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# MUSIC FROM THE VILLAGES OF NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA

Recorded in the field by  
PAUL NEWMAN &  
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Photo by Lyn Davidson, Nigeria 1969

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INTRODUCTION

These recordings were made in the field in Northeastern Nigeria in the fall of 1969. The traditional music of five distinct tribal groups is represented, these being the Bura, the Ga'anda, the Bolewa, the Tangale, and the Tera. In general Northeastern Nigeria is characterized by a great linguistic and cultural diversity. The languages of the five peoples among whom these recordings were made are all related, in that they belong to the Chadic language family. However, these languages have now diverged to the point where they are now as different as, for example, English and Russian. The pattern of relatedness among their languages is diagrammed in Figure 1, which shows the classification of each of these languages within two main branches of Chadic. Tera, Ga'anda and Bura are placed in the Biu-Mandara branch, while Bolewa and Tangale belong to the Plateau-Sahel branch (Newman & Ma, 1966). While these linguistic relationships no doubt are relevant to the ancient origins of the people who speak these languages, their present-day geographical distribution is not easily correlated with linguistic relatedness. (See map in Figure 2.) For example, the Tera and the Bolewa people occupy contiguous terrains, while the Tera and the linguistically close Ga'anda are separated by a considerable geographical distance.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Traditionally this was an area of independent pagan villages interspersed among large kingdoms and powerful states. For centuries the peoples of these villages have retained their ethnic distinctiveness in the face of political and

cultural domination by a succession of powerful invaders. As far back as the fifteenth century Jukun influence extended into the area. Shortly thereafter, and overlapping with the Jukun hegemony, Kanuri people from the area around Lake Chad moved southwestward into this area, at times for slaving, at other times for settlement. In the early 19th century this region was subjugated through a number of Fulani jihads, or "Holy Wars" authorized by the brilliant religious and political leader, Usuman dan Fodio. To this day Fulani constitute the ruling class throughout most of Northeastern Nigeria except for those areas that remained under the control and/or protection of the Kanuri. Since the British occupation of Northeastern Nigeria at the turn of the century, the dominant cultural influence in the region has been Hausa, initially through the medium of isolated traders, then by an influx of settlers, and now through the influence of the Hausa language radio. Each of these successions of distinctive peoples has left its mark in the cultures and languages of the villages where this music was recorded, but their basic ethnic character has nonetheless persisted.

Except for the Bolewa, among whom Islam was introduced hundreds of years ago, these villages remained completely pagan until a generation ago. In recent years, however, both Islam and Christianity have spread into the villages. As these new religions enter a region, the old pagan observances do not instantly disappear. Rather people continue with traditional rites and activities which are now treated in some way as secular customs rather than as religious observances. Nonetheless, the introduction of Islam and of Christianity has contributed significantly to overall cultural change in Northeastern Nigeria. At the present time the Bolewa are almost entirely Moslem; the Tera are in the process of becoming so except in the few towns with mission influence. The younger generation of Buras



has turned to Christianity, but old people in the villages are still basically pagan. The situation among the Tangale is similar, although Islamic cultural and political pressures are greater. Finally, except for isolated Christian converts, the Ga'anda remain completely pagan.

### THE PEOPLES AND THEIR MUSIC

#### The Bura

The Bura people live in the grasslands of the Biu plateau, the elevation of which is approximately 2500 feet. Political authority in traditional days seems to have been confined to village level. There were no markets, the first markets having been introduced by the British. The Bura had no pack animals, smelted iron in their villages, and carried out subsistence agriculture, being dependent mainly on African sorghum and millet. About four centuries ago a group of politically organized Bura-speaking people called the Babur founded a capital close to the present town of Biu. The Babur had extensive contacts with the Kanuri and other groups outside their own limited area. They are now Moslem and have been so for some time. The small Bura villages where the music on these records was recorded, on the other hand, were quite obviously pagan and remained culturally isolated until very recently.

Of the traditional musical instruments used by the Bura people, the most striking are the seven key xylophones. A relatively large amount of Bura xylophone music is presented in this collection. The Bura xylophone is a large instrument (see Cover photo) with keys made of a dark polished hardwood, which are suspended in a wooden hoop. Beneath each key is a cattle horn which acts as a resonator for the xylophone. The ends of the horns are cut off and the small orifice closed with spider web held in by sticky gum. This, according to the Bura musicians, is of

considerable importance to the tone of the instrument. Often the instruments are adorned with hanging tassles, carvings and other decorations, and some are quite spectacular. Bura dance bands are built around the xylophones. One or more xylophones may be played at once; in the dance band we recorded at Marama there were three xylophones playing (Band 5). The xylophones are played with a pair of short, y-shaped sticks, one held in each hand. The forks of the stick are such a distance apart that the musician can hit two adjacent keys at once if he hits the xylophone with the flat side down, or one key if he hits the xylophone with the edge of the forked stick. In this way the musician can strike from one to four notes at one time, as the selections on the record show. The forks on the stick are thus very important to the performance of the music and are not just conventional, as Kirby (1968) suggests.

