

(18)

## RECORDING AND STUDYING MUSIC IN NORTHERN MOÇAMBIQUE

by

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(With drawings and photograph by Helmut Hillegeist)

### INTRODUCTION

Little is known about the music and musical instruments of the peoples of Northern Moçambique. Apart from a study of musical instruments by the research worker, Thomas Jonge in the Nampula area, it seems that so far no serious musicological investigations have been made in any part of Northern Moçambique.<sup>1</sup>

During the years 1960-1962 I spent much time recording the music of the people living around Lake Nyasa, in Tanganyika and in Nyasaland. I recorded music of the Pangwa, Kisi, Nyasa, Nyakyusa and Henga, and found that of the Kisi and the Henga particularly interesting because of a kind of harmony in their songs, which I have not heard anywhere else in East Africa. I have called it "Nyasa-Lake-harmony", since I have found it only with people living near the shores of lake Nyasa. It is most pronounced with the Kisi, while the Henga, it seems have recently adopted many European musical elements which overshadow their original harmonic concept. The "Nyasa-Lake-harmony" sounds very "chromatic" to a European ear.<sup>2</sup>

After this discovery, I was particularly interested to know whether the same sort of harmony would occur elsewhere, and what the music was like at the south-eastern shore of Lake Nyasa and in Northern Moçambique. In July, 1962, I travelled to Portuguese East Africa in a jeep, with two companions: Mr. Helmut Hillegeist, from Austria, who was to film and take photographs, and Mr. Basilius Saprapason, from Southern Tanganyika, who was to help us to overcome language difficulties.

Unfortunately, however, as soon as we had passed the border at Mandimba, we learnt that it was impossible to do any research in Northern Moçambique without a letter of recommendation written by a competent Portuguese authority.

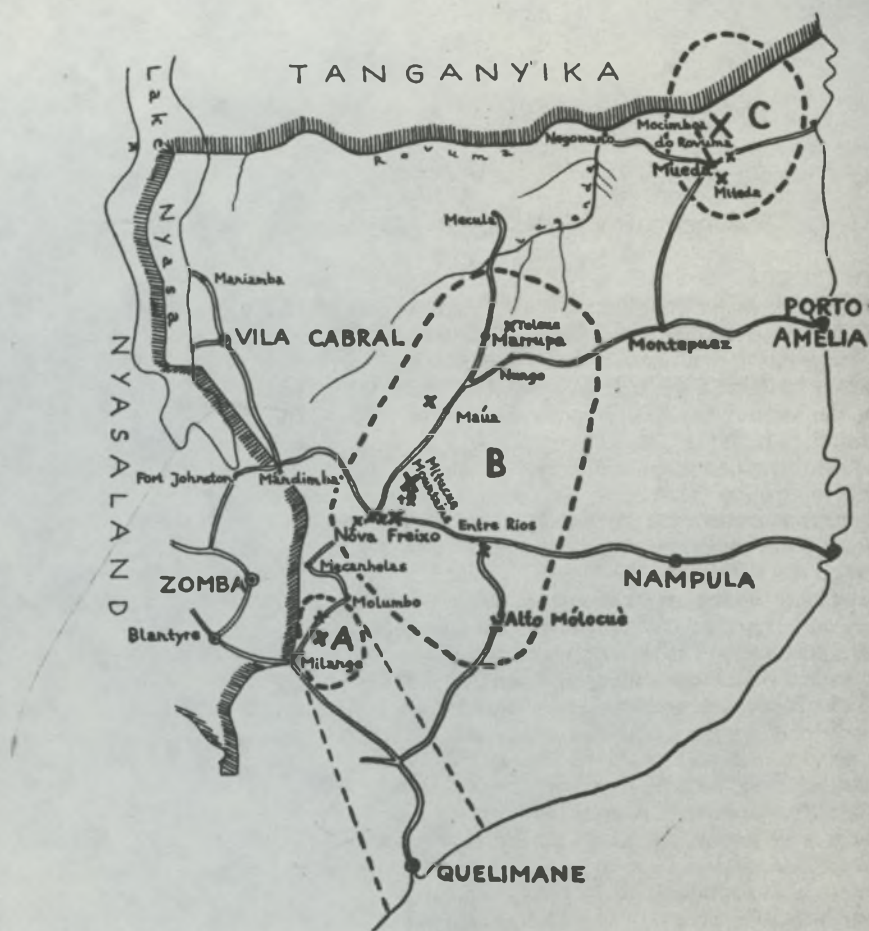
Our letter of introduction in English, written by the Austrian Consul in Nairobi, was of little help. We were received with some political suspicion everywhere, and were advised to apply first for a research permit at Lourenço Marques. We decided then to leave the vehicle at Nova Freixo in the compound of the administration and to depart. I travelled ahead to Lourenço Marques alone, in the hope of getting a letter with the help of Portuguese friends there. Mr. Hillegeist and Mr. Saprapason followed me south more slowly and, as I heard later, were even able to make a good number of recordings of Shirima music in villages near Entre-Rios and Alto Molocue (see Map No. 1).

It was only through the initiative of Mr. Hugh Tracey and Mr. John Blacking in Johannesburg, that my plan to do research in Northern Moçambique finally could be realized. Their representations on my behalf at the Portuguese Consulate, and a letter from my own Consul in Johannesburg, assuring that we had no political aims in the Portuguese territory, made it possible for me to obtain a new visa and a letter of introduction from Dr. Pinto, the Portuguese Consul in Johannesburg, for which I would

<sup>1</sup> Near Nova Freixo we met a group of the "Serviço psicosocial", an institution with the aim of improving relationships between the European and the Native population. The group carried a tape-recorder and had already made some hobbyist recordings of folk music north-east of Lake Chilwa. Unfortunately, when we met them, most of the recordings had been wiped off again. It would be worthwhile, indeed, if such recordings made by institutions not primarily interested in music, could be preserved, even if the tribe and the place are not known.

<sup>2</sup> "Ujiri" a girls' song from Lupingu, Tanganyika, is the most typical item of Nyasa-lake-harmony that I recorded in 1960. A copy of this can be found in the International Library of African Music, Roodepoort, near Johannesburg.





Map No. 1

like to give him my warmest thanks. I am grateful also to the administrators of Nova Freixo, Maua, Marrupa, Mueda and Mocimboa do Rovuma, who received us with great hospitality and did all possible to facilitate our journeys to the smaller villages.

The financial problem of travelling again to Northern Moçambique was solved by two research grants, which I received through the kind initiative of Mr. Hugh Tracey and Mr. John Blacking. One grant was given to me by the Institute for the Study of Man in Africa, Johannesburg, and the other by the International Library of African Music, Roodepoort. The Institute for the Study of Man in Africa also placed 40 long-playing tapes at my disposal, part of which I used in Northern Moçambique. I would like to express here my sincere thanks to the above-mentioned institutions for all the help given to me at a rather desperate time. My personal thanks are due to Mr. Hugh Tracey and Mr. John Blacking.

I entered Northern Moçambique again in September, 1962, at the border post of Milange, coming from Blantyre in Nyasaland. I did not find Mr. Saprason at Nova Freixo. Later we heard that he had been unable to obtain a renewal of his visa and had left the Province for Nyasaland. Fortunately this loss was balanced by the help of



friendly administrators in Northern Moçambique, who provided us with a Swahili-speaking guide wherever we travelled.

In the following two months we covered the large area of Northern Moçambique and tried to reach remote villages, where we hoped to find tribal life as undisturbed as possible. Some places were difficult to reach. The Mitucue Mountain range near Nova Freixo, one of our important recording places, we had to explore in long foot-walks of several days, climbing up and down the steep hills. The end of our research trip to Northern Moçambique came in the last week of November through the loss of Mr. Gillegist's jeep! We followed a path from Negomano, a military post on the Rovuma river, which was said to lead to Meculu, a small "town" north of Marrupa. (See Map No. 1). After thirty miles of difficult driving — once we followed a dry and rocky river bed with the jeep! — it happened that the path was to cross the big Lugenda river. After inspecting the depth of the water we ventured to cross. However, the worst happened. One wheel of the car sank into a deep hole and water flooded the engine. We had to walk about 30 miles back to Negomano. A Portuguese army detachment was mobilized and they pulled the jeep out of the Lugenda river. But the car was spoiled and required extensive repairs. To pay this was beyond our financial position and all that remained to do, was to sell the car to the army at a price which I don't dare mention. Fortunately when this happened, most of the research work was already done.

Northern Moçambique is a large and rather thinly populated territory. North of the town Nova Freixo on the road to Maua and Marrupa, there is endless and almost uninhabited bush. I may, therefore, well claim that we have covered this region well by recording in villages around Nova Freixo, in the Mitucue mountains and near Maua and Marrupa. The extreme North-East is the only region that is comparatively thickly populated: it is the country of the Makonde with the towns Mueda and Mocimboa do Rovuma. Here we tried to establish a "network" of recordings, and recorded at many villages of approximately 10 to 20 miles apart. (See Map No. 2).



