

## THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE AZANDE OF CENTRAL AFRICA

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The Zande language predominates from 23° to 30° Long. E. and from 3° to 6° Lat. N. and in some places extends beyond these limits (Van den Plas, p. 9).<sup>1</sup> As Professor Tucker notes (1940, p. 17),<sup>2</sup> it is remarkable, considering the area covered by it and the number of peoples belonging to different language-groups—Sudanic, Bantu, Nilotic, and Nilo-Hamitic—who today speak it, that it has developed only five, and not very divergent, dialects. It is also remarkable that, without any technological superiority, those who built this empire were able to conquer such vast territories and to weld their inhabitants into a nation. That they succeeded was certainly due in the main to their greatly superior political organization. It was only when they came up against peoples, the Abandiya and the Mangbetu, who had a political organization comparable to their own that they were unable to make headway. The other peoples who tried to resist them and were defeated and displaced or subjugated were, according to all the information we possess, ill-organized politically, having nothing like the Zande stataal organs. On the contrary, living in small communities at variance with each other and lacking common direction, they sooner or later fell a prey to the invader and became politically, and to an increasing extent culturally, part of the great complex we know as the Azande. It is the purpose of this paper to examine this complex, so far as its ethnic composition is concerned, and to analyse its component elements.

Several of the early explorers of Zandeland remarked on the great admixture of peoples comprising the population. Junker (1891, pp. 198-9),<sup>3</sup> for example, describes "the motley mixture of broken tribes and scattered populations", servile peoples (Amadi, Basiri, Augu, and Maranga) with speech and habits

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<sup>1</sup> Van den Plas, *La Langue des Azande*, vol. I, 1921, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Tucker, A. N., *The Eastern Sudanic Languages*, vol. I, 1940, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Junker, W., *Travels in Africa*, 3 vols., 1891, pp. 198-9.

and customs different from those of the Azande, in the comparatively small territory of Palembang (in the neighbourhood of 4° N. and 27° E.). He refers elsewhere (1891, p. 466)<sup>4</sup> to Abarambo colonies among the Azande to the south of the Bomokandi and to Zande colonies among the Abarambo to the north of it, both peoples being in these areas subjects of the Zande prince Bakangai; and Casati (I, p. 198),<sup>5</sup> speaking of the same prince, says that the population of his domains is composed of Azande, Abarambo, and Mabisanga. Junker again (1892, p. 148)<sup>6</sup> says of the areas ruled by Zemio and his brother Wando in the valley of the Mbomu that the ruling Azande class was greatly inferior in numbers to the other inhabitants (Akare, Basiri, Abarambo, and—whoever the following peoples may be, for Junker did not venture to determine their affinities—Shirwas, Ababullos, Embiddimas, and Apakelle). Then, once again (1892, p. 307):<sup>7</sup> “As in many other northern lands, Linda’s territory (about 5° 20’ N. and 26° 20’ E.) was occupied, besides the dominant Zande, by Bashirs, A-Barmbos, A-Biri, A-Pambia, and other subject tribes.”

It is not surprising that those who came after these explorers and could make their observations in easier circumstances have frequently remarked on the same phenomenon. The Polish ethnographer Czekanowski, for example, gave special attention (pp. 21-6)<sup>8</sup> to the ethnic constitution of the Zande kingdoms, noting that the Zande conquerors are a sparse ruling class in vast areas, in many of which the greater part of the population are foreign peoples who have retained their distinctive character (Abarambo, Akare, Apambia, Basiri, Makere, Mundu, Momvu, etc.). In the more thickly populated south, with which Czekanowski was personally acquainted, the serf population includes peoples of many alien stocks who have been conquered but not yet assimilated: south of the Bomokandi scarcely a quarter of the population belong either racially or culturally to the

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

<sup>5</sup> Casati, G., *Ten Years in Equatoria and the Return with Emin Pasha*, vol. I, p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, 1892, p. 148.

<sup>7</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>8</sup> Czekanowski, J. *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet*, 2 vols., 1924, pp. 21-6.

politically dominant Zande element, for the Makere, the greater part of the population, have kept their identity intact. In Bavungara's province, near Vankerckhovenville, the ratio is only about 80 Azande men to hundreds of Momvu, and in the neighbouring territory ruled by Bokoyo the situation is similar. He concludes (p. 43)<sup>9</sup> that the Zande clans stem mainly from these foreign stocks and that it has been the power of the Avongara ruling house that has integrated all these heterogeneous elements into the present Azande people.

Czekanowski is one of my authorities for this paper, but I have chiefly relied on Van den Plas, and after him on Junker, de Calonne-Beaufaict, Hutereau, Larken, Maes and Boone, and Baxter and Butt. Their writings and those of other authorities are cited in the bibliography at the end of this article. When I have made statements without citing authority for them it must be understood that on those points our main sources are in agreement, the statements being a summary of the different records and confirmed in the areas known to me personally by my own experience. If I do not add much that is original to what others have said I can at least, in a condensed form, once more draw attention to the great ethnic complexity of Zande society. The historical processes involved in, and the social consequences resulting from, ethnic amalgamations of this kind and on this scale, for they are found in many other African states, have not, I think, been sufficiently appreciated. The cultural effects have also been important, but they must await later and separate treatment. Here little more is attempted than a brief review of the ethnic elements which constitute the present-day Azande.

