A COMPARATIVE STUDY

OF SOME

CENTRAL AFRICAN GONG-LANGUAGES

BY

J. F. CARRINGTON

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BY

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INDRODUCTORY NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY.

The literature relative to drum- and gong-signalling among "primitive" peoples shows considerable variation in the terms used to describe the instruments by means of which messages are transmitted. In the following study of message transmission in the Upper Congo area of Central Africa the terminology recommended by the Royal Anthropological Institute will be followed. For the hollow wooden idiophone which is widely distributed in the area under discussion and which is also found in South and Central America and in Oceania, we shall use the term *gong* or *slit-gong*. The word *drum* will be reserved for the membranophone in which sound is emitted by the percussion of a membrane stretched tightly over a hollow wooden, metal or earthenware frame. Message transmission with a linguistic basis of the form described in this study appears to be confined mainly to percussion instruments of the idiophone type, membranophones being regularly used only in a restricted area in West Africa (see p. 15).

Because of the variation in terminology found in the accounts of drum- and gong-signalling from various
writers it will be helpful to give a list of the different terms used:

Gong or slit-gong (76).

<table>
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Some writers prefer to give the instrument its name in the language of the people using it.

The linguistic phenomena associated with communication by means of the slit-gong will be referred to as *gong-signalling* and *gong-language* (1) while the terms *drum-signalling* and *drum-language* will be reserved for communications on the membranophone. But it must be pointed out that these different terms express an ethnographical rather than a linguistic difference; for the language phenomena associated with communications on both types of instrument are of the same kind. Moreover, as is shown later (see p. 34), similar communications can be made using instruments of other types such as cordophones and aerophones.

(1) The term *signal* will be used for the sounds emitted by the transmitting instrument. These may be closely associated with linguistic elements forming the gong- or drum-language. This latter is conveniently distinguished from the spoken language of the tribe owing to its stereotyped nature (see p. 55) and the presence in it of words not found in the spoken language.
I. — THE HISTORY  
OF DRUM- AND GONG-LANGUAGE INVESTIGATION  
IN AFRICA.

There are many references in early travel literature to the use of drums and gongs for sending signals to distances of several miles. It is not always clear whether the instruments used are skin-covered drums or all-wooden instruments of the slit-gong type, nor yet whether the signals described are related to a drum- or gong-language or are simply conventional signals with no linguistic basis. Sometimes it is possible to clear up doubts of this kind in the light of later exploration. Thus, an early account of a journey into the country of the Mandingo was given by Francis Moore in his work: *Travels into the inland parts of Africa*, published in 1767. The large instrument used is described in the following words:

> In almost every town they have a kind of drum of a very large size, called a tangtong, which they only beat at the approach of an enemy or on some very extraordinary occasion to call the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns to their assistance; and this in the night may be heard six or seven miles (66, p. 330).

We know from later exploration that this passage probably refers to message transmission with a linguistic basis (cf. Hamlyn, 35, p. 107).

*Labouret* (50, p. 127) quotes a French traveller, de la Courbe, whose reference to signalling in West Africa is nearly a century before that of Moore. In the course of a journey to the mouth of the Rio Grande in 1685, de la Courbe related:

> Lorsque le roy veut avertir de quelque chose il fait battre son bambalon (=large drum) d’une certaine manière qui fait connaître sa volonté et aussitôt tous les autres battent
pour avertir ceux qui sont plus éloignés de ce que le roy demande; ainsy, en un moment, toute l'isle est avertie de la mesme chose; je ne l'ay pas ouy, mais on m'asseuré que cela était vrai.

Mungo Park in 1795 noticed the way in which a drum could communicate orders to the protagonists of an African wrestling match. His remarks are noteworthy since they are still true of wrestling matches as carried out by the Lokele and other tribes of the Upper Congo area (cf. CARRINGTON, 13, p. 79):

It must not be unobserved that the combattants were animated by the music of a drum, by which their actions were in some measure regulated (69, p. 61).

Experiments to verify stories of the possibility of transmitting messages by means of flutes were performed in West Africa by members of the Niger Expedition of 1841. Questions were also asked about the use of drums for the same purpose and the accounts of their findings show that these investigators learned to distinguish between conventional signals and signalling with a linguistic basis:

As we had often heard that the natives could hold musical dialogues even at great distances by means of little gourd flutes we prevailed on them to seperate while, by an interpreter, one of them was desired to convey certain sentences to those at a distance. To our surprise we found, on cross-examination, that everything had been perfectly understood. They said they could communicate with one another even at the distance of some miles where the locality was favourable to the resonance of the sounds. ...He (Glasgow) also said that they could communicate by this means at very great distances by the « war drum » which is kept in every village to give and repeat these signals; so that there is intimation of danger long before the enemy can attack them. We are often surprised to find the sound of the trumpet so well understood in our
military evolutions; but how far short that falls of the result arrived at by these untutored savages. This method of communication, is, no doubt, employed by slave dealers to give notice of the movements of our cruisers (Trotter et alia, 96, pp. 307, 308).

These references to drumming are for West Africa which had contact with explorers from Europe several centuries ago. It was not until the middle of the XIXth Century that signalling gongs were reported from the interior of Africa. The Portuguese explorer, Monteiro, who visited Kazembe’s village (Northern Rhodesia) in 1831 described the « mondo » signalling gong and reported that it was used for signalling messages by a « combination of sounds » which could be heard perfectly by those who understood the language (65, p. 342) (*).

That two distinct notes are necessary for message transmission and that rhythm also plays a part was recognised by Buchholz as early as 1890, observing the gongs of the Cameroons natives (8, p. 147, quoted by Frazer, 27, p. 174). Referring to a gong called elimbe, he writes:

Dieselbe besteht aus einem etwa zwei Fuss langen elliptisch geformten, ausgehöhlten Holzstück, welches in der schmalen Seite eine rinnenförmige, enge Öffnung hat. Diese Rinne ist durch einen Strich in zwei ungleiche Theile getheilt und man kann je nach der Seite die man anschlagt zwei verschiedene Töne hervorbringen. Hierdurch und durch den verschiedene Rhythmus des Trommels ver­stehen die Neger eine grosse Menge von Signalen aus­gedrückt sodass vermittels dieser Trommel eine förmliche Art von Telegraphensystem hergestellt ist...

(*) I saw a mondo gong of the type figured by Monteiro while visiting the area near Kazembe’s village in 1942. It was being used by a Bemba man, though the Bemba of this area say that they cannot communicate by means of gongs in their own language, but must use the language of the people in Kazembe’s village, viz. Lunda.
Meinhof made a careful study of the gong-signalling methods in the area which Buchholz describes. He confirmed the use of a two-toned gong for message transmission and reported that the gong-language could be used for whistling out messages and for shouting them. But when he examined the linguistic basis of the signals (these were written down for him by a Duala native who had been a pupil of his) he came to the conclusion:

mit den Dualaworten haben die Worte der Trommelsprache keine Ähnlichkeit (59, p. 119).

This conclusion is erroneous and it is suggested later in this study how Meinhof was probably led to it (see p. 41). The credit of having first given the correct explanation of the basis of gong-signalling must probably go to Betz who also worked on the Duala gong-language, publishing his account four years after that of Meinhof. His words are:

Viele der mit der Trommel gegebenen Wörter bzw. Sätze insbesondere Sprichwörter, richten sich bezüglich der Tonhöhe, der Tonstärke (des Nachdrucks) und des Tempos nach mit dem Munde gesprochenen Worte... (5, p. 3; quoted by Nekes, 67, p. 73).

More detailed investigations of the gong-languages in the Cameroons followed in 1912 from Nekes and in 1917 from Heepe, working among the Yaunde and Duala peoples. These writers draw a parallel between the Cameroons transmission technique and the gong-signalling which is found in the South Sea Islands and in South America; but the authors rightly point out that these latter methods cannot be of the same kind as those found in the Cameroons and in other parts of Central Africa because they are monotone. Nekes introduces two terms to describe the difference between signalling of the kind found in the South Seas (Signalbildersprachen) and
the tonally-based methods of Africa (Silbentrommelsprachen). He also follows Meinhof in pointing out the connection between the gong-language and signals transmitted by means of shouting (Fernruf) and by means of musical instruments other than gongs and drums.

Heepe's study contains a large number of gong-language texts which are interesting for comparison with the linguistic elements found in other Central African gong-languages. His division of these gong-language phrases into two groups called: « bildlich » and « wortlich » will be referred to later (p. 54).

More recently an American worker, Good, has reported on the gong-signals of the South Cameroons area where the Bulu language is spoken. This writer again refers to the shouting messages which are connected by a common linguistic basis with the signals beaten out on the gong (Good, 29) (*1).

Turning now to the progress of gong-signalling investigation in the Belgian Congo where the phenomenon is widespread, we note that descriptions of the two-toned gongs were given in the records of many early explorers. STANLEY (89, p. 255) gives a figure of the wedge-shaped slit-gong used by the « Wagenya or Wenya and the tribes of the Livingstone » (probably referring to the reaches of the Lualaba above the Stanley Falls). Writing nine years later of the Stanley Falls natives (that is, the Ena tribe whose gong-language forms part of the material collected for the present study) Stanley says:

The islanders have not yet adopted electric signals but possess however a system of communication quite as effective. Their huge drums by being struck at different parts convey language as clear to the initiated as vocal speech (90, pp. II, 158).

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(*) I have unfortunately not been able to consult the original paper embodying Good's results.
In the early days of Belgian Administration in Central Africa the value of the gong for broadcasting messages was appreciated and use was made of this means of contacting the native peoples. Lloyd notes this use of the gong by the administrative officers:

The Bangwa (like most of the Aruwimi and Congo tribes) have a most wonderful means of communicating the one to the other. Télégraphie messages... are sent by means curiously shaped drums which are made from the solid trunk of a tree some five feet in diameter which is hollowed out most cleverly and from it can be produced two distinct notes, and by varying the two notes they can convey messages to a neighbouring village... Belgian officers use this method of communicating with the natives, always keeping a drum of the station and a man that can beat it (55, p. 353).

So in many parts of Congo today, a signalling gong is used on administrative, commercial and mission posts for calling native employees to and from work. It is worth noting too that the gong has been used in road-making in the forest area. A gong is beaten in the village with which a new road is to be linked and its sound gives direction to the workmen cutting their way through the forest.

The tonal nature of some Congo languages was early recognised (1) but the first writer on these languages to publish an account of the correlation between the two essential tones of the gong-language and the signals beaten out on the instrument would seem to be Colle working on Luba:

On sait que les langues bantu... sont des langues chantantes... Chaque mot comporte un accent qui n’est pas

---

(1) Note the detailed tonal structure of Bobangi given by Whitehead as early as 1898 (107), where it was recognised that the language has two fundamental tones. Whitehead probably early realised the connection between the gong signals and the tonal structure of the language associated with them. He explicitly states this connection in his Manuel de Kingwana (108, p. 382).
of some central african gong-languages

l'accent prosodique mais l'accent tonique, musical ou aigu... Or, c'est précisément sur l'existence de cet accent aigu et sur la longueur des syllabes qu'est basé le système de téléphonie sans fil (17, p. 661).

Verbeken attempted in 1920 and later in 1924 to give a detailed account of the relation between the spoken language and the gong-language of the Luba tribe. He found difficulty in discovering the basis of the signals and concluded that in many cases the beats given by the gong-signallers:

ne reposent sur aucune règle. C'est une cadence au rythme naturel, instinctif et par conséquent libre du language indigène (82, p. 256).

Such a conclusion was not reached however by Burssens who approached the study of the Luba gong-signals from the point of view of a student of the tonal structure of the spoken language. He found that the relation between the signals beaten on the gong and the tonal structure of the words of the language associated with them was such a close one that no better means could be found of studying the tones of spoken Luba than the signal-gong itself (11, p. 3). Very recently, however, doubt has been cast on the application of Burssens' conclusions to Luba dialects other than the form he worked upon. Van Avermaet, who has written on the relation between the tonal structure of the gong-language and that of the spoken language of Luba-Samba, answers his own question:

Le kyondo (= gong) reproduit-il exactement les tons du language?...

with the reply:

le kyondo non seulement ne rend pas tous les tons du language... mais il ne tâche pas même de s'en approcher... Bien plus, dans plusieurs cas les tons sont franchement à l'opposé des tons du language (98, p. 7).

Van Avermaet's results will be discussed further in a later section (see p. 60).
Van Goethem (100), Boelaert (6) and Hulstaert (41) made detailed records of the gong language of the Nkundo tribe between 1927 and 1935. The latter author had previously made a careful study of the tonal structure of Nkundo and so was in a position to compare the gong-signals with the tonal patterns of the gong-language words and the corresponding words of the ordinary spoken language of the tribe. Clarke in 1934 described the gong-language of the Tumba tribe (15) whose language is closely related to that of the Nkundo (cf. Hulstaert, 43).

In 1944 the gong-language of the Kele-speaking peoples in the Stanleyville area of Congo was recorded by the present writer (13) after a detailed study of the tonal structure of the spoken language had previously been made (12) (1).

This historical note has so far been mainly confined to messages transmitted on slit-gongs and couched in Bantu languages (with which the present study is mainly concerned). The transmission of messages on drums in certain areas of West Africa is, however, essentially the same phenomenon linguistically although the elements of language which form the basis of the beaten signals belong to a language group other than Bantu. Westermann in 1907 showed that messages were beaten out on two differently toned drums (the male and female atumpani for the higher and lower pitched drums respectively) among the Ewe people. He concludes:

Die ganze Trommelsprache der Eweer beruht nämlich auf den musikalischen (und dynamischen) Silbertönen (104, p. 7).

(1) Some unpublished work on the gong-language of the Lokele tribe had been done about 1930 by Dr. K. W. Todd then a medical missionary at the Yakusu hospital. Of this work only a few records (mainly some village gong-names) were available to me when the present study was undertaken.
The collection of drum-texts given by Westermann for the customary beginnings of drum-messages illustrated the great value of these messages for the student of ethnology and native institutions. Witt in 1910 published an independent though less detailed account of the drum-language investigated by Westermann. He confirmed the results noted in the earlier records (111).

Mention must be made of the discussion on drum-languages to which was devoted the fifth of the Hamburg Phonetische Vorträge. Westermann’s work was noted and a survey made of gong-signalling methods in Africa, South and Central America and Oceania. It is interesting to note that Meinhof, who took part in these discussions still reiterated the conclusion he arrived at eighteen years earlier for the Duala gong-language:

Im Duala ist ein Zusammenhang zwischen Trommelsprache und Sprechsprache bis jetzt nicht zu finden (61).

The first authoritative account in English of communication by means of drum- or gong-language was that of Rattray (73) who studied the signals transmitted by the Ashanti drummers. (We are again concerned here with a non-Bantu language, although the method of communication is the same as that used by Bantu-speaking peoples). Two differently-toned drums were used and these shown to reproduce essential elements of speech such as tone and rhythm. Like Nekes, Rattray draws the distinction between communication on the drum by means of conventional signals having no linguistic basis (he calls these signals « tympanophonic ») and the method in use in Ashanti where the signals are based on essential linguistic elements (these signals are called « tympanosemantic »). Rattray affirms the value of the drum-language for ethnological and historical studies and emphasises that the linguistic elements used
in the drum-messages are grouped into stereotyped phrases or sentences (which he calls: "holophrases") rather than consisting of single works ('). Concurrently with the foregoing accounts and analyses of drum- and gong-messages, attention was given to communication having a linguistic basis and transmitted by means of other instruments. Meinhof's account of the shouted language (Fernruf) followed by that of Nekes and Heepe has already been mentioned. Westermann (104) reported that messages could be sent out by the Ewe on two-toned horns as well as on drums and pointed out that the linguistic basis of both methods of communication were identical. The use of whistles of various types among the Lobi was described in a publication by Labou-

(!) There is one passage in Rattray's account however which differs from the findings of other workers on drum- and gong-languages and which is at variance with the standpoint or the present study. Rattray writes:

"A small piece of iron called « akasa » is attached to the male drum on the tense membrane. This... jingle-jangles and forms a harsh, discordant note ».

(Drummers say) "that the drum will not speak well without it... I believe that the discordant and harsher note very roughly approximates to consonantal sounds, which must be reproduced as they are as essential to speech as unessential and unsought for in music » (73).

But it is quite unnecessary to reproduce consonantal sounds in Central African gong-signalling technique since tonal and rhythmic patterns alone are sufficient to characterise on the instrument the phrases of which the gong-language is composed. With regard to the native opinion as to the necessity of the small piece of iron for correct « speaking », it is worth while mentioning that Lokele men often provide the metal keys of their small hand-pianos « sanza »; in Kele: « likwengu » with tubular pieces of metal which set up a jarring noise when the keys are plucked. The men say that the instrument will not « speak well » without these pieces of metal. The reference is not to signalling but to the emission of a pleasing sound. It is possible that the piece of iron fixed to the Ashanti drum has a similar usage. Similar accessories are noted for some Congo signalling gongs; compare, for instance, the description of seed pods fixed inside a wedge-shaped gong as described by de Haulleville et Coart (37, p. 58) where they state:

"Quand on bat l'instrument ces grelots naturels font entendre un accompagnement originel ayant du charme ».
bet (51) who had previously surveyed much of the existing work on gong- and drum-signalling and by comparison was able to establish the essential similarity between communication methods on the various types of instrument.

All the accounts of gong- and drum-language research so far referred to have been those of authors who have correctly observed the close correspondance between beaten signals and the tonal patterns of spoken words constituting the gong- or drum-language. For the sake of completeness, however, it is worth while mentioning some records in which this correspondance has been missed and erroneous "explanations" of the technique involved have been given. Such a procedure will also serve to show some of the difficulties inherent in gong-language studies and to suggest that in cases where the basis of communication is still unknown, further work may bring to light the true explanation of the signalling methods.

Some "explanations" of gong-signalling technique show little evidence of careful study. Dennett, for instance, states that the gong-beater can differentiate vowel and consonant sounds by hitting the lips of the slit-gong at different positions and with different intensities. He gives a list of vowels reproduced on the gong with the positions for their reproduction:

I : by striking the side of the gong nearest the operator, in the centre;
U : by hitting the belly of the gong on both sides at the same time;
A : by beating the line of incision to the left, near the end of the gong;
O : by beating the line of incision to the right of the I-position;
E : by striking the line of incision on both sides of the gong between the positions for letter A and I.
He adds:

The other letters are formed in combination with these vowel sounds by striking the line with a second drum-stick with more or less of emphasis or precision.

From a priori considerations however, we should doubt the validity of this « explanation », since the Central African native with his characteristic oral tradition does not differentiate between vowels and consonants in the way Dennett's analysis suggests (1).

In an account given by Trilles (95, p. 349) signalling methods used by some tribes of French Equatorial Africa are recorded as:

```
pa-ta panpan ...................... a chief, so-and-so.
pa-ta panpan ...................... the village is in danger.
pan-pan pan-patapan .............. women fly immediately.
pan... panpanpanpan... pan.  warriors all run to arms.
pa-ta panpan ...................... to chief so-and-so.
```

We know that the gongs of this region often have signals with a tonal basis such as those described later in this present study and that therefore the account given above has probably missed the true technique of message transmission. It is suggestive that somewhat similar records of gong-signalling with a basis which is at present unknown may yield to further analysis and be shown to have some connection with the linguistic phrases which are said to describe them.

It may not be out of place to note finally a more recent attempt to « explain » drum-signalling in Africa which invokes the aid of telepathy as the means of the conveyance of the message. After rightly appreciating the difficulty for Europeans of learning the drum-

(1) Crawley (17, p. 252) recommends this account of message transmission by drums as being « all the more valuable because it is free from any attempt to heighten the effect ». 
language and pointing out the large number of different languages used, St. Barbe Baker goes on to say:

The more deeply I have delved into the problem of transmission the more I have become convinced of the inseparable association between the transmission of a visual picture by telepathic means and the language of the drum...

It is strange that we spoiled children of western civilisation are with difficulty rediscovering secrets which have been lost to us, while retained by the people whom we look upon as savages (1, p. 41).

As will be mentioned later, the last word as not been said on the methods of message transmission in use in East Africa, where a good deal of Baker's material was collected (see p. 29). But when Baker includes message transmission in Congo in his telepathy explanation we are in a position to suggest that his account is not adequate. There is no need to postulate telepathy in order to account for drum- and gong-signalling in the Congo area.