Map No. 2

On the two maps are marked all places in Northern Moçambique where we recorded music or stories. After listening to and comparing the music on our tapes, I feel that the part of Northern Moçambique that we covered should be divided into three main areas with different musical styles:



*Area A:* Music South of Lake Chilwa.

*Area B:* Music of various Makua sub-tribes in the Western Central region.

*Area C:* Music of the Makonde people and related tribes in the North-East.

Musical practices in these three areas are distinctly different. This division of the territory is, of course, nothing more than a working hypothesis. There are, for instance, some similarities between instrumental music in Area B and C. And it is also certain that each of the three areas is larger than indicated by the circles in Map No. 1. I assume that musical area A stretches to the South-East as far as the coast of Quelimane. I also assume that music around Nampula is similar to the music we have recorded further West at Alto Molocue and Nova Freixo: at least the musical instruments described by Thomas Jonge<sup>3</sup> are of exactly the same type as those we found used by the Makua sub-tribes of the Western Central Region.

We have not been able to record in the Eastern region of Northern Moçambique, and I imagine the music to be similar to that of the Central region, at least insofar as it is in Makua dialects. Makua music proved to be a distinct tradition, and I would be surprised to hear that the music of the "Macua do Litoral Norte" or the "Makua de Cabo Delgado"<sup>4</sup> differed much from that of other Makua sub-tribes.

Another region that remains musicologically unexplored is the North-western part of the district Niassa with its district capital, Vila Cabral. The people living in this area are mainly Nyanja and Yaua (Yao). The only examples I have of their songs were performed by Yaua women living among the Lomue, and by a village group of Yaua that had split away from their tribe and settled near Mocimboa do Rovuma.

An employee of the district office at Nova Freixo told us that the music of Vila Cabral was the "best music of Northern Moçambique" and he mentioned "trumpets". After I had asked him to describe these instruments, it turned out that he had seen mirlitons (gazoos) being played in ensemble. His information was not surprising to me, since mirlitons are used nowadays in many places around Lake Nyasa, by Nyakyusa, Kial, Henga, Nyanja and Tonga people.<sup>5</sup>

After that we paid a brief visit to the cool highlands of Vila Cabral, but we found everything very civilized there (with tourism and bathing beaches on the lake), and did not attempt recording.

#### AREA A: MUSIC SOUTH-EAST OF LAKE CHILWA

This was the first area that we visited in Northern Moçambique. Although we stayed only a few days and kept more or less to the main road from Milange to Molumbo, we made an interesting discovery here, a Trough xylophone. This was described in the last edition of *African Music* (Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 11-14).

The area South-East of Lake Chilwa seems to have been affected by foreign styles of music. Arabic influence, for example, can be witnessed both by the presence of Mohammedans and the one-stringed fiddle, which is an important instrument all over Northern Moçambique.

At Enencroman, a village on the road Milange-Molumbo (some 40 kms north of Milange), we recorded an old fiddle player, possibly a Nyanja by tribe. He called his fiddle *mugole*. The way in which his instrument was constructed resembled other kinds of the one-stringed fiddle throughout East Africa. It was similar to the Makua and Makonde fiddles. If we compare the Northern Moçambique fiddle with the well-known *endingidi* of the Ganda of Uganda, we find some differences. The string of the *mugole* is tuned with a tuning loop slung around the upper part of the string and the neck of the fiddle. (See Fig. 5). At the upper part of the neck four indents are cut into the wood,

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Jonge "as aptidões musicais dos indígenas de Moçambique." Bol. da Sociedade de Estudos da Colônia de Moçambique, 1934, p. 1638, Lourenço Marques, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> I have taken these terms from the book "Gramática da Língua Macua (e seus dialectos) por P. Antonio Pires Pezra da Sociedade Missionária, Cuzcuzesa, 1960.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Tracey recorded in 1957 Kazoos in Central Nyasaland: the Malipenga dance of the Tonga (on AMA TR-37) and of the Henga (AMA TR-54). I myself recorded Kazoo music of the Kisi at Lupingu, to where it seems to have spread from Nyasaland. It seems that the Kazoo bands are an attempt to imitate the sound of European military music.



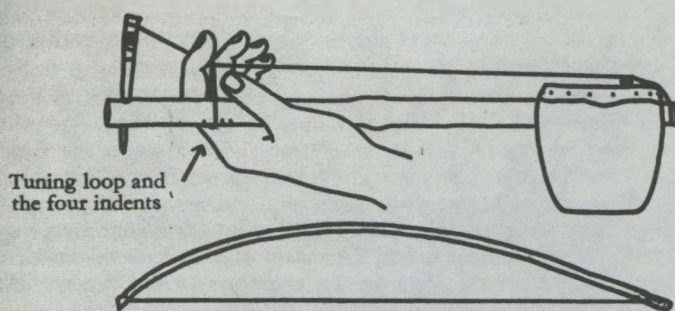


Fig. 5

and through one of them the loop is running. In the process of tuning the musician would first tune the string roughly, and then adjust the pitch more accurately by moving the tuning loop to any of the four indents. The top side of the calabash resonator was covered with a lizard skin. The bow was rather long in comparison with that used, for instance, by the Uganda fiddle players. It was almost as long as the *mugole* itself. The strings both of the bow and the fiddle were made from twisted sisal.

*Playing technique of the mugole fiddle*

The fiddle was not played in the same way as instruments we had seen in other parts of East Africa. As usual, fingering was done with the left hand, and the right hand held the bow. The thumb of the left hand embraced the neck of the instrument, and was not used for playing. But the forefinger was *not* used for playing either. It rested behind the tuning loop, pressing a little the section of the string between the tuning loop and peg. Playing of the instrument thus entirely was practiced with the three remaining fingers. The total melodic compass of the old man's playing was four notes. There were four possible positions. Position *A*: all fingers lifted. Position *B*: Second finger down. Position *C*: Third finger down (while second finger is resting on the string). Position *D*: Fourth finger down (while second and third finger are resting on the string).

The *Mugole* fiddle was played as an accompaniment to songs. The way of singing, particularly in timbre, intonation and in the rather rich melodic ornamentation, showed strong Arabic influence.

There can be found little influence of Euro-American popular music in the whole territory in Northern Moçambique. In this respect the musical scene of Northern Moçambique is very different from the neighbouring countries Nyasaland and Tanganyika. There is also very little modern urban music in Northern Moçambique. It is only in the border regions, at Mocimboa do Rovuma in the North-East, and near Lake Chilwa in the West, that influence of urban music can be traced.

At Enencroman we met two people carrying a homemade banjo and a homemade guitar with them on the road. Their music obviously was inspired by present trends of guitar-playing in Nyasaland. However, out of this initial inspiration the two musicians, Tomage Juao and his friend, had developed a style of their own that was rather new and peculiar. They had most probably designed their instruments from models seen in Nyasaland; but after returning to Moçambique they would have had practically no further influence as radios are not yet found in Northern Moçambique at every road corner and in every shop. So they worked out their own individual style.

*Construction of the homemade banjo:* The instrument had a rather long neck compared with the normal type of tenor banjo made in factories. The resonator was made of sheet-iron that had been hammered out to the required shape. For the membrane, lizard skin had been used. It was fixed to the resonator with small plugs driven into the side of the metal. There was a capotasta at the third fret of the instrument, consisting of a pencil bound to the neck with an elastic band. Tomage Juao played with the thumb and the



forefinger of his right hand. A ring plectron was attached to his forefinger. The banjo had five strings, for which ordinary wire had been used. They were rather thin, and consequently bass notes were missing in this music.

*Construction of the homemade guitar:* The instrument was built after the model of an ordinary Spanish guitar. The body was of wood nailed together. Six thin strings were used. When playing, the musician did not press the strings to the frets as it is usually done, but ran a small bottle over the strings with his left hand. (See photograph). He produced different chords by moving the bottle up and down the strings. This, of course, he could not manage within a split second, so that his harmonic progressions from approximate tonic to subdominant and dominant chords were always connected with *glissandi*. This effect contributed much to the character of his musical style. As a result of this technique, the accompanying chords were in strict parallel motion.

Much of the new and strange sound of this music apparently was a result of technique or even of lack of technique and of misunderstanding. I am convinced Tomage Juao wanted to play the guitar music as he had heard in Nyasaland. But he was not able to imitate it correctly. While still believing that he was playing the guitar music of Nyasaland, he unconsciously had moved away from it towards a style of his own. The recording we made of the music of these two "modern" musicians may have some documentary value, because it shows a new musical style in its embryonic state. (Orig. Tape No. R10, rec. on 5th Oct., 1962).

When playing together, it was the task of the guitarist to provide the chords as an accompaniment, while the playing of the banjoist was strictly melodic, in single notes. The guitarist, like the banjoist, had a ring plectron on the right forefinger. The frets of the two instruments were located at random.