The Avongara are the ruling aristocracy in by far the greater part of Zandeland. The Ambomu are their original subjects, and it is their language that the Azande speak. When one speaks of Azande one speaks of all those who use Zande as their mother tongue.<sup>9a</sup> Nevertheless we have sometimes to distinguish in the area ruled by the Avongara between Azande of Ambomu descent (*Azande ni Ambomu*) and Azande of assimilated stocks (*Azande ni Auro*) who have been completely, or almost completely, assim-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>9a</sup> Azande themselves use the word in such a sense, but they also use it in some contexts in the sense of "commoners" in contrast to the Avongara.

ilated culturally to the Avongara-Ambomu. A like distinction is doubtless made in Zande territories where the Avongara are not the rulers, but where they once were. We may speak of those peoples who still speak their own languages but are, within Zande territory or on its confines, politically under Zande domination as subject peoples. They are, in varying degrees, in the process of becoming Azande. Some of these subject peoples are elsewhere independent. Some foreign peoples, although never subjugated by the Azande, were raided by them or came under their influence and have thereby contributed in a lesser degree to the formation of the ethnic conglomeration of the Azande people. The term "Niamniam", a foreign, perhaps Dinka, designation, is best avoided as it has been used by Arabs and Europeans without much discrimination to refer not only to both Azande and their subject-peoples but also to almost any people in the area under consideration. It was for some of them a very confused representation—cannibals, men with tails, etc.

The Avongara or Akolongbo, as they also call themselves, are today in speech and habits, if we except aristocratic modes of behaviour and mannerisms peculiar to their class, indistinguishable from their followers, and we have no evidence that they have ever been otherwise, though they themselves would not admit to being of Ambomu stock, saying that they are Akolongbo or Avongara of *Agbia*, noble, stock.<sup>9b</sup> In the first half of the 18th century—there seems to be little doubt about the broad outline of the facts—the Ambomu people, who at that time lived in the valleys of the Mbomu (hence their name) and the Shinko rivers, began to move, under Avongara leadership, first to the south-east and thence north, east, and south. These migrations, the causes of which we do not know, continued till checked by Arab and European opposition in the second half of the last century and in the first decade of the present century, and in the course of them the Zande nation was formed. The Ambomu clans are consequently found in most, probably all, parts of Zandeland; but they are mostly, we have reason to believe, to be found in the territories ruled by the descendants of King Yakpati, on both sides of the Nile-Congo divide roughly between Long.

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<sup>9b</sup>I have discussed this question in "The Origin of the Ruling Clan of the Azande," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 1957.

27° 30" and 29° 30".<sup>9c</sup> There they have a slightly enhanced social position in virtue of their descent from their conquering forbears, but it must be said that Azande do not attach great importance to whether a man is of Ambomu stock or not; there has been too much intermarriage for this to count much. What can be said is rather that the Ambomu have a long tradition of attachment to their Avongara rulers and of familiarity with the polished life of courts, so that the standards of etiquette and manners obtaining at court are considered to be those of the Ambomu, and ignorance or contravention of them to be the behaviour of *Auro*, foreigners.

Some peoples have entirely lost their cultural identity in the Zande amalgam but, through many vicissitudes, their ethnic distinctiveness and political independence have survived. This is the case with the Sudanic Abandiya, who live in the most western part of Zandeland, to west of the 26° Long. E. Junker (1892, pp. 241-2)<sup>10</sup> says that they moved into this area from the Mbomu-Makua confluence when the Avongara-Ambomu left it to migrate to the south and east and that by his time they had already become vassals of the Arabo-Nubians. De Calonne (p. 83)<sup>11</sup> says that of their own accord they adopted not only the Zande language but also their political institutions, but I find it difficult to believe that they would have done this so completely if they had not been at some period subject to the Avongara, and I find it easier therefore to accept Van den Plas' statement (p. 14)<sup>12</sup> that they are an ethnically mixed people ruled by the Abaza (whose language a few old people still speak) who, after prolonged combats, were finally subjugated by the Avongara, though, as was their policy in dealing with subjugated peoples, the Avongara left them their own Abaza rulers, with whom they made alliances. The Nzakara also only speak Zande today, having lost their original Banda dialect. They

<sup>9c</sup> The following clans are probably all Ambomu: Agiti, Akalingo, Angbapiyo, Abakundo, Avotombo, Angumbe, Aboro, Ambata, Abadara, Angbadimo, Angbaga, Abauro, Agbambi, Abatiko, and Akurungu. To these should perhaps be added: Angbaya, Abowoyo, Avokili, Aremete, and Abagbangi. This assessment is, however, subject to certain qualifications to be mentioned later.

<sup>10</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, 1892, pp. 241-2.

<sup>11</sup> De Calonne-Beaufaict, A. *Azande*, 1921, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> Van den Plas, V. H., *loc. cit.*, p. 14.

appear to be entirely under the dominion of the Abandiya, on the limits of whose territory they live in two separated stretches of country towards the extreme western limits of Zandeland.

