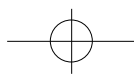
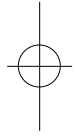
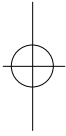
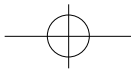
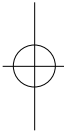
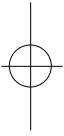


# **Continuity and Change in a West African Society**





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*Globalization's Impact on  
the Sisala of Ghana*

**Eugene L. Mendonsa**

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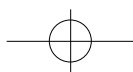
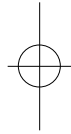
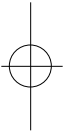
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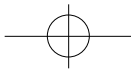
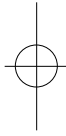
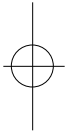
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To Jack Goody and Meyer Fortes  
*Who taught me different things*





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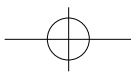
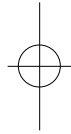
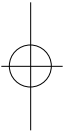
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## Preface

This book, which began as a series of papers, is primarily for my students, but also for scholars interested in anthropology and the region of West Africa. At the same time as being useful in teaching, it is now available to any scholar in the world, to any library that wishes to put it on their shelves for future generations of readers. None of this could happen if this book had remained in my files, as the various chapters have been, as unpublished papers and notes.

My previous book on the Sisala, *The Politics of Divination*, is now back in print through the new technological miracle of e-publishing. It is available through any bookstore in the world that is connected to the Internet, the source of this cybernetic revolution. I hope that together with this book, this will provide a body of data on the Sisala and West Africa that will aid scholars of the region in the future.

I present these works in the spirit of an open forum, a discussion of ideas. I have tried to adhere to the standards of fieldwork and scholarship to which I have been exposed in anthropology, and I stand behind my “facts,” but also in this postmodernist age, I am fully cognizant of the fact that my “facts” are interpretations that are influenced by my personality, life experiences and theoretical orientation. We should be excited to approach our data in this spirit of open-ended inquiry.

I remember that kind of excitement in the air at Meyer Fortes’ Friday seminars when I was a graduate student at Cambridge University in the 1970s. Scholars and recently returned field workers would present working papers, ideas with which they were wrestling, unfinished theses. The ideas and data were debated, sometimes hotly. Edmund Leach and Meyer Fortes would go round and round over the theoretical issues of the day. Jack Goody would talk about history and technology and things that he was writing which were somewhat out of the ordinary in the rarified world of discussions about Levi-Strauss or Chomsky’s linguistics. It was exciting to throw around ideas and data on which not all the “I s” were dotted, and the “T s” crossed.

This book is presented in that spirit of excitement and exchange. I hope that students and scholars alike have the opportunity to read, discuss and debate this and other works on West Africa and come to their own con-

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clusions. If they are different from mine so be it. They should attack my ideas and/or publish their own studies.

In my case, I feel that it is important to publish this book because, like Sir Edmund Leach on his return from Burma (it was rumored in the halls of Cambridge) I have lost my field notes from the 1970-71, 1975 and 1977 trips. Only 1998 notes remain in my possession. Though I hope to do much more ethnography in West Africa, I feel it is time to put these data and ideas to paper.

I have also benefited from the writing of the few others who have written on the Sisala, Edward Tengan, who I believe is a missionary, and Bruce Grindal of Florida State University, and more recently, conversations with Bruce Grindal, who was able to join me in the field in 1998 for a few weeks. It was an interesting experience for both of us to be in Sisalaland together, especially since he had done his fieldwork in the 1960s and I had done mine in the 1970s. Bringing our two perspectives together gave us both new insights, and we hope to continue the collaboration in the future.

Most of what you read in this book stems from previously published and unpublished papers and my memory. In that I have published in some hard to get journals, those data and those contained in my unpublished works are now in front of you.

I would like to thank those who have read and critiqued parts of this book when they existed as individual unpublished papers, John Hawkins, Bruce Grindal, David Crandall, Jerry Eades, John McCreery, Ray Matheny, Natalie Swanepoel, Charles Piot and Tim Earle. All errors are mine.

I am also especially indebted to the financial backing provided by the Kennedy International Center under the guidance of Don Holsinger who was a friend and supporter while I was privileged to head the African Studies Center there. Also, I want to publicly thank the members of the Department of Anthropology at Brigham Young University who provided financial and moral backing to me under the able leadership of John Hawkins who went to bat for me many times.

Also, I would like to acknowledge the ethnographic help of several students who went to the field with me in 1998 and who contributed photos to this book: Ben Baker, Darron Wooley, Amber Law, Melanie Whelan and Mark and Becky Wilson.

Additionally, thank you to Shannon Hedlund who did the graphics and Connie Turner, the able and affable department secretary who helped with much of the logistics of getting this manuscript ready. Also, thanks to the chair of the Department of Anthropology at the Denver campus of CU, Craig Janes, for his moral support of this project.

Gretchen Jordan was a most valuable ally in doing the copy editing. I

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am deeply grateful to her for her attention to detail and her suggestions to change certain parts, which gave more clarity to this work. As a trained anthropologist and writer, she was able to help with grammatical changes, as well as make extremely helpful substantive recommendations.

However, my most important debt is to Nenkentie Badzongoly, his wife Jemila, Ceibu Fuojang, Robert Jua Forkorjang and all the other Sisala who have helped me in the field. By their actions they have given me hope that someday Western society may regain the civilization I experienced among the Sisala of Northern Ghana.

Should you find any errors, or anything you would like to see changed, please feel free to contact me:

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