In addition to the xylophone, Bura bands include two types of drum. The ganga is a medium-sized, double-membrane drum similar to drums known by the same name throughout northern Nigeria. It is played with a single curved stick. Another form of drum, also widespread in this region of Nigeria, is the kwala-kwala. This is a small, single-membraned drum suspended around the neck on a leather thong and beaten with two short flexible beaters. The dance band which we recorded at Marama and one of the bands we recorded in the Bura village of Sakwa consisted only of these instruments, xylophone, ganga and kwala-kwala. The algaita, however, is also known in Buraland and frequently is a component of dance bands, serving as lead instrument in place of or in alternation with the xylophone. Although the algaita is not an indigenous Bura instrument, it seems to have been present in the Bura musical tradition for a very long time judging by its popularity and by the presence of expert native algaita players. Nevertheless, the



overall impression that one has in collecting traditional music in Bura areas is that the music is built around the xylophone, by far the most significant and impressive of the Bura instruments. Among surrounding peoples, the Bura have the reputation of being outstanding xylophone players and builders.

A solo instrument played by individual Bura praise singers is the yakandi, a two-stringed banjo, the resonating chamber of which is composed of a leather covered gourd.\* We observed yakandis with variously long necks. As far as we know, the yakandi is used only as a solo instrument and is never part of an ensemble. We personally observed no other instruments than these in use in Bura villages, though others may exist.

The repertoire of the xylophone player includes other types of music in addition to dance music. An example is music which was apparently used as accompaniment to the rhythmic actions of women grinding grain. When playing alone, xylophone players frequently sing praises, more or less extempore, in accompaniment to their music, as the first bands of this collection illustrate. In the context of dance band performances, it is the xylophone players who do the singing as well. At Bura festivities the music played to accompany dancers is named according to the dance. A particular dance may be related to a particular occasion and it will have a particular rhythmic pattern. However, a number of different tunes will be played by the musicians as the dancers continue their performance, all within the rhythmic framework of the same dance. We observed three common Bura dances. Perhaps the most frequently played is the Bura Bonsuwe, which is performed by a very large number of dancers arranged in a huge circle. Another circle dance, of somewhat slower tempo, is called Mwari-Mwari, the "walking dance." A dance associated with a particular occasion is the "Waksha-Waksha,"

\*(Fig. 3)

performed on the occasion of the coming of the rainy season. The Waksha-Waksha is danced by men stripped to the waist and wearing ankle rattles. The dancers bear ceremonial objects such as short sticks with horsehair protruding from the end. The dancers at a Bura dance commonly sing a form of chorus, though in a somewhat disorganized way, but there is no formal lead-chorus structure such as is so characteristic of some of the other groups represented in this collection.

#### The Ga'anda

The Ga'anda are a small tribal group who occupy the hilly country to the Southeast of the Biu Plateau. The Ga'anda are an isolated group whose history is almost completely unknown. They traditionally lived in independent villages with no political or tribal grouping larger than the village unit. The Ga'anda never exercised political control over this area, nor were they involved in raids or aggressive activities. However, they seem to have occupied an important ceremonial position with relation to neighboring tribes. For example, the Kanakuru of Shani traditionally sent seven cows every year to Ga'anda, a distance of about 25 miles, so that the Ga'anda cult leaders would bring about proper rainfall. In recent years the Kanakuru cut the number of cattle from seven to four, then from four to two, from two to one, and at the time of our visit last year, they were two years overdue. The Ga'anda are outstanding in their region for the quality and variety of their pottery. Linguistically the Ga'anda language belongs to the same cluster as Tera, but these ties are relatively remote, and the Ga'anda recognize no particular kinship with the Tera.

The Ga'anda play a variety of flutes which are blown directly from the end rather than from the side as with the European flute. These flutes are of various lengths and various pitches, similar to those one finds on the Jos Plateau and



elsewhere in Northern Nigeria. In addition, the Ga'anda play xylophones. Like the Bura xylophone, the Ga'anda xylophone has seven keys made of wood, and under each key is a resonating chamber consisting of a cattle horn of a particular length. However, the Ga'anda xylophone is played resting on the ground and is never suspended from the musician's neck as is the Bura xylophone on the occasion of a dance. The Ga'anda xylophone, as the selections we have included will illustrate, has a very different tone from the Bura xylophone, lacking the resonance of the latter. This may in part be attributed to the fact that the Ga'anda fail to remove the tips from the resonating horns under the xylophone keys as do the Bura. The most striking Ga'anda drum is a large drum made from a hollow tree trunk, held between the legs and played with the hands, a drum which is similar to drums known in the Congo but which is otherwise unknown in this part of West Africa. The Ga'anda also use smaller drums, one of which resembles a small version of the Bura ganga and another which appears like a miniature version of the long drum mentioned above and which is also played with the hands.