There are a great many of the Adio people in the Zande population and they are found in all parts of Zandeland.<sup>12a</sup> Some of them form a politically independent group, though culturally in all important respects like other Azande and speaking only Zande, known as Makaraka or Azande-Bambo, in the valley of the Tore, tributary of the Yei. They are thus the most easterly section (Long. 30° 30" E.) of the Azande and, being isolated from the rest, have much mixed with neighbouring peoples. They are part of the Abile migration, as one of the Zande migrations came to be designated, and, I was told, adopted Zande speech and customs during the time they were conquered and ruled by the brothers and sons of Renzi, son of Yakpati, one of whom, Muduba, carried them with him in his migration to the east. When, at Muduba's death, his men, faced with starvation, returned westwards they left the Adio behind them where we now find them independent of Avongara rule. They would probably have been brought under it by Mange son of Gbudwe had not the Egyptian Government established military posts in the area.

DeCalonne says (p. 98)<sup>13</sup> that there is another people, at one time closely associated with the Adio, the Abwameli, who, though they speak Zande, are not under Avongara rule. To escape subjugation by Ndeni son of Tombo, they fled into Ababua country, where they remain independent near the junction of 3° Lat. N. and 26° Long. E. The same author mentions other peoples who accompanied the Adio and Abwameli in their original migration. Whoever these people may have been, today they exist no more as distinct ethnic groups, with the possible exception of the Angada, who, though no longer a cohesive group, appear to be to some extent localized, though mixed with

<sup>12a</sup> Some people give Adio as their clan name. Other clans of the Adio are the Akowe, Abananga, Andebili, Abangbai, and Apise. There may be others (Akudere, Ambari, Agbutu). De Calonne (p. 223) gives a list of Adio clans, but I do not find it acceptable. Van den Plas (p. 14) says that there are a people called Adiyu, fishermen on the Mbili, among the Abandiya who still speak their own Sudanic language, but these may be of a different ethnic group to those being discussed.

<sup>13</sup> De Calonne, *loc. cit.*, p. 98.

Avongara-Ambomu and speaking only Zande,<sup>13a</sup> in a pocket in Abandiya country on the Mbili, north of Lat. 4° N. and between 25° and 26° Long. E. Elsewhere they have been scattered and absorbed by Azande and Abandiya.

Other peoples, or sections of them, have totally, or almost totally, lost both political and cultural identity and are entirely, or almost entirely, merged in the Zande amalgam, where they can be distinguished from the Ambomu only by their clan names and, so the Ambomu say, their boorish habits when they have not learnt to abandon them by contact with the polite society of courts. One of these is the Sudanic Abangbinda, a once numerous people. After conquest by Yakpati and his descendants, their final resistance being broken by Gbudwe, they were almost completely absorbed by the Azande, though here and there in small groups their language is not entirely forgotten. I was able to take down vocabularies from some of the older people. They are one of the biggest elements of foreign origin in the Sudan to the east of the Lingasi.<sup>13b</sup> Another completely assimilated people, according to Van den Plas (pp. 21-2),<sup>14</sup> are the Mabisanga, a section of the Medje who were at one time subjects of the Mangbetu. When the Mangbetu king Munza's kingdom was dismembered by the Egyptians they were subjugated by Ngula-Mange son of Kipa. Emin (p. 204),<sup>15</sup> de Calonne (p. 130),<sup>16</sup> and Czekanowski (pp. 176-7),<sup>17</sup> say that the Egyptian Government appointed Mbitimo son of Wando to rule them.

A large proportion of the Abarambo, or Amiangba, and of the Amadi peoples have also been almost totally absorbed by the Azande. These once great peoples were dispersed and fractionized by bitterly fought wars with the Azande ruled by the House of Yakpati. However, some Abarambo to the south of the Uele still speak their own language and are commanded

<sup>13a</sup> Van Bulck and Hackett (p. 101) say that a handful still speak their own tongue, but this statement is based on hearsay.

<sup>13b</sup> The following clans claim to be of Abangbinda origin: Abiama, Abakpara, Abani, Abadigo, Amabenge, Abambiti, Abaanya, Abagbuto, Abaningo, Abagbo, Abangbaya, Abamunga, Abagua, Avuduma, and possibly also the Abangbara.

<sup>14</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Emin Pasha, *Emin Pasha in Central Africa*, 1888, p. 204.

