Burkina Faso in 1908. Drawings made of architecture and wall decoration by Frobenius's travel companion, H. Hugershoff, are reproduced in some of the German ethnographer's publications (e.g., Frobenius 1923:67; see also Haselberger 1969:226, Fig. 51).[14] Most intriguing, however, are the different types of rock art, consisting of both engravings and line drawings, that were discovered by Father Jean Hébert in the cliffs near Toussiana in the late 1960s. Haselberger (1969:218) also mentions drawings made with red ocher on cave walls and engravings on horizontal sandstone rocks.

THE DO ASSOCIATION AND ITS ARTS

Tussian masks and helmets are produced and used in the context of certain activities and rituals of the powerful Do association (which is called "Lo" in Jula), named after its tutelary spirit or deity. In fact, the name Do and the powerful spiritual ideas it stands for are widespread in southern Burkina Faso.[15] Like others, Trost (1986:100) recognizes the relationship between Tussian and Northern Senufo, and considers the Do initiation to be a variant of some Senufo peoples' Poro. However, until the Tussian Do is more properly studied and understood, the analogy

7 A souvenir shop with a variety of Tussian and other masks in Bobo-Dioulasso.
PHOTO: CONSTANTINE PETRIDIS, 2004

between the two associations seems rather superfluous.

According to Hébert (n.d.:1), Do should be seen as the oldest regional divinity. Through its wide geographical and ethnic distribution, the association and the concurrent rituals show much variation, but the basis remains the same. Initiation into the association is required for men wherever it occurs. The association's membership is publicly known, but its rituals are not shared with outsiders. Among other things, members also enjoy a much more lavish funeral than nonmembers. Hébert suspects that even though Do once represented an encompassing philosophy and a true religion, much of its deeper significance was lost in its recent history. One explanation for this loss could lie in the long intervals between the major initiation phases.[16]

Nevertheless, interviews I conducted in 2004 among both Northern and Southern Tussian revealed a somewhat different understanding of Do. I noted that Do was generally interpreted as meaning "secret," referring to the initiation into manhood that was held in the bush, but that the term also signifies the mask—in fact, in Kourinion, among Northern Tussian, people named masks *dopikwa*, literally 'children of the Do'. The people with whom I spoke emphasized that the term could not be translated as "divinity," "spirit," or "deity," nor as "fetish." It was confirmed, however, that the Do has an iron bull-roarer as its own power object. Viewed as the sonic or acoustic manifestation of the Do, it appears in conjunction with the first phase of Do initiation (see also Haselberger 1969:217, Trost 1986:101).[17] Interestingly, while the men I spoke with acknowledged the existence of a Do association among many of the neighboring peoples, they generally contended that it had little in common with their own practice. Also, in all villages where interviews were held it was agreed that belonging to the Do did not prevent one from being a practicing Christian or Muslim, but that, on the contrary, the association transcends divisions and thus serves as a unifying force.

As the most important socio-religious institution among Tussian people, the initiation into the Do contributes to social and religious education (Trost 1993:photos 20–21; 1999a:189). A distinction is made between a first ("minor") and a second ("major") Do initiation phase. Still, interviews I held among Northern Tussian indicated that a Do feast is organized every year in April or May to honor the ancestors and thus ensure or promote well-being, prosperity, good health, and a successful harvest. Masks and helmets among Tussian people, and most likely among Siemu as well, are specifically related to the second Do. According to Trost (1986:101; 1999a:195), the first Do initiation phase is held every three years in

the northern region and every second year in the southern region. It is open to boys of age 10 or older, as well as to girls who have married in the preceding spring—and thus is not necessarily a prerequisite for marriage, as has been stated by Roy (1988:76, cat. 22). It occurs at the village level and is led by the head of the *silbi*, one of the four clans that constitute a Tussian village community (Trost 1999a:195), and is placed under the supervision of an elder called the "Chief of the Do," or *Dote*, who is in charge of the actual circumcision and excision (Trost 1986:101; 1999a:195). Whereas the second ("major") Do initiation is reserved for men, the first ("minor") phase is open to both sexes. Lasting about eleven days, its main occupation is the excision of girls and the circumcision of boys. Upon their successful initiation into this first Do phase, the initiates receive a second name that supersedes the name they were assigned at birth.

The initiates will receive another name at the outcome of their initiation into the second Do. And, according to my sources interviewed in the Northern Tussian village of Sidi, even though they do not join the men in the bush school, women also receive a new name at this time. The goal of this initiation phase, which occurs every thirty to forty years, is more encompassing and less "material" than that of the first phase. Its main aim is to consolidate bonds among Do society members and to reinforce the Do-related responsibilities assigned to certain Tussian clans.[18] Over a period of about six weeks to three months, the initiates live secluded in the bush, outside the village. A power object of unspecified shape or materials guards the entrance to the camp, making sure women and children are kept at bay. The candidates, males whose ages range from approximately 10 to 35 (averaging 20), are divided into age groups. Dressed only in loincloths, they must withstand serious physical hardships, including sleeping in open air for an extended time period. The initiates learn songs and dances proper to the Do, as well as the secret Do language, known as *do wey* among Tussian people (Trost 1999a:197). In addition to an explanation of the meanings of the various mask types, the boys' training includes an introduction to the techniques and methods of mask carving, using a limited tool kit consisting of axe, adze, dagger, and/or knife.

