



The Couth and the Uncouth: Ethnic, Social, and Linguistic Divisions among the Sandawe of Central Tanzania

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The Couth and the Uncouth : Ethnic, Social, and Linguistic Divisions among the Sandawe of Central Tanzania

ERIC TEN RAA

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The Sandawe of central Tanzania are a small tribe who live in comparative isolation; this isolation is geographical as well as cultural but by no means absolute. The majority of tribesmen live in a range of low, rocky hills which is surrounded by almost uninhabited bush, and their numbers are not large ¹. On the whole the Sandawe may be seen as an aboriginal pocket which survives from before the arrival of the modern Bantu and non-Bantu peoples in East Africa. Although similar types are also seen among their neighbours, the average Sandawe is noticeably different physically ².

¹ According to the latest census, the one of 1957, there were 20,031 Sandawe within their tribal boundaries. The grand total, including emigrants to distant towns, was 28,309 (E. A. Statistical Dept., 1958).

² Physical similarities are particularly noticeable among the Rimi and the Iramba to the north-west. The physical characters of the Sandawe have been investigated by TREVOR in 1944 (TREVOR 1947), but some salient features will again be mentioned below because they show an interesting pattern of variation which has a bearing on our argument. The complexity of the ethnic situation within the tribal area is well matched by the situation outside the tribal boundaries. The immediate neighbours of the Sandawe are of many different origins and belong to several unrelated linguistic families: the

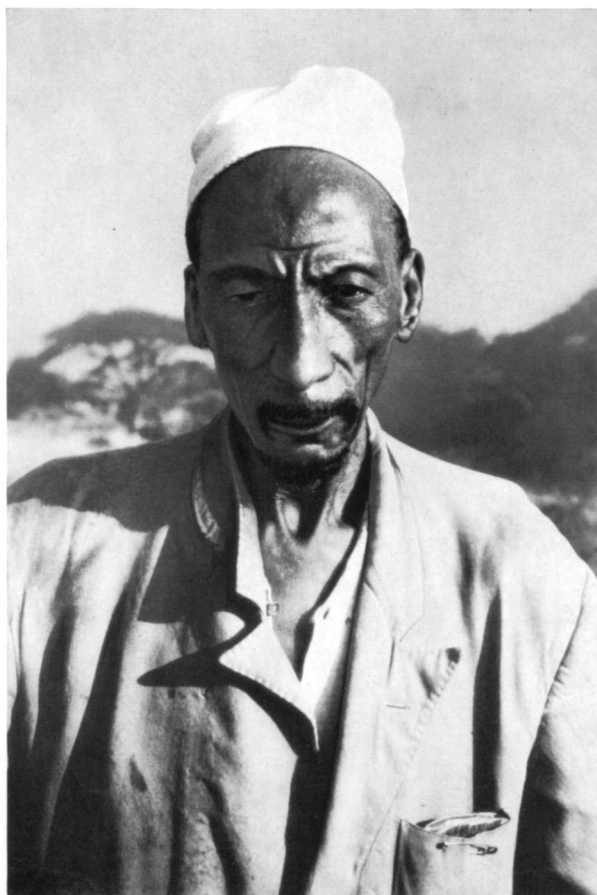
The relative importance of their hunting background is another feature which sets the Sandawe apart from their neighbours. Surrounding tribes like to speak of them as people of the bush who have only recently adopted horticulture and cattle-keeping, and indeed they still practise horticulture in a rather desultory manner, but they have become keen cattle-keepers. Their women still do much food-gathering in the bush, and some of the men continue to spend a good deal of time collecting honey and hunting small game. Sandawe material culture also differs to a degree, mainly in that it is less sophisticated. But the most differentiating feature is no doubt their language; this is quite unrelated to any other language in East Africa³.

The Sandawe are a very egalitarian people, there is only little specialization, and social stratification is almost, but not quite, non-existent. In this paper I wish to show that even in a small, isolated and unspecialized people like this it is possible to distinguish different cultural areas with various degrees of egalitarianism and different levels of cultural sophistication. A large number of local differences which seem hardly significant when considered in isolation, add up to a clearly recognizable pattern. In fact these differences divide the country into two distinct areas, a distinction which the Sandawe themselves also recognize even though at the same time they maintain that all Sandawe are one people, forming a single tribe. The point is that the Sandawe of the centre and the west consider themselves to be the couth, and those of the south-east and the outlying districts the uncouth. This difference is largely to be attributed to acculturation which, according to the Sandawe themselves (and in particular according to the majority who live in the centre and the north-west) has come mainly from the north and the west. The isolation of the Sandawe, which has enabled them to retain their identity until the present time is, as we have noted, not absolute and never has been. The cumulative effect of outside influences has created a pattern which is the subject of our discussion.

Rimi (Nyaturu), the Rangi, and the Gogo are Bantu-speakers; the Barabaiga (Mang'ati) are a Datoga people of the Nandi group of Nilo-Hamites; the Baraguyu who are scattered in and around Sandawe country belong to the Masai branch of Nilo-Hamites; and the Burunge and the Kwa'adzo (Ngomvia, also called Ngomvia or Gomvia) belong to the Iraqw cluster whose languages may be southern Cushitic. A little further afield, the Hadza (also referred to as Tindiga, Kindiga, or Kangeju) speak an unrelated click language.

³ There are certain similarities with the Khoisan languages of South Africa, in particular with Nama Hottentot, and recently I have been able to explain some items of Dahalo (Sanye) vocabulary in Sandawe terms; this has already been referred to by TUCKER (1967: 677). The Sanye are an East African people who live in Kenya. I hope to publish these correspondences shortly. For comparisons between Sandawe and Nama Hottentot, see DEMPWOLFF (1916: 64 ff.) and WESTPHAL (1956), and less well-founded papers by TROMBETTI (1910) and DREXEL (1929). GREENBERG (1955) even asserts that a link exists with Hadza. More recently WESTPHAL has become more cautious and now holds that the material at present available "does not hold out any promise of being able to associate these languages [Sandawe and Hadza] with any of our Southern African click languages by regular and generally accepted linguistic procedures" (1963: 242).

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a) Man from the Téhla Sandawé area.



b) Two elderly Bisa ladies.

1. Variations in Ethnic Background and Physical Characters

All the neighbours of the Sandawe have traditions that in the past their countries had been inhabited by bands of little hunters who had no cattle, did not cultivate, and built no houses but lived in the bush and in rock caves. The Sandawe, too, have such traditions, but theirs differ from those of their neighbours in that they say that their own ancestors were also there, together with the other hunting groups of the past. This stress on the co-presence of their own ancestors is particularly strong in the more remote and least developed parts of Sandawe country.

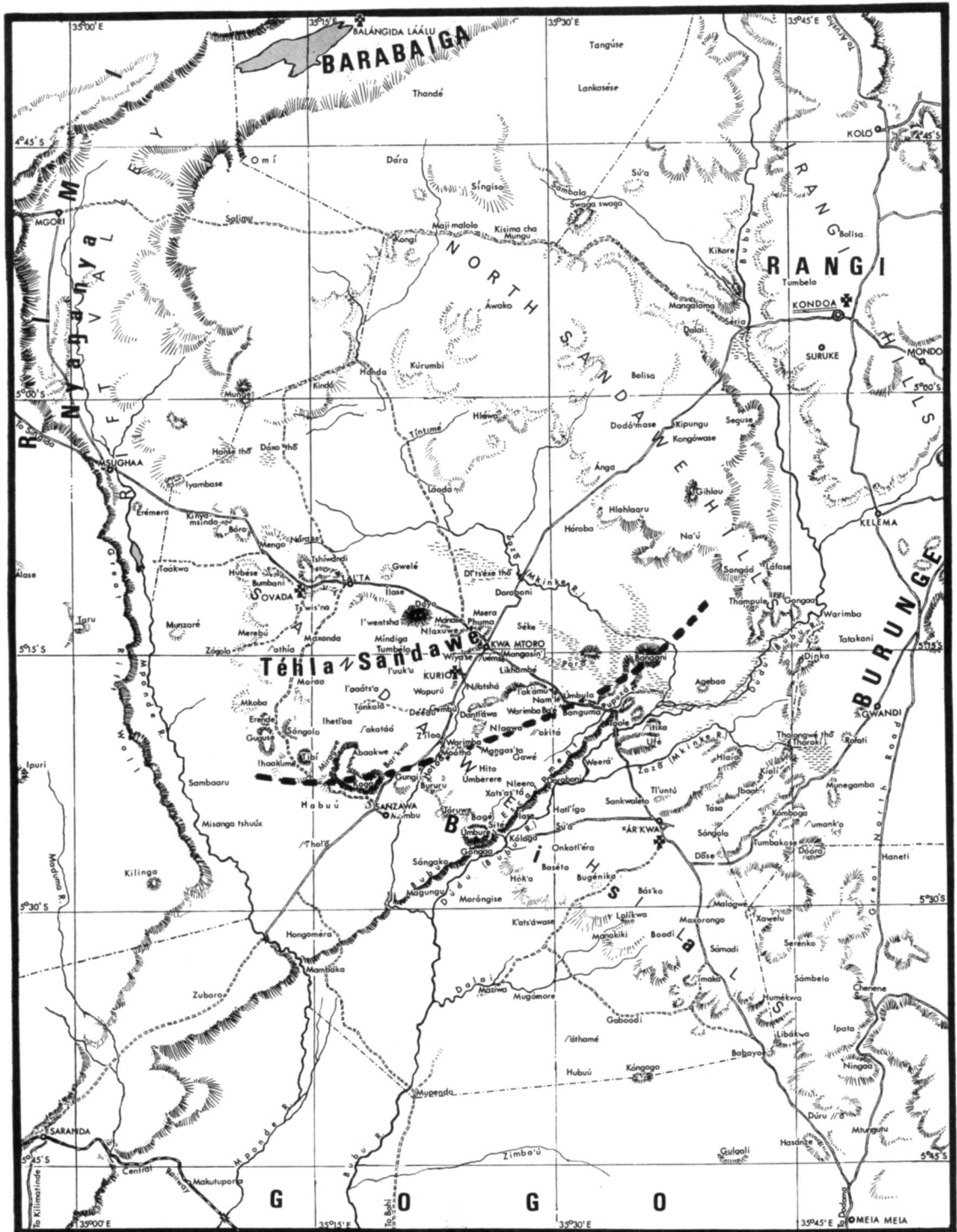
A few references to aboriginal peoples in Sandawe country can be found in the existing literature. An early German explorer, OSCAR BAUMANN, reports (1894) the presence of so-called "Wa-nege" in a large area of north-central Tanzania which includes the whole of the present tribal area of the Sandawe as well as the country of the Hadza near Lake Eyasi, and all the land in between. After that, these Wa-nege have never been heard of again, and subsequent investigators appear to have been at a loss to find them. The only exception to this lack of references is a statement by OBST (1912: 15) that the Wa-nege have "certainly died out several decades ago". The solution to the problem may be found in the fact that the *wa-n/e-ge* (with a dental click [ʄ], omitted in BAUMANN's transcription) is a term which has been in use among the Sandawe to denote bushmen: *wa-* is a Bantu prefix for "people" which the Sandawe often incorporate in tribal names as an integral part of them, *n/e* is Sandawe for "bush", and *-ge* is an affirmative. Thus BAUMANN's term would not have been the specific name of any particular tribe, but rather a general Sandawe acknowledgement of the existence of small bush-dwellers.