<sup>16</sup> De Calonne, *loc. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Czekanowski, *loc. cit.*, p. 176-7.

by their own notables, though under Avongara suzerainty, in Junker's time in the person of Bakengai (1891, p. 335);<sup>18</sup> and they are an independent people between that river and the Bomokandi, for although Bakengai's father Kipa had ruled them on both banks of the Bomokandi, those to the north had by Junker's time reasserted their independence. They are probably the largest single foreign element in the constitution of the Azande of the Sudan,<sup>18a</sup> where one can still find persons who remember their original tongue, though it is no longer spoken. Czekanowski (p. 210)<sup>19</sup> thinks that they are the largest foreign element among the Azande as a whole. The greater part of the Amadi people, whose ancient name, de Calonne says (p. 120)<sup>20</sup> was Amago (Amego) or Aogo (Augu), settled, after wars and migrations, around the chain of hills on 27° Long. E., where Junker (1891, pp. 317-8)<sup>21</sup> found them and where they are still independent today, though all speak Zande as well as their own Sudanic tongue. The rest of this at one time considerable people were dispersed by Yakpati and his sons and were finally absorbed into the Zande complex, their descendants being found today widely distributed in all the central and eastern regions of Zandeland. In view of the fact that the principal battleground between the Amadi, with their Abarambo allies, and the Azande was in the valley of the Sueh it is surprising that so few men claim Amadi descent there today.<sup>21a</sup> One reason for this appears to be that after the severe hammering they received from the Azande in the north the main body turned towards the south. Also, those who were left behind seem to have be-

<sup>18</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, 1891, p. 335.

<sup>18a</sup> Some of their more important clans, in the Sudan mostly found in the old kingdom of Gbudwe, are: Aubali, Abawoli, Abazaa, Avumaka, Avonama, Avundukura, Abakpuro, Amuzungu, Agbunduku, Abandogo, Abalingi, Avunduo, Abakaya, Amigbara, Abagbate, Agberenya, Akpurandi, Abapia, Akpura, Amiandi, Abangombi, Akenge, Abaale, Abaiwo, Abangburu, Amiteli, Abandiko, Angali, Angbuki, Ambare, Abangboto, Abisiaka, Abangere, Abanganya, Abakpoto, Abangau, Avuzigba, Amindamu, Avukida, and Amizoro. There are others.

<sup>19</sup> Czekanowski, *loc. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>20</sup> De Calonne, *loc. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>21</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, pp. 317-8.

<sup>21a</sup> Some of their clans are said to be: Avondawa, Augu, Abubage, Abat-uwa, Akaya, Abaningba, Abanzuma, Amego, Abatambu, and Angatali, but some of these were also said to be Amiangba clans. De Calonne mentions others (p. 121). Some give their ethnic title, Amadi, as their clan.

come to a large extent confounded with the Abarambo, so some of the clans often said to belong to the Amiangba (Abarambo) may be Amadi in origin.

Another people who must, I think, have been partly assimilated are the Sudanic Bangba, who today mostly live to the south of the Uele-Kibali on Long. 28° E., where they sought refuge after a bloody defeat at the hands of Ukwé son of Wando. I believe that some of this people must have contributed to the Zande population because Van den Plas says (p. 23)<sup>22</sup> that besides their own language and Mangbetu some speak Zande, which is gaining ground, and, although the same writer says that none of this group of Bangba are subjects of Avongara, when they lived further to the north, Schweinfurth (I, p. 522),<sup>23</sup> who met them there in 1870, tells us that they, or at any rate a powerful section of them, were subjects of Wando son of Bazingbi, most of them speaking Zande. It is highly probable, therefore, that they have contributed to the population of his old kingdom.

In addition to the peoples already mentioned, Van den Plas mentions (pp. 16-22)<sup>24</sup> others as being of foreign origin but now completely, or almost completely, submerged; Abubage (some dozens of individuals still stammer out their ancient language in the valley of the Gurba); Amuvumba (five or six families at most, who live in the valley of the Sekunde, tributary of the Gurba); Ngbwaya, Ngobwu, and Tokpwo (infinitely small groups about which information is now unobtainable); Abotupwe (met with in the valley of the Poko, tributary of the Bomokandi); Asibali (met mainly among the Apambia and the Abuguru); and Abangombi, Angombe, and Aholi (all completely absorbed). Of these, the Ngobwu are probably the Gobu or Gabu, still found among the Abandiya (Capenny, p. 313; Tucker, 1940, p. 17)<sup>25</sup> and figured on Junker's map as "Ngobbu" between Long. 24° and 25° and just south of 6° Lat. N. The others are probably all clans of peoples listed already or later, and not distinct ethnic groups: the Abubage, an Amadi clan; the Abot-

<sup>22</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> Schweinfurth, G. *The Heart of Africa*, vol. I, 1873, p. 522.

<sup>24</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, pp. 16-22.

<sup>25</sup> Capenny, S. H. F. "The Khedivic Possessions in the Basin of the Upper Ubangi," *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 1899, p. 313.

Tucker, *loc. cit.*, 1940, p. 17.

upwe (Abatukpo), an Abarambo clan; the Asibali (Asigbali), probably a Basiri clan; the Abangombi, an Abarambo clan; the Angombe (Angumbe), an Ambomu clan; and so forth. Hutereau (pp. 317-8)<sup>26</sup> mentions a Ngara people, now absorbed by the Abandiya, and shows them on his map to the south of the Mbomu between Long. 25° and 26° E. Junker (1890, p. 480)<sup>27</sup> and Emin (pp. 375-6)<sup>28</sup> mention an Apagumba people who migrated to the east with the Adio but who had, even in their day, almost completely disappeared in the Adio (Makaraka) amalgam. I believe this to be an old name for the Avotombo clan of the Ambomu. Junker has on his map "Mambelli, a Zande tribe", in Ngangi's old kingdom (between 28° and 29° Long. E. and 5° and 6° Lat. N.) Czekanowski also shows them, in the same position, in his ethnographic map and expresses the opinion (p. 23)<sup>29</sup> that they are of the same stock as the Ambili, who are mentioned later. If this people was once a distinct ethnic group, it has disappeared today. The same must be said of various other groups mentioned by Junker—Marango, Amasilli, Shirwas, Ababullos, etc.—some of which may figure in this account under other names, while others seem to have disappeared.