II. — GONGS USED FOR MESSAGE TRANSMISSION IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

The slit-gongs employed for transmitting messages by the tribes among which the present studies were made (Lokele, Mba, Mbola, Olombo, Topoke, Ena, Aηba, Komo) can be regarded as the simplest African form of the idiophone. It is called boòngü by the Lokele and has a similar name among other tribes: bongûngû, boŋóŋó, akûngû, except the Topoke who also use the term: lokolé. A cylindrical log of hard, red wood (*) is hollowed out through a simple rectangular slit cut in its length. The

(*) The wood used for gong manufacture over a very wide area in Central Africa is usually of the same plant species, or closely related species (cf. 12, p. 75).
hollowing is differential under the slit, one side becoming hollower than the other [see figure B, 1 (b)]. A slight ridge, called the « back-bone » (bokinini in Kele) is left at the base of the excavation, immediately beneath the slit, separating the differently hollowed sides. When the lips of the slit over the hollower side is struck it emits a low-pitched note; the other lip gives a higher-pitched note. In the small portable gong belonging to the writer, these two notes are separated by an interval of approximately a musical minor third. Other gongs however, have different intervals. No two gongs in the village of Yakusu are exactly alike in frequencies of lip vibration and in timbre, nor in the intervals between the notes emitted by the high-toned and the low-toned lips (1). This is of value when several communications are being made simultaneously in the same area on different gongs. Owing to the different frequencies of the notes beaten out and the varying intervals between the high and low notes of the different gongs, listeners rarely fail to « pick up » the message from the particular gong to which their attention is directed.

(1) The designations « male » and « female » are given to the differently pitched lips of the gong. The criterion of « maleness » or « femaleness » seems to be audibility of the emitted sound rather than the actual pitch. Lokele gong-beaters speak of « limiki lifi » (= big voice) and « limiki likéké » (= small voice) for the sounds emitted by the « male » and « female » lips respectively, and do not use the designations « high » and « low » which the European investigator employs. In small Lokele gongs the high-toned lip is frequently that which gives the more penetrating sound and is so called « male », while in larger instruments the low-toned lip may give a more audible note than the high-toned and hence may be called « male ». This may explain apparent discrepancies in gong-lip nomenclature in accounts of the instruments from different authors.

The use of the male-female distinction for the two sounds emitted by a single gong or by a pair of drums is of wide distribution. It is found, for instance among the Uitoto of South America (cf. Koch-Grümburg, 49, p. 302) and in the Solomons Islands (Ivens, 45, p. 170) as well as in Central Africa.
A variation of the simple boûngû type has an opening at each end of the log, through which can be removed the chippings produced during manufacture. Such a gong-type is frequently seen in Mba villages. In all cases examined, gongs with lateral openings had no ridges beneath the slits.

The gong used by the Topoke is essentially similar to the boûngû of the Lokele but is called lokolé. Further down-river, in the Ngala area, the gong called lokolé may have a small projection from either side of the slit at its centre (fig. A 10). This projection is called liele (=breast) and is described for the gong used in the area surveyed by HULSTAERT (41).

The external form of the gong is modified in the Mayombe area of the Lower Congo so that the whole is rather like a « Gladstone bag » in shape. Along the upper reaches of the Ubangi river (whence it has penetrated south as far as the Ngala area of the main river) the solid wooden base of the gong is carved away to form two or four legs. Such gongs are seen in a highly developed form among the Azande and related peoples where the slit-gong represents a large animal with a tail projecting at one end and a carved head at the other, the slit running along the back-bone of the animal (1).

Side-projections without any of the elaborate carving of the Azande gongs are noticeable occasionally in the Yakusu area where they may be used to facilitate traction of the finished instrument. An example from the village of Yafôle (Topoke tribe) was observed in which one end

(1) An example of such a gong, found at Khartoum and now in the British Museum collection has been described by Braunholz (7, p. 7). The interval between the two notes obtained by striking the opposite lips of the slit is approximately a musical minor third.
of the gong had a rolling-pin-like flange around which a rope could be passed (1).

A slit-gong of a quite different type, although superficially resembling that already described, is the mondo gong of South-East Congo (the Ijióndó of the Luba tribe). Made of a whitish wood, softer than that used for the bóündú, it is hollowed out through two circular or elliptical holes which are joined by a narrow slit. The two lips of this slit are left very thick but the interior of the gong is hollowed so that the lips give two differently pitched notes when they are struck (see figs. A 11 and B 2).

A further gong-type with a distribution apparently confined to the Belgian Congo is the wedge-shaped slit-gong in which a wedge-shaped block of wood is excavated through a narrow slit practised in the thin end of the wedge (fig. A 12). Three distinct notes can be obtained by beating the sides of this instrument which is used for dance accompaniment as well as for message transmission (see p. 64). In some areas, e.g. among the Lokele and the Mbóle, the cylindrical and the wedge-shaped types occur together; usually only the cylindrical type is then used for signalling, the wedge-shaped form being used only for dances. (The wedge-shaped gong is called : longombé by the Lokele.) There are other gong-typed in the Congo however, which show transitional shapes between the bóündú-type and the longombé-type (2).

Mention must also be made of the small hand-gongs from the Lower Congo area, which are often surmounted by human figure heads. These may be used as signalling-

(1) Lokele gong-makers often solve the problem of traction by making holes in the rim of the gong and passing rope through these. A number of men together pull the gong into the position required.

(2) Montandon (64, p. 2) figures a series of gongs with the « bóündú »-type at the head, intermediate forms approximating to the « longombé »-type and finally the highly developed form used among the Azande and related peoples.
gongs by the witch-doctor to call together the people (cf. Planquaert, 72, p. 21) but many of these small, hollowed figures emit only one note when struck on either side of the slit and must perhaps be regarded as fetishes rather than as signalling instruments (cf. de Haulleville and Coart, 37 (1)).

**Gong sticks.**

These may consist simply of pieces of soft wood or the lower expanding portions of palm-fronds. But in most Central African gong-signalling communities the gong-sticks are covered with rubber at the tips. Sometimes the rubber extends over the whole of the end of the stick and the rubber then comes into direct contact with the gong lips. More often, however, the layer of rubber is covered by an external binding of cane-work. In the special gong-beating associated with wrestling among the Lokele and their neighbours, the rubber-covered sticks may be supplemented by two thin sticks beaten lightly on the gong-lips by a second operator who beats out exactly the same tonal patterns as the man using the rubber-covered sticks.

**Gong-beating technique.**

Some writers have been at pains to show the way in which right and left hands alternate in the beating out of the gong messages (cf. Nekes and Clarke). In the writer's experience of Upper Congo signalling however, (1) It is possible, however, that even such monotone gongs could be used for signalling with a linguistic basis of the type described in this study, provided that two gongs were available with differently pitched notes. Such a method of signalling has been described for the Stanley Pool area by Costermans (Le District du Stanley-Pool, Brussels, 1895), who writes (p. 43) :

« Tambours de signaux... sont toujours par couple, un grand qui donne la majeure, un petit qui donne la mineure... Les indigènes transmettent à l'aide de ce jeu de tambour n'importe quelle nouvelle ». 


variability is shown in the method of beating out the same gong message. So long as tonal and rhythmic patterns remain the same it does not seem to matter which hands are used for the individual beats. Lokele gong-beaters have also stated that a woman, were she to attempt to beat the gong (it is not customary for a woman to do this, as in many other signalling communities; cf. Westermann, 104, p. 7), would be expected to use one gong-stick only. This would lead to awkwardness in beating but the message would be intelligible; showing that the actual hand used for individual beats is only of secondary importance.

**Gong housing.**

Large gongs belonging to the village sections are usually housed in special shelters which are often at the same time the talking-huts (ngwaka in Kele) used by the men. In riverine villages it is remarkable that the large gongs are housed as near to the river bank as possible and are always orientated with their long axes perpendicular to the bank, the low-toned side of the gong facing up-river. Smaller gongs belonging to individuals are often given shelter under the eaves of houses.

The large gongs usually have a wooden support which may consist of a number of logs laid horizontally beneath the instrument or may be the fork of a tree thrust into the ground. Since the arrival of Europeans in Central Africa and the subsequent use of motor transport, it has often been the custom to place an old motor tyre between the gong and its wooden support so as to get maximum resonance from the instrument. Small gongs are sometimes suspended by rope or forest creeper.

The gong-beater usually stands on the side of the high-pitched gong lip, irrespective of the direction of the people to whom he is sending a message. But many
operators can also send messages when standing on the opposite side of the instrument. The ability to send messages from either side of the gong is considered a criterion of merit among Lokele signallers.

**Time of transmission and distance travelled.**

Most writers state that early and late evening are the times most favourable to gong-signalling. At these times village sounds are reduced to a minimum and atmospheric conditions are probably more suitable for sound transmission. Statistics showing messages beaten at various times of the day in some sections of Yakusu village are given in 13, page 87; these figures are in agreement with records of signalling times from other areas.

The distance to which audible messages can be sent varies with the size of the gong used. Small gongs are useful over a range of three or four miles, while the larger instruments especially those on the river banks may carry six or seven miles. The gong at Lesali, at the foot of the last cataract of the Stanley Falls, is audible to fishermen on the river at night as far down-river as Yatuka (some twenty-five miles away) but messages are never attempted over such long distances. Messages of grave import can be relayed from village to village and it is probably because of this possibility that exaggerated stories have arisen of the large distance to which messages can be sent in Africa (1). Such relaying of messages will not, however, pass over tribal barriers unless a gong-beater is present in a boundary village who is bi-lingual in the gong-language; for each tribe usually has its own gong-language different from those of neighbouring peo-

(1) Compare the remark by Goodwin (30, p. 250).

« The drum-language of West Africa has been built up by careless journalism into one of the wonders of the world ». 
pies. Such men are sometimes to be found. Thus in the village of Yakusu itself which is within gong-range of the up-river section (Bosala) of the Olombo tribe, there are men who can beat out messages in Olombo as well as in Kele. Often such men who are bi-lingual in the gong-language are the children of women from the neighbouring tribes whose gong-languages they have learned from their relatives in those tribes.

There seem to be no special rites or taboos associated with gong-making or gong-beating in the Stanleyville area (1). In some sections of the Mbole tribe there is to be found a kind of hierarchy in gong-beating authority, certain individuals having a recognised priority of beating. These men are few in number, one only being found in each village or group of related villages and they each have distinctive alert signals, consisting of a number of beats on the low lip of the gong. If one of these men has beaten the village gong early in the morning, then no other gong-beater in the neighbourhood must begin to send out a message until the « priority » call is finished. Any other call in progress of being beaten out at the time of such an alert would have to stop. Infringements of these rules are said to be punishable by the fine of a goat.

(1) The only incident of note met with in the area is that of the « welcome » accorded to a newly-manufacture gong of large dimensions when it is beaten for the first time in the village in which it has been installed. Gongs in the neighbourhood are sometimes beaten « in praise » of the new instrument and skilled gong-beaters from other villages may try, in turn, beating out messages upon it. Such a custom is also common in connection with the naming of a new gong in the Mba villages (see p. 108).
III. — SIGNALLING
WITH AND WITHOUT A LINGUISTIC BASIS
IN AFRICA.
(With a note on extra-african signalling.)

It is important to distinguish between two kinds of signalling on gongs, drums and other instruments:

a) Signalling by means of a pre-arranged code where there is no essential relation between the type of beating used and the linguistic elements of the announcement to be made;

b) The reproduction on the signalling instrument of essential and determinative features of the language which forms the basis of the message transmitted.

European bugle calls are examples of the former category; linguistic mnemonics may be added afterwards to aid in memorising the calls broadcast on such instruments, but the signals used are not derived from these mnemonics in the first place. Morse code (an analogy often used erroneously for the gong-languages of Africa) is a combination of both methods (a) and (b) since the signals representative of individual letters are arbitrarily determined and therefore of type (a) whereas the sequence of letters is determined by the words constituting the message to be sent and therefore type (b) is in operation. As mentioned in the historical section, names have been given to these two distinct types of signalling insofar as they are represented by signalling on drums. Type (a) is the « Signalbildersprache » of Nekes and the « tympanophonetic signalling » of Rattray while type (b) is called by Nekes « Silbentrommelsprache » and by Rattray « tympanosemantic drumming ».

If the known cases of signalling by means of drums and other instruments be examined with this distinction
in mind it becomes clear that, so far as our present knowledge goes, type (b) shows a relatively restricted distribution, being confined to certain areas of Central Africa (Belgian and French Congo, the Cameroons and parts of the Sudan) together with some areas in West Africa. In these areas investigators are agreed that drum- and gong-signalling is performed by means of instruments giving two (in some cases perhaps more than two) distinct notes, by means of which the tonal patterns of the linguistic elements of the message can be imitated.

But this cannot be the basis of signalling with the drums of some other parts of Africa, because in those areas signals are frequently transmitted on monotone drums beaten singly or simultaneously in « orchestras ». Such drumming cannot satisfy the conditions requisite for signalling in Central Africa (1). Thus, for Uganda Peters states :

By means of these (drums) the greatest variety of signals can be given. The drum used in war is especially effective even to a European ear. Three drums tuned in fifths are beaten in a peculiar roll which has a solemn, dignified and at the same time menacing effect (70).

Junod (47) has described a drum used alone for signalling purposes viz. the muntshintshi of the Thonga tribe living in the hinterland of Lourenço Marques. This drum is beaten to announce a great fatality e.g. the death of a chief, or to warn the people of the approach of inundation or in the case of fire. It also serves to summon warriors to the capital in case of imminent war.

(1) In gong-signalling communities where method (b) above is the basis of transmission, a single drum can be used for communication owing to the possibility of obtaining a second, differently pitched sound, by stopping the drum membrane at certain point. Hulstaert, in a private communication with the author, has given an instance of such a use of a drum in the Nkundo area.
In cases such as those quoted above, where the signals do not seem to be based on the tonal patterns of a gong- or drum-language and where they are relatively restricted in number, it might be suggested that we have to deal with signalling of the first type (a) quoted above; i.e., the basis of communication is an arbitrary one, the beats on the instrument having no essential relationship with the linguistic elements of the message transmitted. But it is remarkable that sometimes definite linguistic elements are associated with the beating on the drums. Roscoe, for instance, gives language as the basis of signals used among the Baganda and the Baki'tara:

The rhythm of the drum was interpreted as beginning « enemiro » (be bewitched) and going on to say: « Nations, what do they want? We stand like men because the king is here... »

When a chief dies, his drum beats:
Bekereza nkaba taliya basala ensale nkabe taliya (the sick man cries for all kinds of things and fetishes to prevent death, but death says: It is useless, you must come) (Roscoe, 80, p. 291).

If the drum-signalling thus described is truly of type (a) then the linguistic elements must be regarded as aids to memory attached subsequently to signals arbitrarily determined. Against such an interpretation, however, is the fact that in some tribes the number of signals seems to be very large. The signals of the Ila-speaking peoples of Northern Rhodesia, which Smith and Dale found « impossible to record » (85, p. 268) are described as covering a large number of everyday tribal needs. This would be difficult to understand unless the signals corresponded with some essential element of the language used to describe the signals. This essential element may not be tone but rhythm could be a determinative factor. Just as some drum- and gong-languages which are
unmistakably tonal have been misrepresented in some accounts (see p. 18) so it may be that present descriptions of some of the monotone or "orchestral" signals are as yet inadequate and that the key to them may later be discovered.

A similar conclusion will be reached if we examine gong-signalling accounts from extra-African areas (see the Appendix for a description of some of the instruments on which this signalling is performed). Although the gongs of Oceania have lips with two different tones, yet only one of these is struck in most cases for message transmission. Hambruch, referring to the coast of New Guinea, near Frederick-William Harbour, writes:

Die Schlitztrommeln haben zwei Töne aber nie werden beide Töne verwendet, sondern man trommelt entweder auf der einfachen oder der verstärkten Seite... Auf Fidji... sie hat auch zwei Töne von demen jedoch ebenfalls nur einer verwendet wird (34).

Deacon found that single-note staff notation was adequate to represent the gong-signals of Malekula. Thus he gives:

![Rhythm notation]

(The rhythm called "irum naai" beaten at a man's death.)
(After Deacon, 18, p. 501.)

On the other hand, special signals are sometimes beaten out by an orchestra of gongs. Thus Eberlein describes a signal from New Britain (Gazelle Peninsula) beaten on the death of an important personnage when:

vier, fünf und mehr der grössten Trommeln in dem Gehöfte werden nicht selten aufgestellt (24).
In such a case the rhythms were regarded as adequately represented in staff notation as chords:

(The « borro » signal beaten at the death of a man.)

Records from South America give conflicting evidence on the use of distinct tones for signalling purposes. Karsten records the gong-beats by a notation which marks rhythmic differences but not tonal ones (48, p. 111). d'Harcourt refers to these gongs as differing from the Aztec teponastli in giving only one note whereas the teponastli had two distinct notes (36, p. 22). On the other hand, Koch-Grünberg explicitly refers to the two different tones obtainable on the lips of the Tukano gong and states that the Uitoto use two gongs for signalling purposes (49, p. 302) (1). We must note also an interesting substitute for the gong, described by Koch-Grünberg, in which two logs are hollowed out so that one has a wider and deeper groove than the other. These logs are then placed, hollowed side downwards, over a hole dog in the grand. The two logs thus form an improvised signalling apparatus and are beaten in the same manner as the two-toned slit-gong (49, p. 303). The necessity for two differently-toned logs bears out the claim that among the Tukano, tone is an important element in signalling (2).

(1) The two gongs of the Uitoto are of different sizes and tone. Each one is monotone as in the examples noted by d'Harcourt. The two gongs used together by the Uitoto are called « male » and « female ».

(2) Compare a remarkably similar use of differently-toned sticks in Central Africa (see p. 34).
The need for further investigations of the types of gong-signalling found in Oceania and South America is emphasised by the numerous reports of association between the signals and linguistic elements. The restricted number of signals noted by Mead suggests that the phrases composing the «gong-language» are of type (a) given above:

The drum-language consists of a series of formal phrase beginnings which mean: «Come home...» or «I am going to announce how many days it will be before I will do something...», etc. Everyone in the village stops work or play to count these beats but only a knowledge of who is beating the drum and what he is planning to do in the near future make it possible to interpret the announcement (57, p. 25).

But there is evidence from numerous investigators that there is a closer relationship than this between the signals used and the ideas to be conveyed on the gong in some other areas. Deacon, describing Malekulan gongs writes:

Every stage in almost every one of the men’s ceremonies has associated with it its own particular rhythm... every important object or happening of everyday life has its motif and even time can, to a limited extent, be expressed in the same way... Each gong rhythm has a name... which does not necessarily bear any relation whatsoever to the concept which the rhythm serves to convey (19, pp. 499, 500).

It is difficult to believe that so many signals could be learned and understood if they are mere conventional signals and not based on some co-ordinating principle. That rhythm of linguistic elements might be a factor determinative of meaning is suggested by Eberlein’s note for the Bismarck Archipelago:

Der Rhythmus dieses Signals stimmt überein mit dem Versmass eines Sprüchleins welches wohl beim Ursprung des Signals bestimmend gewesen (Eberlein, 24).
Slit-gong signalling has a linguistic basis in the island of San Cristoal of the Solomons group, according to Fox. The number of words is few ("several score of gong words") but:

the interesting thing about these few sentences is that they are not in the language of Arosi (among which clan they are found) but in that of Bauro; not exactly of the present Bauro but very closely allied to it (Fox, 25, p. 39).

This constitutes a noteworthy parallel with the gong-language phrases of some tribes in Central Africa (see later, chapter V).

IV. — INSTRUMENTS OTHER THAN GONGS AND DRUMS USED IN MESSAGE TRANSMISSION.

The nature of gong- and drum-signalling methods in Central Africa, which will be discussed in detail in a later chapter (see p. 42) has already been indicated in chapter I; namely, the two-toned instrument of transmission reproduces tonal and rhythmic patterns of the elements of the gong-language. Any other method of producing two differently pitched notes audible at a distance might be expected to serve in message transmission in the same way as gongs or pairs of drums. In point of fact such methods are used in Africa.

a) Sticks.

The use of a pair of sticks cut to different sizes so that one emits a more highly pitched note when struck than the other is common in the Yakusu area, where young boys often use them in learning the gong-beating technique. The sticks are usually of botúmbé wood (1) and

(1) The umbrella tree, *Musanga Smithii*. 
are placed across the knees of the sitting boy who hits the sticks with two shorter pieces of wood. Hulstaert reports that this method of producing two notes for communication at a distance is also known among the Nkundo boys but that it may also be used in the forest to replace a gong (42, p. 19). This latter author also states that even two differently-toned buttress roots of a tree can serve to send messages over short distances in the forest. Westermann notes the use of sticks among the Ewe (whose language is not Bantu but possesses only two essential tones which form the basis of the drum-language used).

b) Bells.

The double metal bell has a wide distribution in Africa. It is frequently used to accompany the dance but there is evidence that in some cases its double form permits of two distinct notes being obtained from it so that it can be used for signalling in the same way as the slit-gong. Labouret (50, p. 12) figures a « double-cloche » of this type which was used for signalling. He also reports the use in the same way of a single piece of metal from which two notes were obtained for signalling purposes by holding it at different points. A double bell is reported as being used for sending messages among the Luba people (16, p. 662 and 98, p. 12). The Baja of the Central Sudan, although not a Bantu group, also use the double bell for signalling purposes together with the slit-gong and the antelope horn. Tessmann, who describes these instruments, points out that they do not merely give signals but that they actually « speak, as the Baja say » (92, p. 213).
c) Whistles.