TREVOR, in his survey of the physical characters of the Sandawe, mentions a few other names. He writes:

"In the early days there were not chiefs but only clan councils. The Alagwa clan of Tatoga origin were rainmakers. The Elewa were half Gogo. The Bisa are a Sandawe clan speaking a language allied to Ngomvia. It is not certain who made the rock-paintings in Usandawe but 'people say the Portuguese'" (1947: 62) ⁴.

In a footnote TREVOR goes on to explain that "in East Africa, many local *miracula* are attributed to the Portuguese, the first Europeans generally known there" (1947: 62). The Alagwa are not aboriginal Sandawe but arrived in comparatively recent times; later we shall discuss their importance to Sandawe culture. Elewa is the name for a group of clans near the Gogo and Burunge borders; they are partly of Sandawe origin, and partly descended from Gogo and other immigrants, as TREVOR intimates. The Bisa are another

⁴ References to the Portuguese are commonly found among the Bantu neighbours of the Sandawe. Among the Sandawe themselves, they appear to be found mainly in those parts which have been influenced most by the Alagwa and the Rimi.



- DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS
- TRIBAL HEADQUARTERS
- LOCAL COURTS
- ✚ MISSIONS



SANDAWE COUNTRY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Names of surrounding tribes in heavy capitals. ———— Approximate line of division between the two main Sandawe cultural areas

- Tribal boundaries
- Railways
- Roads
- Motorable tracks
- Seasonal swamps

Sandawe sub-tribe, consisting of several small clans which are scattered all over the south-east. Some of their settlements in the neighbourhood of Boodi (see map) have absorbed Ngomvia arrivals several generations ago, and traces of their language are still evident in the local Bisa dialect. Yet on the whole the Bisa represent perhaps the most direct link with the original Sandawe. The Sandawe of the better developed central parts use their name as a synonym for "aboriginal Sandawe", "unsophisticated", "uncouth", and so on, and speak of themselves as *Téhla Sandawé*, which means "Proper Sandawe". Since they do not distinguish clearly between the Bisa and other Sandawe clans of the south-east, they refer to a large tract of land as Bisa country, as opposed to their own. Bisa country includes the whole of the south-eastern hills, the flat southern and western bushlands, and also the fly-infested northern hills⁵. From what follows we shall see that the *Téhla Sandawé* and the Bisa areas form the two principal divisions of Sandawe country in terms of ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity.

The name of the small hunters who once lived in rock hide-outs, is N/ini, according to Sandawe tradition. They were of very short stature and of a light, almost yellow complexion, "like the people of Banguma, Bugénika and Boseto are still to-day", so the Sandawe say. These three neighbourhoods are all in what is now Bisa country (see map). Local Sandawe traditions about the N/ini vary in one important respect: in the north-west, i.e., in *Téhla Sandawé* country, the N/ini are described as a strange and very elusive people, but in Bisa country they are often recognized as part of the present inhabitants' ancestry. Here they are recognized as having been a clan, or a group of clans or scattered families, who spoke a Sandawe dialect much like Bisa, and so the N/ini appear to have been aboriginal Sandawe who had not acquired cattle and cultivations like the other Sandawe. The recent inhabitants of Banguma, Bugénika and Boseto are not N/ini by any recognized (patrilineal) ancestry, but there are local people who say that their ancestors married N/ini women. Physical features which are more or less common in these parts include a short stature, a yellow skin, peppercorn hair, the epicanthic fold, excessive wrinkling of the skin at an advanced age, and a typical pentagonal Bushman-like skull; even steatopygia appears to occur in some women. These are all features which are commonly associated with Khoisan populations of southern Africa rather than with the modern peoples of Tanzania; they may even suggest Bushman rather than Hottentot affinities. Plate *b*) shows two elderly ladies from Bisa country, of a type which is typical for that area; Plate *a*) shows a man from *Téhla Sandawé* country, of quite different racial stock, and similar to the "Hamitic" type which is also common among the Hottentot⁶.

⁵ The inhabitants of the northern hills have been forcibly removed from there by the government, on account of sleeping sickness, but not all of them have been detected and others have gradually returned.

⁶ Compare this photo with Plate VI in SCHAPERA (1930; Hottentot [*≠ aumin*] men with Hamitic features).

TREVOR appears to have carried out his researches of 1944 in and around the tribal headquarters at Kwa Mtoro and the central mission at Kurio. This is Téhla Sandawé country, the central part of the tribal area which has long been exposed to Alagwa and Rimi infiltrations from the north and the north-west. It is therefore not surprising that, in addition to Hottentot links, he finds that "the traditions of the Sandawe concerning their contacts with the neighbouring Nyaturu [i. e., the Bantu-speaking Rimi] are confirmed by the degree of physical resemblance between them" (1947: 76). In these parts many Sandawe trace their descent to Rimi immigrants and some of them are still thought of as Rimi even to-day by other Sandawe. The Alagwa take pride in their Datoga ancestry and, although they have been Sandawe for many generations, some of them still claim that they are really Datoga. In the neighbourhood of Iseke ("real" Sandawe say *Séke*), a few miles to the north-east of the tribal capital, there is a settlement of Kimbu whose ancestors arrived from southern Iramba only three generations ago, and elsewhere in Téhla Sandawé country there are several Nyamwezi colonies, most of which have now been absorbed by the Sandawe ⁷.

In south-eastern Sandawe, i. e., in Bisa country, quite different admixtures are found. Here there are no Kimbu, no Rimi, and only very few Alagwa and Nyamwezi, but many local Sandawe are of Kwa'adzo, Burunge or Gogo descent. Although it is perhaps possible to speak of a general Sandawe type which is recognizably different from other peoples in central Tanzania, local variations can be recognized within the tribal limits, and these tend to conform to the pattern set by the Téhla Sandawé-Bisa distinction which the Sandawe make themselves ⁸.

2. Differences in Material Culture

At present all Sandawe live in what is known as *tembe*-type houses, (cf. Fig. 1 *a*) *tembe* being a Bantu term for a flat, soil-covered roof ⁹. At a first glance all Sandawe houses look alike, but there are local variations in the average sizes of homesteads, cattle enclosures, and the sizes and interior arrangements of the individual structures.

The people who have in the past introduced cattle into Sandawe country are the Alagwa and the Rimi, and today their descendants still represent that

⁷ See HASENSTEIN'S map (1898). The Kimbu and the Nyamwezi are both Bantu peoples from the west. Rather than of Tatoga I prefer to speak of Datoga, as these people vocalize initial consonants. There have been many other splintergroups who have passed through, or settled in, Sandawe country in the past. Several of these are mentioned in TEN RAA 1966*a*.

⁸ Blood-grouping, and even further anthropometrical research, might well produce results which differ to a degree from TREVOR'S findings, if they are carried out in Bisa country. It would be interesting to see whether closer links with Bushman populations could not be found, rather than with Hottentot.

⁹ The Sandawe word for *tembe* is *kumbi* or *kombi*, but this is also Bantu (Rimi). The Gogo *i-kumbi* is a hut for initiates (CLAUS 1911: 40).