#### AREA B: MUSIC OF VARIOUS MAKUA SUB-TRIBES IN THE WESTERN CENTRAL REGION

The largest tribe in Northern Moçambique is the Makua. The Makua are divided into a number of sub-tribes speaking different dialects of the Makua language. The people usually referred to as Makua are settled in the Eastern Central part of Northern Moçambique with the town Nampula as the centre. To the West is the area of the Shirima sub-tribe (language: *Eshirima*), with the towns Entre-Rios and Mutuali. South of this region, with the town Gurue as the centre, is the area of the Lomue. But Lomue settlements are scattered all over the Western Central region. The same applies to the Shirima. Thus we could record Lomue music in places as far north as *Wasiviri* near Maua and in the Mitucue mountains, and Shirima music as far West as Nova Freixo.

In the region of Marrupa in the north, where we paid a brief visit, there are settlements of the Meto, another important sub-tribe of the Makua.

We recorded the music of these three sub-tribes. There was no chance of making recordings of the Makua of Cabo Delgado or the Makua in the centre around Nampula. Also we did not visit the coastal region east of Nampula. We found no essential difference in the musical instruments and musical styles of the three Makua sub-tribes.

#### DANCES OF THE LOMUE AND SHIRIMA AROUND NOVA FREIXO

We had the opportunity to record Lomue dances performed by a large community at a road camp of the Serviço psicosocial, 6 kms from Nova Freixo on the Nampula road. All recorded dances were of vocal music in different sections, accompanied by drums.

##### I. *The Lupanda* dance

(Recorded on 10th Oct. 1962: Orig. Tape No. R2)

The *Lupanda*<sup>a</sup> dance is performed during the circumcision feast for boys. Before

<sup>a</sup> In Ugogo, Central Tanganyika, the circumcision dance is called *chupanda*.



circumcision takes place the boys are sent away from home for some weeks. The Lupanda dance marks the end of this period of preparation.

The leaders of the performance are two young men who dance in front of a semi-circle of drums. Their style of singing shows a kind of yodel typical for Lomue vocal music. The singing of the two men is answered by a large choir of women and girls assembled at the side of the drums. In some sections of the performance the women clap.

The following three drums are used in the Lupanda dance:

- (a) *Ekoma etokweni* — the "big drum"
- (b) *Mudlamu* — which is very similar to the "big drum"
- (c) *Masba*

*Ekoma* and *mudlamu* are almost the same size and are constructed in the same way. (See Fig. 6). There is one drumskin, prepared from the skin of an antelope. Attached to the centre of the skin is a lump of rubber obtained by heating bicycle tyres. The device allows the drummer to produce two tones on his instrument. The periphery of the drumskin gives a high tone, whilst the rubber lump in the centre gives it a low tone. In the old days, black wax was used.

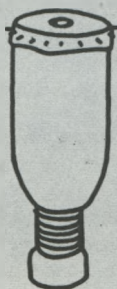


Fig. 6



Fig 7

Both drums are played with the hands. They are laid on the ground and the drummers sit on the instruments. The sound of *ekoma* and *mudlamu* is rather deep, and contrasts with the *Masba*. The players add complicated polyrhythmic patterns to the basic rhythm of the *Masba* drum.

The *Masba* drum is a small instrument shaped like a champagne glass (Fig. 7). It gives a penetrating high tone and is used for playing a very fast pattern, which always is *isorhythmic*. The pattern of the *Masba* is the rhythmic basis of the drum ensemble. The drummers play with two long and thin sticks.

## II. The *Linkiliba* or *Ninkiniba* dance

(Recorded on the same day at the same place)

This dance is performed at the occasion of a marriage or any other occasion of pleasure. We recorded the same group of people that had played the *Lupanda* dance before. But now a woman was dancing in front of the drummers. Her dancing style reminded me a little of that of Ganda women in Uganda. As there, almost every part of the body was moving, the movements of the shoulders producing a counter rhythm to the movement of the arms and hips. Another rhythm again was the movement of the legs, all this resulting in a *polyrhythmic* way of dancing.

There were two leaders of the vocal parts: a man and a woman who was not dancing. The chorus consisted of women only. The drums used for the *Linkiliba* dance were not the same as those used for the *Lupanda* dance.

There were three drummers in the group. One of them played two drums. These were called *n'lapa* and *mwampirini*. Both these drums were about 50 cms high, slender



and cylindrical in form and open below. The skin was made from a big lizard and tightened to the body with pegs. Both drums, although constructed in the same way, were tuned differently. The *n'lapa* had a deep tone and the *mwampirini* a high one. The player of these two drums sat on a stool, holding the *n'lapa* between his knees. The *mwampirini* drum was held by his servant, a small boy sitting at his right hand side. The drummer used both his hands, his right hand mainly for the *mwampirini* and his left hand for the *n'lapa*. (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8

The construction of the two drums called *n'lapa* and *mwampirini* is essentially the same. The names refer rather to the function of the drums in the ensemble and to the tuning. The high-tone drum is always called *mwampirini*.

The second drummer played another *mwampirini* with his hands, and the third drummer played *masba*, the small high-toned drum. He played the same isorhythmic pattern that he had played in the *Lupanda* dance before. I could observe how careful the musicians were about tuning of the drums. Often during the performance, they carried the drums to the fire and warmed them, so that the skin soon became more tightened. If the tone was found to be too high, they lowered it by pressing the ball of the hand onto the drumskin several times until the pitch had decreased.

### III. The *Gangaula* dance

(Rec. on 14th and 15th Oct. 1962, Tape No. R3 and R4)

We recorded the *Gangaula* dance at a remote village in the Mitucue mountains near Nova Freixo. This village we reached from the Catholic Mission at the foot of the mountain in a three-days walk.

The people living in the Mitucue mountain range have had little contact with European type civilisation so far; but we could trace some Arabic influence in their culture. The chief of the third village where we recorded much of the music on our tapes, wore a white *kanzu* and gave the impression of being a well-educated Muslim. In the community we often heard Arabic songs, but this kind of singing had not yet influenced the folk music and dances of the people. I was astonished to hear Swahili spoken quite well by a number of people in the mountains.

It seems that the Mitucue mountain range has been a refuge area for several ethnic groups in Northern Moçambique. There are the Shirima, who are probably the dominating tribe, and there are the Yaua (Yao) and Lomue minorities. We were told that the Yaua in the Mitucue mountains had been driven away from their homeland during the time of the Ngoni invasion in Northern Moçambique. As far as it was explained to me, the language spoken in the Mitucue mountains, however, was strictly Makua (Shirima and Lomue).

Although the people who shared in the dancing declared themselves to be Lomue, it is certain that the two dances (*Gangaula* and *Nawansba*) which they performed during our



visit are of Shirima origin, and were taken over by the invading tribes from the people already living there.

When I heard the singing of the young men in the *Gangaula* dance I was surprised: it started with a kind of yodel that had an interesting harmonic effect. The voices trilled in thirds in such a way that there was an overall impression of tonality built on a minor seventh chord. The same kind of yodel existed in the singing of the women of that village as well, and less pronounced, in the whole region around Nova Freixo.

The vocal parts of the *Gangaula* dance were performed by a group of young men, who stood in front of the three drums in loose formation.

The three drums are the following:

(a) *Masba*. It was played with long and thin sticks in the same way as already described in the *Lupanda* dance that we had heard near Nova Freixo. Its penetrating high tone dominated the whole performance.

(b) *Mtlatamu*. The name obviously is identical with "mudtamu", the similar drum used in the *Lupanda* dance. The construction of this drum is the same as already described there, but the shape of the instrument is slightly different. When playing, the drummer sits on his instrument, which lies flat on the ground.

(c) *Joza*. It could be called the "master drum". In our recording of the *Gangaula* dance it was played by S. Venjiwa, the most outstanding musician in the village. The *moza* is a drum slightly taller than *mtlatamu*. It has a lump of rubber in the centre. When playing, the drummer keeps his instrument between the legs. S. Venjiwa beat three sections of the drum as shown in Fig. 9, thus achieving three tones.

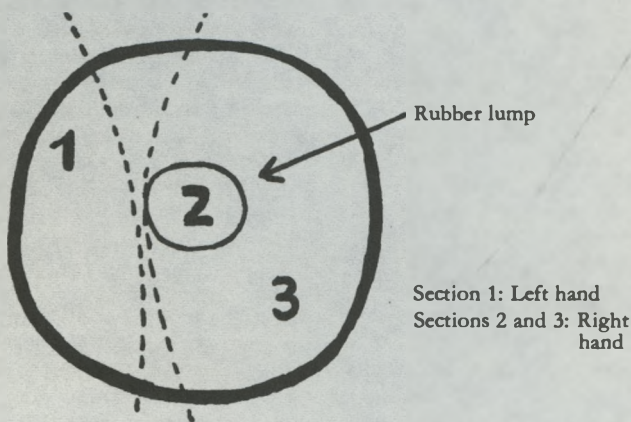


Fig. 9

Occasionally he used the right elbow to muffle the sound of the drum. This was a piece of showmanship, displaying his extreme virtuosity and ease of playing. The *joza* drummer added polyrhythms to the basic beats of *masba*.