Whistles of various kinds are used for signalling with a linguistic basis. We can distinguish:

(i) Spherical whistles made by piercing the dried fruits of a forest tree. By blowing across one of the holes made and closing or opening another, two distinct notes are obtained by means of which the tonal patterns of the gong-language phrases can be imitated. Labouret describes this type of whistle for the Lobi tribe:

On s'est contenté de perforer un fruit desséché de la dimension d'une grosse prune... L'épicarpe ligneux et assez résistant est formé de dix côtés, on le perce d'un large trou servant d'embouchure et de deux autres symétriques, plus petites et placés sur l'axe de la sphère. Un quatrième orifice permet de suspendre l'objet au cou. Ce sifflet, aisé à construire, donne deux notes et se prête à des modulations variées (51, p. 195).

A whistle of this type is common among the Mbole tribe where it is frequently used by children (cf. 13, p. 80). It has been observed also among the Nkundo (42, p. 4) where a temporary substitute is sometimes made with the fleshy fruit of the losau tree (Pachylobus edulis).

(ii) Wooden whistles are also used for signalling purposes. Labouret describes such whistles from the Lobi peoples and derives them from the spherical whistles of type (i), showing a series of instruments which exemplify intermediate stages between the spherical whistle and the elongated instrument used in war. All are capable of producing two differently pitched notes so that they serve:

à envoyer certains signaux convenus et même à exprimer un langage analogue à celui des tambours dans les régions voisines (51).
Johnston mentions a whistle made from a gourd by the natives of Fernando Po, who do not possess signal gongs but:

have a peculiar flute-like whistle used for signalling. This is described by Boyd-Alexander as a small, hollow-necked gourd with a hole at the rounded end. It can be heard at great distances and the natives seem to have developed a system of code signals by musical tones which conveys as much information as the drum signals of the Cameroons (46, p. 959).

(iii) Whistles may be made from bones. The use of such bone whistles for signalling purposes sometimes features in African fables, where a full comprehension of the story often demands the realisation that the player on the whistle can actually communicate language by means of it.

(iv) The human lips may be used as a whistle. This is common in the Stanleyville area. I is also reported for Luba by Van Avermaet (98, p. 5). The same phenomenon is recorded for a non-Bantu tribe by Basden (3, p. 358) who found it among the Ibo. Whitehead (108, p. 382) however, points out that such whistled signals may easily degenerate into a code without any essential linguistic basis.

d) Horns.

It is possible to distinguish two types of side-blown signalling horns according to the presence or absence of a second hole in the tip of the horn, the stopping or opening of which produces two distinct sounds when the horn is blown. Side-blown horns without such an end hole and also end-blown horns are probably not used to signal messages with a tonal basis, although the ability
to obtain overtones with such instruments makes it possible that they could be used to transmit messages with the gong-language technique (1).

Some Central African tribes possess both horns and gongs as means of sending messages. Thus the Mbole people use gongs in their villages but carry elephant or antelope horns into the forest for intercommunication. Similarly with the Olombo and Topoke tribes. In these cases the same language is used as a basis for the gong and the horn signals. Other tribes, however, signal by means of horns alone and do not possess gongs or drums. This is the case, for instance, with the pigmies of the Eastern Congo (Barnes, 2, p. 148) (2).

e) Stringed instruments.

Instruments of this kind can be expected to have only a limited use in signalling messages because of the relatively short distance over which they are audible. But an example of the use of a stringed instrument for signalling purposes is found among the Olombo tribe of the Upper Congo, where a two-stringed guitar called sese by the Olombo is used to signal orders in a game of « hide and seek » (3). This type of instrument has probably been intruduced into Africa from Madagascar (cf. Chau-
vet, 14, p. 101). Ratzel (75, p. 457) figures a similar instrument and calls it the « Hova guitar ». Present-day Olombo tribesmen agree that the sese is an instrument brought to them by the Ngwana raiders who overran the Eastern Congo area towards the end of the XIXth. Century.

The instrument is shown in figure C and has one string of fixed length and tone called nyangó (=mother) and a second string whose length is variable by being pressed against one of three projections. The notes obtained from this second string on the instrument in the possession of the writer are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>String 1 (nyangó)</th>
<th>String 2: open</th>
<th>String 2: stopped at i</th>
<th>String 2: stopped at ii</th>
<th>String 2: stopped at iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Abémol</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these notes are used when songs with Ngwana words are accompanied on the instrument or when it is played without any sung melody. But when the sese is used to convey orders by means of the signal language, only string 2 is used and this is stopped at (i) or at (ii) so as to obtain the two distinct notes required to reproduce the tonal patterns of the words of the orders given. A typical occasion on which the sese would be used in this way is as follows:

A man is sent out of a ring of people and someone (usually a stranger who does not understand the way in which the sese can communicate language) is asked to hide a small object somewhere within the circle, e.g. in the garments of one of the players. The sese player then strikes up a tune which is a signal for the man outside the ring to return and begin to look for the hidden object. As this man makes his way round the ring of players he
listens to the sese instrumentalist who works into the tune he is playing, the tonal patterns of the following stereotype phrases:

- *yakû la mbisea (come backwards)* ........ frets: i, ii, i, ii, i.
- *omaci kolafelo (you left it ahead of you)* .......... i, i, i, ii, i, i, i.
- *yakû lafeleo (come on ahead)* ...................... i, ii, i, i, i, i.
- *ôlênjêke (don't make a mistake)* ..................... ii, ii, ii, i.

It is easy to see that the player who listens carefully to these signalled orders given by the sese player (who knows where the object is hidden) is soon able to find what he seeks. The stranger, however, who is unaware of the nature of the signals given and who cannot disentangle the signalled orders from the ordinary sese tune which is continually played during the game is quite mystified by the success of the player who finds the object.

A passage describing a lute in Pigafetta's *Report of the Kingdom of Congo* of 1591 is of interest in this connection:

More than this (and very wonderful) by means of this instrument they indicate all that other people would express by words of what is passing in their minds and by merely touching the strings signify their thought (71, p. 111).

There is no evidence, however, that the Kongo people used the same system of signalling as that in use today among the Olombo tribe of the Stanleyville area.

It is thus noteworthy that all groups of musical instruments can be used to transmit messages with the same linguistic basis as those forming the gong- and drum-languages: idiophones of various types, membranophones, aerophones and cordophones. Of these groups, all except the membranophones are utilised for message transmission in the Yakusu area with which the present study is mainly concerned.
The human voice.

The distance to which tonetic differences of speech are audible is greater than that over which phonetic differences can be appreciated (*). Canoe-borne natives often shout ordinary spoken messages to one another over wide stretches of water, but as the distance between speaker and hearer increases there is a tendency to stress the tonal as opposed to the phonetic values of the syllables used and finally to rely on the tones alone which are conventionalised for effective pronunciation; ke is shouted for each syllable having a low tone and ki for syllables with a high tone. A similar system of sending messages by shouting over long distances is used by agricultural and hunting tribes in the Yakusu area for intercommunication in the forest. But where the phonetic values of the elements of such messages are completely eliminated and reliance is placed on conventional representation of tones then it becomes necessary to use the stereotyped phrases of the gong-language instead of single words. Thus in the shouted language of the Lokele, the name for the European is as follows:

keke kekiki kekekkek.

Compare these syllables with the gong-language name for the European: bosongoloimokondalokonda (cf. Texts I A 46). The shouted language, composed of the conventional syllables ke (or le) and ki (or li) clearly follows the tonal patterns of the words making up the phrase of the gong-language. Other examples are:

Gong-name .... botandalakoko walisokusoku. the name for a steamer
Shouted .......... keke kekike kekekkekkekke .. (Texts, p. 56).
Tones ............ [. . . . . . . . . . . . . .] ..

(*) Cf. Hulstaert (40): « Si les indigènes se comprennent en s'interpellant à de grandes distances, c'est grâce avant tout au système tonétique ».
OF SOME CENTRAL AFRICAN GONG-LANGUAGES

Gong-name .... tokolokolo twâtoâla .................... firewood (Texts I A 2).
Shouted ......... kekêckêckê kîkêlêkê ..................
Tones ........... [. . . . . . . . .] ..................

Gong-name .... bokoko wâolondô .................... gong (Texts I A 15).
Shouted ......... kêckêckê kîkêlêkê ..................
Tones ........... [. . . . . . . . .] ..................

Gong-name .... wâlelaka wâlelaka wâlelaka. beginning of death
Shouted ......... kîlêckêckê kîlêckêckê kîlêckêckê .... signal (Texts I B 7).
Tones ........... [. . . . . . . . .] ..................

The form of these conventional syllables is of interest of students of Central African linguistics (1). It is noteworthy that syllables representing the high-toned lip of the gong are given a closed vowel (i in Kele; u in the Mba signals), while those for the low-toned lip have an open vowel (ε in Kele as in the above examples; o in the Mba conventional syllables). There is also some consonantal variation in the syllables used for the gong-phrases. In the examples given above from Kele, it can be seen that l sometimes replaces k. This consonantal variation seems to mark some essential rhythmic element in the shouted (and beaten) phrases (see p. 47).

Kele gong-beaters often reproduce the tonal patterns instead of giving the words of the gong-language phrases

(1) This representation of the tonal patterns of the gong-language phrases by conventional syllables gives us the key to MEINHOF'S difficulty with the gong-language of the Cameroons region (see p. 10). The gong-beaters who gave to the investigator the phrases he recorded were probably reproducing for him the conventionalised representations of the tonal patterns of the phrases used on the gong instead of the actual gong-words making up these phrases. Thus Meinhof records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gong Spoken Duala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dog ............... kuku tôtokolô .......... mbo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man ............... tô tôo ........................ moto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water .......... tôgolô golo golo golo ... madiba.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the word «man» occurs in many Central African gong-languages with the tonal pattern (.) which would be represented in conventional form by «kèkè» among the Lokele and by « tô tô » among a tribe using « to » instead of « kè » for the low-toned beat of the gong. This is actually what Meinhof records for Duala.
when they are asked for the signals for given objects and actions. Gong-beaters teaching novices also make use of the ki, ke terminology as well as repeating the phonetic elements of the phrases to be beaten.

V. — THE NATURE OF THE SIGNALS ASSOCIATED WITH GONG-LANGUAGES.

In gong-language investigations it is necessary to recognise the following distinct things:

a) the signals beaten out on the instruments;

b) the linguistic basis of these signals, which constitutes the gong- (or drum-) language;

c) the spoken language of the tribe.

Earlier writers have given definitions of the relations between a) and b) and between b) and c). Thus Heepe defines the gong-language of the Yaunde:

Zusammenfassend ware also die Trommelsprache der Jaunde zu definieren als eine an die Tonhöhen der gesprochenen Sprache gebundene Signalsprache deren einzelne Signäle den durch die wiedergegebenen Begriff teils wörtlicher Übersetzung teils bildlicher Umschreibung unter ausschliesslicher Berücksichtigung von Sprachmelos und Sprachrhythmus, d.h. Tonhöhe unde Rhythmus der Zeitfolge wiedergeben (38).

Clarke refers to the Tumba gong-language in the terms:

The drum-language of the Bantu tribes living in the Equatorial forest is a system of signals (which) represent the tones of the syllabes of conventional phrases of a traditional and highly poetic character (15).

HULSTAERT has given a more succinct definition:

Het princiep van het overseinen is eigenlijk zeer eenvoudig. Men heeft gestereotypeakerde zinnen, waarvan men de tonaliteit en het rhythmie slaat op de lokolé (31).
These definitions are entirely confirmed by the investigations carried out by the present writer in the gong-languages of the Lokele, Mbole, Olombo, Topoke and some other tribes of the Upper Congo. For further discussion we can isolate the following points in these definitions as well as in those given by other workers:

(i) the gong-beater reproduces on his instrument the tonal and rhythmic patterns of words which make up the gong-language;

(ii) objects and actions are characterised in the gong-language by stereotyped phrases rather than by single words. These phrases constitute an important part of the oral literature of the tribe;

(iii) the words composing the stereotyped phrases of the gong-language are essentially the same as those of the corresponding spoken language.

These points will now be examined in detail as they are exemplified by the gong-languages of the Upper Congo.

(i) The gong signals represent tonal and rhythmic patterns of gong-language words.

a) Tonal patterns. It has long been recognised that many African languages (especially of the Bantu and Sudanic families) are tonal. That is to say, that each syllable of the spoken word has a characteristic syllable-tone which is essential for semantic and grammatic differentiation. Detailed study of these languages, however, has shown that:

these essential tones do not always remain constant (Ward, 103, p. 384) (1).

---

(1) This conclusion, arrived at by a study of West African languages is equally true of the Bantu and Sudanic languages of the area covered by the present investigation.
They may be modified by a number of factors such as:

1. the position of the syllable in the sentence. If the syllable occurs at the end of a clause or at the end of a word spoken in isolation there is a very marked lowering of pitch in ordinary sentences (cf. Guthrie, 32, p. 10 and Carrington, 12, p. 196). This lowering of tone is so marked that it has been given special names; Hulstaert calls it « le ton pausal simple » (40) while Guthrie refers to it as « the final cadence » (33).

2. the emotional colour of the sentence in which the syllable occurs. In some types of interrogative sentences there is no progressive fall in tone throughout the sentence and final cadence is suppressed. Emphasis also tends to modify the speech tones of the syllables.

3. assimilation and coalescence of differently toned vowels may also modify the syllable tones.

4. certain factors, referred to by Hulstaert as « l’inter-relation des tons » and by Burssens as « toontegenstelling » affect the syllable tones. In Kele, one of these factors is associated with the coalescence of high-toned radicals with preceding vowels (Carrington, 12, p. 205).

In the enunciation of any given syllable therefore, the final speech tone adopted by it may not be the same as its essential tone. Since, however, it is the essential tone which is important for semantic and grammatical differentiation, it is necessary for the investigator of the tonal structure of such a language to be able to distinguish between tones produced by the modifying factors listed above and tones which are essential.

If the essential tones of syllables are worked out from the speech tones (recorded directly from native speakers or by phonographic methods) and then compared with the tonal values given to the syllables of corresponding
words in the gong-language it is found that in the great majority of cases the tonal patterns are identical. The few cases where the essential tonal patterns of the gong-words differ from the essential tones discoverable from speech tones are discussed in a later section where the suggestion is put forward that they represent in most cases in early stage in the development of the tonal patterns of the present-day spoken language (see pp. 67 and 70). We conclude therefore that the gong reproduces the essential tonal patterns rather than the speech tonal patterns of the words which make up the gong-language. The gong does not reproduce speech tones insofar as these are affected by the position of the syllable in the sentence or by the emotional colour or interrogative form of the sentence (1).

b) **Rhythmic patterns.** In addition to tonal variations between an essentially high and an essentially low tone, the syllables of a word in speech can show differences in prominence which give the word a characteristic rhythm. In Kele and some surrounding languages the most prominent syllable in the spoken language is the penultimate, irrespective of the grammatical nature of this syllable. On the other hand, in some other Central African languages, e.g. Ngala (cf. 32, p. 8) the most prominent syllable is the initial syllable of the radical.

---

(1) Special devices other than tonal changes may be used in the gong-signals to convey interrogative, emphatic or emotional meaning which is suggested in speech by tonal modifications of the essential syllable tones. Note, for instance:

a) the repetition of a high beat « tû, tû, tû », after the word « tólóle » (shall we open ?) which has an interrogative sense, in Texts I B 10;

b) the use of « ho, éingo » and « ho ho » in the cursing signals and the reply to these, which are indicative of anger and surprise (Texts II B 10);

c) the words « tolakondeloko, tolaóteloko » used in messages of grave import (Texts I C 2).
The gong-signals reproduce the rhythmic as well as the essential tonal patterns of the elements of the gong-language. Inexperienced gong-beaters of the Lokele tribe who may reproduce correctly the tonal variations characteristic of a gong-language phrase, but who incorrectly beat out the rhythm are accused of botakwa or « clumsiness ».

The necessity for correct reproduction of rhythmic patterns on the instrument is shown by the fact that rhythm may be the only factor determinative of meaning in gong-language elements which have identical tonal patterns. Thus in Kele the elements:

\[ \text{botandalakoko} = \text{canoë (Texts I A 9)}, \]

and

\[ \text{tolakondeloko} = \text{we shall grow (Texts I C 2)} \]

have the same essential tonal pattern and the same number of syllables; they are quite distinct when beaten out on the gong however because of the difference in prominence of the syllables which leads a difference in rhythmic patterns. In the shouted language, with the ki-ke terminology (see p. 40) these two patterns are given as:

\[ \text{kekekekekeke} \]

and

\[ \text{kelekelekeke} \]

respectively. Van Avermaet (98, p. 9) gives an instance of rhythm alone as a determinative factor for meaning in the gong-language associated with Luba Samba. Hulstaert (41) also records an example for Nkundo.

On the Lokele gongs and those of surrounding tribes prominence seems to be reproduced by a variation of interval between gong-beats rather than by differing amplitude of gong-lip vibration. These variations of interval are probably reflected in the syllables of the
shouted language (see p. 40). Further investigations are required, however, before the rules governing the consonantal variation can be formulated (1).

(ii) The stereotyped phrases.

It is the use of stereotyped phrases rather than single words in the gong-language which makes it possible to transmit a large number of varied communications by means of tonal and rhythmic patterns alone. Thus the words (in Kele):

- lomata (manioc)
- likonda (plantain)
- likolo (above)
- lokonda (forest)

all have the same tonal and rhythmic patterns and would therefore be indistinguishable if beaten out on the gong. But by the addition of other words so as to form short phrases, complete differentiation is obtained because the tonal and rhythmic patterns of the following linguistic elements are dissimilar. Thus we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manioc</th>
<th>lomata otikala kóndo</th>
<th>beaten out as [......]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plantain</td>
<td>likonda libotûmbela</td>
<td>beaten out as [......]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above</td>
<td>likolo kondâüsê</td>
<td>beaten out as [......]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>lokonda tektekê</td>
<td>beaten out as [......]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These stereotyped phrases are often poetical in nature and constitute an important part of the oral literature of the tribe. Comparison of the texts collected in the Yakusu area demonstrates the following characteristics of the phrases:

a) Although the gong-phrases of different tribes may

---

(1) If consonantal variation in the shouted syllables does prove to be linked closely with syllable prominence in the elements of the gong-language, we shall have a valuable method of studying prominence in languages which can be transmitted on gongs and other instruments. This is of interest in view of the importance given to syllable prominence in some theories of Bantu word division (cf. Doke, 23).
be couched in different languages, yet they frequently show a similarity in idea and structure. Note for instance:

The phrase for rain in Mbole and So:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mbole} & : & \text{botuku ótí la baiso} & : & \text{blindness has no eyes.} \\
\text{So} & : & \text{mbúla ekbutú na ńgandi} & : & \text{rain.} \\
\text{émaísia lifita nabosio} & : & \text{puts a cloud over the face.}
\end{align*}
\]

The phrase for earth in Ena and Olombo:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ena} & : & \text{ekikili atténó kitó} & : & \text{the ground does not lack graves.} \\
\text{Olombo} & : & \text{lembúbumbé lotiakeá emelio} & : & \text{the ground where corpses are buried.}
\end{align*}
\]

The gong-name for « dog » in Olombo and Mbole:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mbole} & : & \text{bofulufulu mvwâ} & : & \text{giant dog (which says).} \\
\text{Olombo} & : & \text{kbeékbeé kombübûa} & : & \text{kbeékbeé he howls.}
\end{align*}
\]

The name for a goat in Topoke and Luba:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Topoke} & : & \text{mbúli nama boléngé galokûte} & : & \text{goat, animal, child of smell.} \\
\text{Luba} & : & \text{(after Verbeken, 101)} & : & \text{the goat gives out the odour of the goat.}
\end{align*}
\]

Note also in this connection the name for the goat in the gong-language of the Nkundo, as recorded by Hulstaert (41):

\[
\text{smelly goat.}
\]

The name for the elephant in the Mbole dialects may also be compared with phrases recorded for other parts of Africa:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mbole (Botunga)} & : & \text{omongó olúkasóku wátíndindí} & : & \text{the elephant with big feet.} \\
\text{Mbole (Yalikoka)} & : & \text{lisokusóku lisíláká elenko} & : & \text{the elephant destroys gardens.} \\
\text{Nkundo} & : & \text{(After Hulstaert, 41)} & : & \text{the troop of elephants which trample the gardens.} \\
\text{Luba} & : & \text{(After Verbeken, 101)} & : & \text{the great being which eats trees and plantations.}
\end{align*}
\]
A further example of similarity of idea is furnished by the name given to the European in Kele and Luba [cf. also Mbolé (Yaamba) and Olombo (Bosala)]:

Kele: the European, the spirit from the forest;
Luba: the ghost which comes from the place of our chiefs (Verbeken, 101).

Verbeken suggests that this name is derived from the pallor of the European's skin, which gives the idea of a ghostly figure. Another explanation is suggested however by the experience of the present author with Lokele gong-beaters. These men have explained the author's ability to use the Lokele gong for message transmission as being the reproduction of a skill once acquired during a previous existence as a Lokele man in the Upper Congo area. When this man died his spirit (bolímó) went to Europe and later appeared back in Congo as the present author. The European is thus regarded as returning to a place of former habitation after sojourning in the spirit world.

b) A second characteristic of the gong-phrases is that of the tendency to use derogatory or diminutive words. Thus: the Kele gong-word for « fishing-net » is: bilémé yáwéngó, which is translatable as: « a little bit of an old fishing net ». It may be compared with the Yaunde phrase given by Heepe (38): « an old hunting net ».