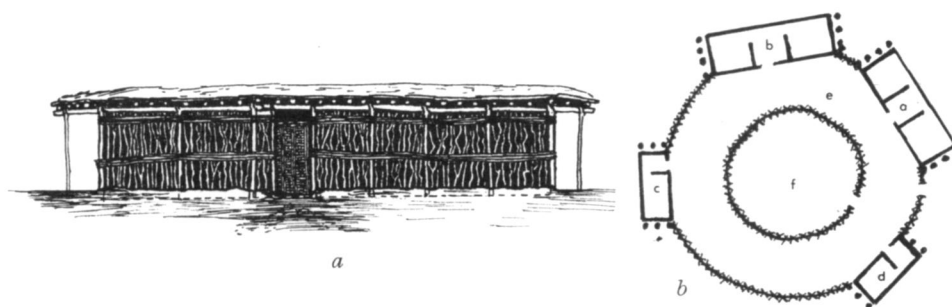


Fig. 1

a) General appearance of a Sandawe *tembe*-type house. The sliding door is made of wickerwork. – b) Plan of a large Téhla Sandawé homestead: (a) senior wife's house, (b) junior wife's house, (c) boys' hut, (d) girls' hut, (e) courtyard, and (f) cattle enclosure.

segment of Sandawe society which is richest in cattle. The area of their infiltration is, we have seen, Téhla Sandawé country. Because of its cattle-wealth, this is also the area where a senior man can often afford more than one wife. Polygamy is not a traditional Sandawe institution; the Sandawe themselves say that it has been introduced by the Rimi, and many still dislike it, even in Téhla Sandawé country¹⁰. But the wealthier Téhla Sandawé homesteads tend to be more polygynous and more populous than those of the Bisa¹¹. Each wife has her own house, and there are separate huts for the unmarried youths and girls. All these structures are arranged around a central courtyard which is protected by a thorn fence, and the centre of the yard is occupied by the cattle-enclosure (cf. Fig. 1 b).

In Bisa country, where a man usually owns fewer cattle and rarely more than one wife, homes are smaller and often lack cattle-enclosures altogether. The smaller number of cattle can be conveniently kept in the yards of agnatic relatives¹². Boys' and girls' huts - if there are any - stand apart in the bush, as there is no spacious courtyard in between, and no protective thorn fence.

¹⁰ DEMPWOLFF's informant Habuni is on record as having stated that polygyny was introduced by the Rimi (1916: 137). Further details about monogamy as a dominant Sandawe institution are given in TEN RAA 1969b.

¹¹ Statistical evidence in support of this contention is to be published later in a separate paper. Here it will suffice that in the course of three area surveys I have found the following figures: Bugénika area (Bisa, south-east): 1 out of 29 households; the household owner is not a Sandawe but a Gogo tribesman. Moótho area (Bisa, near Téhla Sandawé): 2 out of 33 households (one Rimi, one Sandawe). Ovada area (Téhla Sandawé, north-west): 7 out of 31 households (four of the owners consider themselves to be Sandawe, three Rimi, but two of the four "Sandawe" are called "Rimi" by other Sandawe). See also Chapter I in TEN RAA: 1969b.

¹² As an insurance against disease and theft the patrilineal Sandawe like to keep their cattle divided over the yards of clansfellows, preferably ortho-cousins and father's brothers. Also trusted neighbours who are not clan-fellows may be selected. Factors in the choice of places where the cattle are kept are the warmth of personal relations and geographical proximity. The number of sub-divisions of a cattle property varies with its size and also with the number of wives kept by the owner.

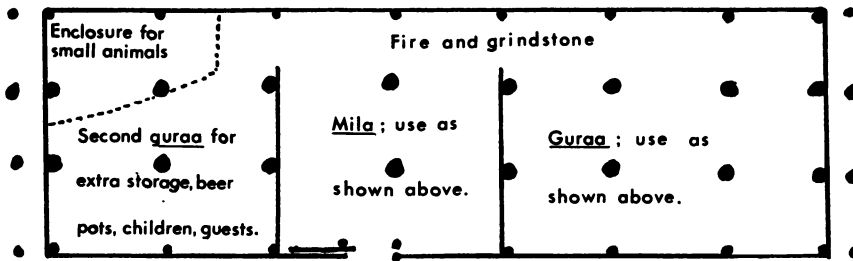


Fig. 2

Typical plan of a large three-roomed "Rimi" house (Téhla Sandawé). Length 40–60 ft.

In both parts of the tribal area room partitions are often incomplete, and, rather than by the number of rooms, the Sandawe like to indicate the sizes of their houses by saying how many main roof-beams (*hubee*) they have; these are the heavy poles which are laid across the shoulders of the main posts (*góro*) and form parallel rows. In our illustration the plan of the largest house has four rows of posts, and this is therefore a four-beam house (cf. Fig. 2); the other houses have only three (cf. Fig. 3*a* and 3*b*). Four rows of beams are not uncommon in the Téhla Sandawé area, but in Bisa houses they are rare.

The circular Téhla Sandawé courtyard with a cattle-enclosure in the middle is a typical Rimi arrangement, and also the long rectangular shapes of the individual houses are of Rimi origin. Internally, Téhla Sandawé houses may be divided into two long and narrow rooms by a partition which runs along the main axis (cf. Fig. 3*a*), but more often two or three rooms are formed by partitions which stand at rectangles to the front wall (cf. Fig. 3*b*). The former method is thought to be the older one, fashionable among the earlier Rimi immigrants. Today this type is still common among the Iramba and the Iambi further to the north-west (beyond the Rimi), and therefore it is referred to as the "Iramba" type. The second type of plan is said to be now

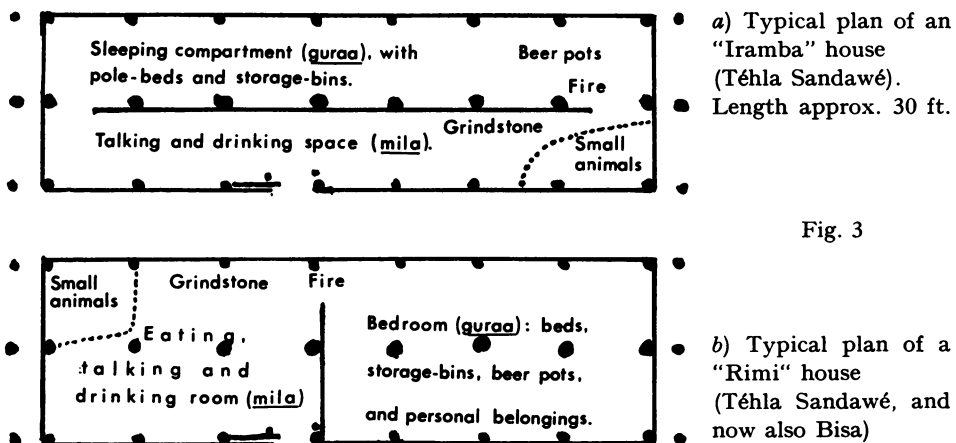


Fig. 3

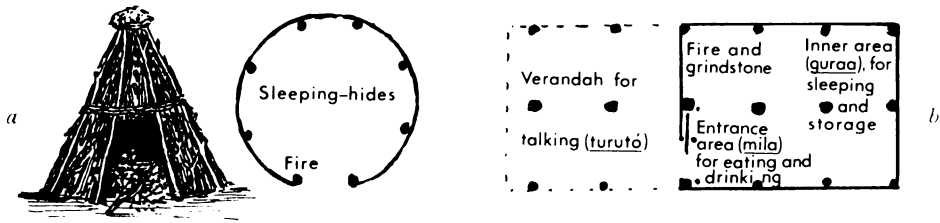


Fig. 4

- a) Appearance and plan of a Bisa *sundu*-type dwelling; the door shutter is a thorny branch.
 b) Typical plan of a small single-roomed Bisa house (often without the verandah shown).

the more usual one among the Rimi, and it certainly is among the Sandawe. We shall call this type the "Rimi" type, although the Sandawe do not call it by any particular name. The "Iramba" type and also the larger (two or three-roomed) "Rimi" houses belong to the Téhla Sandawé area, but in Bisa country there are no "Iramba" houses and the "Rimi" houses are smaller and have at best only two rooms, and often only one. In fact, the one-roomed bush cabin (cf. Fig. 4b) can hardly be termed a "Rimi" type house at all.

Until recent times quite a different type of dwelling has been in use in Bisa country which is no longer even remembered by the Téhla Sandawé. This is the *sundu*, which has been described by BAGSHAWE (1925: 336-7) as the tepee-like shelter of the old semi-nomadic hunting Sandawe (cf. Fig. 4a). Although I have seen such a structure as recently as 1959, it has now really passed into history as a family dwelling. Huts of this type are still erected at circumcision sites, as temporary shelters for the initiates¹³.

Another dwelling of the past is the dug-in house. Oval and rectangular excavations can be seen in several places in Sandawe country; some of these show signs of burning. Among the Téhla Sandawé it is virtually impossible to obtain any definite information as to their origins and, like the rockpaintings mentioned by TREVOR, they are usually attributed to the Portuguese, and sometimes also to the N/ini or even the Bisa. To the present inhabitants their makers are mysterious strangers¹⁴. But in Bisa country far more detailed information can be obtained. Here it is said that the excavations were made by people of Burunge or Kwa'adzo origin who had become Sandawe, but in the Mponde valley a site is attributed to the Iraqw. In all cases it is said that the excavations are the remains of dug-in houses which had *tembe*-type roofs; some informants add that the roofs were flush with the ground on one side and a little above the ground on the other. The roofs were horizontal,

¹³ BAGSHAWE (1925: 336-7) refers to the *sundu* as *isondu*. The present illustration is based on a drawing which I made in the field in 1959. Reasonably good photographs exist, *vide* OBST (1913: 199) and RECHE (1914: Abb. 47; cf. also pp. 24, 28). VON LUSCHAN (1898: 325) presents a plan of an Iramba-type Sandawe house.