We have made analytical recordings of the drumming of the *gangaula* dance, in the course of which each of the three drummers played his pattern separately. (Orig. Tape No. R4). As in the following *Nawansba* dance the singers wore foot rattles.

#### IV. The *Nawansba* dance

(Rec. on 15th Oct., 1962, at the same village in the Mitucue mountains,  
Tape No. R3)

Men, women and children are participating in this dance, but only the young men sing. The same sort of drums that I have described for the *Gangaula* dance were used for the *Nawansba*.



People form a circle to the left of the drummers' group and dance anti-clockwise. From time to time one of the participants leaves his position in the circle by moving inwards; he dances on slowly, passes in front of the next three persons who are dancing and stands in front of the fourth, before rejoining the circle. The fourth person then has to dance out and repeat the procedure. The dance continues in this fashion throughout the performance. (See Fig. 10).

MOVEMENTS IN THE NAWANSHA DANCE:

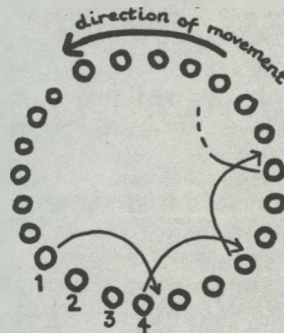


Fig. 10

The young men in the circle who sang (partly yodelled as in the *Gangaula* dance) had foot-rattles bound around their legs. These rattles are called *mabea*. A number of small fruits are dried out and strung together to form the rattle. (See photograph No. 10).

About 10 kms South-West of Nova Freixo, when following the road to Mecanheles, we stopped at a village called Murmela and recorded some more Shirima dance music. Among the recorded items there are two songs of men that were called *Lipanda*. It is probable that these songs are extracts from a dance that is related to the *Lipanda* of the Lomue. (Orig. Tape No. A29, rec. on 8th Oct. 1962). After that a young man called Anampitu performed a song, which the people explained to be *nawansha*. (Orig. Tape No. A29).

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' SONGS OF THE SHIRIMA AND OTHER MAKUA SUB-TRIBES

We recorded women's and girls' songs at almost all places that we visited. Perhaps the most peculiar kind of women's songs we found in the villages of the Mitucue mountains. These were called *likwata*. They were performed by a choir of young women and girls. The music has a strange harmonic effect that results from "tumbling" thirds being sung in yodel style. It produces the same kind of harmony (giving the impression of a steady seventh chord) that I mentioned in the singing of men in the *Gangaula* dance. It seems to be more characteristic of women's singing than of men's. I cannot say anything about the possible origin of this yodel style of singing. Apart from the Mitucue mountains, there was only one other place in this region where we traced the same kind of yodel: at Murmela, south-west of Nova Freixo, in the *iligwada* women's songs (accompanied by clapping) and in the singing of the *Lipanda* by men. But at Murmela it did not appear as developed as we had heard it in the Mitucue mountains. Future research workers in Northern Moçambique should find out more about this style of singing and its possible origins.

During my journeys in East Africa I found that yodelling occurs in Tanganyika. However, it is not commonly heard, and is not at once offered to a visitor, who intends to stay only a few days. That is probably why there are no recordings of yodelling from Tanganyika. At Mvumi, South East of Dodoma in the Central Province, we discovered two Gogo boys, who practiced a unique form of yodel built upon a bourdon tone that



was produced by a third performer. The two kinds of Gogo music, in which yodelling occurs, are called *msunyunbo* and *saigwa*. The yodelling of the Gogo boys, however, was very different from the kind of yodel we recorded in Northern Moçambique, and I must say I have not yet heard in Africa anything comparable to the Gogo yodel. We also heard Nyakyusa boys yodelling at Mwaya on Lake Nyasa. These *kibota* yodel songs showed some remote affinities to the yodelling of the Shirima, although the seventh harmony was not present. I would not, of course, suggest that there is necessarily a connection between the words *likwata* and *kibota*.

The *harmony* of the women's songs in the Mitucue mountains did not resemble in any way the "Nyasa-Lake-harmony" that I mentioned in the introduction. I know of only one place in Northern Moçambique where we found something similar to Nyasa-lake singing. It is at the place between Entre Rios and Ribaue (see Map No. 2), where Mr. Hillegeist and Mr. Saprapason recorded in August, 1962. These were Shirima girls' songs, and I heard the music only on the tape.

In the singing style of girls and women of the Lomue, and particularly of the Shirima, it is striking how often syllables are used for the text instead of words, such as *ee-ee-*, *-ye-*, *-bebe-*, etc. Normally every line of a Shirima girls' song is concluded with a long note to the vowel *-eee-*. This is very characteristic of the singing in this area. I have observed elsewhere the use of syllables in vocal music, particularly in the girls' songs of the Kisi at Lake Nyasa. It is one of the outstanding features of vocal music there. Shirima women's and girls' songs can also be easily distinguished by a peculiar feature of the Shirima language, the many *r*'s and *l*'s in the words. These *r*'s and *l*'s are not found to such an extent in Lomue singing.

There is a certain amount of Arabic influence in the singing of Lomue and Shirima women. One such apparently Arabic element is the drawing out of notes in unison, particularly at the end of phrases; another is the sudden dropping of the voice by a whole tone at the end of some passages. I cannot say whether this last feature really should be called Arabic, but it is definitely Asian and not grown on Africa's soil. (I noticed the same dropping of a long bourdon-like tone at the end of a melodic line in fiddle music all over Northern Moçambique, particularly at Maua.)

Apart from the rare yodelling style in the Mitucue mountains and the slight harmony in the area of Alto Molocue, singing throughout the Western Central region is predominantly in unison. This may be a result of Muslim influence, as it proved to be the case in so many parts of West Africa, where original harmonic singing has been repressed by Arabic monophony. In the Mitucue mountains the women who performed *likwata* were all Muslims. We recorded some of their Muslim songs in Arabic too, accompanied by a tambourin. In their folk music, however, they sang in Shirima.

The *Meto* girls sing music with a double choir that is called *nibicbiliba*, a word possibly related to *linkiliba* or *ninkiniba*. (Rec. at Teleue, 36 kms east of Marrupa. See Map No. 1) The old women at Teleue performed for us a type of song called *yoto*, which was accompanied by *miracha* hand rattles, of the same type as the well-known rumba rattles. Another type of *Meto* song is *mirusi*, performed at marriages. (Compare the word *mirusi* to the Swahili word *barusi*, which means "marriage").

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE WESTERN CENTRAL REGION

### I. Music for the *Sbitata*

The little instrument known as *Mbira* in South Africa and as *Likembe* in wide parts of Central Africa, is also well-known in Northern Moçambique. Under various related names we found it being played by the Lomue and Shirima, as well as by the Makonde in the North-Eastern corner of Moçambique. The Makua and Lomue refer to the instrument as *sbitata*. At Murmela near Nova Freixo it was called *chitata* by the Shirima who lived there. The type of instrument occurring in Northern Moçambique is similar to the *mbira* seen frequently in the Southern part of Africa, but it is simpler and has fewer keys.



We recorded *mbira* music in two places in the Western Central Region. Both instruments recorded were basically constructed in the same way and had seven keys. The construction of the *sbitata* we saw at Missão Mitucue, 20 kms north-east of Nova Freixo, is shown in Figs. 11 to 13.



Fig. 11

METHOD OF FIXING THE BOARD  
TO THE GOURD RESONATOR:



Fig. 12

THE SPHERES OF THE  
THREE FINGERS:

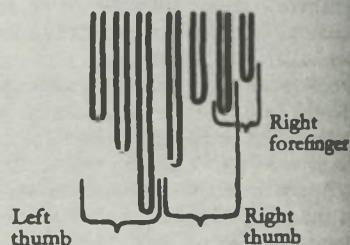


Fig. 13

The board was fixed to the bottom of the gourd resonator by string. As in South-Western Tanganyika (Pangwa, Bena, Nyakyusa, Kisi, etc.) the metal prongs had been fashioned from umbrella ribs. Compared with other instruments in the neighbouring countries the whole keyboard appeared to be shifted to the left, and not exactly in the centre of the wooden board. The reason for this lies in the playing technique. As in Southern Rhodesia, the player at Missão Mitucue used the left and right thumb and the right forefinger, and the metal keys are simply placed in such a way that the three fingers can operate easily within their own spheres of playing. Fig. 13 shows which fingers pluck which keys. We see that Key No. 6 (counting from left to right) can be plucked either by the right thumb or the right forefinger. Fig. 11 shows also the position of the right hand when playing. The thumbs pluck downwards and the right forefinger upwards.

The *cbitata* of Murmela, Nova Freixo, was exactly the same, except in one respect; around the upper half of the gourd resonator a string was tied, to which small pieces of tin-plate were attached to give a rattling sound, whenever the keys were being struck.

## II. Music for the one-stringed fiddle

The *sbitata* is not the only instrument used for solo performances in Northern Moçambique. Very often one meets wandering troubadours with a fiddle. Their songs



are ballads or long epic poems concerned with actual or historical events. The story in such a ballad can be based on a true event, or it may be a product of the poet's imagination.