When we speak of subject peoples it must be understood that while there certainly was some discrimination and some what Major Larken, in speaking (p. 238)<sup>30</sup> of the treatment meted out to the Apambia by the Azande, calls bullying, to say that these peoples were in a servile position would, at any rate usually, be an exaggeration. It is true that the Akare and Basiri have been called slaves and serfs, e.g. by Schweinfurth (II, pp. 395-6)<sup>31</sup> and Chaltin (Lotar, pp. 250-1),<sup>32</sup> and it is possible that this was indeed the case in the west where under Arab influence trading in slaves seems to have been practiced by some of the Avongara rulers (Schweinfurth, II, pp. 417-8 and 430),<sup>33</sup> but

<sup>26</sup> Hutereau, A. *Histoire des peuplades de l'Uele et de l'Ubangi*, 1922, pp. 317-8.

<sup>27</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, 1890, p. 480.

<sup>28</sup> Emin, *loc. cit.*, pp. 375-6.

<sup>29</sup> Czekanowski, *loc. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> Larken, P. M. "Zande Notes", *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1923, p. 238.

<sup>31</sup> Schweinfurth, *loc. cit.*, II, pp. 395-6.

<sup>32</sup> Lotar, L. *La grande chronique de l'Uele*, 1946, pp. 250-1.

<sup>33</sup> Schweinfurth, *loc. cit.*, II, pp. 417-8 and 430.

it was the traditional Zande policy to encourage submitted peoples to accept Avongara rule voluntarily, to stay in their homes, and to become Azande; and one of the main principles in that policy was indirect rule. We are told time and again by our authorities that once a people submitted they were left with their own chiefs. I have already cited Van den Plas to this effect in the case of the Abandiya and the Abarambo (p. 21),<sup>34</sup> and the same author speaks in the same manner of the Abangbinda and the Basiri (pp. 16-17).<sup>35</sup> Professor Tucker (1931, p. 54)<sup>36</sup> asserts the same of the Mbegumba and the Mberidi, and other authors could be quoted in support of the contention, which is very much my own opinion from what I observed among the Bongo, Baka, Abuguru, and other peoples. All that was asked of the subject peoples was recognition of Avongara suzerainty, that they should keep the peace, and a payment of tribute in labour and in kind to their rulers which was no more than Azande commoners contributed towards the upkeep of the courts. Bit by bit Azande infiltrated among them and married with them. Commoners of standing settled among them and encouraged them to adopt Zande habits and to speak the Zande tongue by offering them hospitality—it is through *bakinde*, porridge, Azande say, that men are subjugated (*zoga*), and by justice. They say “*Azande na ra fu agbia mbiko gagama ae*”, “Azande subject themselves to the princes on account of the gifts they receive from them.” Finally some princeling was sent by his father to rule them or did so on his own initiative, and through his court the people became more familiar with Zande institutions. That such peoples as have retained their own languages and to some extent their traditional way of life have been able to do so is doubtless in part due to the imposition of European rule but it is also in part due to the fact that Azande treated, what they considered, in their sophisticated way, to be barbaric foreign usages with good-humored tolerance, and also in part to the further fact that often, like so many small peoples in other parts of the world, these conies dwelt among the rocks: even the

<sup>34</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>36</sup> Tucker, A. N. “The tribal confusion around Wau,” *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1931, p. 54.

names of some of them indicate this, e.g. Apambia and Belanda both mean hill-men.

The three principal subject peoples in the north, all speaking their own languages as well as Zande, the first two Sudanic tongues and the third a Bantu tongue, but entirely under Zande domination, are the Apambia, the Basiri (Sere), and the Akare. Only the main areas of their occupation are mentioned. There are pockets of them elsewhere, and very many of them have been absorbed by the Azande. The Apambia live among the granitic hills forming the crest of the Nile-Congo divide to the north of Lat. 5° N. Tembura son of Liwa established his rule over them; and they form today a large element in the ethnic composition of the area ruled by his son Renzi and in the old kingdom of Ezo.<sup>36a</sup> The two largest groups of Basiri are between the Boku and the Kere and to the north and south of the Mbomu between Long. 26° and 27° E. There are also pockets of them in the Sudan. Van den Plas remarks (p. 16)<sup>37</sup> that of all the peoples submitted to the Azande, they and the Momvu have been the most refractory to the culture of the conqueror; and de Calonne notes (p. 14)<sup>38</sup> that Zandeization is more advanced among such Bantu peoples as the Abangbinda and the Abuguru than among peoples culturally nearer to the Azande, such as the Basiri. However, Schweinfurth (II, pp. 395-6)<sup>39</sup> says that many of them had been assimilated to the Azande by 1871. The Akare form a compact group on both banks of the Mbomu between 25° and 27° Long. E. In the French Congo they are, says Van den Plas (p. 15),<sup>40</sup> mixed with Banda, Gobo, and Nzakara.<sup>40a</sup> In the same region there is a small people called Biri, apparently still speaking their ancient Sudanic tongue to the east of the Mbomu-Shinko confluence (Baxter and Butt, p. 33),<sup>41</sup> on the authority of Von Weise and Kaiser-Walden; they

<sup>36a</sup> Some of their clans in these regions are: Abadugu, Avuzukpo, Abakpa, Avonamangi, Abakumo, Avugioro, Ambaragba, Abamerenge, Andugu, and Abakowe (Larken, p. 237, but my spellings).