Other examples showing the same tendency are:

Kele:
- Goat: imbúmbuli fáokénygé
- Weeds: tongangala twákénygé
- Children: twilengéléngélé
- Head: likokó lyáotó

Olombo:
- Girls: toseka

little goat of the village.
little bits of grass of the village.
very small children (even though youths are referred to).
lump of a head.
little girls.
Mbolé (Yalikoka):
Plantain ... ifofe jálíkondo .................. little bunch of plantain.
Mbolé (Yaamba):
Initiates ... tolóme twábalimó ................. little men of the spirits.

A similar tendency is observable in other recorded gong-languages: thus Yaunde (after HEEPE, 38):
Net: give me an old hunting net;
Sheep: a little sheep;
Plantain: a little dwarf plantain;
Ape: the little ape clammers about in the bush,

and Nkundo (after HULSTAERT, 41):
Woman ..... iseke sekaka y’óllato ................. the first word is the diminutive form.

It has been noted for other forms of oral literature found in Africa that there is a repeated use of the diminutive prefixes... where the thing or person denoted is not necessarily small (GRAY, 31, p. 102).

c) Duplication is a third feature of many of the gong-language phrases. Thus in Kele, the gong-name for fish consists of the names of two kinds of river-fish:
yafélé layambóku ....................... all the félé fish and all the mbóku fish.

The Ena name for fish is very similar:
esélé kolambóku;

while the Nkundo name as given by HULSTAERT (41) also shows the names of the types of fish:
beningó lankaka.

We can add further examples of this duplicated form:

Kele:
Palaver .... njáso labakambo .... two words meaning « affair ».
News ....... mbólí... sango ..... two words for « news ».
Olombo:
Oil .......... sókó mainá .......... two words for « palm oil ».
Note also the phrase given by Clarke for the Tumba gong-language:

Beds ........ itokó la mbéto .... two words for « mats » (16, p. 40).

Duplication is also seen in the arrangement of some phrases in couplet form:

Kele:
inolákâ batíndí mbisa .................. bring back the feet.
inolákâ bakolo mbisa ................. bring back the legs i.e. « return ».
bileli kondábaíso ...................... tears in the eyes.
bolelo kondábonoko ................... wailing in the mouth (part of the death signal).

kondábaâki ................................ on the clods.
kondányaâz ................................ on the ground (the gong-phrase meaning « ground »).
tókeke mbóli ................................ let us hear the news.
tókeke saïgo ................................ let us hear the tidings.

Mbolé (Yaamba):
nangólákâ loéko ........................... speak about the affair.
nangólákâ likambo ...................... speak about the palaver (in the call to the witch-doctor).

Mbolé (Bolinga):
oló mâñz ................................. the corpse itself.
oló tamba ................................. the corpse stretched out (in the death signal).

In all these couplets the contrast between the high-tone of the first part of each couplet and the low tone at the ending of the second part is most characteristic and probably assists the gong-beater to memorise the stereotyped phrases as well as being pleasing to the hearers of the message.

d) A further characteristic of many of the phrases of the gong-language is the frequent occurrence of gong-names in the form:

A x B, where A ......................... one name for the object;
    B ......................... a second name for the object or some descriptive word, and
    x .......................... a concording prefix.
Thus, for Kele, the name for firewood is:

\[ \text{tokolokolo twátoála} \]

\[ \text{tokolokolo being the name for small sticks, while toála is the usual word for pieces of firewood.} \]

Similarly, the name for plantain is:

\[ \text{likondo libotúmbela} \]

\[ \text{likondo being the usual word for plantain, while libotúmbela means "to be propped up";} \]
\[ \text{li- is a concord joining the two elements of the gong-name.} \]

Many examples of this structure can be seen in the collected gong-language texts. To quote a few from languages other than Kele:

**Mbola:**
- **Meat:** \[ \text{otéko ónama} \]
- **Bird:** \[ \text{tofulá átonoli} \]
- **Shield:** \[ \text{likokë lyóotukola} \]

**Topoke:**
- **Oil:** \[ \text{bainá gabolángi} \]
- **Wife:** \[ \text{bogáli yambéle} \]

Essentially similar are some phrases recorded for other languages:

**Nkundo:**
- **isekaseka y’öliato**
- **yoks lotokélâ**

**Tumba:**
- **Meat:** \[ \text{lotéko lónyama} \]

Neither the form \[ AæB \] nor the duplicated form mentioned under c) above seem to occur in the other oral literature of the peoples using the gong-languages. In proverbs and fables, terseness of expression rather than extension and duplication are characteristic. The extended form which is characteristic of the gong-
language phrases is clearly of value because the addition of extra syllables to these phrases increases the characterisation of them by tone and rhythm loane. It must be noted however, that while poetical and even musical factors may have entered into the construction of these stereotyped gong-phrases (1), yet the beats on the transmitting instrument always follow exactly the tonal structure of the component words. We have never found any indication in the gong-language phrases of the Yakusu area that the tonal patterns of the phrases become modified for rhythmic purposes as has been suggested for Luba Samba by Van Avermaet (see p. 60).

e) A few gong-phrases, which are neither of the duplicated form nor of the form \( AxB \) are short word-pictures of the objects they represent and are essentially like the Yaunde phrases which Heepe described as « bildlich » (38; cf. p. 11 of this study). Such are :

Kele :
- House : the house with shingles high up above.
- Money : the pieces of metal which arrange palavers.
- Manioc : the manioc remains in the fallow garden.
- Moon : the moon looks down at the earth.

Olombo :
- European : white man, evil spirit like rain.

So :
- Goat : the animal which walks with a cloud on its face (referring to its beard).

Mbọ́t (Yalikoka) :
- Sun : the sun which remains in the village square (even when all the villagers have left for the forest).
- Dog : young man who runs about in the ashes of the fire.

(1) Cf. Hulstaert, 42, p. 18 : « Il est naturel qu’on choisisse de préférence une phrase qui se prête le mieux à être rendue... qui possède une tonalité et un rythme nets et caractéristiques.
Topoke:

Leopard: giant which destroys houses.
Dog: witch-doctor with bells round his neck.
Elephant: elephant which eats nuts.

Aŋba:

Spear: spear for piercing the belly.

**Personal gong-names.** The gong-names of all male (1) members of the Lokele and surrounding peoples are further examples of the stereotyped phrases. They are nearly always of the « word-picture » type (2). These names are usually inherited from some ancestor and are not coined for each new member of the tribe, except in the case of those peoples who have only recently adopted the practice of gong-signalling. Frequently several men in one village have the same gong-name but they can be distinguished if necessary by adding the gong-names of their fathers and further, the gong-names of the villages from which their mothers came.

(iii) **The correspondence between the gong-language elements and the spoken language.**

If the stereotyped phrases of which a gong-language is composed be examined by anyone familiar with the corresponding spoken language it is clear that there is usually a close affinity in vocabulary and grammatical structure between the two; i.e. the linguistic basis of the

---

(1) The Aŋba and also So have gong-names for women as well as for men. An Aŋba gong-beater informed me that this was so because women often go into the forest to do garden work and the gong can then be used to communicate with them. Note, however, that the Olombo tribe is an agricultural people but does not have gong-names for women. These are called on the gong by being referred to as:

the wife of so-and-so, or
the daughter of so-and-so.

(2) The name in spoken Kele for a « gong-name » is *lombilambila*, which is probably derived from the same root as *bombila*, meaning a fable.
gong-signals is essentially similar to the spoken language of the tribe. We must, however, qualify this generalisation on the essential similarity of the gong-language (and the spoken language) of a tribe in view of the following facts:

a) A tribe has been known to take over in entirety the gong-language of a neighbouring group, although their spoken languages may be quite different. Westermann (104) followed by Witte (111) reported that the non-Bantu Ewe people used the Tschi language when beating messages on their drums. Clarke instances a similar case from the Tumba region of Belgian Congo (1). We can add further examples from the area covered by the present survey. Thus the Ena tribe living round the lower cataracts of Stanley Falls speaks a language which is quite different from that of the Lokele tribe, but uses a gong-language which is almost identical with that of the Lokele (compare Texts I and II). Gong-beaters of the Ena tribe understand spoken Kele as well as their own Ena language and fully recognise that they are using a « foreign » language for their gong-signals.

b) A gong-language may be composite in nature, i.e. it may show a stage intermediate between a gong-language like that of the Ena which is entirely the language of another tribe and that of the Lokele which is based almost completely on their own spoken language. The gong-language of the Mba, to the North of Stanleyville, is composite in nature. The language spoken by this tribe

---

(1) « The spoken language of two tribes was not readily understood but the drum-language was so nearly identical that a member of one tribe had no difficulty in understanding the ordinary messages sent on the drum by the other tribe, except, of course, personal names » (Clarke, 15).
is not Bantu but probably Sudanic in form (1) and the
difference in vocabulary between spoken Mba and the
languages of the surrounding tribes makes it fairly easy
to assess the extent to which the gong-language phrases
are composite. Compare for instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Canoe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mba (spoken)</td>
<td>nēc</td>
<td>Mba (spoken)</td>
<td>ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mba (gong)</td>
<td>ngūtū masombo</td>
<td>Mba (gong)</td>
<td>akuselina nga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olombo (gong)</td>
<td>ngūtū asombo</td>
<td>Mbole (gong)</td>
<td>oköselananga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Plantain</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Come quickly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mba (spoken)</td>
<td>bose</td>
<td>Mba (spoken)</td>
<td>byü jèle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mba (gong)</td>
<td>libōgo</td>
<td>Mba (gong)</td>
<td>kelē mbangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anja (gong)</td>
<td>libōgo libatakulu</td>
<td>Anja (gong)</td>
<td>luā māngomango</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all these examples the Mba gong-language uses Bantu
rather than Mba elements. Note however, that the gong-
names of individuals and of villages consist largely of
Mba elements and are not in language borrowed from
Bantu neighbours. Mba gong-beaters recognise the
origin of the non-Mba elements in their messages as being
derived from the gong-languages of neighbouring tribes.
They also agree that gong-signalling has been introduced
into their village life in fairly recent times. This is the
probable explanation of the fact that many of their
personal names in the gong-language are recent produc-
tions rather than the inherited traditional names of
ancestors as in the case of the Lokele tribe. The follo-
wing name is clearly a recent one and has not been

(1) Little work has been published on Mba. Johnstone (46) gives a
word list and some grammar notes. My own records show that Mba
has the following characteristics: (i) kp and gb are characteristic
phonetic elements; (ii) tone is important for semantic and grammatic
differentiation; (iii) roots are typically monosyllabic; (iv) the genitive
form has nomen rectum before nomen regens; (v) plural forms are
built up by suffix change; in one class of nominals root duplication is
typical of the plural form. In all these characteristics Mba satisfies
the criteria of Sudanic languages given by Westermann (105) and
Tucker (97).
OF SOME CENTRAL AFRICAN GONG-LANGUAGES

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inherited from ancestors living before the advent of the Europeans:

kulage édwabê osonjó téné.

might is of no avail in the white man’s village; i.e. a man who considers himself strong and powerful in native society has to acknowledge his weakness in comparison with the European.

European words are sometimes borrowed for the gong-language phrases, each borrowed word being given a characteristic tonal pattern. For example, Nkundo gong-beaters distinguish between Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries as:

R. Catholic: baseka mpélu ............ men of Fathers (pères).

while the Company agents are given the name:

baseka kománi ........................ men of the « compagnie » (after Hulstaert, 41).

Note also the Mbole (Botur|ga) word for the antelope:

lesase loosongó ........................... « licencié » of the white man.

Frequently, however, European ideas are translated into the gong-language and typical gong-language vocabulary is used; thus the Kele gong-phrase for the river-steamer is:

botandalakoko wáisokusoku ........ canoe, large as an elephant.
wáosongó olímó kondálokonda ... of the European.

A further example is seen in the phrase used to represent the Christian idea of God, as taught by European Missions:

liúwe lisángó ............................. the respected Father.
likásékwelé likolo kondáüsé ....... who came from above.

c) Comparison between the gong-phrases and the vocabulary of the spoken language of the tribe shows that a number of words occur in the former which are
not normally present in the latter. A few words may occur in the gong-language phrases which are untranslatable by the gong-beaters. These latter claim that such words are old words handed down from generation to generation of gong-beaters and whose meanings have been lost with the passage of time. Lokele gong-beaters have informed the author that certain of the words peculiar to their gong-language were used in the spoken language of the tribe within living memory. It is reasonable to regard other elements whose meanings are lost as also being archaic forms which have been perpetuated in the stereotyped gong-language phrases while they have disappeared in the more flexible spoken language. As additional evidence in support of this view it should be noted that words with the same linguistic origin as the peculiar gong-language elements may occur in the spoken language but, in most cases, they then show a more highly developed form in the latter than the corresponding gong-language elements (see p. 71). Similarly, where the spoken language elements show phenomena which are explained linguistically by coalescence and assimilation the gong-language phrases frequently give the non-coalescent or non-assimilated forms. It is easier to explain this by regarding the gong forms as primitive than by suggesting that the gong-language elements are a later development from the spoken language as heard at the present day. We conclude therefore that many of the peculiar gong-words are archaic in nature and in this respect Kele and some other neighbouring gong-languages such as Olombo and Topoke (where borrowing has not occurred to the same extent as in Mba and Ena) are similar to other gong-languages recorded for Central Africa (cf. Hulstaert, 42).

It should be remembered that archaic words are a reported feature of some other forms of oral literature
Maar de meest gebruikte bijnaam voor Kabundi, een woord dat dikwijls zijn naam verwangt, is « dinkelenginge ». Wonder genoeg, niemand kent den oorsprong ervan of weet een uitleg eraan te geven... dusdanige onuitlegbare woorden komen ook voor in gezangen. Ze moeten archaische uitdrukkingen zijn, die voort blijven bestaan in volksmond terwijl de inhoud ervan verloren ging (99, p. 18).

VI. — SOME CONTRIBUTIONS OF GONG-LANGUAGE INVESTIGATIONS TO LINGUISTIC STUDIES.

A) The study of tonal patterns.

It has been shown in an earlier section (p. 42) that the gong-beater reproduces on his instrument the essential tones of the syllables which make up the gong-phrases and that modifications of these essential tones by emotional colour or syllable position, which would affect the essential tones in speech are not heard on the gong (1). Hence the gong-language tones are of value in giving to the student a means of arriving at the essential tones of the gong-language elements. Since the greater part of these are the same as elements of the spoken language (see p. 55) the gong signals give a means of studying the essential tones of the spoken language. Burssens appre-

(1) The only observed difference in essential tonal pattern between the gong-signals and the spoken language (other than differences consequent on coalescence present in the latter and absent in the former) is the pattern for the word meaning « European » which is: bosongó [..] in spoken Kele and bosingo [..] in the gong-language. An explanation of this difference is offered by Lokele gong-beaters and is given in 13, page 79.
associated this method of studying tonal patterns and based his tonal study of Luba upon it:

Het is mijn stellige overtuiging dat het beste hulpmittel om een Afrikaansche Negertaal als toontaal te bestudeeren, de inlandsche seintrommel is (10, p. ix) (1).

In areas where gongs or drums are not used for signalling with a tonal basis, other instruments such as horns or bells may serve to communicate messages based upon language and so give valuable information about the essential tonal patterns of the corresponding spoken languages.

Mastery of the gong-language phrases and the use of these in sending messages can be of great practical value

(1) A recent criticism of such a use of the gong-language as is recommended by Burssens has been made by Van Avermaet studying Luba Samba (98). Some of Van Avermaet’s conclusions have already been referred to but further attention to his results is necessary. If the examples which this author gives are studied word by word and comparisons are made between the tonal patterns of the gong-language elements and the corresponding words of spoken Luba Samba it is found that approximately 30% of these words have identical tonal patterns. Although Van Avermaet suggests that:

« il n’est pas exclu qu’à l’origine la divergence n’était pas si grande qu’à présent... »

yet the present-day discrepancy as recorded by him is so large as to render the gong-language studies of little value as a guide to the tonal patterns of spoken Luba Samba. Since Luba Samba is closely related to the Luba dialects which Burssens studied we must hope for further investigations to clear up this apparent inconsistency. However, it is worth noting meanwhile that Van Avermaet’s records of the tonal patterns of the spoken language are remarkable in that the majority show a progressively falling tonal pattern throughout the word and the last syllable has nearly always a low or mid-tone. In Kele and some surrounding languages this would only be the case if the student were noting down speech tones instead of essential tones. We have already pointed out that any comparison between beaten signals and the tonal patterns of the spoken language must involve the essential tones of the spoken forms, since in speech these latter may be greatly modified by emotional colour, the position of the syllables in the word and sentence and other factors.
to the European learning to speak a Central African language such as Kele with correct tones. Many Kele verbals and nominals derived form verbals can have only two possible tonal patterns; i.e. there is alternance of tone only on one syllable, which is the initial syllable of the radical. The rapid recalling of a gong-language element may thus help the speaker to decide which of the two forms must be employed. Suppose, for instance, the speaker wishes to use the word : lilongi (= victory), derived from the radical : -long- (= to overcome). There can be two patterns for this nominal :

lilongi [. ·] and lilongi (.[ ·]).

If now the speaker recalls the gong-language element : kolongélá [. · · ·] which occurs in the phrase associated with the arrival of a bride at the village of her husband (see Texts I B 6), he realises that the initial syllable of the radical has a high tone and that therefore the tonal pattern of lilongi must be : [. · ·]. This is the reverse of the mental process which occurs when a native drummer uses the gong-language, but it has proved to be of real practical value to Europeans learning Kele and related languages.

B) The number of tones in Central African languages.

The problem of the number of tones in African languages was reviewed by Nekes as an attempted answer to his question : « Gibt es im Bantu verschiedene Tonsysteme ? » (Nekes, 55, p. 81). The following list of languages includes some of those given by Nekes as well as others from the area covered by the present investigation :

2 tones reported : Bangi (Whitehead); Luba (Burssens); Ngala (Guthrie); Nkundo and Tumba (Hulstaert); Yamde (Heepe); Kele Mbole, Ena, Topoke, Olombo, Anba, Komo, So (Carrington).
3 tones reported: Luba Samba (Van Avermaet); Sechuana* (Jones).
4 tones reported: Teke* (Laman); Schambala* (Roehl); Yaunde* (Struck).
5 tones reported: Pangwe group*, including Yaunde, Fan, etc. (Tessman).
9 tones reported: Kongo (Laman); Zulu (Doke).

N. B. — Languages marked with an asterisk are those quoted by Nekes in his paper. In making this list, composite tones are not counted; thus Jones gives 5 tones for Sechuana, but two of these are gliding tones.

The question arises as to whether these apparently conflicting records point to several fundamentally different tonal systems in Bantu or whether they are variants of the same system recorded in this way owing to different conceptions on the part of the various workers as to the nature of tone. Nekes writes:

der Zweifel noch immer nicht behoben, ob in den Bantu-Sprachen ganz separate Tonsysteme vorliegen oder ob diese Unbestimmheit nur auf der verschiedenen Auffassung der Autoren beruht (55, p. 82).

That the apparent diversity is due in some cases to different conceptions of tone by the various authors is suggested by the position of the language Yaunde in three of the above tonal categories (2, 4 and 5 tones according to Heepe, Struck and Tessman respectively).

Gong-language studies are of interest and value in this connection by focussing attention on the difference between speech tones and essential tones. Many of the cases where a mid-tone is reported, for example, may be shown by later investigation to have only two essential tones, the mid-tone being formed in ordinary speech from either a high or a low essential tone by modifications of these owing to positional or emotional factors. If a language can be adequately represented tonally on a two-toned slit-gong or on two differently toned drums or on any other instrument emitting two differently pitched
sounds, then there can be only two essential tones in that language. Hulstaert's experience with Nkundo is of interest:

Je croyais à l'existence d'un ton moyen. Plus tard je me suis aperçu de mon erreur. Une des causes de celle-ci est... le ton descendant à la fin d'un mot. Mais la cause principale est située dans l'existence du ton pausal simple... Ce ton pausal n'est donc pas de l'essence du mot (HULSTAEERT, 40).

If more than two notes were required to send messages in a tone language this would point to the presence in that language of more than two essential tones. Such a case has been recorded by TUCKER for the Banda in the Southern Sudan, where:

the Banda drum-signalling analysed by the author in the Eastern district is tri-tonal (97, p. 65) (1).

C) Composite tones.

It has been the practice of some authors to regard tonal glides as separate tonal elements distinguishable from the level high and the level low essential tones. On such a

(1) Records of the gong-language of the Tetela people as given by TORDAY and JOYCE are of interest in this connection because these authors suggest the use of more than two tones for message transmission in this language. A wedge-shaped gong is used which produces three distinct notes on each side; these are recorded as being different on one side from the notes obtainable on the other and are represented as:

Of these six notes, only four are concerned in signal transmission with a linguistic basis since:

« 1 et 4 ne sont employés que pour séparer les mots et les phrases ».