Many of the wandering troubadours are blind or crippled, and earn their living by playing for chiefs and rich people in the towns and villages they visit. A very inventive troubadour and fiddle-player we met was Mwerelani, crippled in both legs. His ballads were so original and funny that he gained spontaneous applause from all people in the villages. He said he was a Lopone (Lomue tribe), and he called his instrument *takare*. It was the same type of instrument with a tuning loop that I described earlier. There was a hole in the resonator, into which his audience would throw a few coins.

Here is a précis of one of his songs: A young man fell in love, but the girl to whom he was engaged proved to be a difficult character. On the first night that he visited her, she said she could not accept him, because her mother was sick. On the second night, she said she could not accept him, because her mother had died. On the third night, she said she could not accept him because there was no food, and he ought to bring food first. On the fourth night, she said she was unable to accept him because his house was not smart enough. After that the suitor built a very big house for her; but still she would not accept him and agree to marriage. She said the house was not good enough. After that he built a palace. A suite of rooms was for her alone. On the following night he came to her again, but she said she could not receive him, as the palace was too big and they were only two.

Mwerelani sang this with great enthusiasm. His ballads were mainly humorous or satirical and caused storms of laughter in his audience. People in the village spontaneously started to clap to his fiddle playing. He sang in a falsetto voice, whose tone was rather like that of the fiddle itself. In other places of Northern Moçambique, I observed that minstrels sang with the same tone as their fiddles. Thus the vocal melodic line and the accompaniment formed a counterpoint of equal instrumental patterns.

At Wasisiri, the seat of the "Sultan" of Maua (8 kms west of Maua) we recorded another fiddle player, S. Margish, who also belonged to the Lomue tribe. He sang a duet together with another young man. His instrument was the typical Northern Moçambique fiddle that I have described, but there were ornamental carvings on the tube resonator. The tube resonator was of wood. The Arabic or Asian character of the performance of S. Margish was even more pronounced than with any fiddle-player we had heard before. A characteristic feature was the sudden dropping of the voice at the end of a long ostinato tone. This peculiar practice I have mentioned already in the singing of Shirima women. When the fiddle-player dropped his voice glissando-like for a full tone, the note of the fiddle carried on the bourdon tone (or central tone), with the position of all fingers lifted.

H. Hillegeist made a recording of a fiddle player in Kosti, Southern Sudan, in January, 1963. The music of this Sudanese fiddle-player was almost exactly the same as the music of the player at Wasisiri in Northern Moçambique. The falling of the voice at the end of a bourdon tone was very characteristic here as well. Even the tune of the Sudanese fiddle-player had almost the same melodic pattern as the tunes of S. Margish.

Some of the themes on which S. Margish sang were: "About incisions to be made on the head of small children"; "about a man who drowned a dog in a river"; "about sowing and planting of millet". S. Margish called his fiddle *tagare*.

The Meto people have a music for the one-stringed fiddle that is a little different from what we had heard from the other Makua-sub-tribes. At Teleue (36 kms east of Marrupa) we recorded a young man, Rashidi Nhachi, who danced while fiddle playing. The fiddle, of the same type we had seen before, was called *chikwèsa* in the Meto language.

In the middle of a circle — consisting of men and women — the fiddle player sang and danced. He was dressed in a hat made of feathers of wild fowls; around his loins he



wore a *milala*, consisting of strips of bamboo of the same kind as is used for making baskets and mats; and he had tied *maruchulu* rattles round his legs. The *maruchulu* rattles were the same as the *mabea* of the Lomue Shirima. While keeping the fiddle in his hand and playing, the player danced vigorously with his legs only. Occasionally he pirouetted.

### III. Xylophone playing

The only place in the Western Central region where we saw xylophones was in the area of the Mitucue mountains. I have not heard of any xylophone music being played around Marrupa, Maua, Nova Freixo, Entre-Rios and Alto Molocue.

The area of the Mitucue mountains, which had already proved to be of particular interest for musicological research, was very rich in xylophone music. Xylophone playing was practised in all three villages that we visited in the mountains, as well as in the settlement of the Missão Mitucue at the foot of the mountain range.

Throughout the major part of Northern Moçambique, from an invisible line perhaps along the main road from Mandimba to Nampula as the Southern border up to Rovuma river in the north, xylophones belong to the type of *log-xylophones* with banana stems as a base and without resonator. This statement is based on wide travelling as shown in Map No. 1. Of course, we do not know anything about the music in places like Montepuez, Porto Amelia, Mocimboa da Praia and other towns in the coastal area, but I would be surprised if xylophones found there were constructed differently.

The xylophone in the Mitucue mountains is called *manguilo*. The keys are cut from the wood of a tree called *mujabuma*, according to the xylophone players, S. Venjiwa and S. Jenja in the third village of the Mitucue mountains. In the first village the name of the tree was pronounced *mujebuma*.

A series of photographs in the possession of the author (not published) show how the *manguilo* xylophone is made. The logs are cut to shape, and are left to dry for some days, sometimes even for weeks. After that they are placed across two banana stems. In order to separate the keys from each other, small sticks are pressed into the soft stems. There is no additional device to fix the keys to the banana stems. During performance the keys often move out of their position, and either one musician (always the player B) or a "boy" has to push them back.

From this short description we can see that the kind of xylophone played on the Mitucue mountains is essentially the type of log-xylophone described by Olga Boone for the Northern half of the Congo, as well as all the Uganda xylophones (of the Ganda, Nyoro, Soga, Konjo, Gwere, Dholá and Alur).

Compared with the xylophones of Southern Uganda, the keys of the *manguilo* are a little smaller, and their shape is different. (For the shape of xylophone keys in Northern Moçambique, see Figs. 18 and 19).

We recorded several xylophone players in the Mitucue mountains, but I owe most of our information to the two most outstanding players, S. Venjiwa and S. Jenja. We recorded (on Orig. Tape No. R3) many of their virtuoso xylophone pieces, and at the same time H. Hillgeist made an 8-mm-film in slow-motion of their playing, with the intention that we should transcribe the music later from the film strips. A difficulty here was that for each of their compositions the musicians arranged the keys differently, but their co-operation was excellent, and after an item had been filmed and recorded, I quickly recorded the scale that had been used, so that the "silent beats" on the film strip can correctly be translated into sound. To transcribe instrumental music from film strips — although it takes much time — can be a much more successful method of transcription of non-European instrumental music than from tapes. The film strip shows the exact "image as played" and the ear is not deceived by the inherent rhythms, as it is the case with transcribing from tape recordings.<sup>7</sup>

In the first village of the Mitucue mountains we met a woman, Senora Muhua, playing a xylophone together with a small boy. It was the first time in Africa that I have

<sup>7</sup> A special publication with the transcriptions of *manguilo* xylophone music from the film strips is in preparation.



seen a woman playing the xylophone. S. Muhua was introduced to me by the chief as a curiosity. That she could play *manguilo* was valued as an extraordinary achievement of her people in the village. When we made the recording, she and her people smiled.

In the compound of the Missão Mitucue, a Catholic mission run by Italian fathers, we recorded the players Dixon, Rosario and Garlindo, who played well but not as expertly as Venjiwa and Jenja. *Manguilo* xylophone playing seemed to be for young people only: the players that we recorded were all in their early 'twenties.

In all places we visited in the Mitucue mountains the *manguilo* xylophone had six keys, and a seventh key was kept in reserve. It was common practice to interchange the keys with each other for the different musical pieces, and occasionally, when interchanging, the reserve key was used. I therefore recorded the scale after every tune.

The reasons for the practice of interchanging the keys for every tune appear to be technical. The keys were always arranged in a way that the melodic patterns played by the musicians could be easily performed. Sometimes even a pattern of movement was just transferred to another arrangement of the keys and a different tune resulted! I have found that the musicians of the Mitucue mountains think in terms of patterns of movement rather than in terms of melody.

The *manguilo* was always played by two people, sitting obliquely opposite each other. (Fig. 14). Each of the two musicians had two plain sticks in his hand. The players Dixon and Rosario told me that normally the *manguilo* xylophone should have 11 keys and should be played by four musicians, two sitting obliquely opposite each other. In none of the places that we visited we found, however, any evidence of what the two boys had told me. In the Makonde country, as well, we did not see any eleven-key xylophones. However, the information of these two musicians should not be left unmentioned, since the combination of 11 keys and four musicians is a logical combination that would fit the pattern of *manguilo* music.