While in seclusion, each Do initiate receives a new name of an animal that will be his personal emblem for the rest of his life. The animal name reflects the boy's character and personality. The animal emblems are ranked in a hierarchical order, ranging from the heron at the bottom to the buffalo at the top (see also Cooksey 2005:23). Wooden plank masks and helmets are produced to represent these different animal identities and given to each corresponding initiate, becoming his personal property. From that time onwards the initiate must treat that animal with respect and cannot kill or eat it. Traoré (2004:104) emphasizes, however, that at least among Siemu people these Do emblems should not be confused with normal family emblems, which function as protective devices.

Closely related to wooden carved masks and helmets, as Haselberger (1969:127) already suspected (based on information she had received from Brother Marcel Guilhem, then director of the *Collège* in Toussiana), brass zoomorphic breast pendants attached to a leather cord reveal the second Do initiation name of their wearer, even if according to Trost (1999a:200) not all initiation names are visualized in a pendant.[19] When she visited the region in 1967, Haselberger (1969:216) found out that an iconoclastic movement, locally referred to as the Water Cult, which

8 Helmet
Northern Senufo, Mali
Wood, fiber, metal; h. 52cm (20½")
Acquired by F.-H. Lem in the village of Finkolo near Sikasso in 1934-35. Ex coll. Helena Rubinstein, Paris. The Newark Museum, Purchase 1966, The Members' Fund (1966.619)
PHOTO: THE NEWARK MUSEUM

9 Tshaka Koflan, chief of the blacksmiths and carver of the masks in the photograph, flanked by other title-holders and elders in the Northern Tussian village of Kourinion.
PHOTO: CONSTANTINE PETRIDIS, 2004

had originated about three years earlier, had asked its members to give up all traditional paraphernalia and amulets. It was then that many of the animal pendants in cast metal were discarded or at least hidden. Next to the leopard and the hornbill, the buffalo, which is generally called *kap* or *kab* among Southern Tussian and *kong* among Northern Tussian, is the favorite subject of these breast pendants (Fig. 6).[20] Interestingly, Susan Cooksey points out that according to one of her main informants, Yerisige Soulama, a caster among neighboring Gouin people who works for different clients in this mixed ethnic region, the birds represented on the back of cattle in brass pendants are protective and serve to warn of approaching hunters.[21] As such, they may allude to the fact that the initiates are being protected by the Do association or by the Do elders.

Trost (1986:101–2) also mentions that this second initiation phase coincides with the investiture of the village chief *(kwilte)*. Occurring on the first day of the Do initiation, the ritual takes place near an altar called *kodyaha*, consisting of a pile of large stones that is constructed near the chief's home to represent the tutelary deity of the village as well as the ancestral spirits of the *kwilte*, called *lekobe* (sg. *lekote*). Among Siemu people the actual Do initiation is preceded by a ceremony called *nichian*, comprising a total of twelve dances performed over a period of three consecutive days.[22]

The initiates don the masks they have carved themselves during their seclusion at the celebrations signaling the end of the Do initiation and the reintegration of the initiates into the village. In 2004 I noted that blacksmiths, called *numu* or *dyondyo*, are generally identified as makers of masks and helmets, which are always commissioned by the Do chief. This was confirmed to me both in the Southern Tussian village of Takaledougou and in the Northern Tussian villages of Sidi and Kourinion. In Kourinion it was stressed that blacksmiths make wooden and metal objects, but that brass objects are produced by specialized craftsmen in the villages of Mbie and G[u]ena (the village was also visited by Frobenius). Haselberger (1969:218), however, reports that there are two classes of blacksmiths: the "regular" blacksmiths, called *numu*, and those blacksmiths who also act as gravediggers and carve in wood.[23] Among Siemu people the masks representing the initiates' respective animal emblems are generically called *kono*—most likely related in some ways to the Mande association of the same name. The examples illustrated in Jean-Luc Moreaud's field photographs in Traoré's booklet (2004:105, 109, 112), of a hornbill plank mask and a buffalo helmet, are similar to

those among Tussian people, even if it is not specified whether they were actually made by Siemu artists.

In addition to learning how to make the masks, during their seclusion the initiates master the dances and movements proper to the animals they portray. Wearing their masks and costumes, they form a procession to a sacred cleared space where they are awaited by the village inhabitants. The orchestra accompanying the masquerade consists of drums, flutes, and xylophones. Every masquerade is also accompanied by songs performed by a women's chorus. Unfortunately, the masks or headdresses shown in the town of Orodara in the field photograph reproduced in Traoré (2004:106) are hard to read; it cannot even be determined whether they are carved out of wood or instead made of more perishable fiber and plant materials.[24]

Upon the completion of the initiation, the masks receive an offering of a rooster—typically, an offering of a white hen is made to the ancestors—and are hung on the outer walls of the houses of their respective owners. Kept out of sight of women and the non-initiated, they are left to deteriorate (Cooksey 2005:23, cat. 7; see also Haselberger 1969:218; Traoré 2004:108). According to Trost (1999a:199), when the masks are so damaged they cannot be used any longer, they are buried in a shelter dug in the ground or put in a cleft in a rock face, or sometimes simply thrown from the cliff. Although Cooksey was told that one was supposed to protect and preserve his mask until the next initiation, she observed only remains of them during her time in Toussiana (Cooksey 2005:23). Trost (1999a:199) also mentions that rather than being hung on the walls of the houses, the masks are some-

10 Helmet (*daagu*)
Senufo, Côte d'Ivoire
Wood, metal; h. 34.9cm (13¾")
Ex coll. Katherine C. White, Cleveland (to 1975). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Katherine C. White (1975.152).
PHOTO: THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

11 Helmet (*noo*)
Senufo, Côte d'Ivoire; possibly carved by Sabarikwo of Wazumon
Wood; h. 39cm (15¼")
Ex coll. Josef Mueller. Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva, Switzerland (1006-48).
PHOTO: ARCHIVES BARBIER-MUELLER, STUDIO FERRAZZINI-BOUCHET, GENEVA

times stored in a special construction. In Yorokofesso I was told that the Do house serves this purpose. In Toussiana it was said that after the conclusion of the initiation the masks are preserved until they naturally decay; they are supposed to be kept hidden but are never sold or even discarded.