¹⁴ Even rockpaintings have been shown not to be purely things of the past; cf. TEN RAA 1966a: 197-8; here the making of a Sandawe (Bisa) rockpainting is described.

and on the side where the ground was lower they were supported by walls of dug-in palisades; they had small openings through which the occupants could shoot their arrows at marauding invaders. Domestic animals were kept inside, and it was these animals that the marauders were after; in most cases these are said to have been Masai or Baraguyu, and their method of attack against the dug-ins was to try to smoke out the occupants. Sometimes they managed to set fire to them, but this was done only out of revenge when some of the attackers had been killed by the defenders' arrows. The local name for the old dug-ins is *xibixibi* or *xogóxogó*, terms which are well remembered in some circumcision songs of the Bisa¹⁵. *Xibi* is the Sandawe word for the burrows of animals like the aardvark, and it is also used as a verb in the meaning of "to burrow". Bisa descriptions of the dug-ins strongly recall the type of dwelling which the Burunge are reputed to have built until recently, a type which is still common even today among the Gorowa (also called Fiome)

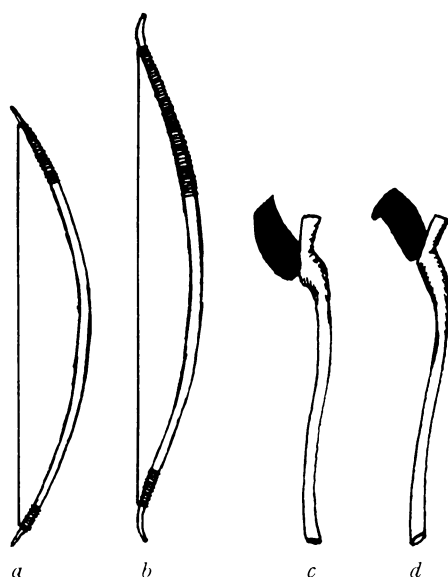


Fig. 5

- a) Gogo-type bow ("Rangi" type). Length 4 ft.
- b) Sandawe-type bow ("Bisa" type). Length 5 ft.
- c) Sandawe machete. Length 32 in.
- d) Gogo machete. Length 32 in.

and the Iraqw (or Mbulu) who live further to the north. These two peoples are closely related to the Burunge¹⁶. Thus it is in the backward parts of Bisa country that the link with a former mode of life is still alive, a link which has been largely lost among the Téhla Sandawé, most of whom are descended from immigrants who married local Sandawe women.

¹⁵ TEN RAA 1969b: Text N° 106.

¹⁶ RECHE (1914: 25) describes the Sandawe house as semi-dug-in ("halbversenkt"), but his photographs show a modern type of *tembe* house. For Iraqw dug-ins, see FOSBROOKE 1954; cf. also JAEGER 1911. The Sandawe descriptions contain no references to tunnel-like entrances and smoke-deflecting devices, and superficially the Sandawe sites show no evidence that they have been used (I have not carried out any excavations).

Also in other respects Sandawe material culture shows the dichotomy: Bisa = original Sandawe, Téhla Sandawé = assimilated Sandawe. The traditional bow of the Sandawe differs from the bows of their neighbours both in size and in shape. The usual bow among the peoples of central Tanzania is of the type shown in our illustration as the Gogo-type (Fig. 5*a*). The Sandawe bow is larger and more powerful, is bent back at the tips, and has more string windings, in particular around the top end (Fig. 5*b*). In Téhla Sandawé country this bow is no longer seen very often, and some local people even deny it the status of a native Sandawe bow. They say that it is a "Bisa" bow, but they do not claim that their own (Gogo-type) bow is Sandawe: this they describe as a "Rangi" bow.

There are also two types of machetes in use among the Sandawe, a "Sandawe" type, and a "Gogo" type (Fig. 5*c* and 5*d*). In the past Rangi traders used to visit the central parts of the country, exchanging hoes and other iron implements for dik-dik skins and honey. Some of those Rangi were expert blacksmiths, and a few of them settled in Sandawe country, their descendants becoming Sandawe. They evolved a local type of machete which differs from the shapes normally seen outside Sandawe country (or could it perhaps be an original Rangi form?). This Sandawe machete lacks a "nose", the protrusion at the tip of the blade which is so typical of the "Gogo" machete, and it has a cutting edge which is smoothly curved in a clean sweep. Presumably for lack of trade, the Rangi blacksmiths do not appear to have penetrated much into Bisa country, and therefore a local "Sandawe" type was never made there. Instead, machetes continued to be obtained from outside. A little amount of barter must have gone on even there. In Téhla Sandawé country both the local and the "Gogo" types are used.

Among the Bisa several objects can still be found which are no longer used among the Téhla Sandawé. One is a special box for storing guinea-fowl feathers (used as tail feathers for arrows); such boxes are called *mú'a*¹⁷. Among the Téhla Sandawé the traditional bow-and-arrow culture is in decline and personal belongings are now stored in Bantu-type bark boxes. Other objects which can still be seen occasionally in Bisa country are loin strings made of grass, and strings of beads which consist of alternating little discs of shell and hide, like Bushman beads. These are now rare, but among the Téhla Sandawé such beads appear to be completely unknown, having long been supplanted by imported glass and china beads. Nowadays plastic is beginning to replace all other types, even in Bisa country.

Among the Téhla Sandawé, on the other hand, some objects have long been in use which have never been known among the Bisa. Alagwa warriors who had distinguished themselves in raiding, wore special iron armlets, and they were given different burials (both customs have now died out). The Téhla Sandawé have various kinds of iron finery which have never reached the Bisa of the bush; these include the armlets but also bracelets and necklaces

¹⁷ Such a box is illustrated by VON LUSCHAN (1898: 334) who visited Téhla Sandawé country. Nowadays these boxes are only found among the Bisa.

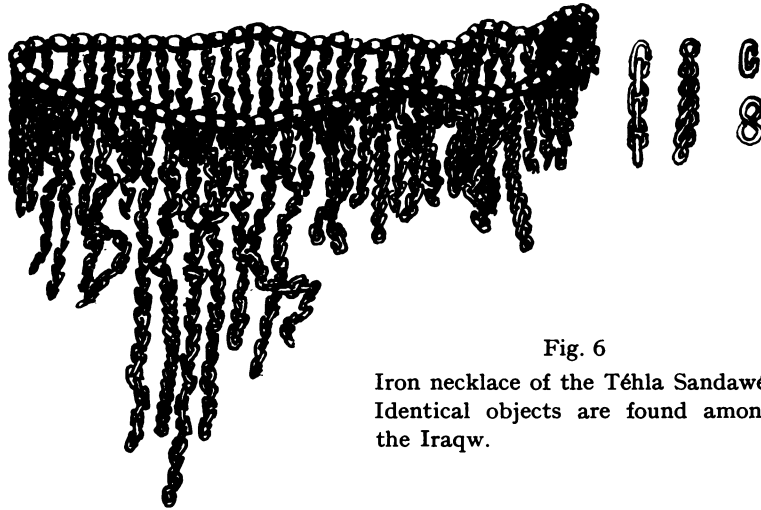


Fig. 6

Iron necklace of the Téhla Sandawé. Identical objects are found among the Iraqw.

with chain decorations (*moraa*) (Fig. 6), all of which the Sandawe themselves state to be of northern origin. I have indeed seen virtually identical objects among the Iraqw and the Sukuma (cf. Fig. 8). Also limited to the Téhla Sandawé is the use of decorated ceremonial gourds, called *dafá*, in marriage ritual (cf. Fig. 7). These are transferred between the families of the groom and the bride, and the decorations, the contents, and the manner of closing them have all symbolic significance. *Dafá* ceremonial is now a common feature in Téhla Sandawé marriage, but it is still recognized as really being a Rimi custom. The Bisa do not use them. Spears (*mukê*) and shields (*goná*) from Sandawe country have been described and illustrated by VON LUSCHAN (1898: 334-5), but the Sandawe themselves say that these are not really Sandawe weapons; in particular of the shields they say that they are Alagwa or Rimi objects. Special weighted spears have been used by Sandawe elephant hunters for a long time. The traditional area of distribution of spears and

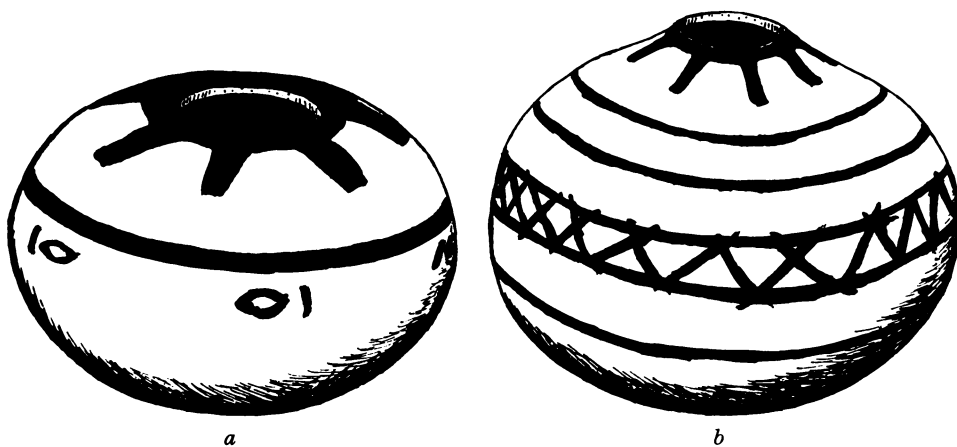


Fig. 7: *Dafá* ceremonial gourds from the Téhla Sandawé (a) and from the Rimi (b)