If this account were an accurate statement of the gong-beating
system Kele would have the following five essential tonal elements:

\[
[. \cdot] \quad [\cdot \cdot] \quad [\cdot \cdot \cdot] \quad [1] \quad [\sqrt{\cdot}]
\]

Similarly for the other languages studies in this survey. But it is possible to regard such tonal elements as composite tones \(^1\). Thus:

\[
[\sqrt{\cdot}] \quad \text{is representable as two consecutive tones: } [. \cdot]; \\
[1] \quad \text{is representable as two consecutive tones: } [\cdot \cdot]; \\
[\sqrt{\cdot}] \quad \text{is representable as three consecutive tones: } [\cdot \cdot \cdot].
\]

Technique and the same correspondence should hold between beaten and spoken tonal patterns of Tetela as exists in the languages of the Upper Congo, then we should have to conclude that Tetela has four essential tones representable by the following notes:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
2 \quad 3 \quad 6 \\
\end{array}
\]

We cannot, however, accept this conclusion without reserve, for the following reasons:

\(a\) The wedge-shaped gong is used for dancing by the Lokele and neighbouring tribes who use three notes obtainable by striking the side of the instrument at different points. But in no case do the gong-beaters differentiate between the notes obtainable on one side of the instrument and the set of notes obtainable on the other side.

\(b\) The Rega gong-signallers employ a similar gong to that of the Tetela but use only two notes (Delhaise, 19). The present author has witnessed such bi-tonal signalling on a wedge-shaped gong on the Lualaba river.

\(c\) Some of the records given by Torday and Joyce in their study show that notes 2 and 5 are interchangeable in some of the gong-language elements. One example has notes 3 and 6 interchangeable. This suggests that there is no essential tonal difference between notes 2 and 5 and between notes 3 and 6, though the alternation of beats on the different sides of the gong may aid in correctly transmitting rhythmic patterns.

\(d\) A native from the Eastern area of the Tetela tribe and educated at the Mission stationed at Wembo Nyama has informed the author that Tetela messages could be signalled adequately on one side only of the gong and that two notes only are required to beat out the tonal patterns of the linguistic elements.

\(1\) This only refers to essential gliding tones. The glide produced by the effect of the final cadence on a terminal high tone is not included in this discussion.
Meinhof admits the possibility of such a method of writing gliding tones:

Man kann bei Doppeltönen auch zwei Vokale schreiben von jeder ein Tonzeichen erhält, z. B. a, a' statt ä (60, p. 10).

Evidence for the correctness of writing the composite form for the gliding tone in Kele (and related languages) has been adduced elsewhere (Carrington, 12, p. 195) (1). The gong-language beats provide additional evidence for the correctness of this view because the so-called glides are represented by separate beats on the different lips of the instrument; these beats coincide with the representation of the gliding tones suggested above. Examples from the Kele gong-language are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kele (glide representation)</th>
<th>Kele (gong)</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basa</td>
<td>[./]</td>
<td>baása</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asosilela</td>
<td>[.\•••]</td>
<td>asósísélá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asota</td>
<td>[.\•]</td>
<td>asóóótá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kolaka</td>
<td>[./•]</td>
<td>koóláká</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lola</td>
<td>[./]</td>
<td>loóla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Summarised, this evidence is as follows:

(i) Gliding tones are produced during grammatical changes when contiguous vowels have differing essential tones. Thus the word: lici (=a bite) is heard as: [./•] but from its grammatical form it known to be essentially: liici [./••] Similarly, atoyakela [./•••] (= he will come to do) is from grammatical considerations: atooyakela [.•••]

(ii) Comparative studies of the languages in the Yakusu area show many words with similar meanings to be derivable historically from similar radicals. Where Kele words have glides in the present-day forms, some of the cognate languages may show two similar vowels with differing essential tones but separated by a consonant. Thus:

Kele: bomwi [./] (= five) can be compared with

Mbôle: bohomoi [./••] (= five).

This suggests that on historical grounds, Kele: bomwi is better written: boomwi.
Similarly for other gong-languages of the area:

Olombo:
boöngö (= son of) which is heard in speech as: bôngö [’]
(cf. Kele: bolöngö)

yaâli (= wife) which is heard in speech as: yâli [’’]

Mbole (Yalikoka):
bolombóoki (= villager) which is heard as: bolombóki [..]

Mbole (Botunga):
lóosongö (= of the European) which is heard as: lóosongö [\.’’]

In some cases where the gong analyses a gliding tone into its component vowel-tones, the consecutive gong-beats come together rapidly and may even coincide so that the two lips are beaten simultaneously. Thus the Kele word for five: boömwi, may be beaten out as: [..] or sometimes as: [:]. Heepe mentions a similar rapid beating at the representation of gliding tones in Yaunde (38).

What is true of the representation of gliding tones on the gong is also true of the representation of the tones of long vowels. It is customary to distinguish e.g. a: (or a*) from a. But the same considerations as those given above for gliding tones in Kele suggest that in that language and in related languages it is more accurate to regard such tones as composite and to write áá instead of á: (or á*) and aa instead of a: (or a*). Again, the gong beats separate out the elements of the compound vowel; thus: baoló: ló (= elders) is beaten as baolóóló (1).

(1) It could be argued that, since the gong is unable, owing to the limitations of the instrument, to represent a glide in any other way than by splitting it up into two consecutive tones of different pitch, then the fact that the gong-beats do represent tonal glides in this way is no additional evidence for the correctness of this method of writing them. But in the case of the tones of long vowels the instrument is not so limited. It is, for instance, conceivable that the gong would represent the tone of a long vowel by a number of rapid beats on one lip of the instrument, or by a single beat followed by a pause. The fact that the gong represents these vowels as two consecutive beats on the same lip of the instrument is suggestive evidence therefore in support of the composite nature of such vowels.
D) Comparative linguistics.

In an earlier section (see p. 58) it was shown that though the gong-languages of the Kele-speaking and some neighbouring tribes contain elements of language which are essentially the same as the corresponding spoken languages, yet differences do occur. In such cases it is claimed that the gong language elements represent an archaic form of language. Hence the gong-language phrases are of the same interest for the comparative study of modern African languages as are, for example, documents embodying an old form of language in the study of modern written languages. HULSTAERT refers to language elements of this kind when he writes of the Nkundo gong-language:

Op taalgeld zijn de lokole-namen en berichten zeer interessant. Ze bevatten nl. een hoeveelheid speciale woorden, zelfs die niet in de gewone spreektaal gebruikt worden, en die dus etymologisch zeer waardevol zijn. Verder ook grammaticale vormen (44).

In any comparative study involving the use of possibly archaic elements of the gong-language, it should be remembered however, that dialectic variations may occur over a wide area. Thus the gong-phrase representing: «son of» in Kele is a form of language never heard in the ordinary spoken language of the tribe but occurs only on the gong. It is given by gong-beaters from various parts of the Lokele area as:

litiángá liéko; litilángá loéko; litilángá liléko; litiwángá loéko;

all of which have the same tonal and rhythmic patterns but show variations in phonetic structure. Sometimes a different word will be substituted for an element of the gong-language phrase the tonal and rhythmic patterns being kept constant. Thus some Lokele gong-beaters
give as the gong-language phrase for « plantain », the words:

likondo libotíndela = the plantain to be cut down

instead of the more usual:

likondo libotúmbela (or libotúmbeka) = the plantain bunch to be propped up when ripe.

When questioned as to the meaning of the first word of the Kele gong-phrase: bokálí labalaŋa (=wife), some gong-beaters have given the meaning: « Tail », which in spoken Kele is actually bokálí. Most gong-beaters, however are agreed that the gong-language element: bokálí, is an old word meaning « wife » (cf. later, p. 71). Another variant of this same phrase which is sometimes heard is:

bokálí labalanga = the wife with gardens

instead of the more usual:

bokálí labalaŋa = the wife with yams.

In view of these variations of form, it is necessary to collect the gong-language texts from as wide an area as possible so as to be able to assess the amount of variation occurring.

Some of the interesting linguistic points which emerge from a study of the gong-language texts collected in the Yakusu area are:

(i) Pronominal infixes in Kele. Spoken Kele shows none of the pronominal infixes which are characteristic of some other Congo languages (e.g. Nkundo, Ntomba, Luba, Ngwana) (1). There are indications, however, that

(1) Thus Ngwana has:

nitapika = I shall strike;
nitamupika = I shall strike him (with infixed mu).
such pronominal infixes occur in the gong-language. Thus the Kele gong-language has the form :

\[ \text{tokambésáká = tell us,} \]

where to- represents "us" (see Texts I F 1). In spoken Kele the form used would be :

\[ \text{kambésáká isó, with no prefixed to-} \]

Note that the tone of to- is low and so agrees with the tones of infixed pronominal forms of this type in Nkundo and Ntomba. The occurrence of this infix in the Kele gong-language suggests that Kele may have used pronominal infixes of this type in earlier times but that these have disappeared from the spoken language while still being retained in the stereotyped gong-language phrases.

(ii) Classe I and I A nominals. Working on the tonal structure of spoken Kele the present writer has shown that nominals of Class I fall into two groups according to the tone of the possessive concord governed by them. A small group of nominals including mainly words for family relationships (father, mother, son, brother, sister, etc.) govern a low-toned concord, while other nominals of Class I (e.g. gong-beater, fisherman, girl) govern a high-toned concord. This is also observable in some other languages in the Yakusu area. It is interesting to note that the gong-language differentiates these two groups by giving a personal pronominal concord to nominals of the former group while retaining an impersonal pronominal concord for the second group. The spoken language gives a personal pronominal concord for both groups. Thus; in the gong-phrases:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{sängó asóosílélá} & \quad \text{father has finished... (Texts I B 7).} \\
\text{nyaängó asóosílélá} & \quad \text{mother has finished... (Texts I B 7).} \\
\text{boto botomálf... asóóótá wána} & \quad \text{the woman has given birth to a child (cf. 13, p. 86).}
\end{align*} \]
the three words for « father », « mother », and « woman »
govern a personal concord a-. But note also:
boseka bótfilakendé linginda ...... the girl will not go fishing with
the « linginda » net (Texts I A 27),
and
bofulufulu wâlifoka ....................... giant of riches (Texts I A 32).
where the words : « girl » and « giant » govern a high-
toned impersonal concord bo- or wa-. Spoken Kele would
give a personal concord to all of these forms, but the
gong-language differentiates the two groups. On the
basis of tonal studies and gong-language investigation we
can therefore make out two groups of nominals included
in Class I :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type : nominals describing intimately personal relations : e.g. father.</td>
<td>nominals describing other persons: e.g. girl, hunter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class prefix : bo-; w-; nil;</td>
<td>bo-; w-; nil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive : wa-;</td>
<td>wa-.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronominal prefix : a-;</td>
<td>bó- in the gong-language, but a- in the spoken language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doke (21) has drawn attention to the presence of two
groups of nominals in the « personal class » and claims
that those included in Class I A may be more archaic
forms (21, p. 203). But it should be noted that the groups
distinguishable in Kele and some related languages are
not co-extensive with groups I and I A distinguishable
by prefixes alone.

(iii) Developmental stages in vocabulary. Conclusions
reached by comparative linguistic studies involving the
use of present-day spoken language forms may be
confirmed by a study of the gong-languages associated
with the spoken languages. Thus :
a) Kele : wîké and Olombo : boîké, both meaning
« many » seem to be derived from a common root-form in
which the Kele word shows a more developed stage than the Olombo word. The same element of language occurs in the Kele gong-language phrases where it is given as: wiké and beaten out as: [: •] i.e. the first syllable is represented on the gong by simultaneous beats on the high and low lips. This suggests that the gong-language form is really: oïké and is an intermediate stage between boïké (spoken Olombo) and wiké (spoken Kele).

b) A further example of such simultaneous beating of high and low lips is the tonal representation of: kwíndé (=he alone). The spoken Kele form has the tonal pattern: [: •] but the gong-language form is: [: •]. This latter is nearer to the hypothetical origin of the word from ko [:] plus inde [: •] than is the present-day spoken forms.

c) In spoken Kele, as in many other Bantu languages, there are nominals which cannot be referred to any verbal forms in the present-day spoken language, although other nominals occur of the same shape which are known to be derived from verbals. In some cases of this kind it is suggested that the verbal form has now disappeared from speech while the nominal has been retained. In at least one such case, the gong-language has preserved the verbal form which has disappeared from spoken Kele, although a nominal derived from this verbal is a common element of everyday spoken Kele. Thus:

loásɔ (plural: njásɔ) meaning: affair, palaver,

is a common Kele word. The hypothetical radical from which this nominal is derivable is: -ás-, which does not occur as a verbal in spoken Kele. But the gong-language has a form: kwásá explained by gong-beaters as meaning: « know that », « hear that », and beaten out
on the gong as : [ \textit{\textbf{::{}}\textbf{::}}]. This form is probably built up from ko- [.] plus -ásá, the latter being the hypothetical radical of the word loásà.

d) The gong-phrase for «wife» contains the element : bokàlí [\textit{\textbf{::{}}\textbf{::}}] which is different from the spoken Kele form : wàli [\textit{\textbf{::{}}\textbf{::}}] \(^{(1)}\). If words with a similar meaning in some surrounding languages are examined we find that we can arrange them in the following order showing decreasing complexity :

bogàlí (Topoke), bohàlí (So), bokàlí (Kele gong), bohàlí (Olombo), wàli (Kele, spoken).

The Kele gong-language element thus relate the present-day spoken form to a more complex and probably earlier stage in word development which is nearer to the present-day form in some surrounding languages.

**VII. — SOME CONTRIBUTIONS OF GONG-LANGUAGE INVESTIGATIONS TO ETHNOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES.**

The value of gong-language phrases for research into African customs and ideas has been noted by a number of workers. Thus, Verbeken (101, p. 721) writes :

A mon sens, ces sentences sont pleines d’intérêt pour qui-conque désire se rendre compte, de près, de la mentalité des noirs. Elles peuvent aider à comprendre des idées et des coutumes qui nous paraissent inexplicables et nous fournissent des traits inédits et insoupçonnés. Mieux encore, elles constituent souvent l’histoire abrégée du clan ou de la famille.

\(^{(1)}\) Cf. Meinhof’s Uf-Bantu form for «woman» : yali (60).
Rattray makes a striking claim for one phrase of the Ashanti drum-language when he comments:

The constant allusion to « the stone which wears down the axe » carries us back, I believe, to the neolithic age in their culture, of which we have examples today in the celts and grooved rocks which abound in Ashanti (74, p. 265).

Examples which the present writer has been able to cull from Central African gong-languages are not numerous nor of far-reaching importance but they serve to show that these gong-phrases have a real value for ethnographical studies in the area covered. The following points are worth noting:

(i) *The birth of twins.* In the call heralding the birth of twins (see Texts I B 5) there is mentioned the word « bolunda » which refers to a tree providing a poisonous juice which is used for ordeals. The juice is placed in the eye and guilt is established if the eye becomes swollen and inflamed. This mention of the word suggests that an ordeal of some kind had to be undergone at the birth of twins. It is remarkable, however, that twins are not feared in present-day Lokele society and no expiatory rites have to be performed at their birth. It is probable that the stereotyped gong-phrases are perpetuating the idea of a ceremony which has now fallen into desuetude.

(ii) *Belief in the spirit world.* The Central African belief in the spirit world is well exemplified in the gong-names for the European, noted on page 48. A further reference to the spirits of former villagers in explicit in the Mbole (Yaamba) call to the witch-doctor (kaṅga):

- nangólaká loéko .......... tell about the affair.
- nangólaká likambo .......... tell about the palaver.
- lyábaltimó kotállokonda .......... of the spirits in the forest.
- bákándé balombóoki .......... who were once men of the.
- báokéngé .......... of the village.
Neke reports that the talking-gong of the Yaunde people is used as a means of communicating with the spirit world:

Doch die Trommelstimme durchdringt auch das... Totenreich. Er... « spricht » mit dem Toten (67, p. 78) (1).

There is little evidence that the tribes of the Yakusu area use the gongs to speak with the spirit world. The only example of messages which seem to be sent directly to the spirits is that which is beaten out by the Lokele on the approach of rain:

bolemba olóngó laloóla lókoki .... bad spirit, son of the spitting snake whose poison remains virulent.

óyékesé óyékesé ...................... do not come down (repeated).
kondábauki kondanyèle nyongó .. to the clods, to the ground for.
ísó bato báoki ........................ we men of the village.
kosímélá kondándáko .................. will go inside the house.
yatúmbé elundú likolo

The gong-signals used in connection with the secret ceremony rites are of interest in this connection because these ceremonies (libeli among the Kele; ekanga among the Mbole) are supposed to be controlled by the spirits. In the Mbole (Yaamba) call to the eka nga rites, there is a reference to the practice of making the novices « run the gauntlet » between two rows of elders armed with whips (cf. Millman, 63 and Rouvroy, 81) for
tolóme twábalímó ófimbo ............ little men of the spirits with whips.

(1) Westerman (104) gives some very interesting drum-phrases which are beaten out as direct communications with the spirit world by the non-Bantu Ewe people.

The gong is used to address the spirits in other parts of the world. Thus Karsten reports that the Jibaro tribe of South America believe the slit-gong to be a means of communication with the spirit-world (48, p. 110). The gong itself is supposed by this tribe to represent the spirit which appears in the form of the Anaconda snake. Bateson (4, p. 286) states that the central Iatmul of New Guinea regard the gongs and the spirits as fundamentally the same.
The gong takes no place in the Lokele ceremony of libeli except to call together the elders. This is not surprising because the ceremonies are recognised by Lokele men to be a foreign institution which spread within fairly recent times from the North-East into Lokele territory.

(iii) Wrestling and dancing. The Lokele claim that the wrestling which they practise has been derived from the Ena tribe at Stanley Falls. This origin is reflected in the gong-name for the sport:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lolongó lólikalika} & \quad \text{the dance.} \\
\text{lókásékwélé} & \quad \text{which came.} \\
\text{kondândé lyábainaténdé} & \quad \text{from the river of the baENA.} \\
\text{lafanga failongá} & \quad \text{of fish-traps.}
\end{align*}
\]

On the other hand the Ena groups living at Stanleyville claims that certain types of dancing came up-river from the Lokele. This is also evidenced in their gong-name for dancing:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{olongó lólikalika} & \quad \text{the dance.} \\
\text{lósekwélé} & \quad \text{which came.} \\
\text{kondálandé lyáYaokakanja} & \quad \text{from the Yaokanja river area. (Yaokanja is the central part of the Lokele tribe) (1).}
\end{align*}
\]

(iv) Gong manufacture. In an earlier section it was mentioned that one tree known in Kele as wele is almost always used for gong-manufacture. This wood is given as the material of the gong in the Mbole (Yaamba) name for the transmitting instrument:

\[
\text{bokoko bokó wele} \quad \text{the log of « wele ».}
\]

In Kele, however (and in other gong-languages) another

(1) Note the extra -ka- syllable in the gong-name for this area. It may be another example of the diminutive form (cf. p. 49).
wood is mentioned in the gong-name for the instrument itself:

bokoko wâolondô ......................... the log of the « bolondô » tree.

bolondô is the African Teak (Chlorophora excelsa Benth.). A possible explanation of this divergence of names is that the bolondô was used in earlier times for gong-manufacture, but later another wood, namely wele, replaced it; the earlier name is still retained however in the stereotyped gong-language phrase. Note that bolondo is still used by some tribes e.g. the Mba, for gong-making.

(v) Staple foods in the Upper Congo. It is known both manioc and plantain, the staple foods of present-day Central African populations are not indigenous plants but have been introduced into this area within comparatively recent times. The question arises as to what formed the diet of the people of the area before the introduction of these crops. The gong-name for « wife » in Kele and in some other gong-languages may provide a clue in suggesting that yams (Dioscorea spp.) formed an essential part of native diet. Thus the Lokele call a wife:

bokâli labalanga ... woman with yams.

(vi) The history of Central African communities. The gong-names of villages and village sections often reflect some event of historical significance and therefore constitute valuable records in a country where written documents do not exist. It should be remembered, however, that gong-names may change so that the events referred to may be fairly recent. Thus in Kele, the village of Yalokombo is given two names (Texts I D 2). The earlier name was used when the village had as its neighbours two other Lokele villages Yaaloca and Yaliembe. A quarrel broke out however, and as a result Yaaloca and
Yaliembe moved over to the South bank and left Yalokombc on the north bank where it is today. At the same time the village was given the second gong-name recorded in the Texts. On his map published in 1885, Stanley marks Yaaloca as being on the North bank, together with Yalokombc, so probably the feud broke out after this date and hence the new gong-name is not very old.

The name of Yaaloca village has also changed within the period of European administration. Since its founder was said to be one of the junior members of the early Lokele group, a former gong-name for Yaaloca was:

batikakâ lifoka liyatunâ mbisa ... they had the wealth of the youngest member of the family.