TUSSIAN (AND SIEMU) PLANK MASKS AND HELMETS

Rectangular plank-shaped masks like the examples illustrated here are without doubt the best-known type of Tussian—and by extension Siemu—sculpture (Figs. 3–4). However, I have not been able to confirm the name *loniaken*, which Roy (1987:361; 1988:76, cat. 22; 2007:69) noted for such works. In the Northern Tussian village of Sidi it was suggested that *loniaken* may be a Bamana or Jula term. As shown in Figs. 3–4, these plank masks can be surmounted by either an animal head or two inward-curving horns. The animal heads are most often carved in separate pieces of wood and inserted in an inset in the plank's rim. Most of these masks are decorated with a crosslike design consisting of a wax stripe in which red *Abrus precatorius* seeds are set. Sometimes one or more mirrors are attached to the surface above the eyeholes (also accentuated with red seeds) or in place of them. According to Cooksey (2005:23), mirrors are considered conduits to the spirit world by local diviners, and they may have the same association on the mask—that is, to connect Do and his worshipers. Small holes pierced along the edges carry a fringe of plant fibers similar to those that form the costume covering the whole body of the masquerader.[25] Because of their appealing modernist form, these masks have enjoyed great popularity among Westerners (see also Roy 1987:362, Fig. 311). As a result, and probably also because they are so easy to replicate, examples for the tourist market are widely available in stores and boutiques in Bobo-Dioulasso and elsewhere in Burkina Faso and adjacent Mali (Fig. 7).[26]

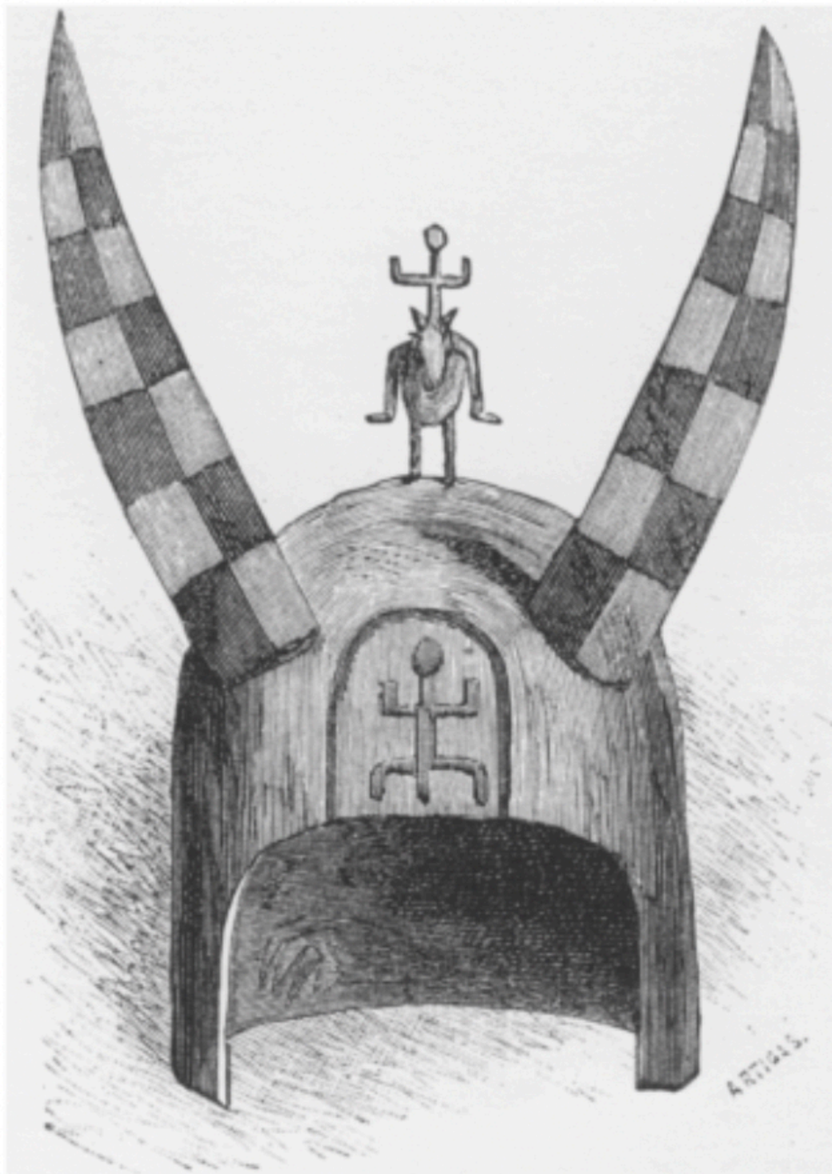
Haselberger (1969:218-19) also distinguishes between Tussian

12 Helmet
Possibly Senufo, Côte d'Ivoire
Copper alloy; h. 24.8cm (9¾")
Ex coll. Lucien Van de Velde, Antwerp (1967 to 1991). National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (museum purchase, 91-16-1)
PHOTO: FRANKO KHOURY, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, DC.