#### The Bolewa

Traditionally the Bolewa have had two major centers of political and cultural authority. North of the Gongola River is the old Bolewa town of Fika. Prominent Southern Bolewa towns include Dukku, Gadam, where the Bolewa music on this record was recorded, and Bojude. At an earlier period the Southern Bolewa were dominated by a town called Kalam which has now disappeared. Since 1808 and the Fulani jihad, the Southern Bolewa have been under the domination of a Fulani emirate, centered in Gombe. Traditionally the Bolewa were neighbors and warlike antagonists of the Tangale to the South. In contrast to this relationship with the Tangale, the Bolewa enjoyed a particularly friendly relationship with their neighbors

to the East, the Tera. For example, we were told that Tera xylophone players were frequently invited to play at Bolewa dances. Between the Bolewa and the Tera, what is called a "joking relationship" existed, in which men of either group were allowed to insult each other without running the risk of provoking a fight. The better-known Northern Bolewa of Fika are in many ways less representative of traditional Bolewa culture than the Southern Bolewa among whom we recorded the music in this collection. The Northern Bolewa were politically organized for several hundred years, and for a long period they have had extensive military, commercial, and political contacts with neighboring peoples such as the Kanuri. (It is even possible that the ruling class of the Northern Bolewa was actually Kanuri in origin.) While not as organized as their northern fellow-tribemen, the Southern Bolewa present a contrast to the Bura, the Tera, the Ga'anda and the Tangale in being relatively sophisticated politically. Bolewa towns are organized more hierarchically than those of the other peoples mentioned. Moreover the Southern Bolewa were exposed to Moslem religion and cultural influence at an earlier time than the Tera, for instance. At present, despite the completely Moslem caste of the ruling classes, pagan observances still persist, at least in smaller villages. The musical instruments used by the Bolewa people are different from those of the other groups which we studied. As far as we know there was no indigenous Bolewa xylophone. Interestingly, the xylophone seems to be completely absent among peoples speaking Plateau-Sahel Chadic languages (see Figure 1) regardless of their geographical location. The Bolewa use a variety of drums, and also play striking horns, called pare, which are constructed of animal horn covered with leather and are three or four feet long. The drums include the widespread ganga and the small, single-membrane drum hung around the neck



which the Bolewa call by the Hausa name, kazagi. In addition, they have a tone drum of Kanuri origin called bala which is an hour-glass shaped, double-membrane drum. The player changes the tone of the drum by tightening on thongs which run from the top of the drum across the indentation to the flared bottom of the drum structure. The drum is held between the legs and the tone is changed by pressure from the knees. Peculiar to the Bolewa is the ceremonial abanga, a special drum of magical significance.\* In the notes describing the individual selections below the abanga is described in more detail. Although we did not observe the algaita in Gadam, it is unlikely that it is absent from the Bolewa area. The algaita was reported among the Fika Bolewa by C. K. Meek (1931). Hausa influence is strong among the Bolewa and the effects of this on the traditional music is seen in the presence of the small Hausa tone drum, the kalangu, which is played under the arm, and Hausa style singing and dancing. We recorded music which is best interpreted as a synthesis of Hausa with Bolewa musical tradition at Gadam, a selection of which is presented below. At this point, the Bolewa are close to 100% bilingual with respect to their knowledge of Hausa.

Traditional Bolewa lead-chorus singing is different from that of any other group we studied. In much of the music the lead singing was done by a man rather than by a young girl as among the Tera, and this man played no instrument. The lyrics sung on the occasion of a dance are far more complex than are the words sung to dance music among the other peoples. They do not simply represent praise singing, but instead are elaborate traditional allegories, ceremonial references, incantations and so forth. Examples are given below in the notes to the individual selections. In the case of only one particular dance\*, which we have referred to in the notes below as a woman's song, was the lead sung by a woman. The Bolewa

\* (Fig. 4)

\* (Fig. 5)

dance figures are physically more active than most of the dances to be seen in Bura or Tera villages. Like the Bura and Tera, the dancers line up in a large circle in which the participants are arranged according to height. The musicians play in the center of the circle and move about amidst the crowds, stimulating first one and then another portion of the dance circle.

#### The Tangale

The Tangale occupy the rolling open country south of Gombe, bordered by spectacular jagged hills. One of the landmarks in this region is a jagged peak known as Tangale peak. Before the advent of the British around the turn of the century, the Tangale were a fiercely warlike group who carried on active military confrontation with the Bolewa to the North, and mutual slave-raiding activity with the neighboring Waja.\* The aftermath of such a raid would be the total destruction of a village. However, Tangale informants told us that they regarded their troubles with the Waja as merely annoying incidents and that the real focus of their martial efforts lay within the Tangale nation. An endless traditional warfare was carried on between the two main Tangale centers, Biliri (where the music in this collection was recorded) and the neighboring town of Kaltungo. From the account of these informants, it seems clear that the warfare between Biliri and Kaltungo had become so permanent that it was ritualized. Neither side ever mounted a final attack upon the other, nor were casualties particularly severe, as far as we could ascertain. Conflict would be preceded by elaborate ceremonial preparations and in fact an experience in such conflict was a necessary aspect of the ceremonial maturation process for young males. The warfare itself was carried out by groups of elaborately dressed warriors facing each other across a considerable distance, from which they shot poisoned spears and arrows at each