But with the advent of European rule, one of the Yaaloca chiefs was raised to the position of paramount chief of the Lokele tribe and the gong-name of the village became:

batikakâ lifoka littilatungâ mbisa . they had wealth which shall never end.

Many of the gong-names for villages show the part played by warfare in tribal life before the advent of the European. Note, for instance, the names of Lokele towns: Yatuka, Yaowamya, Yefoloma, Yafungâ, where references to prowess in warfare are explicit. Other names have implicit references to warfare. Note for example, the Mba village of Basule, whose name contains a reference to a bird which is believed by the native people to be attracted to the site of fighting and to keep up its song during the clash of arms. In this connection the generic name for the down river tribes living beyond the borders of the Lokele people is of interest. The expression of fear of such peoples may be due to their excessively warlike habits as compared with the up-river tribes. (The Lokele seem to have contracted alliances with the Ena
people living at Stanley Falls; such alliances are perhaps reflected in the gong-name for Yagondê village, which is partly the same as the Kele gong-name for the Ena). But another explanation of the fear of down-river tribes may also be the fact that in riverine warfare a raid is more likely from down-river than up-river because in the former case the raiding party can make a quick get-away with the current of the river.

**VIII. — THE GONG-LANGUAGE TEXTS.**

The collection of gong-language texts appended is for the most part self explanatory. A few points, however, may be noted in connection with them:

a) *Personal gong-names.* In many tribes these names, when given in full, consist of three parts:

(i) A gong-name peculiar to the individual;

(ii) The gong-name of his father;

(iii) The gong-name of the village from which his mother came.

If the tribe is one of the few which give women gong-names, then part (iii) would be the name of the person’s mother. The order of beating out these parts is usually (i)-(ii)-(iii), but sometimes varies from this; in lengthy names part (iii) may be omitted. Sections (ii) and (iii) are usually preceded by special gong-language elements; in Kele these are:

**Preceding part (ii):**

litiänga liëko lyá .................... son of.

or : bolöngö la-

or :

ambulu kuku wâoliki wâ- ............ with the same meaning.

(The latter is characteristic of the Wembe section of the tribe.)
Preceding part (iii) :

bokáná wá-

or :

botíki wá-
yá.

These elements can be readily picked out in the examples of gong-names given in the Texts. In other languages there are different elements used to join the various parts of the names :

Ena : preceding (ii) a-

Olombo : preceding (ii) yeéngá;

preceding (iii) otikeke;

preceding (iii) lólo.

In the Mbole area there is a close connection between the gong-name of an individual and his spoken name, the latter being frequently the first word of the former (cf. Yaamba Texts E 1, 2, 3 and Yalikoka Texts E 1). This does not occur among the other tribes examined, though a Lokele boy inheriting an ancestral gong-name often inherits at the same time the spoken name of the same ancestor.

b) Shouting accompanying gong-beating. The gong is sometimes accompanied by shouting in which a large group of people (often the whole village) repeats the linguistic elements of which the gong is beating out the tonal and rhythmic patterns. Examples of this from Kele (the author has not observed it for the other gong-languages recorded) are underlined in the Texts. For instance, when a run-away marriage takes place and the bride reaches the village of her future husband, the entire clan of the latter welcomes the couple. The gong joins in the welcome with a characteristic beat :

ku ku ku kukulokéle ............... (imitating the cry of a bird.)

and the assembled crowd shouts the word kukulokéle in concert with the gong. Later the gong beats out the tonal patterns of the question : tóliole mbú tú tú = shall
we open (probably referring to the admission into the village of the bride's parents who will follow the young couple to claim the completion of the marriage dot from the man's clan). Immediately after this gong-phrase, which is interrogative in nature, the assembled crowd shouts:

\[ \text{óólóléke ó \ldots \ldots do not open... oh!} \]

the tonal and rhythmic patterns of which are beaten out by the gong which accompanies the shouting. Other examples of such accompaniment of voices by the gong found in cursing and in the removal of epidemic disease.

One case where the voice accompanies the gong in the Lokele area is represented by Lokele gong-beaters in the ki-ke symbolism as:

\[ \text{kekele kekele ki ke ki} \]

and provokes a shout from the assembled people hearing these beats. No other linguistic basis is known for it and the rhythm of the initial elements is not of the usual Kele gong-language type; the whole phrase is probably a borrowed one.

c) The form of a complete message. Some writers have taken pains to analyse gong-messages into a number of sections such as: a) opening conventional alert-signal; b) name of person addressed; c) name of the gong-beater; d) the actual message; e) closing signal. In the experience of the present author working in the Yakusu area however, these sections do not follow in a rigid sequence as suggested by such an analysis. Frequently b) will precede a), or b) may be omitted altogether in an area where the sender's gong is well-known by its characteristic tone and timbre.

One interesting form of transmission is sometimes heard from Yakusu village and occurs elsewhere among
the Lokele. It is used to call people together e.g. to be ready for the State Administrator when he comes to the village. The message is broken up into short phrases and these are beaten out between repetitions of the word: yakú (=come). The tonal pattern of this word is beaten very slowly and the message fragments follow at normal gong-beating tempo, with the addition of the gong-names of the sender and of those to whom the message is addressed; there is usually also a reminder of the punishments which await those who disobey the injunctions of the gong.

Lokele (and other) gong-beaters often seem to have finished transmitting their messages when they beat out the series of low notes which is the usual terminal signal, but then they begin over again with a re-emission of the same news. Often the message is punctuated by successive beats of the two lips of the gong made to resound simultaneously (1) which gives the impression that the gong-beater is thinking out the next part of his communication.

d) Individual names for the gongs. Among the Mba it is common to find that the gong itself has an individual name just like a person. These names are given to the gongs by the clan which manufactures them or purchases them. In the area covered by this tribe a gong-beater will frequently terminate his message by beating out the gong-name of the instrument he has been using. Some of these gong-names for the instrument itself are given in the Mba Texts. The custom of giving the gong an individual name may perhaps be compared with that of the Nkundo who give personal names to the bells called « elonja » (Hulstaert, 42, p. 24).

(1) In the ki-ke terminology this simultaneous beating of the two gong lips is rendered by: kbei.
The appended gong-language texts are grouped in the following way to facilitate comparison of equivalent texts in the different languages recorded:

A. Gong-phrases representing objects and persons:

1. Water.
2. Firewood.
4. Plantain.
5. Palm oil.
7. Fish.
8. Fowls.
9. Canoe.
10. River.
11. Paddlers.
15. Gong.
17. Spear.
18. Shield.
19. Arrow.
20. Hunting net.
21. War.
23. Moon.
24. Man (male).
25. Woman.
27. Girl.
29. Children.
30. Elders.
32. Chief.
33. Money.
34. Palmier.
35. Leopard.
36. Goat.
37. Elephant.
38. Antelope.
39. Pig.
40. Chimpanzee.
41. Bird.
42. Dog.
43. Forest.
44. Above.
45. Below.
46. European.
47. Fetish, charm.
48. Rain.

B. Phrases associated with special functions:

1. Dancing.
2. Wrestling.
3. Circumcision.
7. Death.
8. Initiation rites.

C. Special alert signals.

D. Names of villages.

E. Names of individuals.

F. Specimen complete messages (without repetitions).

1. **KELE** gong-language texts.

A. 1. baliá balokölla
   water of lokölla (probably a forest creeper).

2. tokolokolo twátoála
   little sticks of firewood.
   A variant of this is:
   tokolokolo twatótés
   little sticks of little trees.

3. lomata otikala kóndo
   manioc remaining in fallow land
   (= in an old garden).
4. likondo libotûmbela
5. baîtâ olôngó lalitoko libotukola
6. ñgûtû iyasendo
7. yafélé layambóku

For small fish:
   yafélé layambóku yâbotomâlî wallo
8. kôkô bolôngó labokiôkô
9. botandalakakâ
10. bolôngó bofilaitaka
11. balûkananga
12. ndako yatûmbé elundû likolo
13. likêlengë liboki
14. bôkôkô wâolondô
15. (i) likêmbélë likembi
   (ii) yeêtô yâkembe
16. yeêtô yâlikongâ
17. likôkô libotukola
18. and 20 not used by the Lokele.
19. bitéi bilamba fuko
20. bûsê likolo
21. sôngë litângela manga
22. bôto botolôme
23. bôto botomâlî wallo
24. bokálî labalaâga
25. boseka bôtêlakendê linginda
26. litîângâ liêko
27. twîlêngêlêngê
28. twîlêngêlêngê
29. botô baoloolô
30. kanga sîmbâ ilokîto
   yâolôngó lôlikalika
31. bofulufulu wâlifôka
32. plantain to be propped up.

oil from the palm tree.
(ñgudu is a forest animal; the word iyasendo is a gong-word whose meaning is doubtful).
all the félé fish and all the mbóku fish.
fish.
belonging to women.
fowl which says : kiokio (an onomatopoeic word for the noise made by chickens).
? of doubtful meaning. Possibly :
« log by means of which you walk on the river ».
son of ?
those who pull paddles.
house with shingles high above.
? of the village (the first element probably also means village).
log of the bolondô tree.
small, harmless knife; this is for the knife used in food preparation.
metal of knives.
metal of the spear.
shield made of botukola wood.
war watches for opportunities.
sun (sky) up above.
moon looks down at the earth.
female person of ?
woman with yams.
the girl will never go fishing with the linginda net.
? little children.
elders.
witch-doctor, lion, man of the dance
giant of riches.
33. bilângá tûkâ bolonja mbéko
34. njâso labakambo
35. bofulufulu wâlifaka mbézo
36. imbûmbuli fâókéngé
37-42. No special names, since the people.
39. lokonda ikctéke
40. likolo kondáusé
41. kondábaûki kondânyéle
42. For European in geral:
   (i) bosongo olímô kondálokonda
   For the missionary:
   (ii) bosongo olímô kondálokonda wâlokâsâ lwâlonjwâ
43. boté wâlisendo
47. boté wâlisendo

B. 1. olónô lôlikaliaka
2. olónô lôlikaliaka
   lôkáswèlé
   kondálandé lyâbainaténdé
   lajângâ fâilongga
3. tôtinyeke lombétà
   botémâ kolutakâ
   botolóme kowâ itâ
   botolóme kosasemo
   bolêngi wábotolóme
   koómwítô
4. boto botomâlî oyayalikf
   kondâbatita bâbakwakulu
   asôóôtâ litifângâ liéko
   lyâwâna otolóme
5. Hé baâsa kélélé (repeated)
   bolunda kélélé
   baâsa kélélé
   bôkse, bilémé yáwéngà
   ndálândé
   koôlákâ yafélê layambóku
   wiké wiké
   pieces of forge metal which arrange palavers.
   matters and affairs.
   giant, destroyer of houses (cf. Top-oke phrase).
   little goat of the village.
   Lokele are riverine and not forest of ? (possibly : dry twigs).
   above in the sky.
   white man, spirit from the forest.
   white man, spirit from the forest, of the leaf used for roofing (reference to the use of books, especially the Bible).
   medecine of a charm.
   child of ? (probably an old word meaning : dance).
   the dance.
   which came from.
   the river of the baEna.
   of fish-traps.
   let us cut the foreskin.
   the hearth will be pulled.
   the male dies as in wae.
   the male recovers.
   the fierceness of the male is.
   but one. (This last phrase is somewhat obscure, but see Carrington, 13, p. 86 for a variant where the meaning is clear.)
   the woman who was.
   in the hut at the back of the house, has given birth to.
   a son.
   Ho! twins (kélélé = a noisy shout).
   poison ordeal tree.
   twins.
   if you throw your bit of a net.
   into the river.
   you will kill fish.
   many many.
OF SOME CENTRAL AFRICAN GONG-LANGUAGES

6. lisalákutu kolóngdlá
ku ku ku kukulókèle
tóliole mbú tú tú
óliolgélé ò

7. wálelaka wálelaka wálelaka
 bilelí kondábaíso
 bolelo kondábonako
 wálilúwe lisángó
 asóosilélá boló
 wábolimó kondálokonda
 kondábaúki kondánycié

A variant form, used at the death of a woman, and beaten by a member of the family:
wálelaka (repeated thrice)
bilelí kondábaíso
bolelo kondábonako
wálilúwe linyangó
asóosilélá boló
wábakalékale
kondábaúki kondánycié

8. mbéle yáambolü bondobondo

9. loó kóndé mbóle
disease, go down river.

10. likóko’ lyáctó
lump of a head.

A worse form of curse; used for abusing women:
boléké wátôngonó
vagina full of worms.

C. 1. The ordinary alert on Lókele gongs is:
ki ke ki ke ki ke
This is probably the tonal pattern of the word: ito, which means: look out!

2. For news of grave import, the following phrase is added:
tolakondeloko tolaóteloko
we shall grow, we shall be born.
(The meaning here is apparently that the matter about to be broadcast is such as has never been heard before.)

3. Wrestling is introduced by the alert:
kbéi kbéi kitakita kiki
This has no linguistic basis, but is an onomatopoeic representation of the gong sounds.

4. The alert for introducing an announcement of a circumcision is:
kbéi ktektete
(Onomatopoeic.)

5. The alert for the libeli announcement:
ke ke ki ke
(Onomatopoeic.)
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

6. kekele kekele ki ke ki

(An alert used to raise a shout in the village; no known linguistic basis.)

7. ito ito ito ito

(cf. alert 1 above; here the beating is more rapid): look out! look out! — Used as an alert for the approach of rain, or as the war signal.

8. tu tu tu tu tu tu

a varied number of beats on the low-toned lip of the gong terminates most Lokele messages and is also used to punctuate them.

D. Proceeding down-river from Yakusu we have the following towns:

1. Yakusu: bafakâ kolaalémby
2. Yalokombe: bolemba òtì la òtò laoto

An earlier name was:

báákâ lilolé
jòsingá yeo

3. Yatuka: báákâ bangé nlandé

4. Balako: baláko báyaokakanja

5. Yaowamya: báákâ lahitlatwé nangò

6. Yaaloca: Báitiákâ lifoka lítítlatúngé mbísa

An earlier name was:

báitiákâ lifoka liyatúngé mbísa

7. Yaosuka: báákâ lajâqge Jâakolo

8. Yangambi: bokójikâ kondâ- Olombo

9. Yangonde: loóla lókoki

lwábainaténdé

10. Yaalufi: boolóooló báyaokakanja

11. Yefoloma: báákâ lalikundó lyáyaokakanja

12. Yafolo: yatómá iyalélo fálifoto lilembú

13. Yafunga: limanga ilaláká bolendé

14. Yalikina: elia yâliôndo lyáyaokokonde

(unknown meaning).

The bad spirit has no friend, nor kinsman.

they had medicine, to defeat curses.

they were masters of the river.

Balako of Yaokanja.

they were not to be surprised by dawn attacks.

they remained with wealth, which shall never end.

they remained with the wealth of the younger son.

they carried the bier.

chimpanzee among the Olombo people.

spitting snake whose poison does not lose its virulence, allied to the baEna.

elders of Yaokanja.

they were noted for revenge, in Yaokanja.

(unknown meaning).

of the slight gulf, fierce as a civet-cat.

lake, very deep, of Yaokokonde.
15. General name for down-river peoples:

liandé lyaloleka
loti lesaelo
the river of poison which never loses its virulence.

E. 1. Gong-name of Lifindiki of Yaalu:

botikaelase
bolongó labakwelo njásó
yábokoliká
yábato baáká layalioké
he who remains (= younger son), son of those who arrange palavers, of the chimpanzee (probably a reference to Yangiambi), of the men of Yaliöke.

2. Balaanga of Yefoloma:

bolângâ wâyatuke liandé
wâbaolôôlô bâlé kondâlifato
lilembû lyâyatömá iyâlélo
litiângâ liêko
lyâbotôôkoôlaka
kêngê wâlimânga lialâká
bolândê
basket of Yatuke river, of the elders of Yafoló, son of, him who kills repeatedly, of the town of Yafûnga.

3. Lipasa of Yafunga:

eféfé étêlaóké njásó
yábato bátikâká lifoka
lilaké lyâmbisa
ambulukuku wâoliki
wâeféfé étêlaóké njásó
yábato baáká laolemba
the proud man does not listen to advice, of the men of (? a Wembe town), son of, the proud man does not listen to advice, of the people who had an evil spirit.

4. Kamango of Yakusu:

loóla lókoki wêngâ lalikundé
botiki wâbato baáká bângéné
lîande
spitting suake whose poison does not lose its virulence sharp harpoon, from the village of Yatuka,

5. Coko, chief of Yakusu village:

sôngé litângela manga
bolongó labotikaelase
the moon looks down at the earth, son of the younger member of the family.

F. 1. Request from the people of Yafoló to those of Yafûnga that the latter should watch for the coming up-river of the white man and report on the gong when he is seen:

batiéijgâ baéko
botsorçgo olimô kondâlokonda
the moon looks down at the earth, sons of (i.e. those who are interested in...), the white man.

bâbosongo olimô kondâlo-konda
tingsâna tingsâna tingsâna
watch watch watch.

bosongo olimô kondâlo-konda
the European.
Alel likoló is coming up river.
laolongó bofilaitoko to Yafolo.
wàyatômá iyálélo jàlifoto lîlîmbû
tokambèsákô kolabokoko wàolondô tell us on the gong.

2. Boyele, a gong-maker of Yafolo invites wealthy men to come and buy the new gong he has made and is now beating:
lilukaftuko he who looks for an opportunity.
oyakayeke labilângâ tûkà who has money.
bolonja mbékô yàsômbékô bokako wàolondô come and buy a gong.
boténdéli wàonoko bûle shall my crying be in vain?

3. Announcement that rain is imminent; people in the forest or near the village are advised to take shelter:
itô itô itô mbûlà look out, look out, look out, rain.
bolemba olongó laloóla lókoki bad spirit, son of the spitting snake.
óyékèsé óyékèsé óyékèsé do not come down (repeated)
kondàbaüki kondânyelc to the clods, to the earth
nyôngo isô bato bâoki for we men of the village
kosîmélâ kondàndàko yatùm-bé elundu likolo
óyékèsé óyékèsé óyékèsé do not come down (repeated)

4. Call to Kamango of Yakusu to tell him that the European awaits him to talk over a palaver:
bokitilanangà bokitîa likoló the gong (1) goes up-river
kondàlikèléngê liboki to the village
lyàato bààkâ labosômbo of Yawekelo (« the men who were
bálé kondàbonoko wàotimá blessed with gifts » — a section
wàbakongâ of Yakusu village)
yàkû mbôle yakû mbôle Kamango (cf. E 4)
kwasà mbo kwàsà mbo come down-river (repeated)
loôla lókoki wèngà lalikundé know that (repeated)
bôtîki wàbato bààkâ bangénè Kamango (cf. E 4)
lilandé come down-river (repeated)
yàkû mbôle yakû mbôle come and see about the affair
yàtàngêléngê liôl lalikambo which the white man will speak
likààngô bosongo olìmô kondålokonda
alombakéli alombakéli about
lalliôi la likambo he is waiting (repeated)
kondàlikokô lyàotéma with a matter
in his heart

(1) « bokitilananga » is also the gong-name for a canoe.
5. Request to the witch-doctor to make a charm:

kanga simbá ilokito
yálóngó lólílikalika
yákeléké boté wálisendo
kondábaúki kondányelé

witch-doctor
come and make a charm
to put on the ground
(Kele: lisendo, refers to a charm which was frequently buried near the door of the house)

For other gong-messages and further gong-names of individuals see Carrington, 13, pp. 83 and 85.

II. — ENA gong-language texts.

The language used in these texts is essentially Kele and not spoken Ena. Only those texts are given which show a marked difference in form and content from corresponding Kele gong-language phrases.

A. 3. liála lyáolinga likásele
   bato báokeké kondálikko
   lyákíngó

6. olóme wängútú nyama
   yálokonanda

7. esélé kolambóku

13. bótando wálikolé lyálíkolé

15. lisombo lyáolokó

21. itá yáínanelo

? which men put into the
the lump of the neck
male ngútú, animal of the forest
sélé fish and mbóku fish
roof on pillars
war on the battle-ground

B. 1. olóngó ólikalika
   lósékwélé kondálandé
   lyáyakakanja

5. boléké wátóngonó
   boléké mototu

7. elió yálimó kondálokonda
   kondáekikili
   atienó kitó

The dance
which came from the river of Yaokanja
vagina of worms
(the women is addressed as though of evil repute)
corpses of the spirit
down to the plant-roots
which have no need of graves
(i.e. on the ground, for the ground itself comprehends all graves and therefore does not need a grave itself)
lump of a head!
would reply on his gong:
men of strife
yes indeed
yes, yes, how evil!
to say a word of the mouth
evil evil
D. 1. Yanggembe village:  
omanga ofécha kéngé  
fierce as the baManga folk (= Bba) who burn villages

2. Lesali village:  
báaká labosámbá wáinakaténdé  
they had the strong arm among the baEna

3. Binakulu village:  
báaká lalikundú  
they were vengeful

4. Binasilonga village:  
báosélengé wáinakaténdé  
those of the beach of the baEna

E. 1. Isaaloqga of Yanggembe:  
liandé likaó lalakufú  
the river bathes the back of the shield

bokongó wánguwa  
he dances before the men of the village of

koinákélá botolómé  
mother’s village

yáosombó olongelongo  

yálobéla lókoki  

otikéké  

tolombi kondálokoná  

2. Sila of Yanggembe — son of Isaalonga:  
lobéla lókoki  
the spitting snake son of Isaalonga

aliandé likaó likalufú  

bokongó wánguwa yáosombó  

bolongelongo  

otikéké  

bolemba ótí laótó laoto  

III. — OLOMBO gong-language texts.

The main series given here is from the Yambau area. Other texts are also given from Yangeka and Bosala where these differ from those of Yambau.