plank masks and helmets. In addition to wooden plank masks and helmets, Cooksey (2005:23) discusses yet a third category of masks: leather masks representing monkeys and warthogs. All three categories are related to the Do initiation. Haselberger (1969:219) describes a type of buffalo mask consisting of a leather case that the dancer holds in his mouth and to which are attached hornlike warthogs' teeth on either side. Although he does not acknowledge a category of leather masks as such, Roy (1987:362) mentions that only those Tussians whose emblem is the buffalo make helmets in wood, whereas other clans use fibers and other perishable materials, the results of which have not been preserved.[27]

Haselberger (1969:219) separates the category of wooden helmets into two subtypes. Except for the horse-riding image carved on the skull, her description of one of the subtypes seems to match the horned helmet of the Newark Museum that had been field-collected by F.-H. Lem among Northern Senufo people in Mali (Fig. 8). Unfortunately, Haselberger herself gives no examples of this second type of helmet, but she does list six examples of the more typical Tussian helmets. One is the work in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which is the piece that Goldwater (1964:50, Fig. 66) published as "Northern Senufo" (see also Robbins and Nooter 1989:105, Fig. 140; Convers 1998:78, Fig. 25); another the above-mentioned example that Haselberger purchased herself from an antiques dealer in Bobo-Dioulasso in 1967 (see Fig. 2).[28] The example I saw in the Northern Tussian village of Kourinion in 2004, along with two plank masks, was made by the chief of the blacksmiths, Tshaka Koflan (Fig. 9). All three masks shown in the photograph would have been newly made for the purpose of my study.

Roy (1987:364) is the only author to make specific comments on the use and function of Tussian helmets (see also Roy 2007:60–70). The author notes that the conversion of many Tussians to Islam led to the gradual disappearance of such sculp-



tures. He claims that while the plank masks are worn during (Do) initiations, the helmets, called *kablé* according to Roy, are instead used in village purification rites and at funerals. The helmets were specifically worn during rituals to drive out evil forces and foster childbirth, well-being, and bountiful crops. For this purpose, dressed with the carved buffalo helmet or a fiber cap representing one of the other totemic animals, the head of the lineage danced in front of the entrance to his house during celebrations that lasted up to fifteen days. Such helmets, still following Roy's information, could also be worn on the occasion of funerals for male elders during the dry season. The same context is discussed by Traoré (2004:124) with regard to Siemu people. Here, *kounklé* is the name of the final celebration that marks the communion between the living and the dead and confirms the transformation of the deceased into an ancestor. During this feast, organized at least one year after the passing of a patriarch, a buffalo headdress is worn—although it should be noted that the sketch illustrated in Traoré (ibid., p. 114) depicts a helmet that is less elaborate than the more typical buffalo helmet worn in the context of the Siemu's Duo-Tê initiation.[29]

My own notes, taken in the villages of Sidi and Kourinion in the Northern Tussian region, and Takaledougou, Toussiana, and Yorokofesso in the Southern Tussian region, are not entirely in agreement with Roy's information. Among Southern Tussian I was told that only plank masks are made and used and appear solely in the context of the second Do initiation, whereas helmets (sometimes also called by the Jula term *segi*) are proper to Northern Tussian and carved exclusively in the villages of Kourinion, Toussianmaso, and Mina. Here, both helmets and plank masks are worn in the context of the second Do initiation as well as on the occasion of funerals of elders, specifically those who have witnessed or participated in two different Do initiations. Regrettably, for the time being, we cannot confirm whether this is also true among Siemu people, and we have no information about Siemu production centers.

TUSSIAN/SIEMU AND SENUFO HELMETS COMPARED

The general form of the Tussian and Siemu helmets, and their combination of a bowl-shaped helmet and carved buffalo horns, brings to mind a number of Senufo sculpture types. First, there is the *daagu* or *dangu*, sometimes also spelled *danga* (Glaze 1986:38), a fine example of which is in the Cleveland Museum of Art's collection (Fig. 10). Another such mask, from the Baltimore Museum of Art's collection, was described at some length by Till Förster (2004:102–4, cat. 22).[30] Identified as a "Singer's Headdress," the helmet is worn by young men of ages 12 to 18 in certain rituals before they enter the local Poro association. Once they pass a physically challenging test, they gain the right to sing songs that criticize and ridicule male elders. Two of them are chosen to wear the *daagu* headdress. The songs they bring are often integrated into whole sketches, and sometimes the men repeat their performances in a number of towns or settlements in the region. The horns of the *daagu* refer to cattle horns, since the young men about to be initiated into the Poro society after their graduation from the age-group rituals in which the helmet was worn were considered unknowing and anxious oxen.[31]

Perhaps more than the Senufo *daagu* type, the Tussian and Siemu buffalo helmet type resembles a Senufo sculpture called *noo*, which is related to the prestigious and feared Healers' Society known as Nookaariga (Fig. 11); *se'e noo* is what Senufo call the buffalo.[32] The Healers' Society members were highly regarded because of their knowledge of the curative effects of plants and their expertise in medicine. In addition, they were well versed in divination. But their reputation was first and foremost based on their capability to cure a wide range of injuries and ailments. Convers (1998:74) identifies them as healers and "bone-setters." They had the power to reduce swellings and mend fractures through placing a large, coiled, wrought-iron bracelet in the shape of a python onto the wounded limb (Convers 1998:70, Fig. 1).[33] The society originated and remained in the southwestern corner of Senufo country, among the Fodombele or Fodönrö (Glaze 1978:68, Convers 1998:71).[34]

Convers (1998:74) also notes that because of their connection with the *tugubele* bush spirits, the society members performed burials for hunters who had died in the bush. It was during these burial rituals that each Nookaariga member held a "ring of silence" between his teeth (see note 33). This relationship with

Un enterrement chez les Siène-ré.