<sup>37</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> De Calonne, *loc. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> Schweinfurth, *loc. cit.*, II, pp. 395-6.

<sup>40</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>40a</sup> De Calonne (pp. 225-8) lists some of their clans: Alibu, Apomboro (?Akpongboro), Abanzika, Abangeli, Abakuba, etc.

<sup>41</sup> Baxter, P. W. T. and A. Butt, *The Azande and Related Peoples of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Belgian Congo*, 1953, p. 33.

are also mentioned by Capenny (p. 313)<sup>42</sup> as dwelling on the middle course of the Warra.

Another people now completely under Zande domination are the Bantu Abuguru (Babukur), though they still speak Liguru as well as Zande. One section of them occupies the crest of the Nile-Congo divide between the eastern sources of the Sueh and the sources of the Meridi and another occupies a stretch of country in the valley of the Sueh to the north of Yambio, the Azande having driven a wedge between the two sections. Smaller groups are found elsewhere.<sup>42a</sup> They were first subjugated by Renzi and Bazingbi, sons of Yakpati. The Huma, who speak a language almost identical with Liguru, mostly live in the hills on the Sueh-Iba watershed, 70 miles to the N.E. of Tembura. They were brought into subjection by Tembura.

A number of other peoples are in part ruled by the Avongara. Those in the south are members of the Mangbetu cluster. When the Azande began to push southwards from the Uele they met with strong resistance from the Sudanic Mangbetu, who at that time had a highly developed political organization embracing a number of peoples, Medje, Makere, Momvu, Mangbele, and others, ruled, like the Azande by the Avongara, by the Mangbetu aristocracy, which has given its name to the whole complex of peoples. Nevertheless, they made some advance and they took over further territories when, after 1870, Egyptian forces had broken the power of the Mangbetu kings. As recorded earlier, some of the Medje (the Mabisanga) have now become Azande, and it seems that others in the north are ruled by Avongara (Baxter and Butt, p. 48).<sup>43</sup> They were subjugated by the Zande king Kipa and placed by him under the rule of his son Bakangai. They are said to be, though much mixed with Azande, a compact group speaking their own tongue and Zande only when it is required of them. In about 1885 Ukwe son of Wando in a campaign against the Momvu pursued them as far south as the Bomo-

<sup>42</sup> Capenny, *loc. cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>42a</sup> Some of their clans found among the Azande, almost exclusively on or to the east of the Sueh, are: Ababaimo, Abakaya, Abagende, Ababanduo, Abayali, Abakpanda, Abakango, Ababali, Abamage, Abandagburu, Abangbandili, Abagiali, Abaruouro, Abadugumu, Ababamuru, Abadangasa, and Abangbapere. To the east of the Sueh they are, on my calculations, over a quarter of the Zande population.

<sup>43</sup> Baxter and Butt, *loc. cit.*, p. 48.

kandi and subjugated them between that river and the Kibali. They have, however, kept their own language and manners and customs, speaking Zande only when necessary. Their resistance to Zande influence may be due in part to the arrival of the Belgians shortly after Ukwe's campaign. Other sections of the Momvu are subjects of the Mangbetu and yet others have retained their independence. A group of the Mangbele on the left bank of the Uele, from the lower Gada to the Mapuse rapids, were defeated by Kipa but later came again under Mangbetu rule. Some of the Mangbele are independent and others are ruled by Avongara and Mangbetu. Originally a Bantu people, they now speak a Sudanic language.

Van den Plas speaks (pp. 18-19)<sup>44</sup> of the Ambili people, Bantu who have to a large extent become completely Zandeised. Those who live compactly in the region of Bondo (just west of 24°E. and just south of 4°N.) have kept their old language, though, having been subject to the Avongara for several generations, they also speak Zande. They seem to be part of the particular Zande complex known as the Azande-Abile.