\* (See Fig. 2)



other. If someone was injured, the fight would be broken off and those who had inflicted the injury would return to the village for an extensive celebration. We were told that every seven years the chiefs of Kaltungo and Biliri would meet in order to decide whether to continue the war pact. Not within memory was the decision ever made to have peace. The coming of the British made a great difference in the life of the Tangale. Traditionally, they hunted the large game which roamed the grasslands of their region. When the British imposed their Pax Britannica upon the area it became possible for Fulani herdsmen to move into the grasslands with their enormous herds of cattle--in previous times such itinerant herdsmen would have been speared and eaten at once. With the coming of the Fulani cattle herds, the large game was slowly driven from the grasslands. The last lion was seen in the country around Biliri in the days when the present chief was a small boy. Before the British it was unsafe in the grasslands and the Tangale dwelt in small villages in the rugged hills which border the country which they inhabit today. The grasslands permitted easy access to horse-borne slave raiders of Jukun or Fulani origin and no one lived there. Today, however, only scattered remnants of the Tangale people remain in the hills. Furthermore, and perhaps most important for the internal structure of Tangale society, the British stopped the traditional warfare between Biliri and Kaltungo. Since this warfare was the focal point of much of the ceremonial and cultural life of the Tangale, it must have left a large cultural vacuum. It is interesting that so many years after the actual cessation of this warfare the ceremonial costumes, the dances and even the weapons are kept clean and serviceable and are readily shown to a visitor.

The dance music of the Tangale people is built mainly around a series of flute-like instruments and whistles.\* The Tangale refer to the flute and whistle

\* (Fig. 6)

war dance music as Latang music. When the Tangale drum equivalent to the ganga is played with the flute and whistle music, the war dance music is referred to as bid-bid music. Flute music was also used on the occasion of ceremonies in honor of the planting of crops, marriage, procreation and probably other occasions. Dances are done primarily by men who wear iron ankle rattles and provide much of the rhythmic percussion.\* A striking feature of the war dance music is the male chorus singing, which has a strong martial quality. The singing is without lead. There are also songs with a female lead and chorus. The example presented in this collection is sung in praise of the chief. Other forms of music among the Tangale include garaya praise singing with Fulani style gourd rattles and the one-stringed fiddle, or goge music widespread throughout Northern Nigeria. The algaita and Hausa drums are also present. Though these instruments are almost certainly of external origin, their introduction must have occurred some time ago since the Tangale refer to all of these forms of music as indigenous and sing with these instruments in Tangale. The only exception to this is the Hausa praise singing which we heard as accompaniment of the algaita and the Hausa drums. The Tangale in addition use a horseleather-covered horn called a bol for the purpose of summoning people for war, and also to signal the end of a dance tune. This horn is somewhat reminiscent of the pare horns of the Bolewa.

#### The Tera

The Tera live in relatively large, well-kept villages in the area stretching east of Gombe across the river Gongola, and into the area south of the Biu Plateau. Early British travelers to the area were much impressed by the Tera. Boyd Alexander, for example, described the Tera town of Wuyo as "peopled by the civilized Tera pagans instead of the various Yam-Yam tribes. Here was plenty of

\* (Fig. 7)



food and ripe corn, and a big thriving town inside a mud wall" (1907:159). Traditional Tera towns were tightly compacted, walled villages, surrounded by large areas of farm land. In time of warfare these villages would be strongly defended, but the Tera have no tradition of aggressive warfare. This cultural characteristic is exemplified in a line from one of their songs to the effect, "Who wants to fight? He who fought lies dead behind Wuyo town." In the large collection of folk tales collected by Newman (1968,1970), there is no suggestion of the epic or heroic. Traditionally Tera villages were politically independent but were interrelated by a curious system of alliances. These alliances were in many cases a function of the Tera ruling that a son could not succeed his father as chief. The result of this was that a chief's son would go to a neighboring Tera town to seek the chieftancy. Tera society was only weakly hierarchical. Although Tera villages did have chiefs, the chief was really only the leader among a group of councilors. There was a functioning check and balance system whereby the councilor next to the chief had the power to depose the chief but did not have the right to succeed to that office himself. It is not clear how often he actually used this power. In chief lists collected in three Tera villages going back 160 years, the average tenure in office was between 10 and 14 years. In most Tera villages the chieftancy alternated between two families, and a chief of one family would be succeeded by a chief of the other.

The pleasant quality of a Tera village is difficult to describe adequately. The village typically has a large packed-down central plaza which is used for ceremonial occasions such as the dances at which we recorded the music in this collection. The compounds are fronted by mud walls in most Tera villages, and sometimes display fairly elaborate and beautiful sculpturing on the exterior

surface. Tall trees provide heavy shade in most of the streets running between the compounds. The people themselves are extremely attractive. Traditional Tera facial markings, the result of scarification during the first few months of infantile life, are remarkable (see Fig 8).<sup>\*</sup> The scar lines are vertical on both men and women and closely resemble the facial markings which have been preserved in the famous *Ife* bronzes. Women also bear small transverse marks, sometimes resembling cats' whiskers. On ceremonial occasions and at dances the women wear head ties and long flowing dresses.<sup>\*</sup> They carry large colorful fans made of dyed feathers. Their movements are particularly graceful and some of the Tera dances have a flowing, traditional choreography. Particularly memorable was a dance which was held in honor of the dry season, which is performed by sets of three women advancing toward each other from across the open center of the plaza (Band 22).