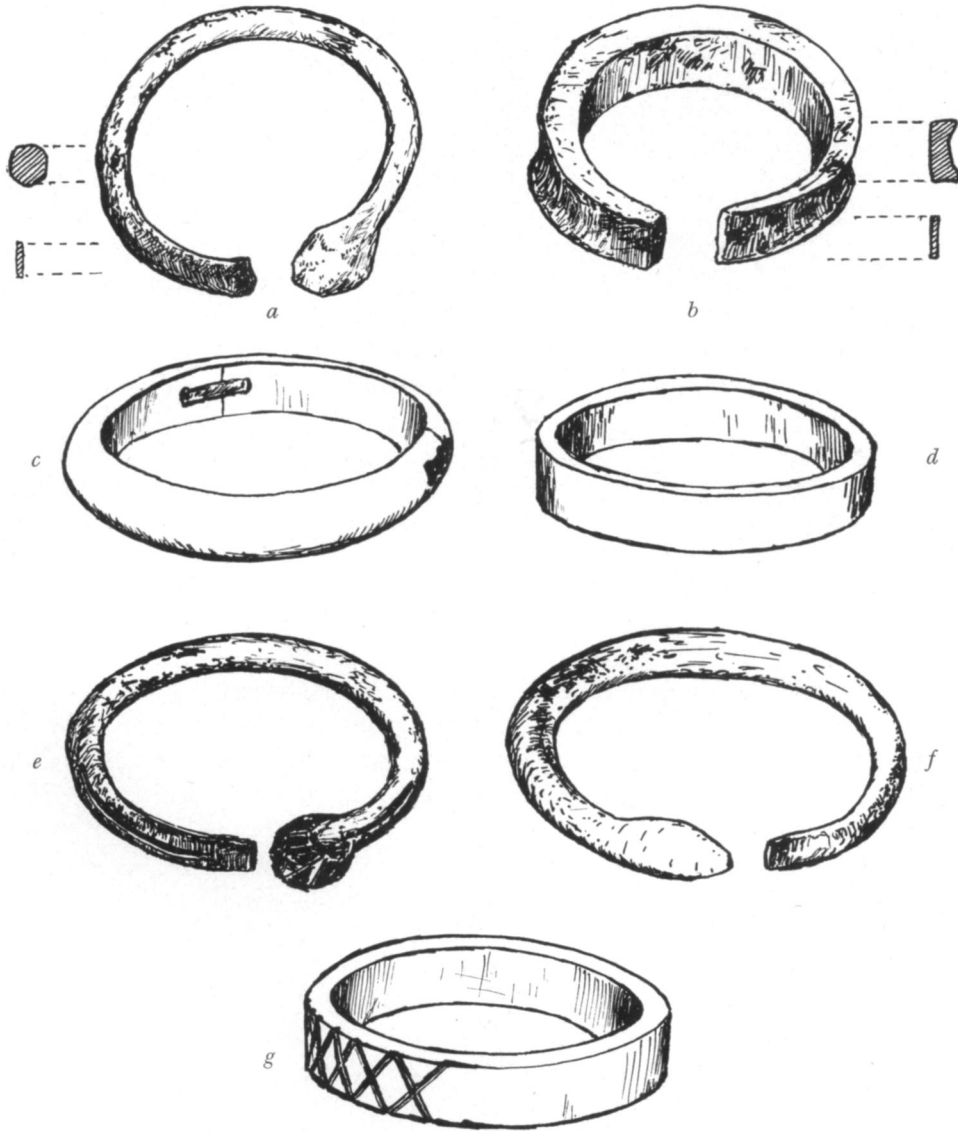


Fig. 8

- a)* and *b)* Sandawe (Alagwa) iron armlets.
c) and *d)* Sandawe (Alagwa) ivory armlets.
e) and *f)* Iraqw and Sukuma iron armlets. The Iraqw ring shows line decorations, and the Sukuma ring clearly resembles a snake. All Sandawe rings are unadorned.
g) Iraqw ivory armlet, partly decorated with crossed line carvings.

[The Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford possesses copper armlets from the Tuareg and other Saharan peoples which are strikingly similar to the Alagwa ring shown in Fig. 8*a*, and a brass armlet from the Bari of the Sudan which is shaped like the Alagwa ring shown in Fig. 8*b*. A stone man's armlet from the Tuareg is like Fig. 8*c*, and a Shilluk armlet (ivory?) like Fig. 8*d*. The Masai have armlets like the one shown in Fig. 8*c*, and also similar ones with a circular section.]

shields is Téhla Sandawé country, not Bisa country, and the names of these weapons are of Bantu origin ¹⁸.

The Téhla Sandawé have also adopted some musical instruments which the Bisa do not use. In addition to the common round iron ankle bells (which the Bisa also have), they have bean-pod shaped arm and thigh bells (now rare) which are also made of iron (all these bells are called *kirigo* in Sandawe). During initiations into female elderhood Téhla Sandawé women use mortars and drums as resonators for phallic rubbing-pestles; both the rites (called *mirimó*) and the instruments are of Rimi origin and quite unknown to the Bisa ¹⁹. On the other hand, everywhere in the remoter parts of Bisa country the common wooden bowl (*la'sé*) is still used as the ritual instrument *par excellence* at circumcisions. The bowls are simply turned upside down and rubbed with the ends of sticks or stirring-spoons, and the roaring sound which this produces represents the roar of lions, or danger in general. Incredible as it may seem, this important ritual use of the ubiquitous bowl appears to be quite unknown to most Téhla Sandawé. Apart from these differences, however, the Sandawe use much the same instruments all over their tribal area, and many of these are also common to their neighbours in more or less the same form. A case in point is the trough-zither (*totó*), which is the most common instrument of Sandawe minstrelsy. Some recent cultural acquisitions from the Gogo are well known everywhere, in particular the African hand-piano (*marimba*) and the fiddle (*zogozogo*), but the stick-zither with gourd resonator (*súmbi* or *phaángo*) remains best known in the southern parts only. Burunge-type reed rattle-bozes (*khayámba*) are comparatively rare and belong to eastern Bisa country which is not far from the Burunge ²⁰.

On the whole Bisa material culture has adopted less and has retained more traditional Sandawe implements than Téhla Sandawé culture. The general level of material achievement among the Sandawe is noticeably lower than among their neighbours, but the Téhla Sandawé consider themselves superior to the Bisa. The Bisa have nothing, so they say: they live in the bush, they are "foliage people" (*jaa n/omóso*).

3. Regional Differences in Customs and Manners

We have already noted that polygyny is, properly speaking, a Rimi institution which is practised mainly in the more populous Téhla Sandawé part of the tribe, and that the marriage custom of *dafá* transfer is also Rimi. In addition there is a significant difference in the payment of bridewealth

¹⁸ *Muké*: cf. Swahili *mkuki*; *gona*: cf. Swahili *ngao*. – For weighted spears, see TEN RAA 1966b.

¹⁹ The *mirimó* is described in TEN RAA 1969b, chapter 6.

²⁰ For descriptions and illustrations of these instruments, see TEN RAA 1963 and 1964. For the significance of the rubbing-bowls in circumcision ritual, and descriptions of the phallic rubbing pestles used in female elderhood rites, see TEN RAA 1969b.

between the two parts of the tribal area. This is not so much a matter of purpose and terminology as of size and kind. Bridewealth terminology and the number of units involved is much the same throughout Sandawe country, although individual variations exist. Along the cattle-rich Téhla Sandawé the principal units are invariably cattle; these number five or six according to the circumstances. Additional units are made up of goats and sheep; these are paid over as gifts for members of the bride's family, as counter-gifts, and for ceremonial purposes²¹. But among the Bisa only few animals change hands, and the number of cattle among them is smaller still or even absent. In particular in the remoter parts beehives, arrows, and beads continue to be used instead. The Téhla Sandawé are wont to make derogatory remarks about the poverty of Bisa bridewealth payments.

Significant differences also exist in hunting habits. Among the Bisa altogether more time is spent on hunting, but they hunt for only two reasons: food, and the protection of their small cultivations (mainly from marauding pigs). Téhla Sandawé cultivations are larger, and here pig-hunting has become comparatively more important while much less time is spent on hunting for food. The Téhla Sandawé also hunt for trade while the Bisa fish for trade in the Bubu river. The profit motive is not very dominant in either case, but more so among the Téhla Sandawé than among the Bisa. We have already referred to the exchange of dik-dik skins with Rangi traders, and there has also been some export of elephant tusks and leopard skins. Elephant hunting was done by Nyamwezi colonists who had settled among the Téhla Sandawé, by visiting Makua who were professional hunters and charm pedlars, and by local Sandawe tribesmen. Some Nyamwezi and Makua owned muzzle-loaders before the arrival of the first Arabs and Europeans, but the Sandawe hunted with stabbing-spears, drop-spears, pit traps, and poisoned arrows²². The proper Sandawe elephant hunt (*wáyá'ga*) was an affair which was conducted with stabbing-spears. Hunting big game had become a source of much prestige to some Téhla Sandawé but net-hunting for small game, which remained the speciality of the Bisa, had come to be regarded as slightly inferior. Cattle-raiding was also done by the Téhla Sandawé, in particular in the form of counter-raids against marauding Datoga and Masai who had driven off Sandawe cattle. The habit of killing rhinoceros for their horns seems never to have caught on among the Sandawe.

As sources of food, horticulture and cattle-keeping have become almost as important among the Téhla Sandawé as among the neighbouring peoples, while among the Bisa hunting and food-gathering (by the women) continue to be important. This has resulted in a slight but noticeable difference in local diets. The Bisa with their smaller cultivations lack the comparative affluence of the Téhla Sandawé in their prosperous years, but they are also less vulnerable to famines caused by droughts and agricultural pests. As a

²¹ Names and purposes of the principal bridewealth units are discussed in TEN RAA 1969b.

²² Cf. TEN RAA 1966b.

result the nutritional balance among the Bisa tends to be better, being less one-sidedly based on porridge. But even among the Téhla Sandawé this remains better than among neighbouring Bantu peoples, according to the findings of a recent nutritional survey²³.