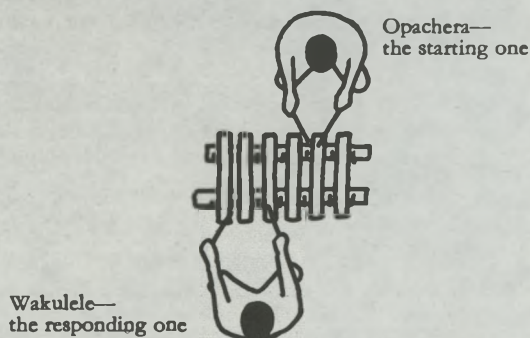


Fig. 14

According to information given by many people in the villages, the two opposite players of the *manguilo* are called *opachera* and *wakulela*. *Opachera* means: the starting one, and *wakulela*: the responding one. There are no definite "spheres" of playing, as it is the case in other East African xylophone music. Each player has a limited range that changes from tune to tune, and that is not the same for all tunes as it is for example, in xylophone music of Buganda. I also have never seen both players using all six keys. Their spheres of playing, although not constant, were always limited to a section of the instrument.

The task of the *opachera* is to play a basic repetitive pattern. It is melodically and rhythmically less complicated than the pattern of the *wakulela*. And the *wakulela* plays difficult and virtuoso patterns, that often fall between the *opachera's* melody. None of these patterns, however, is isorhythmic as in xylophone music of Southern Uganda and



Southern Congo. All are more or less polyrhythmic formulas. The voice of the *opachera* is constant, but in the *wakulela*'s playing improvised variations are common.

The manual skill of the players Venjiwa and Jenja was simply incredible, although much of the fast speed of the recorded items is just the result of the interlocked method of playing. In some pieces the musicians not only struck the xylophone keys but beat the two sticks together at certain points. I observed that when the keys moved out of their positions, it was always the *wakulela* who stopped playing to push them back. The *opachera* player never interrupted his basic pattern. One item was performed on only five keys. The other players already mentioned, Dixon, Carlindo and Rosario played in the same style and even the same tunes as Venjiwa and Jenja. These players said they were Lomue, while Venjiwa and Jenja were Shirima by tribe.

Dr. A. M. Jones kindly measured with a Stroboconn the scale of the *manguilo* xylophone from the third village in the Mitucue mountains. The reserve key is included in the scale:

Key No. 1	604.3	v.p.s.	
"    " 2	481	v.p.s.	
"    " 3	534	v.p.s.	(Keys No. 1 and No. 4 have the same note.)
"    " 4	603.6	v.p.s.	note.)
"    " 5	653	v.p.s.	
"    " 6	784	v.p.s.	
"    " 7	887	v.p.s.	

Unfortunately, when climbing the Mitucue mountains I lost my pitch-pipe. It is almost certain that the recording machine by that time was running slow and hence more than a quarter tone flat. For the trough xylophone which we had recorded eleven days before, the pitches had to be rectified by 74 cents. This approximately the amount that should be reduced here as well. The assessment of the absolute pitch, however, is not important for our considerations below.

Here is the approximate impression the scale made to my ear, just when I recorded it:

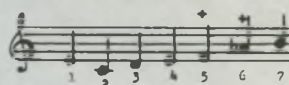


Fig. 15

The lowest note of the xylophone scale I felt as the "tonic" and wrote it therefore as a C. The auditory impression of the scale coincides well with the result of Dr. Jones's measurements. This is the *exact* scale as it looks on the graph:



Fig. 16

I have written down the note 534 v.p.s. as a pure D, in order to show the relationship to the European scale for comparative purposes.

What is this *manguilo* scale? Is it just an unsystematic, sequence of random intervals, or are there relationships between the intervals? Looking at the graph, what strikes us first is that his hexatonic scale stops before the octave is completed. What happens if we just complete the octave? Let us write down the basic C in the higher octave with 962 v.p.s. What we find now is interesting. The interval between note No. 7 and the newly-gained note No. 8 is the same as the interval between note No. 4 (resp. No. 1) and note No. 5. It is 1.40 cents between No. 7 and 8, and 1.35 cents between note No.



4 and 5. The difference between these two cent values is 0.05, an inaudible magnitude. This fact is very surprising indeed. Can it be just accidental?

Soon we discover that there are two other intervals in the scale that are exactly the same, with only 0.01 cents difference! They are the intervals Nos. 3 and 4 and Nos. 6 and 7. It appears then that this scale has been constructed systematically. We have traced so far two standard intervals: 2.14 cents and 1.40 cents. These intervals reappear in two different sections of the scale which are a narrow fifth of 6.65 cents apart. Let us examine the remaining intervals of that scale. There is the interval of 1.81 cents between notes No. 2 and No. 3, and the rather wide interval of 3.17 cents between notes No. 5 and No. 6. What meaning have these numbers? What will happen if we subtract these two intervals from each other? Let us do so: 3.17 cents minus 1.81 cents. The result is fascinating! The difference is 1.36 cents, which is just our first standard interval.

What we have discovered through this playful analysis of the *manguilo* scale suggests that the *manguilo* scale of the third village in the Mitucue mountains is an abbreviated version of a *heptatonic* scale that consists of two sections of identical intervals being built above each other.

Let us put in the "missing links" we have found, and arrange all intervals now in the form of a ladder. According to our hypothesis the "original" (?) *heptatonic manguilo* scale must have looked like this:

Step I	..	..	..	1.81 cents (standard interval A)	} Section I
II	..	..	..	2.14 cents ( " " B)	
III	..	..	..	1.40 cents ( " " C)	
IV	..	..	..	1.40 cents ( " " C)	
V	..	..	..	1.81 cents ( " " A)	} Section II
VI	..	..	..	2.14 cents ( " " B)	
VII	..	..	..	1.40 cents ( " " C)	
VIII (octave)					

The fourth in this scale (5.35 cents) is wider than in the European fourth, and the fifth is narrower (6.75 cents).

There remain many questions, which cannot be answered now. If our hypothesis that the *hexatonic manguilo* scale is extracted from an ancient *heptatonic* scale proves correct, where does this scale come from? Can it be found anywhere else in Africa or outside this continent? Why do the Shirima on the Mitucue mountain not have the complete *heptatonic* scale, and why is one note missing? Why is it that the three standard intervals are just 1.81, 1.40 and 2.14 cents and not any other intervals? What musical, acoustic or psychological law is behind that? A superficial view shows that the three standard intervals progress by approximately the same amount of cents (0.36 and 0.41). It would be important to investigate whether in any other scale of the world 0.40 cents is a basic interval or whether some of the standard intervals of the *manguilo* scale can be traced elsewhere.

#### AREA C: MUSIC OF THE MAKONDE AND RELATED TRIBES IN THE NORTH-EAST

The Makonde are well-known in ethnology, since they are the only people in East Africa with significant plastic arts.

Coming from the Makua country to the area of Mueda and Mocimboa do Rovuma, we were surprised to find that the country around these towns is quite thickly populated. Not only do Makonde people live there, but a great many different tribal groups live together in the area.

Around Mueda there are mainly settlements of the Makonde. We travelled from our second base, Mocimboa do Rovuma into a number of small villages. (See Map No. 2). Soon we learned that almost every village belonged to a different tribe. The first two places, Nachomba and Mitande, were settlements of the Makonde, and the next



village but one, Nechache, was inhabited by Ndonge people. The next village, Chinganda, was inhabited by Vaua minorities that had split away from the major bulk of their tribe in the West. There are also Ndonge settlements in this region.

The music gives a similar impression of diversity. We had thought this North-eastern part of Moçambique would be a really "remote" research field. To our surprise, we found it more civilized in the European sense of the word than the places we had visited before. On the roads we met many people wearing new clothes from Tanganyika. On some of them there were written political slogans in Swahili! It was clear that there was a well-established illegal traffic across the border, and that many Makonde from Portuguese East Africa frequently visited their friends and relatives on the other side. We found many people who spoke Swahili fluently, many more than at Nova Freixo.

The few radios that could be found in some native shops were usually tuned in to Dar-es-Salaam, and people on the street corners whistled guitar songs from Katanga and Kenya.

The traditional music of the Makonde, particularly their singing, shows much foreign influence, to a greater extent than any other example I have from East Africa. There must have been several "waves" of foreign musical influence in this territory.

Many Makonde songs betray a variety of influences, rather like a series of layers: the lowest and historically most ancient layer may be the "true" Makonde scale and harmony, which sounded to me rather Central African. At least it was something which I have not heard anywhere else in East Africa. Above this there is the Arabic or Asiatic layer, which might have been even more pronounced a few decades ago, but decreased with the start of European influence. I did not hear any unaccompanied vocal music of the Makonde without some Arabic influence.

The most recent layer is a trend towards part-singing in the major scale that comes from church music. (There are many missions in Makonde country). The reason why European harmony has been able to infiltrate traditional folk music so quickly lies in the fact that the Makonde had their own style of part-singing before. Thus it was extremely easy for them to get accustomed to European chords. European harmony, however, is so much mixed up with the traditional harmony and scales, together with passages in the Arabic style of singing, that it is very difficult to separate the heterogeneous elements and say exactly which is which and from where it comes. Makonde music somehow lacks a specific personality. Almost everything can be traced to some other place, though sometimes only to neighbouring tribes such as the Makua. The original Makonde harmony was probably *parallel harmony* in thirds. A good idea of it is given in the *Ing'oma* girls' songs — although I have the impression from all these recordings that they were attempting to fit the singing in parallel thirds into the European major scale. (Tape No. R7, rec. at Nachomba).