Instrumentally the composition of Tera dance bands<sup>\*</sup> resembles that of the Bura. The main instrument is again the xylophone, which the Tera call shinji. The Tera xylophone is played a bit differently from the Bura xylophone, but the distinctions are not nearly as clear as between the Bura and the Ga'anda xylophones. Structurally the Tera and the Bura xylophones appear indistinguishable. The Tera also use the ganga, and the small single-membrane drums worn around the neck called kotol-kotol. However, unlike the Bura and like the Bolewa the Tera have a tone drum called kanjau which is played between the knees and provides a strikingly characteristic tonal and rhythmic background for the dance music. Not infrequently, algaita players are present on the occasion of Tera dances and the algaita music is more or less integrated with the xylophone-drum-dance band music. In some cases either the algaita or

<sup>\*</sup> and Cover photo

<sup>\*</sup> (Fig. 9)

<sup>\*</sup> (Fig. 9)



the xylophone player will perform alternately while in others they will play together. Unlike the Bura xylophone players, Tera xylophone players do not sing. Another difference is that among the Tera there is much less emphasis on the use of the xylophone as a solo instrument.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Tera dance music is the marvelous lead-chorus singing. Lead singers are frequently young girls and are always female. The choruses are sung spontaneously in parts by participants in the large dance circles. As the band traverses the interior of the circle, the lead singer will walk near the band, and as she finishes her melody line, the adjacent people will take up the chorus. The result is a remarkable choral performance, as the selections in this collection illustrate (Bands 21, 23, and 31). Many of the Tera songs are sung at dances, some, but not all, of topical nature. Most have a single line or two lines which are sung by the lead singer and answered by the chorus, although in some cases the chorus singers repeat what the lead singer has sung. Examples are given in the notes accompanying the individual selections below. One of the main occasions for a big dance is gamto, the occasion of the death of an old or an important man. Other occasions include the appearance of a notable visitor and the advent of harvest, rainy season, dry season, and so forth. Melodically both the lead and chorus lines are much more variable and interesting than those we recorded for the other groups.

Tera villages are frequently the hosts to Fulani court praise singers. A very excellent band of Fulani praise singers was present in the Tera village of Wuyo on the occasion we recorded there, and a representative selection is presented on this record. The Fulani live in settlements which are interspersed

among the villages of other peoples throughout this region of Northern Nigeria. Traditional Fulani praise singers are sought after by village chiefs and other officials. On the occasion of their performances they praise celebrations their hosts and whoever else will pay them.



### The Individual Selections

#### MUSIC OF THE BURA PEOPLE

*Band 1:* Bura Praise Singing with Xylophone. The Bura call this instrument tsinza.

It is played here by a typical Bura praise singer, Inuwa Kusar Mundi. These selections were recorded in Sakwa, a Bura village some 10 miles to the south of Biu town.\* The words are extemporaneously applied by the singer according to traditional patterns. An example follows:

I greet Pindar [a girl's name]. They will take their quiver and go to war because of her. Amina Sawa, I put her with Pindar. Really, they should become the wives of the same man. There is this European from some country. He also will take his quiver and bow and go to war because of these women. There is another girl, Zinaibu. My friend Katchala Sawa, won't you take up your weapons because of this girl?"

Some of the xylophone pieces are essentially dance music and one can hear the same pieces being performed at village dances. Some of the music played by the musician in these selections, however, was classified for us as "grinding music," i.e. music to accompany the grinding of grain by women. When the xylophone player began to play this particular type of music, a row of little girls who were sitting around his feet listening got up on their knees and began to make grain grinding motions.

*Band 2:* Bura Dance Music. The instruments are the xylophone or tzinza; a big drum which is beaten with a curved stick, called ganga; and little drums suspended around the neck by leather thongs, called kwala-kwala. The singing is done by the xylophone player. This selection illustrates the habit of these dance bands of changing the tune and the melody line while

preserving the basic rhythm by which the dance is identified.

*Band 3:* Bura Praise Singer with Short-necked Banjo. This selection was recorded in Biu town. The musician is Bello Mundi.\* His instrument, known in Bura as yakandi, is a two-stringed banjo with a relatively short neck. The resonating structure of the banjo is made of a gourd. Like the xylophone player in the first selection, this musician is also singing praises but his prose is considerably more colorful. An example follows [in a fairly free translation]:

My heart is rising because of Pindar Wassala. Be patient with me. Pindar, talk to me so I can be certain about the matter before us. Pindar, talk to me. My heart is rising. I am going to go and make certain about this thing, but not yet. First I shall go home. I am going to make a building for the Veriti family, Pindar's family, in order to please them and I am going to take this girl and go with her to Bauchi. Dalipa, my heart is rising also. I will take Dalipa home now, since her menstruation is finished. One of the women is more beautiful than the other and I lack what I need in order to get up and go to Zaria. Which of the two should I marry? Something which is black, which color will it match with? Even though I am light, I choose only the one my heart goes for, the light one. At daybreak I feel so fine I can't describe it, so I just say "unhnh".