The traditional hunter's rations of the Sandawe consist of a stiff lump of millet pudding fermented with honey; this is wrapped up in leaves and tied to the belt with a string. Called *sakaláni*, it is still used by Bisa hunters and honey-collectors who go into the bush on long expeditions, but among the Téhla Sandawé it is spoken of as a thing of the past. The coarse, dark grey pudding which constitutes the main ingredient of *sakaláni* still serves as the basis of meals all over Sandawe country, but more so among the Bisa than among the Téhla Sandawé. Among the latter finer and whiter machine-ground flour is now more widely used. It seems unlikely that this refinement will result in any nutritional improvement.

In respect of food taboos, and also of eating manners, there are traditional differences between the Bisa and the Téhla Sandawé. On the whole the Sandawe have few general food taboos. Unlike their neighbours they all eat eggs and fish, and there are no totemic or clan avoidances. But special taboos there are legion: the Sandawe observe avoidances for pregnant women, growing children, the sick, hunters, travellers, and in ritual situations. These taboos are observed throughout the tribal area, but there are also regional differences. What the Téhla Sandawé refuse to do but the Bisa have a reputation of doing, is to eat the meat of hyenas and snakes, in particular python. In the beliefs of neighbouring Bantu peoples these creatures are associated with witchcraft and to eat them is unthinkable. These associations have also become widespread among the Téhla Sandawé. Among the Bisa, on the other hand, they are not yet very well entrenched although nowadays they too pay lip-service to these avoidances. There still are people in Bisa country who are known to have eaten python and hyena meat, but this is no longer readily admitted to strangers, not even to other Sandawe. In the border area of the tribal divide there is a small clan whose name is Walámpit; it is said that they have been given this name, long ago, by the Rimi, because of their lack of food taboos. *Wala-mpiti* is Rimi for hyena-eaters, and the Téhla Sandawé still maintain that they are really Bisa.

Bisa manners are considered crude by the Téhla Sandawé, even though the latter, too, do not always adhere to the standards which they claim to be their own. Educated Téhla Sandawé have acquired good Bantu manners, and they eat and handle food only with their right hands. But the Bisa remain unconcerned and use either hand. They also present and accept gifts with either hand, and can be seen to blow their noses, urinate, and clean themselves after defecation, using their right hands instead of the left. The older generation of the Téhla Sandawé, too, have not yet universally accepted the use of the right hand for "clean" and the left hand for "unclean" actions. At

²³ A nutritional survey was made by LATHAM (cf. LATHAM 1964). A history of famines is contained in TEN RAA 1968.

least in front of strangers virtually every Téhla Sandawé now refers to the wrong use of hands as uncouth Bisa habits, but visiting Bantu may be heard to comment on the manners of *all* Sandawe in hardly laudatory terms; they speak of their manners as being as bad as those of Europeans. Only those Sandawe who have been educated at school (where Swahili is the medium of instruction) or been in the towns, will invariably use their hands correctly. It is also they who are the strongest critics of the Bisa.

To point at a person with the whole hand (*nyosé*) is another thing which continues to be done by the Bisa; among the Téhla Sandawé this is considered insulting. In accordance with proper Bantu custom they avoid all obvious pointing, even with the index finger alone. Nudity, too, is not regarded by the Bisa as something unnatural or improper, but it is among the Téhla Sandawé. The Bisa think nothing of mixed bathing, but the Téhla Sandawé are inhibited and always cover themselves when members of the opposite sex are in sight. The uninhibited use of language by the Bisa is a matter which will be discussed later, when we shall consider dialectical distinctions.

4. Ritual, Ritual Leadership, and Political Organization

The main body of Sandawe beliefs is much the same all over the tribal area. The same myths are handed down to the younger generations, the same ideas are entertained about the moon and the mantis, and the same symbolism is used in poetry, riddles, and in everyday speech. But there are some rituals which are only regionally practised, and others which are practised by the whole tribe but show regional variations. Several of these differences are merely interesting from a diffusionistic point of view, but some of them are also sociologically significant because they reflect subtle differences in tribal structure.

We have already referred briefly to a highly secret rite of the women, in which they initiate new members into the ranks of female elderhood. These rites are known as *mirimó*, they are of Rimi origin, and they are practised only in Téhla Sandawé country. The Bisa of the southern borders have a ritual called *sanzoona* which shows some correspondences with *mirimó*, but the similarities concern only the basic principles. In form and execution they are quite different, and *sanzoona* is not rigidly secret. More widespread than *mirimó* is the harvest and courtship dance called *landá* which is also of Rimi origin. This has become something like a national dance of the Sandawe, but its main area of distribution remains in Téhla Sandawé country. Only in the south-eastern reaches of Bisa country it is not established; here the Gogo *nindo* is performed instead. Probably the most interesting of the "regional" rites is the *phék'umo*, an old fertility dance of the moon which shows striking similarities with the eland-bull dance of the South African Bushmen. It is no longer even remembered among the Téhla Sandawé, but in Bisa country it is still performed on rare occasions. Even the Sandawe possession cult of *simbó*, which belongs to the whole tribal area and which has been

described by VAN DE KIMMENADE (1936: 399) as perhaps the greatest dance of the country, shows regional variations in some minor detail. Among the Téhla Sandawé the women stimulate the achievement of possession by beating buffalo horns, but among the Bisa they rub wooden bowls, as in circumcision²⁴.

Of more sociological significance is an investigation of Sandawe rainmaking. We have already quoted TREVOR as saying that "the Alagwa of Tatoga origin were rainmakers". There is no doubt about the validity of this statement, but rainmaking has also been traditionally practised by all the other clans of the Sandawe in the past, and it still is today, notwithstanding the efforts of the Alagwa to monopolize it. Without mentioning rain at all, BAGSHAWE gives us a concise description of such a clan-rainmaking ceremony when he writes:

"A really big affair, if a whole family or clan feel it necessary to be present – they often do – must take place on the sacred hill of the clan, to which all must go, including women and children. On arrival the victim is laid on its back and is split open alive. Everyone present takes a handful of the liquid contents of the paunch, and, shouting prayers, scatters it over the graves or the top of the hill, as the case may be" (1925: 328)²⁵.

Rainmaking, in the first instance, is a clan ritual. Each Sandawe clan has its own ritual hill where the rain ceremonial is performed. Other places are the sites where the clansmen's ancestors are buried; the ceremonies are performed here if it is believed that a neglected ancestral spirit has been interfering with the rainfall out of spite. These graveyard sites tend to be the stages for lineage rites rather than for rites performed by the whole clan, because clan ancestors are remote and somewhat diffuse while lineage ancestors are remembered by name and their individual graves are known.

This simple pattern of only two types of rain ceremonial is found in Bisa country; in Téhla Sandawé country it is complicated by the superimposition of Alagwa rainmaking. When the Alagwa arrived many generations ago, they brought with them their rainmaking technique, and cattle. While the Bisa use their ancestral graves and their rock shelters in the hills as the simple stages for their rituals, the Alagwa use all the paraphernalia of rainmaking which may be found among neighbouring Bantu and Hamitic peoples. They too, make rain in the hills, but for the more esoteric rites they have a sacred rain hut in which they keep special rainstones and horns, they practise ritual intercourse, and they make effective use of the prestige conferred by secrecy. Like their fellow Sandawe, the Alagwa work on two different levels, but they do this on a higher plane. While the Bisa have graveyard and hill rites, the

²⁴ This is not the place to describe these beliefs and rituals. Sandawe moon beliefs are discussed at length in TEN RAA 1969a; for the mantis and various rituals see TEN RAA 1969b, for the *landá*, see DEMPWOLFF 1916: 102–3, and for the *simbó*, see VAN DE KIMMENADE 1936: 412–3. The *landá* and the *simbó* are discussed in more detail and analyzed in TEN RAA 1969b.

²⁵ Prayers are presented by DEMPWOLFF as parts of vernacular texts (1916: 142–3) and presented in detail by TEN RAA 1969b.

Alagwa have hill and hut rites. The hut rites are the most sacred and only resorted to when the other methods have failed to produce the desired results. Non-Alagwa clansmen go to the Alagwa for help when their own ritual has proved ineffectual.

The ritual leaders of the Bisa (and also those of the non-Alagwa clans in Téhla Sandawé country) are not institutional leaders, and they have no authority other than the prestige derived from success in divinership, seniority, and sheer force of character. But the elders of the Alagwa derive additional status from the traditional nature of the ritual leadership which is vested in their clans. Not the same lineages are always dominant within these clans, and therefore there are several Alagwa who claim the most senior status. But the senior rainpriests are always members of the Mungé clan of the Alagwa, and the rainpriestesses, who are also the guardians of the huts, are members of the Hanse clan who are also Alagwa. Thus we see that both the "male" and the "female" priestly clans are Alagwa, and it is they who claim to own the rain. Their leaders jealously guard their secrets from outsiders, passing them on only to younger kinsmen whom they consider to show sufficient promise ²⁶.

Alagwa rainpriests wear no emblems and they do not have any other visible attributes, nor have they succeeded in establishing political power among the Sandawe (except their chiefship in the colonial era, which will be discussed below). Apart from status, the only benefits which they derive from their craft are payments in cattle and produce. This, of course, helps them to maintain their wealth, but the local Sandawe are not over-awed by their prestige, and when the efforts of the Alagwa fail to produce results they are liable to be fined by their clients, sometimes heavily. The pattern which now emerges is that, unlike the Bisa clan elders, the Alagwa rainpriests make rain for others as well as for their own clan-fellows, they have superior techniques and a measure of professionalism, and they have a tradition of inheritance behind them ²⁷. These are all advantages which no non-Alagwa enjoys.