We have made other recordings of vocal music with melodic-harmonic progressions that sounded much more "chromatic" and rather strange, so that it is equally possible that the original Makonde tonality and harmony may have been in that style.

One song performed by a group of six-year old boys and girls at Namaua (near the Catholic Mission) about 20 kms from Mueda was outstanding in many respects. The first part of this song has a very strange tonality. There is a sort of modulation, of a type which I have heard sung only in West Africa. (It is not the same as the modulations in Nyasa-lake-harmony). To give an *approximate* idea of this song, I have transcribed part of it from the tape recording.<sup>8</sup> (Orig. Tape No. R7, rec. on 26th Oct., 1962).

The theme is a falling melodic sequence. If we write the melodic centre of the first phrase as an E, it shifts in the descending modulation into D and then into C♯. A similar descending progression is also used in the songs of Ndonge women. (See later

<sup>8</sup> For a long time I hesitated to do so, since my experience has been that one has to learn the song oneself before transcribing it, and not just to transcribe it from a tape, which may give inaccurate results. The Makonde text of this song also is not known to me. Under the notes are written the syllables, as they sound on the tape, and this "text" would probably be unintelligible to a Makonde who might read this paper. But the purpose of this transcription is to give an approximate idea of the melody of this song.



parts of this paper). The children's song I have described is mostly sung in unison. The long-held notes such as E and D give the music a slight Arabic flavour. This impression is due also to the kind of intonation with which the children sing these notes. One must hear the recording to get a real idea of its beauty and of the fine timbre of the children's voices. (See transcription in Fig. 17).

MELODIC SEQUENCE IN A MAKONDE CHILDREN'S SONG:

♩. = M.M. 120

I a)

i na nde ra ma ti gu i se é ve e bo

b)

i na nde ra ma ti gu i se e bo i na

c)

nde ra ma ti gu i tu di ti u ma re bo

II a)

da ru mañ'ndi 'ba lu cñn ve e bo etc.

Fig. 17

After the children have sung the three parts a, b and c four times with variations, the song develops surprisingly. The voices move into a clear major scale with "mission" harmony (not transcribed). In this kind of "refrain" of the song most of the assembled children join the four leaders in singing and a big choir is formed. The key into which this part of the song moves is in relation to the transcription above, A major. (With E major as the dominant chord).

From the songs of Makonde women and children, one can get some idea of Makonde singing as it was in the old days. Even in a completely up-rooted society, women are often able to produce true folk music, while the men have already lost it.

Before I proceed to a description of Makonde dances I must mention a two-note antelope horn, called *lipalapanda*, that is often used to accompany *Ing'oma* women's songs. In the recorded songs accompanied by the horn there was no harmonic part-singing. (Rec. at Namaua, Tape R7).

DESCRIPTION OF MAKONDE DANCES

The Makonde have masked dances. At Miteda (20 kms south-east of Mueda) we recorded the *masbesbo* dance. During this dance everybody sings. There was a mixed choir of men, women and children. The singing was predominately in parallel thirds and showed strong mission influence. All voices clearly moved around tonal centres that could be called tonic, subdominant and dominant.

There were two masked dancers, who wore bells around their bodies and were dressed in striped woollen costumes. The masks did not resemble the Makonde masks that we know in museums, and were apparently a recent product. The costume as a whole looked clown-like, and even resembled the dress of space travellers in certain utopian films.

The drums were remarkable. There were five different kinds used in this dance:

- (a) *Likuti*
- (b) *Ntoyu*
- (c) *Ligoma*



- (d) *Singanga* (There were three such drums used in the performance).  
 (e) *Neya*

The drums (a) to (c) are played by hands, and (d) and (e) with thin sticks. The *ntoyu* with a rubber lump in the middle of the skin resembles both in appearance and playing technique the *ekomá* and *mudtamu* drums of the Makua Lomue, described earlier in this paper. Quite remarkable are the tall, thin *neya* drums, and the small drums called *singanga*. The *singanga* drums could be called the *masba* of the Makonde, as they are played in the same way as the *masba* of the Lomue<sup>7</sup> Shirima peoples. Their pitch is equally high and penetrating, though their shape differs from other *masba*. The bodies of the drums were extended into thin sticks, so that they looked like giant nails. Before starting to play, the musicians pierced the *singanga* into the sand. (In Makonde country the soil is generally very soft and sometimes sandy). We saw one *singanga* being played at Miteda that looked exactly like the *masba*. But it was only 20 cms high and c. 10 cms wide, the smallest drum that I have yet seen in East Africa. *Singanga* and *neya* play together the same kind of rhythm, fast basic patterns.

The drumming of the *mashesho* dance sounds rather like Makua drumming in the *gangaula* and *nawansha* dances for instance. We shall see later that not only in drumming but also in xylophone-playing, there is a relationship between Makua and Makonde music. The vocal part of the *mashesho* dance was not at all like Makua singing, however.

We made another recording of the same dance at Namaua (20 kms north-east of Mueda). The name for the dance was pronounced *maseso* here. The following drums were used:

- (a) 2 *Singanga*  
 (b) *Likuti*  
 (c) *Ntoji* (Compare *ntoyu* at Miteda)  
 (d) *Simbombo*  
 (e) *Nnea* (Compare *Neya* at Miteda)

The *simbombo* was played instead of the *ligoma*. It was a kind of drum that we had not seen before in Northern Moçambique. The drum is cylindrically shaped and has two skins connected by parallel leather straps. I doubt whether this is a traditional Makonde drum, and suspect that it is modern. The body of the drum was made from an oil drum.

An interesting feature of the drumming at Namaua was the playing of *ntoji* and *likuti* by one man. He struck the smaller *likuti* with the right hand, and *ntoji* with the left. We had already seen this among the Lomue near Nova Freixo in the playing of the *n'lapa* and the *mwampirini*.

Although the drum names of the Makonde differ from the names given to the instruments by the Makua, it is obvious that some of the Makonde drums resemble the Makua drums (or *vice versa*)? and that Makonde drumming is related to Makua drumming in style and technique.

There is a dance for girls in Makonde country called *nkala*. (Orig. Tape No. R9, rec. at Mitande, 29th Oct. 1962). In this dance the girls form a circle in front of the drums and move anti-clockwise. The music is in two sections: there is a vocal part without drum accompaniment, and another part sung to the drums. Both these parts are not very long, and follow each other alternately. In the singing part the girls do not dance but just walk slowly in the circle. From the moment the drumming begins, however, all those girls who happen to be opposite the drums, stoop down and dance energetically.

The following drums are used in this dance and are played by boys: (a) *Singanga*, (b) *Ligoma*, (c) *Likuti*, (d) *Ntoyu*. *Singanga* and *ntoyu* are tuned a fifth apart. The note of the *ntoyu* is the central note of the vocal part. The *nkala* song that we recorded had three notes (full-tones C, D, E) in its melody. All was sung in unison.

On arriving at Mitande, we came across some small girls playing a delightful little game. The *Ndombi* children's game. (Orig. Tape No. R9).

The ground near the village was sandy and grassless, and provide a natural, slightly



concave arena. Two girls stood opposite each other outside the arena, holding the two ends of a creeper in their hands. They started the play by swinging the creeper from left to right and back in a wide circle, beating it regularly against the sand. Another girl sang the leader's part of the *ndombi* song and had to jump into and through the circle without being struck by the creeper. After the first girl had done this successfully, another girl started to sing the *ndombi* song and repeated the actions. The beats of the creeper on the sand formed the rhythmic basis of the song.

#### MAKONDE INSTRUMENTS FOR SOLO MUSIC

For solo music in Makonde country two instruments are chiefly used. One is the *chitiatia*. It is a *mbira* constructed in the same way (with gourd resonator, etc.) as the *chitata* of the Makua. The instrument always had eight keys, like the *malimba* of the tribes north and east of Lake Nyasa in Tanganyika. At Namaua, it was customary for a second performer to drum with two sticks on the calabash resonator of the instrument while the other plucked the keys.

At Nachomba the *chitiatia* was played differently. Under the gourd the kernel of a fruit was attached, so that the instrument rattled when being played. The singer (S. Saidi) had a strange, hoarse falsetto. His style of singing and playing reminded me very much of *malimba* music in Southern Tanganyika.

The player, like the Makua musicians, used the thumbs and the right forefinger. The right forefinger plucked *upwards*. Every finger had its own sphere. Counting from left to right, keys Nos 1 to 4 were played by the right thumb, Nos 5 and 6 by the left thumb, and Nos. 7 and 8 by the right forefinger. The spheres did not overlap, as was the case among the Makua players.

Further north we did not find any playing of the *chitiatia*, which does not seem to occur in the villages east of Mocimboa do Rovuma.

In one Makonde village we found the one-stringed fiddle. (Orig. Tape No. R9, rec. at Nachomba). It was a typically Northern Moçambique specimen with a tuning loop. The musician used three different notes when playing, being approximately D, C and A, if we call the tonal centre an A. The instrument was called *akanyembe*.