13a–b A helmet worn in a funerary context among the "Siène-ré" [Senufo] in the village of Katon in 1888.
ENGRAVINGS REPRODUCED FROM GUSTAVE-LOUIS BINGER, DU NIGER AU GOLFE DE GUINÉE PAR LE PAYS DE KONG ET DE MOSSI (PARIS: LIBRAIRIE HACHETTE ET CIE., 1892), VOL. 1, PP. 223 AND 225

hunters sheds light on the importance of buffalo imagery in the association's insignia. Indeed, in Senufo thought hunters are likened to the strength and fearlessness of the so-called black buffalo (*Syncerus caffer brachyceros*). According to Glaze (1993:17, cat. 10), the horns seen in Nookaariga-related art forms refer to the mythical buffalo bull that first revealed his secret knowledge of healing and magical powers of transformation to the Senufo hunter, founder of the first Healers' Society.

Even more important to understanding the reference to the buffalo in masks, helmets, and other society symbols, the Nookaariga members were greatly feared for their mystical power to transform themselves into buffalo—the name of the society literally meaning 'to change into a buffalo'. According to Convers (1998:78), this metamorphosis took place when the association members acted as executors of laws established by the Chief of the Earth. Concealed by the darkness of the night and wearing wooden clogs with soles carved in the shape of hooves, the members would set out to punish criminals. It was on these occasions that a clan dignitary was dressed with a mask known as *nupe-nyongo*, while at the same time the Chief of the Earth himself would wear a horned helmet, called *nyon-nyikaryi-tongo* according to Convers (1998:80), or simply *noo* according to Glaze (1993:17, cat. 10). The *nupe-nyongo* mask and the helmet always appeared together and only during the nocturnal activities of their wearers.[35] They were also secretly stored together. An example of the *nupe-nyongo* mask was once part of the Paul and Ruth Tishman Collection (Convers 1998:78, Fig. 26).[36]

Aside from these wooden Senufo sculptures, the Tussian and Siemu buffalo helmets can formally also be likened to the few copper-alloy helmets that are sometimes labeled as "pre-Senufo," a connection that has also been suggested by Glaze (1993:17, cat. 10). One of the most spectacular examples of this tradition is the well-known work currently in the National Museum of African Art in Washington DC. (Fig. 12). Philip Ravenhill (1986:64) had already drawn attention to the formal affinity between these ancient brass or, rather, copper-alloy helmets and the more contemporary wooden Senufo sculptures. According to Ravenhill, the objects share the inverted-bowl shape and the broad and flat tapered horns associated with the bush-cow.[37] Most interestingly, the buffalo images surmounting the Tussian and Siemu helmets

also appear like enlargements of the quadruped on the summit of the National Museum of African Art's (pre-)Senufo helmet.

Regrettably, as Ravenhill (1986:64) explains, little of certainty is known about the provenance or history of this type of cast metal "Senufo" helmet. In a letter dated 1942 to the then-director of the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) in Dakar, Théodore Monod, the man who found the work now in the National Museum in Abidjan, wrote that it was discovered by an elderly woman in a riverbed when she was constructing a fishing dam. In light of a popular practice in central and eastern Côte d'Ivoire, there are good reasons to believe the helmet accompanied a chief or a king in his grave in a riverbed. Aside from important symbolic reasons, one of the benefits of this burial method was that it prevented gravediggers from locating royal burial sites and stealing the precious regalia they held. Although this has never been confirmed, oral history suggests that the famous helmet in the National Museum of African Art (Fig. 12), along with a brass face mask that was once in the collection of Luciano Lanfranchi in Milan (Barbier 1993:111, Fig. 109), was also found buried in a riverbed; according to information provided to me by a Parisian art dealer both objects were thus discovered by Christian Debenest in the 1970s.[38]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The possible role Senufo helmets would have played in the context of burial practices brings to mind the illustrations of a wooden cap mask in a funerary procession in a mixed Senufo/Jula village near the Mali/Côte d'Ivoire border in 1888, reported in Captain Louis-Gustave Binger's travelogue as what may be the earliest field document of Senufo sculpture (Fig. 13). On pages 222 and 225, Binger gives a detailed description of the funeral and the festivities that accompanied it. Glaze (1993:16, cat. 9) referred to these images in her entry on yet another Senufo helmet in the Barbier-Mueller Museum. Although it was identified as a *daagu* helmet in the Senufo art catalogue of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (Koloss 1990:41, Fig. 31), Glaze believes this example was probably meant to be worn by a champion cultivator in the context of an agricultural celebration.[39] There is no question that the cap mask illustrated by Binger—with a miniature equestrian image framed between a pair of flat horns—is quite similar to the earlier-mentioned helmet of alleged Northern Senufo origin (Fig. 8), and somewhat reminiscent of the description given by Haselberger of one of the two helmet subtypes among the Tussians. It should be remembered that Tussian and Siemu buffalo helmets are also worn on the occasion of funerals for some elders.