A number of peoples living on the northern confines of Zandeland are, or were, wholly or in part, under Avongara dominion. Two of these peoples have long been grouped together in literature as the Belanda, a Bongo term, and are referred to by the Azande as Abari. Though much intermingled, they are culturally quite distinct, the one, the Mberidi (Bor), being a Nilotic people related to the Luo, and the other, the Mbegumba (Bviri), a Sudanic people speaking a dialect of the language of the Basiri. One section of these peoples today live between the Sueh and Iba rivers and Lat. 5° and 6°N. and other groups between the Sueh and the Wau. Faced with Arab persecution from the north they chose to submit to the Avongara. Both peoples have preserved their languages and customs, though each speaks the language of the other as well as their own, and both speak also Zande and have been much influenced culturally by the Azande in other ways. Some of the Belanda settled permanently in Zande country, where they have been absorbed. The Bongo, a Sudanic people whom Schweinfurth (I, pp. 257-60)<sup>45</sup> reckoned in 1870 to number some 100,000, scattered over an

<sup>44</sup> Van den Plas, *loc. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>45</sup> Schweinfurth, *loc. cit.*, I, pp. 257-60.

area of nearly 9,000 sq. miles between Lat. 6° and 8°N., were unable to resist enslavement by the Arabs, and some communities fled to the south to seek refuge with the Avongara rulers Tembura, Gbudwe, and Mange. Others sought, by moving to the south, to escape the Arabs and also to preserve their independence but were attacked by these Avongara and forced to accept their overlordship. Such Bongo speak Zande as well as their own language.

In Schweinfurth's day (1870-1871) Azande were spread to the north roughly as far as Lat. 6° 30" and they were in occupation of most of the same territory when Junker was in Zandeland ten years later, but the most northern areas, ruled in Schweinfurth's day by Mofio and Solongo, as he calls them, had been lost to the Avongara by about 1874 (Capenny, p. 310),<sup>46</sup> so that such Azande as were there, known, Junker says (1891, p. 112),<sup>47</sup> as Diggas, no longer had a position of dominance but lived in common dependence on the Egyptian Government with peoples who had once been their vassals and with whom they were by this time very mixed. These were, in addition to groups of peoples already mentioned—Basiri, Bongo, and Pambia—the Golo and some of the Kreish (Gbaya); and to these peoples mentioned by Junker we must add the most easterly section of the Banda nation and some very small peoples—Ndogo,<sup>47a</sup> Bai, and Togbu. All these peoples speak their own Sudanic languages but they also speak Zande with varying proficiency. Junker tells us (1891, pp. 111-116)<sup>48</sup> that some sections of some of these northern peoples had already by his time migrated to the south to seek protection in the powerful Avongara kingdoms from the Arabo-Nubians.

If the Zande expansion to the north on the whole met with weak resistance till countered by the Arab intrusion so that we can, with some latitude, it is true, list the peoples of that region under the heading of subject peoples, in the east and north-east resistance by some small peoples was not sufficiently or on a large enough scale overcome before the Egyptian Government

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<sup>46</sup> Capenny, *loc. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>47</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>47a</sup> Schweinfurth's "Nducco" are a Kreish tribe, not the Ndogo (Tucker, 1940, p. 15).

<sup>48</sup> Junker, *loc. cit.*, 1891, pp. 111-116.

established military posts in the area for us to describe them as subject peoples, except perhaps in the case of the Baka. De Calonne says that the Baka on the Aka and Garamba were subjugated by Wando, and even those who are independent of Avongara rule in the Sudan have been much influenced by Azande, whose tongue is widely known among them. Had it not been for Arab intervention they and the other peoples of the area would have inevitably been brought into complete subjection, for they were unorganized and disunited. As it was, they were raided and displaced by both the Avongara and the Adio, who took captives whose descendants are found among the Azande today. There must also have been some degree of social contact between them and the Azande, for it is seldom that one fails to find among them individuals who understand Zande.

The peoples raided and sometimes displaced by the Azande in this area but cannot be said to have been subjugated by them to any extent, or even at all, are the Sudanic Mundu, Avukaya,<sup>48a</sup> the so-called Jur peoples (Beli, Sofi, etc.), the Moro<sup>48b</sup> peoples (Moro Kodo, Moro Meza, etc.), and the Logo; and the Nilo-Hamitic Fajelu and Kakwa. It would seem that individuals, and perhaps sometimes small groups, of all these peoples have contributed to the ethnic composition of the Azande.

Some southern peoples who seem to have contributed, though in small numbers, to the formation of the Azande nation are briefly mentioned. De Calonne says (pp. 73-4)<sup>49</sup> that the Mabudu, a Bantu people living today to the south of the Mangbetu cluster, were defeated by Kipa's sons who, however, later withdrew northwards. The Ababua stoutly resisted the Azande, but the lack of unity among the communities of this Bantu people told against them and they had already had to yield to the Avongara a stretch of their country to the north when the Belgian occupation stopped further encroachments. The Mayogo, of the Mangbetu cluster, appear to have had very limited

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<sup>48a</sup> The Abakaya clan of the Azande, found in numbers to the east of the Sueh, may be this people, though it was listed by my informants as a clan of the Abuguru.

<sup>48b</sup> The Amuru clan of the Azande, found almost exclusively in the most eastern parts of Sudan Zandeland, may be this people, though, here again, the clan was listed by informants among the Abuguru clans.