*Band 4:* Bura Praise Singer with Long-necked Banjo. This recording was made in the village of Kwaya Tera, which, in spite of its name, is Bura and not Tera. The musician is called Yanga Kwaya. The instrument he is playing has a neck perhaps a foot longer than that of the yakandi used by the last musician. He is also a praise singer and much of the praise in this selection concerns ourselves, the Europeans or Batures who have

\* (Fig. 2)

\* (Fig. 3)



come to listen to the music. A translation of part of the selection follows:

I hear that there is a Bature named Malam Sabo. Is that you? Have you come from Kaduna? What are you going to do? I have no lodging I can give you. You have suffered much trouble in coming and you will bear a lot of discomfort in returning because I don't have a place for you to stay. Malama Roxana, you're tired out, but be patient. Best that I go with Malam Sabo and see your country. Malam Dauda, you will return home and what can I give you? Your coming to this town has confused me. I don't know what to do. Malam Dauda, have you come? You have suffered useless exhaustion because you have found no place to spend the night. Malam Dauda, you don't say anything. What can I do with my thoughts? Malama Lyn, you don't say anything. What can I do with my thoughts? We greet you on the tiredness of your travels, but suffer in patience.

*Band 5:* Bura Dance Band. This selection was recorded at a night-time dance in the Bura village of Marama. The dance was held in honor of the visit of a touring education officer, Aliyu Ahmadu Biu. The band consisted of three xylophones, two small drums and one big drum. The singing on this selection is mainly that of one of the xylophone players with the other ones joining in on occasion. The name of the dance is Bonsuwe.

*Band 6:* Bura Dance Band with Algaita. This selection was recorded in Biu town. This particular band included the Bura ganga as well as smaller drums together with the algaita, the double-reed horn popular throughout Northern Nigeria and adjacent areas. The musicians were from the east Bura village of Kwajaffa.

#### MUSIC OF THE GA'ANDA PEOPLE

*Band 7:* Ga'anda Flute Band. This selection and the next were recorded in the

village of Ga'anda, in Adamawa Province. The music was made by five or so flutes of various sizes and shapes. While playing, the musicians danced around while the listeners stood watching, in contrast to the situation we observed in other villages when dance music was being performed. The wooden flutes are of a type which are found in Nigeria from the Cameroon border to the Jos Plateau.

*Band 8:* Ga'anda Xylophone Band. The Ga'anda xylophone is similar to the Bura and Tera xylophone in having resonating horns underlying each of the keys, but, as noted above, it differs in important respects. A Ga'anda xylophone band consists of seven xylophones. The xylophones are of different sizes and the whole set of seven is constructed by one man. If a person wishes to have xylophone music for any occasion, he must rent all seven xylophones in the set. This selection represents a type of music used either for dancing or general celebration in the village.

#### MUSIC OF THE BOLEWA PEOPLE

*Band 9:* Bolewa Horns. This and the following selections were recorded in the Bolewa town of Gadam. The horns are called pare. In traditional times the horn was blown to summon the people of the village to the chief's palace.

*Band 10:* Bolewa Horns with Singing and Drums. This dance is called Babunare. The words sung to the dance Babunare consist of praise-singing. In this selection, two Bolewa horns, the traditional Bolewa drum called abanga, and two small drums are being played. The abanga is a special drum endowed with religious or magical significance. The drum has a bulb at the bottom and is a single-membrane drum (*Fig. 4*). As a Bolewa man



explained to us, there are no students of the abanga. When the man who plays it dies, his son will simply know how to play it without being taught. If the abanga player is too old to perform, the drum will stand idle until he dies. If the man has no sons, then the knowledge of how to beat the drum will pass to his daughter.

*Band 11: Bolewa Dance, Jabalwa.* The words sung by the leader in this song are loosely translated as follows:

A certain man is coming in the manner of a spirit possession dance to do this rite. It is a dance of affectation invoking a man called Galadima, father of the tsafi, [which are fetish spirits in the bush]. Where is a young man, very, very handsome, of good appearance? [Several names are given.] The singer calls a sharif, a man who will not be burned by fire. In this place, if you buy salt there is not the customary extra gift from the seller so I will go to another town and there I will fix soup, very, very thick, so good, that I will even bathe in it. A woman named Chunimama went with another man 22 years ago. She should feel shame. Her husband found them.

*Band 12: Bolewa Dance-Jakkutu.* This is a woman's dance sung by a woman with the Bolewa chorus\*. The words of this selection are loosely translated as follows:

There is a man Musa whose mother is called Dundu. Wherever she goes, whoever she sees, it's just like Musa. Because of this it is impossible, like if you put a stone in the soup, it won't cook. It is impossible. There is a woman named Halinatu who has the same parents as the previous chief of Gadam. If she were a man, I, the singer, would have preferred her to be the chief and because of this I am angry. There is a man named Dagari and when he goes to the farm he should bring back sweet things, for his wife is sit-

ting at home and he should bring her some sweet things as a present. There is a woman and her younger sister has a husband and children. Perhaps she should marry a son of her younger sister. No. That would not do. She should wait and be patient. There is the man Dagari and there is another woman who loves him very much besides his wife. He is coming back from the farm and she will meet him on the road. She doesn't know, but perhaps he will agree to marry her. There is a man named Danabuba. He is the chief of the drummers. When he beats the ganga gazelle come in from the bush, even up to his house, he beats the drum so nicely.

*Band 13: Bolewa Dance with Hausa Drumming.* The next three selections are Bolewa dances in which a typical Hausa tone drum is featured. This drum is called kalangu. It is a small hourglass-shaped drum held under the arm. In this case, the drummer was playing the kalangu and another drum at the same time. The selections are sung in the Bolewa language, and typify the Bolewa lead and chorus style. The Hausa and the Bolewa have a history of close intercommunication and the Hausa tone drum has evidently been closely integrated into the Bolewa traditions.