Yambau area.

A. 1. boongó bofilyaitoko  
(the same phrase as Kele A10, but whose meaning is obscure)
little sticks of trees

2. tokolokolo tómosándú  
lamosábela  
manioc which remains in the old garden

lamosábela  

3. lomata otikala bekondo  
plantain which has become ripe

4. boliki bóllifolofila  
ilikákendôa ngálusá  
oil (two words for oil)

5. sókó mâiná  
(cf. the same phrase in Kele)

6. ngúttu asombo  
bit of fish

7. lekesá líswí
8. kókó bokwakekelo kondálituka

12. oyálutole biéma bólóbúšá
15. ikoko émolondó
16. bosabola bökembe
17. likongá libokusakusa
20. litukaalemba
21. kó kó kú kú
22. imbelé abúšé
23. sógé litángelamanga
24. boito botolóme
26. yaálí iyabalanga
31. isómbe abokití bolengelenge ébéka atiletile kotáebándá
32. kúmí abafoka
34. lobéko
35. álóngá bosámbo
37. ngútí asombo soku bolúka lifofola
38. Small, blue antelope: ngútí asombo ítitti íthángé lisambi
Large antelope: ngútí asombo íyalítalita labaiso
41. kókó elituka botáyangóma
42. kbee kbee kombúla
43. botáyangóma
46. bosongó bolemba bókaké mbúla
For the missionary: bosongó bolemba bókaké mbúla bólokásá lóbosongó lókosóñelo

fowl which can be cut up in the
the communal club-house (large
animals must be cut up away
from the house because of blood,
etc.)

he who comes to carry the goods.
little log of the molondó tree
little, blunt old knife
spear used for wounding
(derivation unknown to gongbeat-
ers)
(alert signal with no linguistic
basis)
sun in the sky
moon looks down at the earth
male person
woman with yams
witch doctor of?
if he dances he shakes himself
about in the village square
elder of wealth
affair (lit. thing spoken about)
he breaks down roofs
animal, namely elephant
? who seeks for plantain?
animal namely the small antelope
does not fear the forest paths

animal which dazzles the eyes (re-
terence to colouring or possibly
speed)
fowls of the forest
kbee kbee he howls
(meaning uncertain; possibly a cor-
rupption of the Yaqgeka word for
forest)
European bad spirit as rain

European

of the leaf of the European which
is used for writting
47. oté bóliküla lisendo
48. bóóngó bofelyaitoko
   ébéra áseše tálembümbé
   lotiakéa emelio
   medecine of a charm
   water
dances down to the ground
which does not refuse corpses

B. 1. loóngó lólikalika
3. tóten limbúté
5. kékésé baásaá yambóyó
   aena lotútá lóbaása
   baása báésú
7. tó tó tó tó tó tó
   (the name of the dead person
   follows)
   akasisiló tálembümbé lotiakéa
   emelio
   as for Kele B. 1
   let us cut the foreskin
   ho ! twins salute !
   what a pregnancy with twins,
   our twins
   opening alert
   he has gone down to the ground
   which does not refuse corpses

C. The commonest form of alert in all Olombo gong-signalling is
a long roll on the high note of the gong. The Lokele method of
repeating the notes represented by ki-k£, is sometimes heard from
the Olombo gong-beaters.

E. 1. Walo of Yambau :
kúmi allílonda ikundé
   yákunde
   melío akusaka bí jándé likolo
   litína lígingó líisoku bolúka
   lifofolíla
   yeéngá
   isúlá bosío kóbítá
   ióló
   líóngá libolombo lindaliafuko
   chief who takes revenge
   who stabs civet-cats
   root of the neck of the
   elephant
   son of
   him who sets his face to war
   mother's village
   Lokáli

2. Kilót also of Yambau :
bolemba wósonjá libóté lobélá
   lólitíndo
   yeéngá
   ikúmí ebotikaelo labolángá
   mbúkólá
   ióló
   líóngá libolombo lindaliafuko
   bad spirit who gathered poison
   together
   son of
   the chief who remained with
   the basket (?)
   mother's village
   Lokáli

Yangeka area.

A. 4. likondo libotúmbesa
9. yáto ilotúmbé
43. botályakombé
46. bosongo olímó kotálokonda
48. likundé lyáfefyá ngóto
   likolo
   plantain to be propped up
   little canoe of botumbe wood
   forest of trees
   European, spirit from the forest.
   vengeful spirit which blows
   the leaves of the roofs
OF SOME CENTRAL AFRICAN GONG-LANGUAGES

B. 2. lolóngó lólikalika
lósecwélél libandé
lyábaimatándé

3. italíkilé takilé, italíkilé takilé
oluwá koloténo oluwá koloténo

the dance
which came from the river
of the baEna

(probably onomatopoeic only)
come to the cutting

F. 1. Call to villagers to clean up before the arrival of the Administrator:

lutóláká billékétuká bikmbé
bilóóngó lólikalika
lóyoótó likongó ifiténa libeki
bosöngó olimó kotólokonda
atólwuá tálitína libeki
labũsékwí

bring pices of metal, namely
knives to the dance
leaves lying on the village streets
the European
comes to the village
today

Bosala area.

A. 2. tokwándükülú lákolokolo
twátoté

5. sükú báningó

7. tolungulungu twáyasélá
layambóku

13. mbéč etümé elindé likolo

17. losabola lólikongá

18. likóko língwuwa

22. likóko líbósé

24. buto botolóme

27. toseka tótiajándé línginda

lumps and sticks of wood
oil and fat
baskets of sele and mboku fish
house with shingles above
old, worn out spear
shield (two words)
lump in the sky
male person
girls cannot walk about in comp-
apies (without quarrelling) (cf.
the Kele explanation of this)
witch-doctor, lion, who is a liar
elephant enters the forest

B. 4. boáli abalanga isumbeíyo
ákakía lamáli écümé elindé likolo
lakúmi éwána ibuto botolóme

7. lingílo lingílo (repeated)
likukáis isumbeíyo
ákasislíla títalúmbé
lóti kilé belio
labóowo bókóbóláká baió
bábóki

10. likolo líbeke tombùwámúmbùwá
tólémálema twito tobétóbó
báyá bátáatúlí ebólónde
labásóko
sakólóko bolutala bólókonda
tálítína lílókómbá

wife, respected
has reached the house
with a chief, namely a man-child
(death-signal alert)
the respected father
has gone to the ground
which does not refuse corpses
with the illness which kills
men of the village
the villages of poor men
evil little men
they do not wear fine clothes
only leaves from the forest
put over their skin
IV. — 50 gong-language texts.

A. 1. hâé hâlibângé  
   water from the river  
2. tosândú natocebéo  
   sticks to be cut up  
3. lisângâ lîbâlchka  
   pieces of manioc from the  
   lîmelûmé  
   ground  
   Manioc puddings are:  
   litindî lifololombo  
4. lifayahafa  
5. sükû ebainà  
6. tugûtû esombo  
7. likisâ lîsûe  
8. kôko etiehûûa bôtikano  
9. moindiaâkoko  

11. mosânja molûka libangé  
13. litukatumbê lîfâlalimâ  
15. lifaya lîbolondô  
18. likoko lîbîtuola  
22. mblî eboisé  
23. sôngë lîtâmbola melîho  
24. limbûtê lîbîtolôme  
25 and 26. lîhâlî naliîanga  
27. mosea moendâ lîngînda  
29. likalû namelondo  
32. kùmi namafoa  
33. helâkâtûkê hèsôngê  

35. bålôngâ mesâmbo  
36. ngûtû asombo eîndâ lalîfita  
   lâbósio  

46. General name for European:  
   botutu bôlingolingo mangénê  
   oliûla limêtê  
   Name for the missionary:  
   botutu bôlingolingo  
   ëkndâ nalimbimba lîngôto  
   emaâsia lifita nákâsio  

   white man master  
   of the country  

   white man  
   who travels with a leaf  
   which puts a cloud over the face  
   (probably referring to the strang-  
   eness of reading matter which  
   the missionary brings with him)
48. bólite bólite mbûla
  ekbutû nangandi émaisia
  lifita nábosio
  look out, look out, rain
  (first two elements obscure)
  which puts a cloud on the face
  (possibly referring to blinding force of tropical rain)

B. 1. libâŋgé nasambi

  2. libâŋgé nasambi lyâbaito
      bálâbânga libolombo
      the dance of the men of the Olombo tribe

  3. likalût namelondo libambomba
      lisenge nabaito bálîmbûtê
      luà luà luà luà
      kanga simbâ eboûta
      elîngâ baito bálîngâfunga
      ngâîne âttî libângê nasambi
      libambomba lisenge nabaito
      bálîmbûtê
      children to be cut
      in the genital organ of men
      come come come
      the witch-doctor
      wants the villagers
      that he may carry out the
dance of the cutting of the
  genital organ of men

  4. motobohâli ébáiya lalitütût
      sengû limaiya yakifandé
      libolombo
      émaluseâ likalût nomelondo
      limotobolême (motobohâli)
      the woman who has been pregnant
      has finished pregnancy
      she has born a child
      male (female)

  5. Call to relatives to make
      betrothal of a girl :

      kûmi namafoa luàe luàe luàe
      tôsümâ nabaito bâbângênt
      lômbusé bêmâluâ nabîma
      nabîlákûtükê namosea
      moenda
      linginda
      elders of wealth, come come come
      let us talk with men
      who have come with food
      and money to the girl

Call to tell villagers that the
  arrangements have been made and
  accepted by both parties :

lihîlihîlihîlilîhîlihîli
bêyâtüngâkâiya naliûla limûtê
mbusé
sôsumbi motéma
nalikoko libotuola iné
liahûâyâ ngûtû esombo
lîndóto njâli
limbîmba molemba sombo
opening signal
those who stayed in the
  village
do not be cast down
  the war which came to me
has killed an animal
of fine body
the net I cast has been blessed
with good fortune (the reference
to war here is probably an allu-
sion to the asperity with which
bargaining is carried on during
betrothal arrangements)
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

7. kutukutukutukutukutukutu
   (name of person who has died)
   émâyâ tâmelûmbé mébaito
   bakûmû lamafoa
   opening death signal
   he has gone to the ground
   where all elders go

F. 1. Call to hospital assistants in training to tell them to stop making a noise as the white doctor wishes to rest:
likalû namelimando
liboututu bôlingolingho
ékendâ namosisa mobohû
hainyi boô
botutu bôlingolingho
émâisia ilô omàiso
children
of the European
who travels with medicines to cure diseases
stop making a noise
the European
has sleep in the eyes

2. Call to children to attend the mission school:
likalû namelimando
luâ nàlitua litibûiyâ
namangénê liboututu bôlingolingo
botutu bôlingolingho
émabûa limbûmba lingûto
nàllifindi
ebûsûngûtû nàllilonga
elingâlingâ likalû namelimando
bâlue obîmê obûinê
mission school:
children
come to the house that has no master, that of the white man
the white man
holds a leaf
in his hand
he awaits on his bench
he wants the children
let them come today today

V. — MBOLÉ gong-language texts.

A number of dialect forms of the spoken language exist, each associated with a geographical area. Gong-languages associated with four of these dialect forms are here recorded.

Botunga area.

A. 1. osôngô olêngûa laâye
2. tokoloko lo twâtoâla
3. lomata lòondifondifîo
4. ifôfo fòlikondîo
5. bâitâ olêngûa laâtîto
6. ôtêko ônyama ndàlâkoûnda
7. ôtêko ôsêkê ñgûnda
8. ôtêko ôkûkô olêngûa
9. wàto wàokûlû akeselânanga
11. bâto bôokàkêndê ndáwàto
   wàokûlû
   river current of water
   little sticks of firewood
   manioc of stickiness
   bunch of plantain
   oil from the palm-tree
   stream of meat from the forest
   piece of fish from the forest
   streams
   piece of fowl which cries:
   fiofio
   canoe of bokulu wood, sent along by paddles
   men who travel in a canoe
13. itondó ambèle
15. bokoko bóko wele
16. ifaki oléngá akamba
17. osongó wálíkonga weémálé
18. bokumbéisa wóchángólíki
21. lokákálá lwáolemanongo
22. onaná wáusé
23. yókányá tolonga
31. eselesi yákaanga
32. yeétó laiíóngó íkúmáká
34. mbéko... saango
35. mbúli nyama oléngá lalónkó
36. lesasé lóosongó
38. tofuli átonolá
40. mbúli nyama oléngá lalonkó
43. ohóká mbéko
44. ohóká saango
45. mbúli nyama oléngá lanjéné
46. osongó okúmáká atále

The missionary is:
osongó okúmáká okili

47. ótì oléngá laoté tukulu
48. botuku ótì laaisó likolo

B. 1. kbií katakatatakatakata kata
isó aboma wábakolo
kolékolékolékolékolékolé

? (ridge-pole) of the house
trunk of the wele tree
little knife (the first element is
probably another word for knife)
shaft of the spear, upright
(probably shield which protects
a man from being ki:illed)
arrows of ?
alert signal for war
sun in the sky
(meaning unknown to informants)
? of the witch-doctor
metal and knives called francs
(two words meaning : affair)
hear the news
hear the affair
(affair)
giant, son of the forest
goat, animal, son of the town
elephant (two words) of feet
erand-boy of the white man
(two words meaning : birds)
giant dog, child which cries
kweékweé
European sent by Bula Matale (the
native name given to Stanley
and now applied to any agent
of the State)
the European sent by Mokili (the
native name for Mr. Millman, a
former head of the Yakusu Mis-

sion)
charm child of a tree of the forest
blindness has no eyes above (prob-
ably referring to the blinding
force of tropical rain)
(opening signal for dancing call)
we shall dance with the feet
(probably onomatopoeic for the
sounds of the dance gong and
drum)
2. kbeí kolosuka
tinyáká lmìbètì
lìála ìsàngò lìála ányángò
kèlzì kèlzì kondàatéma

7. kò kò kò kò kò
wàlélaka wàlélaka wàlélaka
lihûli lìsàngò lìtìkàlìkì
lastì lòkìndo mbìsà
asòosùlwà ndàosòngò olèngò
laàye
lòkìndo kolowè lowè
Another formula at the end of
olio mèńè olò tamba
(signal of alert) the penis
cut the foreskin
let us cut the penis
father and mother
crying in the heart
(alert signal)
you will cry (repeated)
the respected father who has been
amongst us
has gone down to the water
journey to death
many death-calls is:
corpse stretched out

Bolinga area.

A. 3. lomata wòlwàa bolemanjane
4. likòndo tásìsolà
6. otèko ónama
8. kòkò olègà lalòtofìlà
11. alùkànaìà
13. itònò amélè
29. iñèj yòlìyòlì
46. osoòj èkùmàkà andòmbèlè
(for the missionary)

48. otuku ótí laaìsò

B. 7. kò kò kò kò kò
wàlélaka wàlélaka wàlélaka
yoòmè yàsàngò
ákàsòonìbà
olio mèńè olò tamba
8. kò kò kò kò
efìnyào efinìyàò
safàkà safàkà
manioc of?
plantain in the garden
joint of meat
fowis children of?
pullers of paddles
(? ridge-pole) of the house
very small children
white man sent by Bandombele
(the native name for the Direc-
tor of the Mission post in this
area)
blindness has no eyes
opening alert signal
you will cry (repeated)
male, namely father
has died
the corpse stretched out
special opening alert signal
(words of unknown meaning)

Yaamba area.

A. 1. loòso lwàtènàkà basélè

3. lomata lòósùmbèke
4. likòndo liòtùmbèke
bark cut from the basélè tree (ref-
terring to a common method of
obtaining drinking water in
stream-less forest regions)
manioc to buy sell
plantain to be propped up
5. báitá akááké boléngá lalitoko  
6. otéka ónoma tálolokonda  
8. kókó oléngá lakióko  
13. itóndó landáko  
14. bokéngé wambáká aisó  
15. bókoko bókó wele  
20. sèngó kotállokonda wóbotéko  
21. ka tí tí tí tí tí tí lílí líámambatuka.

31. eselesele yákanga  
43. lokonda lotokulo  
46. bosongo olímo kotállokonda  
48. lílí líámambatuka  
líloóla lókoki

B. 1. bíktétettekétettekétettekétetteku  
bolumo bátatáká lokota lókókó  
ótákendéké lokendo  
lóngondangonda

4. liúla áwána  
átišélé akolo sé  
kondáлокómá indo  
lwálilála ányángó

8. tolóme twábalomó ófimbo  
yóóko yóóko yóóko  
tónangokoleke njásó  
laakambo  
yóólio laolío

E. 1. Name of Yasingéele of Yaatange :  
yásingéele mbako  
kúmí lalikanda likó pela  
he who bears the blame  
elder of the village of Yaatange

2. Name of Alendekelo, his son :  
alendekelo binjásó  
kolakambo  
boléngá  
wáyasingéele mbako  
bókóloká loende  
the man who is to be trusted with  
palavers  
son of  
(see his father's name)  
(mother's village — Yakaki)
3. Lékolésá, son of Alendekelo:
Lékolésá tálélíma límáta
boléngâ
wáalendekelo bínjâso
kolaakambo
he who arranges palavers well
son of
Alendekelo (see above)

F. 1. Call to witch-doctor:
eselesele yákanga ó
kó kúlikuli
nangóláká loéko
nangóláká likambo
lyáalimó kotálókonda
áákándé bolombólombó
wáokéqgé
witch-doctor oh!
of the fowl (reference to sacrifice
of fowls)
tell forth the matter
tell forth the affair
of the spirits of the forest
which were men of the village

2. Chief returns to village after
liâla ásângó
akíkí lokendo
álé bosongo olímó kotálókonda
asõímólá bakolo mbísa
kondábokéngé wámbáká aisó
visit to State post:
the father
went on a journey
to the European
he has returned his legs
to the village belonging to us

Yalikoka area.

This area is not always considered to be a part of the Mbóle tribe’s
territory but is sometimes included in the area occupied by the Foma
tribe, a forest people whose spoken and gong-languages are almost
identical with those of the riverine Lokele. It will be noticed that the
texts given below often show an intermediate stage between the gong-
language of other Mbóle regions (e.g. Botúnga) and Kele.

A. 1. báye bátoscéngle
2. tokolokolo twátoála
3. lomata otíkala kóndo
4. ifofí fálíkóndo
5. haitá bálítoko lyáolemba
6. otéka wámbólókó
7. okosáká olónógo laalununga
lyáotíma
water of the small beaches (probably referring to small forest
streams whence water is drawn)
little sticks of firewood
manioc which remains in the old,
fallow garden
bunch of plantain
oil from the palm, the evil spirit
(probably referring to the thorns
and jagged leaf-bases of the palm
which often lead to serious acci-
dents among palm climbers who
collect the nuts)
joint of antelope
cray-fish from the stream
8. kóó olóngó lalokóku keke
12. balombóóki ebátótólá isimá layeka yábosongó okúmáká atále
13. akótó landáko
15. bongúngú laolondó
16. yeétó yákzmbé yáofufufulu
17. osongó wálikongá
18. likoke lyáotukola
20. balémbualembù
21. bitá flombatuka
22. linyanyá elitikálíkí lalómbo
24. botolóme otolombo
25. otomálí otolombo
26. boháli labalanga
27. boseka ótikendé linginda
28. litfláká loéko lwátolóme otolombo
31. eselesele yákanga
33. yeétó yáofalángá yálisómba sómbélé
34. loáso... likambo
35. bofulufulu
36. mbúli olóngó laféré
37. lisokusoku lisfláké elengo
41. ótêka wátofulú latánilí
42. bokolo wákatakala útá
43. lokonda liksteke
46. For any European :
hosongó olímó kondálokonda
For the missionary :
hosongó olímó kondálokonda wáosongó okúmáká Okíllí
48. tofofele toókola múbúla ãítólingá lalikolo atómatélá kondányeke

fowl, child which makes a crowing noise
men of the town who carry the goods
of the European of the State sides (?) of the house
gong of the bolondó tree
metal of the knife, the giant shaft of the spear
shield of botukola wood net
war watches for opportunities the sun remains in the village square (even when the people are away at work)

male person
female person
woman with yams

the girl does not go to the linginda net
son of a male

? witch-doctor
money, namely francs
used for buying things
two words for palaver

goat child of a fool (i.e. the goat cannot defend itself against attack)
elephant which destroys gardens
joint of birds
the young man who runs about in the ashes of the fire
forest of ?