The Alagwa claim that already before the arrival of the Germans they had achieved political ascendancy over the Sandawe, in particular during the lifetime of their great headman Amás'. Amás' was a man of strong character who had successfully counter-raided the Barabaiga, the traditional foes of the local cattle-owners. He became recognized as the most influential leader of the Alagwa, and his influence extended among the neighbouring cattle clans. But it is strongly denied by other Sandawe clans that he should ever have exercised anything like political control over them. There is indeed nothing to suggest that his influence ever extended beyond the Téhla Sandawé

²⁶ A text presented by DEMPWOLFF (1916: 142) contains the following passage: "Who then is our rain priest? – It is said that only one man and also one woman know the rain; all other Alagwa do not know it, [the secret] is hidden even from the Alagwa."

²⁷ Here I am contradistinguishing the Alagwa rainpriests against Bisa clan elders. As we shall see, the difference between them is one of professionalism and non-professionalism.

area. This position is recognized, in a rather curious manner, in an early map by SPRIGADE and MOISEL (1904) which shows the area around Babayo in the south-east as a separate political entity, marked Barasungu's Realm (Barasungus Gebiet). In fact there has never been a local chiefdom in that area. Barasungu was a local clan elder who had acquired a good deal of personal influence, but others in this time, like Solá at Farkwa and Marenga at Gaboodi, enjoyed exactly the same prestige in their own neighbourhoods. What SPRIGADE and MOISEL's map does show correctly, is that there was no such a thing as Alagwa political dominance over all Sandawe. Traditionally the Sandawe are chiefless, and only the advent of the colonial era changed this picture to some extent, and that only temporarily.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century the Germans tried to consolidate their authority by setting up a network of sub-chiefs and village headmen, under a tribal chief, through whom they could administer the country. After the Germans had overcome initial Sandawe resistance, the Alagwa claimed from their administration formal recognition of their prominent position, and an Alagwa headman was appointed chief of all Sandawe. But this was only after a series of German punitive expeditions had pacified the country, and the first person to seek official recognition of his local influence was not an Alagwa, but a Nyamwezi settler called Mtoro. This was the man after whom the present tribal headquarters is named: Kwa Mtoro is Swahili for "At Mtoro's". But Mtoro had fallen out too badly with his Sandawe neighbours (this was largely the cause of the ensuing disturbances), and in the end the Germans established the chiefship of the Alagwa²⁸. This lasted all through the colonial era of Tanganyika, including the British period, but when in 1962 the government of independent Tanganyika stripped all the chiefs in the country of their temporal powers this raised no protest among the Sandawe. Among some of their neighbours, where chiefship had been a traditional institution, former chiefs continue to be held in honour even today, but among the Sandawe the last vestiges of Alagwa temporal power vanished almost overnight.

However egalitarian Sandawe society may be on the whole, there are local differences in the degree of this egalitarianism. In the Téhla Sandawé area superior rainmakership, backed up by wealth, has produced a measure of ritual leadership which is vested in one group. The population is wealthier and more settled, the homesteads are larger and more populous, and polygyny has become more accepted as a way of life than among the Bisa. Being better targets for marauding Datoga, the Téhla Sandawé clans, i.e., the Alagwa and their allies, had produced men of proven ability as counter-raiders and war magicians. Among the Bisa such leadership was less developed, and personal reputation rested mainly on hunting feats and divinership²⁹.

²⁸ Mtoro's flight and his return with the aid of the Germans is mentioned by BAGSHAWE (1925: 221).

²⁹ The importance of good warriorship among the Téhla Sandawé is evidenced by what DEMPWOLFF's informant Habuni tells us (1916: 141): "A hero is a person who has slain Datoga in the past." These are the people, already referred to who had earned the right to wear iron armlets, and to be buried in a special manner.

5. Dialectical Differentiation

In the section on Sandawe in the linguistic survey of African languages, WESTPHAL (1956: 158) leaves unanswered the question whether Sandawe is a single linguistic unit or not. He states that "it is not known whether the language is uniform or whether there are dialectical divisions". Indeed, from the existing literature this question cannot be readily settled, but from what follows we shall see that Sandawe is in fact a single unit, although there are slight and gradual differences between the Téhla Sandawé and Bisa areas. Just as in the case of the other cultural divisions of the tribe, there is considerable overlap between the two dialectical areas, and there is no sharply dividing borderline between them. All Sandawe can understand one another without difficulty, even those of the westernmost parts and those who live well beyond the south-eastern administrative border.

The terms *Téhla Sandawé* and *Bisa* are used by the Sandawe also as linguistic terms. We have seen that the former means "Proper Sandawe", and that this is the name which the people of the centre and the north-west apply to their own dialect. But the Bisa do not call it so, they refer to it as *l'úma katé* "mid-country [speech]" and also, somewhat contemptuously, as *Tsueéso*, which means "Rimi". Bisa speakers of the south-east say *Tsueésono' ni* "let us go to Rimi country", when they are actually proposing a journey to the tribal headquarters at Kwa Mtoro or to the central mission at Kurio. To them, these parts and the local dialect are therefore not "Proper Sandawe" at all but clearly foreign-influenced. The Téhla Sandawé, on their part, have no other name for the Bisa dialect, which is always called Bisa even though it is realized that properly speaking the Bisa are no more than a small group of clans. From this it does not follow that the Bisa really speak "pure" or "aboriginal" Sandawe. Their speech has also been influenced by the Bantu. Though Rimi influences may perhaps be somewhat less evident in Bisa speech there is clearly more Gogo influence. Like Rimi, Gogo is a Bantu language.

The main features which distinguish Bisa from Téhla Sandawé are the following (the first two are closely related):

1. Slowness of enunciation, like a sort of drawl. Bisa speakers say *àáre* for "really", which in Téhla Sandawé is pronounced *áre*; a common intermediate form is *ááre*. In extreme Bisa "wife" is a long-drawn *n/oómoòsu*, but in the west this is a brief *n/úmus'*; the generally accepted intermediate form is *n/úmusú*. Slowness of enunciation is seen as typical for Bisa. Sometimes this is ridiculed, and the standard Sandawe word for "to speak with a slow drawl" is *dank'am'sé*, a term which is derived from *dank'amé* which means "to walk with a limping gait".

2. Retention of vowels which are eliminated in Téhla Sandawé. This mainly concerns unstressed final vowels, but also initial vowels in some cases. The final vowels affected are usually those which terminate words of foreign origin. The Bisa word for "story", *hadisi*, becomes *hadís'* in Téhla Sandawé (cf. Swahili *hadithi*). In Bisa "a black cow" is *tíithi*; this is *tiith'*, *tíit* or *tít'*

in Téhla Sandawé (cf. Rimi *titi* and Gogo *nthūthu*). In Bisa “a light grey cow” is *nīsi*; this is *nīs’* or *nīs’* in the mid-country dialect (cf. Rimi *nyīsi* and Barabaiga *nyawish*). “To bleach in the sun” is *ánaku* in Bisa, but in mid-country speech this is *ának’* (cf. Rangi *aneka*)³⁰. Initial vowels are retained (or possibly added) in Bisa, in a few verbs. “To speak” is *embó* or *imbó* in Bisa, but *’mbo* or *’bó* in mid-country Sandawe. “To come” is *i/i* in Bisa but */i* in Téhla Sandawé. In the latter case Bisa may have added an *i*.

3. Differences in vocabulary. Some of these can be attributed to borrowing from different directions, Téhla Sandawé having borrowed mainly from the Rimi and the Barabaiga, and Bisa from the Gogo and the Burunge (and Kwa’adzo). The isoglosses do not exactly follow the division marked on our map but this division roughly indicates the dialectal distinctions.

Maize is called *n/ini* in Téhla Sandawé but *aana* in Bisa, and *mambatú’a* in southern Bisa. *N/ini* is the same word as the name for the aboriginal hunters of the past. Maize is not an indigenous crop, but it is said to have been introduced by the Nyamwezi. It is thought to have been called after the *N/ini* because heads of maize resemble people of short stature. Others say that maize is called *n/ini* because the first strains to be introduced had very short stalks, shorter than the millets and sorghums which were familiar to the Sandawe. The Bisa word *aana* is a borrowing from Kwa’adzo, and *mambatú’a* is a descriptive Bisa term which seems obscenely funny to Téhla Sandawé speakers who have never heard it. It seems to be a phallic reference, and an odd one at that, because *mamba* (“a giant snake”) *tú’a* (“comes out”, or “rears its head”) is not normal Sandawe. Giant snakes are well known in Sandawe mythology as all-devouring monsters, but their usual Sandawe name is not *mamba* but *manga*. *Mamba* is a Bantu word which means a crocodile.

Finger millet is called *!hekoo* in Téhla Sandawé, but the Bisa use *súxumo* or *sóxumo*. Téhla Sandawé also has *sóx’mo*, but usually only for a special strain. A general Sandawe term for a brindled animal is *samú* (see footnote 30), but the Bisa near the dividing line normally use a different term: *’úkí*. Others elaborate on the term *samú* and use the more descriptive *’eká samú* “bee [like] brindle-colour”. The “outer ankle” is *kurúkuru* in Téhla Sandawé; this is also the word used in the neighbourhood of Moótho which is generally considered to be Bisa, but the Bisa speakers of Farkwa say *kirigo*³¹. For “to carry [a child, or a load] on the shoulders” the Téhla Sandawé term is *thaké’a*, but the Bisa say *sigóngola*.