From the preceding descriptions it appears that there is a special relationship between helmets and funerary practices. To a lesser extent, hunting also seems to be part of the connection. The importance of buffalo imagery in this context is not limited to Senufo and Tussian (and Siemu) peoples, but is instead quite common and widespread throughout the Western Sudan, and as suggested by oral history and some rare archaeological findings we are apparently dealing with an ancient and once well-established cultural practice.[40] However, whether or to what extent it is linked with the distribution of Do-related associations are questions that fall beyond the scope and ambition of this preliminary inquiry.[41]

This article has asked more questions than it has provided answers. Clearly, the topic touched upon here deserves further investigation. It can be expected that research in some of the above-mentioned archives and libraries will also contribute to our knowledge of the subject. First, there are the objects, writings, and visual documents resulting from the expedition Leo Frobenius conducted in the area in 1908, which appear to be shared between the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology and other German museums and the Frobenius Institute at the University of Frankfurt/Main. Second, there are the unpublished writings that Father Hébert might have left us, copies of which are apparently preserved at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and entrusted to Professor Dacher.

In order to analyze the relationship that buffalo imagery and symbolism may have with hunting and funerary practices it would be worthwhile to take a more systematic look at the findings on neighboring peoples and other groups in the Voltaic region. In this regard, serious attention should be paid to the presence and impact of the Do association in the broader cultural area. The affinity with Senufo culture is also something requiring further exploration, as are the general historical context of the region and the importance of the centers of Kong and Bondoukou in the diffusion of certain cultural features and related forms of artistic expression, most notably the technology of brass casting.[42] Despite the many remaining questions and the need for further research, it is hoped that this article has at least lifted Tussian and Siemu buffalo helmets out of the shadow of their Senufo counterparts.

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Notes

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1 My field trip to Burkina Faso in the Fall of 2004 was generously funded by the Cleveland Museum of Art and additional aid from Case Western Reserve University's art history department. I thank both institutions for their support. I also extend my appreciation to the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel Burkinabé (ASPAC) in Bobo-Dioulasso and its director, Urbain Kam, for logistical and practical assistance.

2 Susan Cooksey, personal communication, October 26, 2007; see also Cooksey 2004:chap. 8.

3 Anja Veirman, personal communication, February 11, 2008.

4 Coincidentally, such helmets appeared in recent auctions at Sotheby's Paris (June 15, 2004, lot 41; again on June 8, 2007, lot 71; Fig. 2), Christie's Paris (Dec. 6, 2005, lot f260), Sotheby's New York (Nov. 17, 2006, lot 204), and Sotheby's Paris (Dec. 5, 2007, lot 13). It should be mentioned, however, that the work offered at Christie's was labeled as "Senufo," an attribution which occurs quite often in the literature (see Oberlin College 1955–56:cat. 9; Plass 1956:pl. 11-L; and Friedman 1960: cat. 30, on the helmet illustrated in Fig. 5; Goldwater 1964:50, Fig. 66, on the example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Förster and Homberger 1988:17, Fig. 1, on a piece then in the collection of Emil Storrer in Zurich).

5 Richard Fardon, personal communication, November 17, 2006.

6 It is noteworthy that among the Benue River peoples buffalo masks also play a significant role in a funerary context; see especially Fardon 1990 on the Chamba and Rubin 1985 on the Mumuye.

7 In his "Le Do chez les Toussian," an unpublished thirteen-page undated typescript preserved in the library of the Centre d'Études Économiques et Sociales de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CESAO) in Bobo-Dioulasso, Father Hébert stresses that his research would remain incomplete until he had a chance to witness the initiation in Toussiana. In 1997, French ethnologist Michèle Dacher edited and published a manuscript Father Hébert had written around 1964 in the journal *Anthropos* (Hébert 1997).

8 Like the languages spoken by the peoples collectively termed "Senufo," the Tussian language, called Winwen—Trost (1999a:190) spells it "Win Wey" and Roy (2007:69) "Winway"—belongs to the Voltaic or Gur group. In fact, a distinction should be made between Kotan Wey spoken in Toussiamba and Pento Wey spoken among Northern Tussian (Trost 1999a:191, n. 6).

9 Curiously, Toussiana is presented as the equivalent of Konse in Trost 1986:99, while Toussiana is equated with Winkwil but Konse with Toussiamba in Trost 1999a:190. The spelling of Kourinion—also known as Pentokwil—also varies between the two articles: Kuriyon, Kulnion, and Kurinyo; it is spelled "Kurignon" in Roy 2007:68.

10 In his *Art of the Upper Volta Rivers*, Roy (1987:360) also states that it is difficult to distinguish between "Tusyâ"—as he spells their name—and Siemu (see also Roy 2007:68–70). Haselberger (1969:199) points out that the arts of sparse peoples such as the Gouin, Karaboro, Natioro, Somolo, Tiefo, Turka, and Waran, share a number of cultural traits and relate to the Northern Senufo.

11 Anja Veirman, personal communication, February 11, 2008.

12 As testified by the writings of Anita Glaze (1981, 1993) and Till Förster (1996), among others, Senufo ethnicity is a complex matter. Covering a group of peoples that numbered more than 1.5 million in the 1990s, the term encompasses a linguistic and cultural diversity across the borders of Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Burkina Faso. A distinction is generally made between northern, eastern, central, and southern groups. These groups are related in some ways with many of their neighbors, and often neighboring peoples differ from each other by degree only. For a nuanced theoretical understanding of the concept of ethnicity, see especially Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart (1995).

13 Although drawings of some such metal arts made by Frobenius's travel companion H. Hugershoff in 1908 were reproduced in Frobenius's 1911 book, a majority of these remain unpublished. These materials would currently be preserved in the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt/Main (although much of it was lost during World War II). Many of the materials Haselberger collected during her missions to Burkina Faso in the 1950s and '60s are currently housed in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium.

14 The wall reliefs described by Frobenius in his diaries are somewhat reminiscent of the architectural embellishments I saw but was not allowed to photograph in the Northern Tussian village of Kourinion in 2004.