European spirit from the forest
the European the man sent by Mokíllí
storm which overthrows things namely rain; it does not stay above, it tramples the ground
B. 1. twilengé tolitoli children (youths)
yáktsecké lolóngó lólíkalika send the dance
likolo kondáuse up into the sky

2. Circumcision is a private affair arranged by the father of the boy with the surgeon — who may be the witch-doctor, though not necessarily. The surgeon is called on the gong thus:
(Gong-name of surgeon)

yaðkú lokendo lwánoŋgo-
ŋongó come on a journey early in the

yáscléké litiláaká loéko come and put to my son
lyámi yeétó yákembe the metal of the knife
tondáusungá lwáskelengene to the penis

4. otomáli otolombo
akendiki lokendo lwatótomáli the woman
laotolomé went on the journey of the
litiláaká loéko lisóoyalá kosé a child has come down
lyáatolomé otolombo a male

5. Name of father beaten and then:
baâsa félélé, baâsa félélé twins, salute (repeated)

6. The following is the announcement to relatives to attend preliminary discussions on bridai price, etc.:
Names of relatives of boy's father:

yaðkú kolanongóŋongó come in the early morning
yángaleké së come and sit down
yénéké loásó yenéké likambó come to see the affair
yalitiláká loéko lyámi of my son
litókená lokendo lwálilála who goes on a journey to a fian-
laeléngá gene cée tomorrow

7. ke ki ki ki ki ki ki kwâlelaka kwâlelaka (opening alert signal)
Name of dead person:
asoké boló labolío you will cry
he has become a corpse

E. 1. Mënokenge of Yasendo:

mënókengé láyéetó lallondó master of the town of the sheathed
kúmi lalikanda liyáataella knife
dokáná elder of the village of Yaatelia
wáyalonga língaYaolonga

2. Mënokenge's father:

bolángalángá bötioté lokonda bright light does not enter the for-
kúmi lalikanda liyáataella est
dokáná elder of the village of Yaatelia
wátokokí láakundu mother's village
a section of Yasendo

3. Litwele, Mënokenge's half-brother by the same father:

litoko liyáangalákókö palm inhabited by biting ants
kolila kôffifolo climb up — brush them off
VI. — TOPOKE gong-language texts.

Kombe area, situated near the main river.

A. 3. lomata galofoliinga

4. londo botinda
5. bainá gabolángi
6. beté yábénama
8. tofulu latamói tokókó
9. tokéékélélé tótotando
   latotando tolibandé lilénc
10. libândé lilénc
12. bolóngó bábaитo bóbími
21. ks ki ki ki ki k í
   bolóna bóbitá fatofofsto
25. bagáll labána
32. bokota labelémé mbúla
33. gióló gefwelé gélofàrlánga
   lomondélélé gayabosongo
46. mondélélé gayabosongo
48. báje labáje bágebeló

B 1. belóngó ébai to bámbísa
   yóo tósle owonga bóliolo
   mobênc fólóló

A. 2. tokolokolo átòála
3. boli wisungú bólokálya
4. likondo kotínda
5. baíña bolángge
6. betéá benáma
7. betéá béséké langónda

8. kôkó bolengá gábaafú fololo
13. mbéle yeotála yisámbo
14. otéma gaokéngé
15. bongúngú łóolondó
16. gelondé gelemba
17. bokoloronya bólikongá
21. lakúngé fuko iwáita
22. kakángálángá boléngé galóhe

manioc to be soaked in water (a necessary operation in preparing manioc « puddings »)
plantain to be cut down
oil for the pot
joints of meat
birds namely fowls
little logs for walking
on the great river
the great river
men of goods
(alert signal)
the fighting of war
women with children
chief possessing clothes
money of francs
of the European
(two words for : European)
water like that from the spring

people and men
come, let us put the leg stretched out

little sticks of firewood
root of manioc to be dug up
plantain to be cut down
oil for the pot
joints of meat
joints of seké fish and small forest stream fish
fowl which spreads out its wings
house with a wide roof
heart of the village
gong of bolondó wood
little sheathed knife
shaft of a spear
chances and opportunities of war
bright-shining sun
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23. wéli bósôngé  
24. botolôme botolombo  
25. botomáli botolombo  
26. bogâli yambéřé  
27. getúngelo gébosea  
28. liëmbá lalohóla  
31. geselesele gékaŋga  
32. liüge lisängó ayaosongo  
33. biétô labilondó bifalânga  
35. bofulufulu wâluwaka mbélé  
36. mbólũli nama boléngé galokúte  
37. bomongó bolásuli  
38. mbólókô lamennglelé laboklen-gnè  
42. geselesele gékaŋga gebalondé  

General name for European:
bondélé bosongo goliandé
Administration:
bondélé bosongo goliandé
boofulufulu wâluwakambéřé
Missionary:
bondélé bosongo goliandé
bólókasá lólikuku
likatángama

B. 4. bogâli yambéřé àŋgaláká
lagelembalemba gâligundũ
liôtéma
lióta lifulé libolanga sóso
asóóóta botolôme botolombo

5. kilîli keïk keîlî

6. To make arrangements for betrothal:

yâůkwâl tôlôweke
mbéko lalikambo
lyâbogâli yambéřé
bakâŋgâlângâ bâbôiná

moonlight of the moon
male person
female person
wife of the house
junior of the family, the girl
youth, young man
? of the witch-doctor
respected father (appointed by the European
metal of knives namely francs
giant who destroys houses
goat, animal child of smell
elephant eats nuts
little antelope of ?

white man from the river
European
like a leopard
European
of the reading book « likuku »
which is to be read
(likuku is the first word of the title of the Yakusu reading primer)
the woman who had pregnancy in the womb
has born successfully a son
(onomatopoeic for the gong beats; possibly borrowed)
come, let us know
the affair and the matter
of the woman (wife)
today (literally : in the sunshine of today)
VII. — AïBA (|ÍGELEMA) gong-language texts.

A. 3. ligükü lâlomata lump of manioc
d. libógo libatakulu plantain which has ripened
6. ngütü asombo (cf. Olombo A 6)
7. likita lisüwe group of fish
17. likongá mubuda melâamba spear for piercing the belly
18. liñbęñbęłę ngoma the round shield
26. bokalí labilanga woman with gardens
36. begbégbe mémé goat (the first element is an onom-
atopoeic représentation of the noise made by the goat)

B. 1. luwée luwée come, come
iltęngelę mbüsa youths
luwée nalikükü come with the sticks
labęlbęłęmbęłę and the drum

D. 1. Bodžla village :
bokasola bitá kabodžla they overcame in war
baniki kabéléngga children of Bélénga
2. Bandangi village :
likita likómbe libékela group of parrots which make a noise uselessly

Bondokwe village :
3. bambongó wámakoko elephants which spoil trees

VIII. — MBA gong-language texts. (Non-Mba words underlined.)

A. 1. No word used.

3. lomata manioc
4. akundalibógo (he wants) plantain
5. sükú maningó oil (two words for this)
6. bütü masombo (cf. Olombo 6)
8. kóko mutakula fowl
9. akuseltnganga propelled by paddles
11. kópellí kópellí paddles (repeated)
12. ilęngelęngé büsa youths
16. gomboge maténaka ligdó the axe which cuts liana
17. inbilinbili ngoma

21. tu tu tu tu tu tu
   inbilinbili ngoma
   bòllaküka
26. igáli maseseka
29. ekita libeníki
33. fafänga
36. imbimbili gangó
37. imbembélì soku
46. mosongó kwabá mosongó
48. limbembe likó mbula

B. 1. bamanga batokílo
   bòkusane
   imbilimbili kabóbó
   koleúsé koleúsé
5. ko kokú ko kokú
7. cukácu cukácu cukácu
8. bamanga batokílo
   bòkusane
   sakóló sakóló
   kwakíla lingindó
  idóbó zëlémbete
   koleúsé koleúsé

D. 1. Basule village :
   kibóngólú kûlikóko
   ibogé yabola
2. Yasanqí village :
   ibogé yongonda ibogé yajebé
   family of the forest, family of the medecine tree
3. Yangene village :
   bosambola ndikó ibogé
   Yangene
4. Bangwade village :
   kbekite lingindó
   kédóbó zëlémbete
   men accompanied by the bird
   which cries during fighting
   of the family of Yabola (an an-
   cestor)
family of the forest, family of the
medecine tree
   group of porcupines, Yangana’s
   family
   circumcision rites (cf. B 8 for a
   variant of this phrase where
tonal and rhythmic patterns are
as in this version but phonetic
structure is different)
   the penis has been cut

(cf. Aqba A 18. Probably this phrase
for « shield » was used by the
Mba with the meaning : « war »
and has thus become used also
for « spear »)
(alert signal)
the spear (i.e. war)
has come
wife, namely girl
group of children
frances
little goat of ?
? elephant
European, namely the European
evil spirit namely rain
people of the Mba tribe
come together
the dance
today today
(onomatopoic for the gong sounds;
no linguistic basis known)
crying, crying, crying
people of the Mba tribe
come together
because because
circumcision rites
let us cut the penis
today, today
E. 1. Matebe of Rasule:
mulaténé maselébé
you remain in the village, you are ignorant of affairs

2. Adembo, son of matebe:
mulaténé maselébé bené mataba’s son
likita libakulá dombi Boliambé is his mother’s village
gizogí bené

3. Alapo, another son of matebe, now a teacher for the Mission:
mulaténé maselébé bené mataba’s son
likita libeniki kyamosongo of the group of the European

This latter part was added when Alapo became a teacher in order to distinguish him more easily in gong-calls from his brother Adembo.

**Gong-names given to gongs themselves.**

Two gongs in Rasule village are called:

(i) totilasángó we have no father
(ii) mbilo góe égbabé bíf in a big palaver one must not come late

A gong in another section of Basule village:
kolanángó éswabé kwigi in the morning it does not tell of death

Two gongs in Mbane village:

(i) keqgele keqgele ațila-sángó drifting about from place to place (as water in a canoe)
(ii) monoko yáókénge he has no father
mouthpiece of the village

F. 1. The European has arrived and requires food for himself and his retinue:
túktúktúktúktúktúktúktukú (opening alert)
dokodokodokodokodoko the European has arrived
bosongó bólyakúka kúlekúka the European says he wants
bosongó swaba akundalibógo plantain and fowls
nakóko mutakula come quickly
kelémbangumbangi

2. Villager tells his wife who is in the forest to come home and prepare food as he is hungry:
kulokuto kulókutó (opening alert) (1)
igáli maseseka wife
kelémbangü come quickly

(1) This alert is rendered elsewhere (more accurately) gólógóto gúlúgútú.
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A. 9 and 11:
  kakâ kale bolûkandanga (canoe ?) and paddler
24. botolôme man
32. mokóló lokëngé elder of the village

IX. — KOMO gong-language texts.

Compared with the gong-signalling of the Lokele, Mbôlé, Olombo and other surrounding tribes, the gong-beating of the Komo is undeveloped and infrequent. Careful listening to messages beaten out from the villages opposite Yakusu makes it clear that only a few gong-language phrases are employed and that these are repeated over and over again. An Olombo informant (of the Bosala section of the tribe which has had contacts with the Westward moving Komo people) explains this lack of development as being due to the fact that the Komo did not originally know how to send messages by gongs but that when they came into contact with the tribes of the Yakusu area they adopted the gong-signalling they found there. The few gong-phrases which the author has been able to record contain elements allied to spoken (and beaten) Kele rather than to spoken Komo.
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46. mosongó
48. mbúla likofé

European
rain is falling

B. 1. batolóme totina totina
7. kebóka kebóka kebóka

men let us dance (repeated)

(? — probably an onomatopoeic rendering of the gong sounds and allied to the elements of the Mba signal for this announcement)

APPENDIX.

A note on extra-african slit-gongs.

Signalling by means of gongs and drums is not confined to Africa. It is of interest to the student of Central African gong-signalling methods and instruments to note records of similar phenomena in extra-African localities. Writing of the distribution of «drums», Wieschoff has stated:

Es gibt wohl auf der ganzen Welt nicht ein zweites Musikinstrument das eine so allgemeine Verbreitung zeigt wie die Trommel (109, p. 1).

By the designation : Trommel, Wieschoff is here referring to both drums and gongs and he proceeds to insist on a distinction being made between the membranophone (Felltrommel) and the idiophone (Holztrommel, Schlitztrommel or Schlitzpauke). The distribution of the idiophone is more restricted than that of the membranophone being mainly confined to the Equatorial belt (1). It is noteworthy that, although the slit-gongs may be

(1) Within this belt, however it is still true that:

« the area of the slit-drum encircles the whole globe ».

(Hornbostel, 39, p. 133.)
used to accompany dancing and singing they are almost always associated with message transmission (1).

**Oceania.** Buck (9) note the presence of slit-gongs in the Cook Islands and states that they are present also in the Society and Austral groups, having probably been used as far East as Mangareva Island. Other Polynesian groups for which gongs are reported are Samoa and Tonga, but the instrument was unknown in the Marquesas, Hawai, Easter Island and New Zealand. The gongs described by Buck do not appear to give two distinct notes when the different lips are struck, but he states that:

> a different note is obtained by changing the beats from the middle to the ends (9, p. 263).

This same writer also adds that slit-gongs are found in Fiji and throughout Melanesia.

In Fiji signalling is accomplished on a wooden idiophone in which the slit is so enlarged as to give the gong a trough-like appearance. The instrument is referred to by German authors as « Trogtrummel ». **Hambruch** (34) states that two differently pitched notes are obtainable from it but that only one of those notes is used for signalling purposes.

Slit-gongs are the characteristic percussion instruments of the New Hebrides where:

> mit Ausnahme von Ureparapara kommen... keine Felltrommeln vor, sondern nur hölzerne Schlitztrommeln.—(Speiser, 87, p. 420).

**Speiser** records that the lips of these gongs are of different thicknesses so that from the same gong distinct

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(1) Cf. Hornbostel (39, p. 284) : « The close association between specimens found in widely separated regions is proved by the use of the slit-drum for signalling in all continents ». 
notes can be obtained; these, he states, are important for signalling purposes (87, p. 420). Deacon (18) has described in detail the gongs used in Malekula. Small gongs are found in a horizontal position but many slit-gongs are vertical, resembling huge wooden statues and carved to represent a human figure (see fig. A 6). Such gongs often occur grouped together.

Slit gongs are found in the islands of the Solomons group, those of San Cristoval being described by Fox (25) who also gives an account of the gong-language associated with them. In Bougainville island the single wooden club (which serves to beat the gong in other localities of the Solomon Islands) is replaced by a bundle of rattan cane (Lewis, 54).

Gongs used for signalling in the Gazelle Peninsula (of New Britain) have been described by Eberlein (24) who reports on the nature of the gong-beating which is employed for message transmission with these instruments. Gongs of different sizes which emit differently pitched notes are frequently beaten simultaneously for special communications. The Gazelle Peninsula gong is called « a garamut » by the inhabitants. Its opening is not a slit of the simple rectangular type but consists of two holes connected by a narrow slit. Hollowing is carried out through the two circular holes (these may be rectangular in some instruments) and a considerable thickness of wood is left beneath the two lips of the narrow slit (see fig. B 4). This type of gong is also found in New Ireland where it is referred to as « garamut » (Reche, 76).

New Guinea localities for slit-gongs used in message transmission are mainly in the Northern Territory between Potsdam Harbour and Dallman Harbour (Lewis, 54). Some tribes, e.g. the Kiwai, do not use gongs for signalling (Landtmann, 53). In areas where signalling
is carried on, gong-beating is done with a single stick which is held in the right hand and rammed against the gong lip, being guided into position by being passed through a ring made by the thumb and the first finger of the left hand. Reche distinguishes three types of slit-gong from the Kaiserin-Augusta River, these types being differentiated by shape and slit-form. One type is characterised by the presence of a peg (Zapfen) projecting from one of the lips of the slit at its middle point (1). All types of gong had lips which emitted two distinct notes when struck. Some gongs in North New Guinea have simple end-projections which serve as handles in transporting the instruments. Often such projections are elaborately carved with zoomorphic designs.

Slit-gongs are reported among the Murut people of North Borneo, where messages can be signalled on the gongs (Rutter, 82). Further west they are found in Java, where some are horizontally placed for signalling while others are vertical and resemble wooden statues. The use of these gongs for signalling has been described in detail by Meijer (58). Steinmann (91) correlated the position adopted by the gongs with the type of carving shown on them; gongs with zoomorphic designs are horizontal while anthropomorphic designs are found only on vertical gongs. The same author also notes that the slit-gong, usually of wood, but rarely of bronze, is widely distributed in Indonesia and includes in his list of localities: Borneo, Celebes, Lombok, Bali, Sumatra and Sumbava. « Hollow log drums » are recorded for Sumatra by Loeb (56) who quotes Wirz (110) as stating that a gong-language is associated with them.

1 Ivens (45, p. 170) notes a similar type of gong in the S. E. Solomons:

« each gong has a tongue, waki, extending from the upper lip... to within a couple of inches of the back. »
Assam. A very large idiophone of the slit-gong type is recorded for some Naga tribes of Assam. It is used to announce deaths, war and important ceremonies and consists of a whole tree trunk hollowed out through a narrow slit. It is so large that:

young men... (can) line up twenty or thirty or more on each side with drum-sticks like dumb-bells (Mills, 62).

These men beat the gong in concert. The instrument appears to be confined to the Northern tribes: the Ao (Smith, 86), Konyak, Sangtan, Yachunga and Chang groups (Mills, 62). Where examples are found in villages of the Southern Naga e.g. the Sema (Hutton, 44) they occur only in clans with an admixture of Northern blood.

South and Central America. A wooden slit-gong figures among the musical instruments of the Aztecs of Central America (d'Harcourt, 36, p. 20 and Seler, 84, p. 110). The slit was not, however, rectangular but H-shaped so that two tongues of wood were freed from the upper surface of the log of wood, the interior being excavated through an opening cut in the under surface of the log. The « teponastli » as this gong was called, was beaten with two rubber-tipped sticks. This form of slit-gong is still used in Mexico (Redfield, 77). The two tongues of the gong give out two distinct notes when beaten; the interval between these notes is recorded as a musical third or second.

d'Harcourt claims that the teponastli is related to slit-gongs found among certain Indian tribes of Central and South America (36, p. 22). These latter gongs are usually large instruments — reaching a length of over two metres — and have incisions in the upper surface of various kinds, though never like the H-shaped slit of the teponastli. Koch-Grünberg (49) gives a figure from Gumilla of a large gong found on the Orinoco in the
XVIIIth. Century. This gong had three sinuous slits in its upper surface and was suspended by creepers tied to four upright posts. Such a method of gong-suspension was found by Koch-Grünberg among the Tukano tribe on the River Uaupes but the sinuous slit of the gong he saw was continuous and connected four circular openings (see fig. A 1). The interior of the gong was hollowed out through the circular openings but different thicknesses of wood were left beneath the lips of the narrow slit so that the gong emitted two differently pitched notes when struck on these lips (fig. B 3). A gong described in the middle of the XIXth. Century by Spix and Martius (88, p. 1248) is of this form.

Gongs of the Uitoto were similar to those of the Tukano according to Koch-Grünberg but used in pairs, one large gong called the male and a smaller gong called the female. These gave out differently pitched notes when struck.

Karsten (48) figures a gong called « tunduli » almost identical in form with that of the Tukano, found among the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador and Peru. Karsten reports that the gong has essentially a religious significance and is used to transmit messages to the spirit world. Rather a different form of gong is described by Rivet (78) for the Jibaro under the same name « tunduli ». Rivet states that the form of the opening is variable in different parts of the Jibaro area; the figure he gives shows four triangular openings which are not joined by a slit (see fig. A 2). Gong-languages which are sometimes mentioned as « well-developed » are reported to be associated with some of the slit-gongs of South America, for example, among the Uitoto and the Jibaro Indians.
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A. — Gongs used in message transmission. All are drawn to the same scale (1/20) except No. 6, in order to show comparative size and variety of slit-form.

1-3. South America and Central America.
1. Tukano gong, after Koch-Grünberg.
3. Aztec *teponastli*, after d'Harcourt.

4-7. Oceania.
5. Java, after Meijer.
6. New Hebrides, from Steinmann, after Speiser (scale: 1/40 approx.).
7. West Java, after Steinmann. Front and side views.

8, 9. Yafolo-made gongs of the Yakusu area.
10. Equatorial region, Congo, showing projecting "liele".
14. Sea-coast area, Congo

B. — Details of gong-construction.
1. a) Longitudinal section of Yafolo-made gong, drawn to scale of 1/10; unshaded portion hollow;
   b) Transverse section of same gong, to scale of 1/5 showing differentially hollowed "cheeks" of the gong and the backbone (*bokinini*).
2. a) Longitudinal section of "mondo"-type of gong from the Kasai region;
   b) Transverse section of the same gong. (Both after de Haulleville and Coart.)
3. Transverse section of Tukano gong (after Koch-Grünberg).
4. Transverse section of Gazelle Peninsula *garamut* (after Reche).

C. — The "sêssê" of the Olombo tribe (% natural size).
1. Side view.
2. View from beneath.

Map of the Yakusu area showing the territories occupied by the tribes mentioned in the present gong-language study.
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