*Band 14: Bolewa Singing - Babunare.* In this selection the traditional Bolewa lead-chorus singing can be heard clearly.

#### MUSIC OF THE TANGALE PEOPLE

*Band 15: Tangale War Dance - Latang Music.* The instruments include three flutes and two small whistles held vertically to the lips, as well as a single-membrane drum called latang\*. Each of the male dancers wears an iron rattle on one ankle. Their dancing thus provides rhythmic percussion for the band. Women's shrilling is prominent in Tangale latang music, even more noticeable than in the music of the other peoples on this col-

\* (Fig. 5)

\* (Fig.'s 6 and 7)



lection, although all of the groups represented here employ this expression of joy and good feeling. The refrain of this song, which accompanied a war dance, means, "If you kill an enemy in war, is it wrong?" All of the Tangale selections were recorded in the Tangale village of Biliri.

*Band 16:* Tangale War Dance - Latang Music. The refrain of this song describes a coward who refused to go to war, preferring to stay home and eat. As a result he could not get married and was considered a foolish man.

*Band 17:* Tangale War Dance - Bid-Bid Music. This music is characterized by the presence of a large drum which is played lying on its side on the ground with the drummer's leg thrown over the drum. Again, the shrilling and the percussive sounds made by the dancers' iron ankle rattles stand out.

*Band 18:* Tangale Dance Sung by Women. This song is called Kwalkwangam. The lead singer was a young woman and the chorus was composed entirely of women and girls. Kwalkwangam is a song in honor of the present chief of Biliri, Iliyasu, about whom they say "he has opened the eyes of all the people of Biliri."

*Band 19:* Tangale Banjo Music. The lead instrument is a long-necked two-string banjo referred to in Biliri by the Hausa name garaya. Accompanying it are two gourd rattles similar to those used by the Fulani people. The singing, however, is in Tangale. Though the music is strongly reminiscent of the itinerant Fulani praise singing bands, the people of Biliri insist that this music is indigenous to the Tangale people.

*Band 20:* Tangale Praise Singing with One-String Fiddle. Accompanying the one-string fiddler who is singing praises to the power of the chief are two unique Tangale rattles called kuluk, which are composed of poles, per-

haps three feet long, on which large disks of wood slide freely back and forth as the poles are shaken.

*Band 21:* Hausa Court Music. The musicians are singing the praises of the chief of Biliri, Iliyasu, whom they refer to as chief of Tangale. The instruments are an algaita and four Hausa type drums called kotso. The singing is also in Hausa. At the desire of the chief, a Tangale man who was already known as a musician was sent away to Hausaland in order to learn to play the algaita, in order that this form of court praise music could exist in the town of Biliri.

#### MUSIC OF THE TERA PEOPLE

*Band 22:* Tera Dance - Bonsuwe. This selection was recorded in the Tera village of Wuyo. The lead singer is a young girl who walks around the dance line singing as she goes. As she completes each verse the people near her sing the refrain. The band consists of an xylophone, called shinji in Tera, and various drums. The Tera make use of the ubiquitous ganga and the small drums hung around the neck, which they call kotol-kotol. In addition they have a tone drum, called kanjau (borrowed from the Kanuri), which is held and squeezed between the knees. The dance Bonsuwe is extremely popular among the Tera people, although it is clearly recognized that the dance was originally introduced from the Bura.

*Band 23:* Tera Dry Season Dance - Ngudi. In this selection the Tera tone drum can be heard. There is no singing in this dance, which is performed by sets of three women advancing and retreating toward each other across the wide-open central space where the dances are held. The recording was made in the Village of Wuyo.



- Band 24:* Tera Funeral Dance - Gamto. The Tera people call this dance Gamto while the closely related neighboring Jara people call it Jangalang. The lead singer in this selection is a Jara girl who uses the name Janga-lang, though she is singing in Tera. The dance is traditionally associated with the occasion of the funeral of an important man. A refrain from this dance is translated. "Do not mourn, there is not only one man. We do not wish to fight -- the one who did lies dying behind Wuyo town." This selection was also recorded in Wuyo.
- Band 25:* Tera Xylophone Music. These selections were played for us in Wuyo by the xylophone player who had been performing in dance bands the previous evening. He is playing the xylophone parts to two dances. The first is called Bayamina, and the second is called Ndeli.
- Band 26:* Tera Bonsuwe Sung with Two Xylophones. This recording was made in the Tera village of Deba Habe. There are two xylophone players accompanying the women and children of the village. The lead singer was a girl of perhaps fourteen.
- Band 27:* Tera Dance with Two Xylophones - Sapar Kwada. This selection was also recorded in the village of Deba Habe. Two xylophones are being played.
- Band 28:* Tera Walking Dance - Leo-Leo. This selection was recorded in the Tera town of Zambuk.\* A striking feature of this particular piece of music is the successful integration of the algaita, an instrument which is not indigenous to the Tera people (the algaita player in this selection was said to have been a Hausa man from Deba Habe). The indigenous Tera instruments in the band are the xylophone, or shinji, the tone drum or kanjau and the kotol-kotol, the small drums worn around the neck.