15 The complex relationship between Poro, Do/Lo, and Komo practices and rituals in the border region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire obviously requires further study. It was dealt with to some extent in Boureima Diamitani's PhD dissertation at the University of Iowa (1999; see also Diamitani, this issue), and is also addressed in the on-going research of Susan Gagliardi (UCLA) and Anja Veirman (Ghent University, Belgium).

16 There is little doubt about the antiquity of the Do tradition. Except for its wide distribution, Hébert (n.d.:1) points to the drawings he and others discovered in the cliffs in the Tussian region. These images bear an unmistakable relationship with Do practices and rituals, but the meaning and possible symbolic value of the depictions remain unknown.

17 I witnessed the importance of this type of object during the annual Do feast in Bobo-Dioulasso in 2004. The Do association and the rituals and artworks that are related to it have been extensively studied among the Bwa and the Bobo (see, for example, Capron 1957, 1962; Coquet 1995; Le Moal 1980; Roy 1996a, 1996b, 2003). The affinities with the Tussian and Siemu Do seem to be multiple, including the symbolic significance of the bull-roarer in Do-related performances.

18 There is some confusion in the literature on when the last Do initiation took place. According to Trost (1999a:196) the most recent one in Toussiana was held in April 1989 and in Dramandougou in 1982 (Trost 1986:102). In Yorokofesso I was told that the last initiation occurred in 1988. In the Northern Tussian village of Sidi, I noted that the last two initiations took place in 1955 and 1992, while in the village of Kourinion it would have been in 1951 and 1992. Among Siemu people the two last Do initiations took place in March 1946 and April 1986 (Traoré 2004:100).

19 As testified by two photographs of a little boy's pendant in Traoré (2004:88), brass sculptures representing family emblems are almost identical to the Do-related breast pendants.

20 The many variations on the name for the buffalo and the spelling of *kap* (pl. *kaplo*) are listed in Trost 1999a:198. The Water Cult mentioned by Haselberger is most likely the religious movement known as the "Holy Water Cult" or "Cult of Moussa," named after its founder and leader (Susan Cooksey, personal communication, October 26, 2007; see also Cooksey 2004:chap. 8).

21 Susan Cooksey, personal communication, October 26, 2007.

22 According to Trost (1999a:196–7), the occurrence of the second initiation is stipulated by the council of elders led by the Do chief. However, during this phase it is not the Do chief who is in charge, but rather the leader of the xylophone players.

23 Contrary to what Roy (1988:76, cat. 22) writes and to my own findings, Trost (1999a:199) claims that the blacksmiths who produce metal objects among Southern Tussian make no masks.

24 In hopes to better interpret this particular image, I contacted Africa traveler Jean-Luc Moreaud, who is acknowledged as the author of the photographs in Bakary Traoré's booklet, but I learned that this was the only photograph in the entire publication that was not his. Mr. Moreaud told me that Mr. Traoré had obtained the image from an unidentified inhabitant of Orodara without any further information (personal communication, August 15, 2007).

25 However, according to Susan Cooksey's research assistant Madeleine Traoré, the plank masks also appear annually to request the ancestors' support at harvest time and before planting (personal communication, March 5, 2007; see also Roy 2007:68–70, which incorporates some of Cooksey's new findings). Haselberger (1969:219) mentions the many field photographs Father Jean Hébert made of masked dancers which are preserved in the Documentation Française in Paris (no. AO 4932 to 4972). One of these appears in the Barbier-Mueller Museum's mask catalogue (Hahner-Herzog, Kecskési, and Vajda 1998:facing pl. 11; see also Haselberger 1969:242, Fig. 36).

26 This mask shape occupies a distinct place within the sculptural production of the Western Sudan. Aside from some rather vague analogies in some of the plank-board masks of Bwa people of Burkina Faso, the closest parallel is to be found in the Sigma society-related masks of the little-known Vagla or Vagala people of northwestern Ghana (see esp. Poppi 1991; see also Roy and Wheelock 2007:pl. 98).

27 Trost (1993:61 and 143, Fig. 48.3) illustrates and mentions a horned helmet which was discovered with other items in the ancient site of "Old Niansogoni" in the region inhabited by Wara people, neighbors of Tussian and Siemu, in southwestern Burkina Faso. This headdress—which apparently consists of a bowl-shaped helmet made out of basketry to which a pair of real animal horns are attached—is clearly related to the "modern" wooden helmets that are the focus of this article, as well as to the horned headdresses of a variety of Voltaic peoples as discussed in note 40.

28 Haselberger also refers to a helmet drawn by Frobenius's assistant H. Hugershoff in G[u]ena in 1908 and two others that are illustrated in a photograph preserved at the Documentation Française in Paris (no. AO 4936). Aside from the examples mentioned in note 4 and those illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, so far I have found other Tussian helmets in the following collections: Barbier-Mueller Museum, Geneva (Fagg 1980:48); Ethnological Museum, Berlin (ex Jef Vanderstraete, Lasne, Belgium); National Museum, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (Holas 1969:121, cat. 32); and the Thomas G.B. Wheelock Collection, New York (Roy and Wheelock 2007:pl. 189). Roy (1987:367, Fig. 316) also published an example in an unidentified private collection. Finally, there are two such helmets in the collection of Maureen Zarember, New York; one of these—published in a Tambaran Gallery advertisement in the journal *The World of Tribal Arts* (2000 6[1]:19)—was previously in the Wheelock Collection, the other—from the former collection of Vincent and Mary Price—appeared at Sotheby's New York on November 15, 2002 (lot 19).