³⁰ In a single case a stressed vowel seems to be affected, but it does not seem very likely that this is really the case, because we may have to do with an instance of borrowing dissimilar forms of the same root: In Bisa a brindle-coloured animal is called *samú*; in mid-country Sandawe this is also *samú* but it is also heard as *sám’*, in particular in the west (there is also a Sandawe verb *sámü*, or *sám’* in the west, which means ‘to grunt’). The animal is called *samú* in Rimi, but the Gogo say *ili-sámü*. Both forms appear to occur also among the Barabaiga, who say *samoi* according to WILSON (1952: 36) but *semü* according to my own notes. The latter are the result of a survey of cattle names which I have undertaken among the neighbours of the Sandawe; this still awaits publication.

³¹ The same word is used for a bell (see above).

Some differences of vocabulary are minor ones: the Téhla Sandawé word for “hoeing” (i.e., the second hoeing, of small weeds) is *hiboo*; this corresponds with *yuboo* in the Bisa dialect of Úmbure. In Téhla Sandawé “to descend from a hill” is *genge*, but the Bisa of Mangas’ta and N!eero say *g/ig/i*. In the Bisa neighbourhood of Moótho the Téhla Sandawé term *genge* is preferred, but in the nearby settlement of Warimba, which is closer to Téhla Sandawé country, Bisa *g/ig/i* is preferred. For “it is ready” the western Téhla Sandawé speakers of Ovada use the short *tléa*, but the slower Bisa speakers prefer the more complex form *tlém’so*.

Terms used for “stranger” are largely overlapping. The usual Téhla Sandawé term is *wagé*, but the Bisa of Farkwa prefer *swaa*, from *Swa-hili*. Most words for “stranger” are based on tribal names: *tatúr’* is common in the north-west, *wagó*, in Bisa country, and *konónko* and *makúua*, throughout the whole Sandawe area. *Tatúr’* is the Sandawe name for Taturu, or Datoga, who are a group of Nilo-Hamitic peoples which includes the Barabaiga; *Wagó* is Sandawe for the (Wa-)Gogo; the Konongo are a Nyamwezi tribe, and the Makua are the southern Tanzanian people who are famous for elephant-hunting. In the meaning of “stranger” any of these terms may be applied also to Arabs and Europeans.

To the average mid-country Sandawe, Bisa speech appears uncouth and often embarrassing. In Téhla Sandawé the red behind of a baboon is called *kénto*, but the Bisa call it *kurú*. This also means a lump of clotted blood, or a part of the placenta which has remained behind in a woman’s body after childbirth; it is said to prevent her from carrying loads and from doing her work properly. In Téhla Sandawé the word is strongly associated with pollution and it is considered improper to use it in public, but Bisa speakers do not mind and they do not avoid it.

Matters concerning sex, pregnancy, and childbirth are always referred to with circumspection by Téhla Sandawé speakers. They refer to pregnancy in terms of “weight” (*lèka*), and a pregnant woman “is heavy” (*lèkasus*). Bisa speakers, however, are uninhibited and say “she has a foetus” (*gúbasus*), an expression which sounds crude to western Sandawe. Even when referring to a pregnant cat the latter prefer to use a euphemism; they say “she has swallowed a stone” (*dísa tímúua*). Proper language should be observed even in respect of cats, for cats are “inhibited” animals, so the Sandawe say. They call their mates at night and procreate in the secrecy of darkness. They are also fastidious eaters, which further proves that they are sensitive animals. When a cat is giving birth to her young in the house, people must not come close to watch her because, if the cat is not accorded the privacy to which she is entitled, she will sneak out into the bush and bear her young in the hollows of an ant heap. Western Sandawe in the Ovada area also say that if a pregnant cat is bluntly spoken of as “having a foetus”, she will be offended and run away to have her young in the bush. She would rear them there, and this would be unfortunate since the Sandawe keep cats to keep mice out of their homes, and it is not easy to find a run-away cat and bring her back. “A cat is very shameful” (*naángwe úrsa múres*), the Téhla Sandawé say, but

in Bisa country people do not have any particular regard for a cat's susceptibilities.

Bisa speakers likewise refer openly to sex and to sexual organs, a subject avoided by the Téhla Sandawé. When a Bisa parent once told his small children that the name for an initiate is *tháso* "testicle", a Téhla Sandawé guest showed embarrassment. An initiate is normally called a "hyena" (*thékele*) in Sandawe. When a Bisa parent asks a long-unmarried daughter: "Who will in the long run give you his testicles?" (*Hó labá sípoi tháso?*), this simply means: "Who is going to marry you at long last?" Among the Téhla Sandawé, however, such idiom would be felt to be in bad taste. The Sandawe verb /'u means "to copulate" and also "to marry". The Bisa use it freely in both meanings, but the Téhla Sandawé consider it a vulgar word. For Bisa "he marries a woman" (*thámetsua /'úwe*), the Téhla Sandawé substitute "he takes a woman" (*thámetsua sie*). "He sleeps with a woman" is also *thámetsua /'úwe* in Bisa, but the more refined Téhla Sandawé prefer to say instead: "he moistens a woman" (*thámetsua /'ókaa*).

In respect of childbirth the mid-country Sandawe show similar inhibitions. The Sandawe word for "to give birth" is *hábá*, and the Bisa use it freely for humans and animals. But in the western parts of the country, in the Ovada area, it sounds crude and is therefore generally restricted to animal birth. For human birth it is more appropriate to use the term *hlánta* "to lower [out of the mother's body]". Of a midwife it is said that "she helps to lower [the infant]" (*hlántasukèèsa*) or, even more properly, "she supports the infant [during its birth]" (*n||oosa gidee*). To the Bisa such circumlocution seems entirely superfluous; they say *hábásukèèsa* "she helps to give birth", no matter whether she assists in the birth of an animal or a human child.

Tsína is a general Sandawe term for the lower parts of the body, in particular of the female body, and accordingly the Bisa term for "feminine" is *tsínasus'*, i.e., "having a [female] bottom"; this is also the common Bisa term for any female animal. To the mid-country Sandawe such usage sounds vulgar, and the borrowed words *daama* (female animal) and *da'mé* (young female animal, of a limited number of species) are used instead. In the opinion of Téhla Sandawé, human nudity is shameful and private parts ought not to be discussed in public. Once, when a Bisa father had investigated an itch under his testicles and concluded: "My scrotum is red" (*tsínáa /'i'é*), a visiting Sandawe from the central parts of the country looked quite offended. For, he explained, it is extremely rude to announce one's findings so bluntly and, above all, to carry out such an investigation in front of one's children. To the Bisa family there had seemed to be nothing odd in the father's behaviour.

Like their fellow Sandawe, the Bisa initiate their daughters into adulthood by excising their clitorises but, unlike their mid-country fellows, they see nothing wrong in mentioning the name of the organ (*/wě*). And, what is worse, they do not even avoid references to cut-off clitorises (*/áie*), which to the Téhla Sandawé represent the epitome of pollution. As among the Téhla Sandawé, it is unusual for Bisa youths and men to sit in the middle of the circle when people are gathered together. According to the Téhla San-

dawé this would simply be bad manners, but the Bisa have a practical reason for not liking it. A man who sits in the middle cannot see what is happening behind his back, so he will not notice approaching danger in time. Men are the defenders of the family, and the middle of the circle is the place for the women and the children. At a Bisa home a youth was once told off for sitting in the middle, in a jocular manner, in the presence of a Téhla Sandawé guest. The latter showed his disagreement with the rebuke, but nobody took much notice at the time. Later he explained that his objection had not concerned the fact that the youth had been told to get up. This is what should have been done. What he had objected to was the coarseness in which the youth had been corrected. He had been told: "Why do you stay in the middle like a child's cut-off clitoris (*Hós'pi n||ooko ||'áieě xe' katé' iye*)?" To the Bisa this is perfectly normal mild ridicule, but to the Téhla Sandawé it is a shocking thing to say in the presence of women and children.

6. Conclusion

The first main point to emerge from our discussion is, that it is possible to make a clear distinction between two cultural areas which may at first seem hardly visible, or at least blurred, to an observer on the spot. It is even possible to draw a line on the map which would meet with the approval of most local Sandawe. Neighbourhoods like Dantl'áwa and Mangas'ta are shown to belong to the Téhla Sandawé and Bisa areas respectively, a division which is unlikely to be questioned by any of them. Since most Sandawe live in the central hills, it is here that the Bisa line can be reasonably well defined. To complete the Téhla Sandawé boundaries, we would have to draw two imaginary lines, both in a north-westerly direction, from the two ends of the line on our map. Téhla Sandawé country lies in between, and the Bisa area outside. Most of the Mponde River valley, as well as the fly-infested northern hills, would thus be included in the Bisa area. But we must remember that the Téhla Sandawé-Bisa distinction does not merely follow a geographical dividing line, for "Bisa" means three things: 1. a small group of clans in the south-east, 2. all the people of the outlying bushlands, but also 3. any Sandawe with uncouth manners, even within Téhla Sandawé country.

The second point is the cultural interest of the Bisa. They show traces of the aboriginal Sandawe stock, material culture, social structure, and linguistic tradition. They are not rich in cattle, poor in cultivations and housing, and less acculturated by Alagwa and Rimi influences. They have also been less affected by modern influences than the Téhla Sandawé. Being within easier reach, the latter have been influenced more by Islam and Christianity in recent history. From Kwa Mtoro as a centre, Islam has been propagated by Arabs and Swahili from Kondoa, while Christianity has spread from the three mission stations at Kurio, Ovada, and Farkwa. Only the last-mentioned place is in Bisa country. While a majority of Sandawe is now nominally Christian, Bisa country is still the area where a good number of the local tribesmen is

still uncommitted. Less influenced by the two major religions and the cultural spheres which they represent, the Bisa remain the principal bearers of the ancient Sandawe tradition.

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