\* (Fig.'s 8 and 9)

- Band 29:* Tera Dance - Gwarde. This selection, which features the Tera xylophone and drums was also recorded at Zambuk.
- Band 30:* Fulani Garaya Band. This recording was made in the Tera village of Wuyo. This particular band came from the Fulani village of Briyel some fifteen miles away. The band claimed to have performed in towns all the way from the Cameroons to west of Kano. Two of the female rattle-players in this band sang together in unison, sometimes so closely that it seemed as if there were only one voice. Typically, the chanting of the praise singer is in Hausa, while the singing of the women is in Fulani.
- Band 31:* Tera Dance - Bayamina. We return now to the traditional Tera dance music with xylophone. Tera drums and Tera lead and chorus singing. The tune is one of the most melodic of the Tera dance tunes, and this selection illustrates part-singing in the chorus. A translation of the refrain reads, "A young girl wishes to go out. Her mother says, 'Don't go out,' but her mother-in-law says, 'Never mind, go out anyway.'" The recording was also made at Wuyo.

#### Note on Recording Equipment

The recordings were made on Tandberg 11 portable recorders, operating on batteries. The microphone was an AKG-200.



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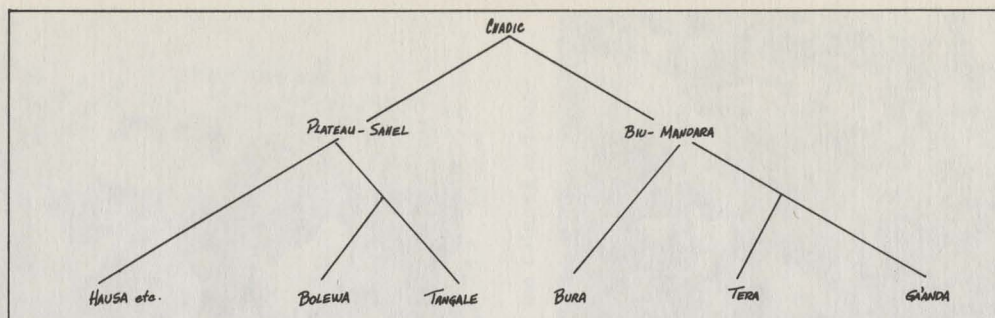


Fig. 1 - Classification of Nigerian Chadic languages.

Fig. 2 - Map showing area of Nigeria where music was recorded. Location of peoples and towns (represented by dots) are given.

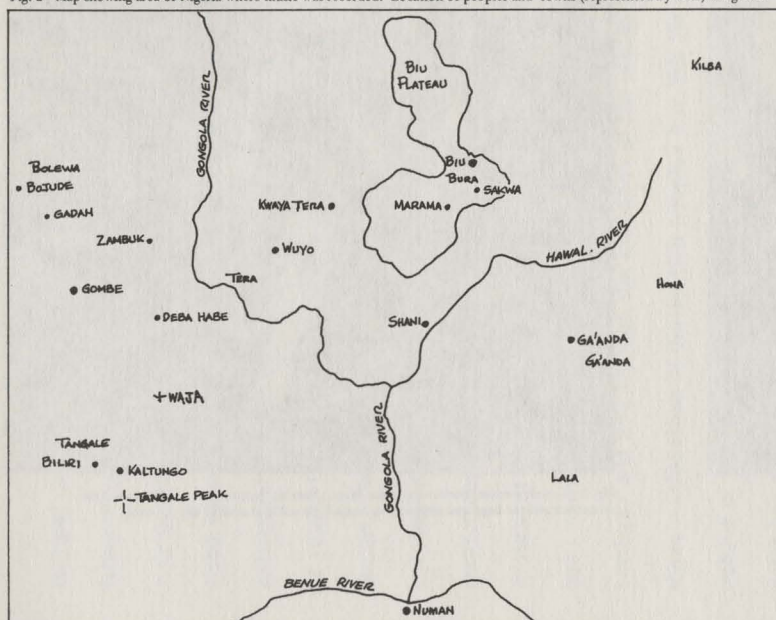


Fig. 3 - Bura yakandi performer recorded in Biu town. His music is represented in Band 3.



Fig. 4 - Bolewa drum band recorded in Gadam. From left to right the drums shown are kazagi, the ganga, and the ceremonial abanga.

Fig. 5 - Bolewa women in a dance line at Gadam.







Fig. 6 - Tangale flute players recorded at Biliri.



Fig. 7 - Tangale warriors performing a war dance. Note the barbed spears, the cowrie shell ornaments and the large iron rattles worn around one ankle of each of the warriors.



Fig. 8 - Tera *kanjau* drummer recorded at Zambuk. By tightening on the thongs attached to the head of the drum with his knees the drummer changes the tone of the drum.



Fig. 9 - Tera dance band recorded at Zambuk. Tera women dressed for a ceremonial occasion form part of the dance circle. Note that one of the women carries a young baby on her back as she dances. The Band includes the *kanjau* player of Fig. 8, a *shingi* (xylophone) player, an *algaita* player, and two *kotol-kotol* drummers.

Cover photo

Tera xylophone player and drummers.