29 However, the sketch on the same page that is supposed to represent the initiation buffalo helmet is also of a different type than the more typical one, like the example shown in Jean-Luc Moreaud's photograph reproduced in Traoré (2004:105).

30 Even though a bit smaller and lacking the carved horns, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *daagu* helmet is stylistically so similar to the Cleveland Museum of Art's that one suspects the two works to have been carved by the same hand (Goldwater 1964:53, cat. 73; Koloss 1990:42, Fig. 32; compare with Fig. 10). Other Senufo helmets of the *daagu* type are the work in the de Young Museum at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (Roberts and Roberts 1996:41, cat. 48); a sculpture in a private collection in Seattle (Robbins and Nooter 1989:115, Fig. 159); and an example that used to be in the collection of André Blandin (Kourouma 1983:32, Figs. 2–3). Most recently, another *daagu* helmet was auctioned at Sotheby's Paris (June 8, 2007, lot. 63).

31 According to Glaze (1993:17, cat. 10), who points out that the *dangu* helmet, as she calls it, is proper to the Gbato or Patörö Senufo dialect area, this type of headdress was possibly invented by the famous carver Sabarikwo of the village of Ouazoumon (or Wazumon or Wazomon), who is also responsible for the exquisite *kpeliyehe*-type mask in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Petridis 2003:42, pl. 6). Anja Veirman has witnessed and photographed yet another type of horned wooden Senufo helmet—somewhat similar to the *da(n)gu*-type helmets—worn in a performance by a buffoon-like character in the village of Fanterela (personal communication, February 11, 2008).

32 Convers (1998:71) spells the association's title as "Noukarga" and writes that its plural form, Nyikaryi, refers to both the association's members and their symbolic emblems, and is also used as a synonym of Noukarga. According to Convers, the name is derived from the words *nou* ('ox, buffalo') and *-karga* ('to change or metamorphosize').

33 As first described in the literature by Father Gabriel Clamens (1953), the most important insignia of the society was a metal ring depicting a buffalo head made by the Kpëëne brass casters, the image of which can also be seen in bas-relief on the mud walls of the society's house on the outskirts of the village or village quarter. Initiates held these rings in their mouth during funerary rituals for deceased society members (Glaze 1978:70).

34 Convers (1998:81, n. 2) is correct to see the term "Fodombele" as a synonym of Fodonon or Fodönrö. However, this is not the case for "Senambele," which refers to the Central Senufo or Senari Cluster, while the Fodonon instead belong to the Southern Senufo cluster. Convers also hesitates whether to consider these Fodonon as an ethnic "subgroup" or as a separate group altogether, which was settled in the region before the arrival of Senufo proper, but in the opinion of Glaze (1981:2–4) they do constitute a dialect (sub)group within the larger language group of Southern Senufo.

35 Contrary to Convers, Glaze (1993:17, cat. 10) writes that it was believed that every society member owned such a helmet, worn exclusively for highly secret initiation and healing rituals.

36 Other than the example illustrated here in Fig. 11, Senufo helmets that appear to be of the *noo* type include one in a private collection reproduced in Bacquart (1998:72, Fig. 3); an example in the de Young Museum at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (Roberts and Roberts 1996:43, cat. 50); a work in the Menil Collection, Houston (V 9071); and one once owned by Adelaide de Menil that was sold at auction in 1992 (Sotheby's New York, November 24, 1992, lot 62).

37 Ravenhill (1986:64) specifically mentions similarities between wooden Senufo helmets like the one in the Newark Museum, illustrated here in Fig. 8, and the copper-alloy helmets of the National Museum of African Art, illustrated in Fig. 12, and the Blandin Collection (Kourouma 1983:33, Fig. 5).

38 Ravenhill (1999:48, cat. 27) also briefly points to the relationship between the copper-alloy helmets and those face masks in metal from northern Côte d'Ivoire for which Timothy Garrard (1993:94–100) had proposed a Mande/Jula origin and a date of manufacture between 1770 and 1890. Interestingly, the so-called pre-Senufo face mask in pure tin that is in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium—and tentatively dated to the thirteenth century—was supposedly accidentally found in an old tomb in Northern Ghana (Meyer 1992:108, Fig. 90; see also Convers 1975:25).

39 Judging from its type and its style, Glaze (1993:16, cat. 9) suspects that this particular helmet comes from the northwestern or western part of the Central Senufo culture and style region.

40 One striking parallel with the Senufo and Tussian (and Siemu) contexts is to be found in the occurrence of horned headgear in second burial rituals of Frafra people of Ghana as described by Fred Smith (1987:50). Similar funerary practices are found among neighboring Kassena and Builsa, and horned headdresses also occur among different peoples in northeastern Ghana and the broader Voltaic region, including Dagomba, Tallensi, Lobi, Konkomba, and Moba.

41 On the Do association and related masks among Muslim Jula, Ligbi, and Hwela in the regions of Bondoukou, Bouna, and Kong, see esp. Bravmann 1974, 1993, Garrard 1993, and Silverman 1996. An association known under various phonetic variations of the term Do exists over a vast geographical area. As Garrard (1993:86) states, it is possible that, like among Tussian and Siemu peoples, the institution has a pre-Islamic origin in the Bondoukou region as well, and that it was analogous to the Senufo Poro bond.

42 Basing himself on the discussion of Kpëëne brasscasters in Glaze (1981:34–40), Ravenhill (1986:65–66) suggests that the historical dimension of brass casting in the region points to a connection with Kong. Breaking up the artificial boundaries of the ethnic perspective on art styles, the Kong connection reveals a historical framework of regional and long-distance trade, and establishes a link to the neighboring trading towns of Bondoukou and Begho.

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