I do not know whether the zither called *banjo* in so many other places is used by the Makonde. The only village where we found it was Chinganda, near the Rovuma river (Map No. 2), and there it was played by a Yao man. I have not seen it in any Makua or Makonde village. Thomas Jonge reports the instrument of the Makua, and the *banjo* drawn in his article is similar to that we saw with the Yao man at Chinganda.

#### XYLOPHONE PLAYING OF THE MAKONDE

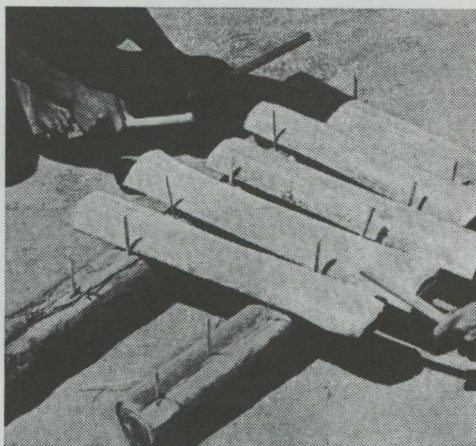
Xylophones are often found in the Makonde villages. We recorded xylophone music at Namaua, Miteda, Nachomba and Mitande. (See Map No. 2). We saw it also at Balale, but did not record because there were no representative players at that time.

The instrument is similar to the xylophone of the Lomue Shirima which we had recorded in the Mitucue mountains. We should not overlook, however, some essential differences. The Makonde xylophone is usually a little smaller than that of the Makua, and the shape of the keys is different. See Figs. 18 and 19:

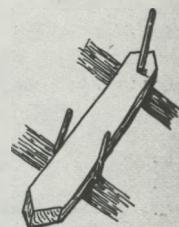
Throughout Makonde country the name of the instrument is *dimbila*.<sup>9</sup> It has *six* keys. The base consists of two ordinary hard stems of wood usually from the thicker branches of a tree. Bundles of grass are placed on the two stems to give the keys a soft base. On one occasion (at Nachomba) the instrument had banana stems as a base; on another (at Mitande) we found an instrument with banana stems as a base, but on top of them the grass bundles! It is very interesting to see that the "idea" of building a xylophone in the way described above has survived even where the use of the banana stem had been imported.

<sup>9</sup> For comparison: The Chopi in Southern Moçambique have a xylophone called *timbila*. And the Kanyoka in the Southern Congo have *dimbila* xylophones.





Manguilo xylophone  
playing in the Mitucue  
mountains



Makonde xylophone  
key

Fig. 19

Fig. 18

The xylophone at Mitande was unusual in other respects. It had *eight* keys. But soon I found that the musicians only played on six of them. The two extreme keys to the left of player B were obviously supplementary.

Not all the eight keys of the xylophone were made of the same wood. The three highest-tuned ones, I was told, had been cut from *ntukutu* wood (Makonde language), and the five lower keys had been made of the reddish *utama* wood. These are not the only sorts of wood used for xylophone-making in Makonde country. The *dimbila* at Nachomba, for instance, was made from *mtandavala* wood.

Just as in Makua music, the use of supplementary keys was common, and keys were often interchanged to fit the patterns of movement of the various compositions. Indeed, some compositions could not have been mastered technically if the keys had not been arranged in the required way.

The way in which the keys were attached to the base also differed from the Makua method. The rather light and flat *dimbila* keys were pegged at one end with small sticks. The other ends were left loose, but at both sides of the keys small sticks were pressed into the grass bundles. These wooden sticks were short and were never stuck into the stems. We saw this technique of steadying the keys on the trough-xylophone of the Cuabo man near lake Chilwa,<sup>10</sup> though in that case iron nails had been used instead of wooden sticks.

The music played on the *dimbila* xylophone is similar throughout the whole area. At Namaua, for instance, we recorded a tune called "*Nambili*". The same tune was played at Nachomba in the north. Moreover, Makonde xylophone techniques are similar to those of the Makua.

According to the players Alfonso José and Sambalau Natila at Namaua, the two players of the *dimbila* who sit obliquely opposite each other (like the Makua) are called *kutunduvanga* (player A) and *kujalola* (player B). I have not been able to check this at another village, nor did I hear contradictory information. I found it very difficult to explain to the people what I wanted to know. The usual answer was: "There are no names". Either they did not understand, or they did not want to understand. (In the Mokonde country there have been some tensions between the native and the European population, and the people in the villages were not always co-operative.) It is possible that the two names given above refer to the different parts of the music and not the

<sup>10</sup> See Fig. 1, p. 12, 'African Music' Vol. III No. 2.



persons that are playing. But this cannot be decided now. As far as I could discern, player A just played a basic pattern as in Makua xylophone music, while player B executed variations.

An interesting thing happened with the two musicians at Namaua. Player A did not know how to start a particular tune, because he had forgotten the pattern. Player B, sitting opposite him, began to play to him the correct phrase. When demonstrating the pattern, however, he remained on his own side and *crossed his hands*. Thus the movement-pattern of the phrase to be performed was not changed. I see in this a manifestation of how much the Makonde xylophone players think in motor images, rather than in acoustic images.

#### A NOTE ON MUSIC OF THE NDONDE

We had only a brief acquaintance with Ndonde music. But what we heard in one village Nechache, that was inhabited by Ndonde people was surprising. I could hardly imagine we were still in East Africa. I thought we were in the Congo or some other place in Central Africa.

People assembled to start a dance with animal masks. Such masks are called *lingwele* in Chindonde. The dance was called *mizimu*, and the performance was given in honour of the *mizimu*, the spirits of the ancestors. There were two masked dancers in the open square in front of the drummers and singers. The style of dancing was dramatic and grotesque. In the course of the performance the dancers fell to the ground, with their bodies in convulsions.<sup>14</sup>

The music produced by the group was unlike anything we had heard before. On the other hand the drums were almost the same as Makonde drums. The following instruments were used:

- (a) *Likuti*. (Just the same drum as the *Likuti* of the Makonde);
- (b) *Lisondo*. (A tall drum reminding in its form and construction to the *neya* of the Mokonde, but the *Lisondo* is more stout. It had a rubber lump attached to the centre of the skin).

Both these drums were played with the *bands*.

- (c) *Likopo*. (A hand-rattle with a wooden grip, made from an old tin, with seeds inside).

The same set of instruments was used to accompany women's songs called *deda*. A group of women assembled, some of them with lip-plates and lip-plugs. The singing of these women, too, seemed to be Central African in style. The songs were in parallel harmony, moving in chains of *minor thirds*. Here is the beginning of one of the *deda* songs, to give an idea of the harmony employed:

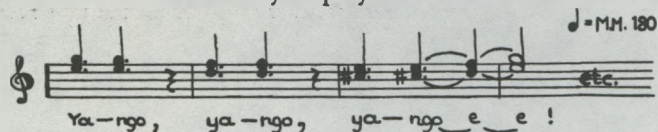


Fig. 20

Later on this song develops differently. After completing the parallel pattern, the women start singing a more polyphonic texture of tones to the syllables *-e-*, *-e-*, a way of singing which we already know from the women's songs of the Makua.

We recorded Ndonde women's songs also at Navanga on the Rovuma river; but the people in this village were strict Muslims, and all their songs displayed Arabic influence.

#### MUSIC IN A YAO VILLAGE OF THIS AREA

The village Chinganda was inhabited by Yao people. We recorded vocal music accompanied on a log, called *kindimba*. The log was played by two men with two sticks in their hands. Both men and women participated in the singing.

<sup>14</sup> A short 8 mm film of the dancing, made by H. Hillegeist, is in our possession.



The other items we recorded were songs to the seven-stringed *banjo* zither, performed by a young man. His music was very much influenced by the modern East African guitar-playing that he had heard from Radio Dar-es-Salaam. But his technique of playing was traditional.

The *banjo*-zither is shoved into two gourds which serve as resonators. The young musician at Chinganga played *chords*, not single notes, and he used two chords only. One chord arose from the tuning of the zither itself. The second chord was achieved by putting four fingers of the left hand onto the strings at certain points of division. (See Fig. 21).



Fig. 21

The right forefinger struck *all* the strings from one side to the other. Some of the strings were tuned by means of tuning plugs — small moveable bridges — pressed between strings and the board.

#### SUMMARY

The present paper is a modest attempt to fill in one of the blank spots on our ethnomusicological map of East Africa. It cannot be more than a preliminary superficial account of music and musical instruments in the wide territory of Northern Moçambique. Further research trips will have to be done in the coming years in order to check all the information that was given to me, and to collect more material, so that we may gain a more extensive knowledge of the area.

Many problems and questions have been raised in this paper. They can only be solved through intensive analytical and comparative studies of the present and additional material. The author would be glad, in this context, if he could be informed of any other recordings of music from Northern Moçambique that have been made or are being made.

There remains still much of the collected material to study. In particular, an analysis of the 8 mm film strips, together with a detailed analysis of all the tape recordings, will give us plenty of further insight.