<sup>49</sup> De Calonne, *loc. cit.*, pp. 73-4.

contacts with the Azande. The Mobenge (Benge) form the most northern part of the Bantu Mobati, living just south of the Uele between Long. 23° and 24° E. Burrows (p. 19)<sup>50</sup> says that they are dominated by the Azande, to whom they pay tribute. Capenny asserts (p. 312)<sup>51</sup> that they were subjugated by Jabbir, "a son of a Zande prince" (p. 85).<sup>52</sup> Van Bulck and Hackett (p. 79)<sup>53</sup> say that they have been largely overrun by Abandiya and Azande. Zande domination by this people is not mentioned by our other sources. The Bakango are riverains of the Uele between Bambili and Bondo. They do not, however, appear to be a distinct ethnic group, but sections of Azande, Ababua, and other peoples. Pygmies are sometimes met in the most southernly extensions of Zandeland, e.g. in the valley of the Poko, tributary of the Bomokandi (Czekanowski, p. 25).<sup>54</sup>

For convenience I table the peoples who have in one way or another and in varying degrees contributed to the Zande complex, the table serving the further purpose of key to the sketch-map. Forty different peoples are listed. Some peoples who might well have been entered separately appear under a single title, the "Jur" and "Moro" peoples for example, or the "Medje" (the Mabisanga section are probably Bantu in origin). Had they been given separate entries and had some doubtful cases (mentioned by Junker, Van den Plas, and others) been included, e.g. Apagumba, Mambelli, etc., we could assert that, together with the Ambomu, at least 50 different peoples have contributed to this vast ethnic amalgam; and it may even be, for we seldom have sufficient information to decide, that some of these peoples, as would appear to be the case with the Abandiya, were themselves composed of heterogeneous stocks.

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<sup>50</sup> Burrows, G. *The Curse of Central Africa*, 1903, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> Capenny, *loc. cit.*, p. 312.

<sup>52</sup> Capenny, *loc. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> Van Bulck, G. and P. Hackett, "Oubangui to Great Lakes," *Linguistic Survey of the Northern Bantu Borderland*, Vol. I, 1956, p. 79.

<sup>54</sup> Czekanowski, *loc. cit.*, p. 25.



PEOPLES CONTRIBUTING TO THE ZANDE COMPLEX

ALMOST AS-SIMILATED CULTURALLY	STILL SPEAKING OWN LANGUAGES	MINOR CONTRIBUTORS TO AZANDE
SUDANIC		
I Abandiya	X Apambia	XXXI Mundu
II Adio	XI Basiri	XXXII Avukaya
III Abwameli	XII Biri	XXXIII Jur peoples
IV Angada	XIII Medje	XXXIV Moro peoples
V Nzakara	XIV Momvu	XXXV Logo
VI Abangbinda	XV Mangbele	
VII Abarambo	XVI Mbegumba	
VIII Amadi	XVII Bongo	
IX Bangba	XVIII Golo	
	XIX Tagbu	
	XX Bai	
	XXI Gobu	
	XXII Kreish	
	XXIII Banda	
	XXIV Ndogo	
	XXV Baka	
BANTU		
	XXVI Ambili	XXXVI Mabudu
	XXVII Akare	XXXVII Ababua
	XXVIII Abuguru	XXXVIII Mobenge
	XXIX Huma	
NILOTIC		
	XXX Mberidi	
NILO-HAMITIC		
		XXXIX Fajelu
		XL Kakwa

In presenting a sketch-map (based on de Calonne's map of Zande distribution and with the location of peoples taken from the authorities listed in the bibliography) I must emphasize that only the approximate locations are indicated.

Enough information has been given to indicate the great ethnic complexity of the Azande. Those who wish for further information may consult the authorities quoted. They will find

it heavy-going. It is indeed an exhausting experience to try to follow and reconcile their accounts. I may have made mistakes in this endeavour, and so may they in their reports; but this is of little importance so long as the general presentation of the ethnic heterogeneity of the Azande is a correct one, and there can be no doubt about that. When we come, however, to consider the contribution of each people to this complex in terms of clans and their distributions and numbers we are faced with difficulties far greater than any we have hitherto encountered, and only very rough approximations can be attempted. For most of Zandeland we have no record of the distribution or numerical strength of the clans, and we have also no record of the clans of most of the peoples represented in the Zande complex, and in the few cases where they are listed, mostly by de Calonne, they are scarcely reliable. De Calonne is not to be blamed for this, for he died before he was able to collate his notes and also because Azande are themselves vague and contradictory in their attachment of clans to ethnic groups. I have myself attempted to sort the matter out for Sudanese Zandeland, but without great confidence in the correctness of the results. All Azande I have consulted are agreed that certain clans are Ambomu, but about others there is uncertainty and dispute. Then, when all are agreed that a clan is of foreign stock, there is a diversity of opinion about to which stock it belongs. I have followed the advice of good informants in listing the clans of various peoples as I have done, but I must record that in some instances there was disagreement. Some men said a clan was an Amiangba one, others said it was an Abangbinda one, and yet others that it was an Amadi one. Generally Azande seem content to know that a people are *Auro*, of foreign origin, and if pressed for further information they are inclined to put them into some category with which they are most familiar, their favourite in the area where I carried out my researches being "Amiangba". The truth is that in some cases nobody is quite certain, not even, I think, the clansmen themselves, what their origin is. What makes the matter even more complicated is that Zande clans split into sections with different names and, further, that totally different clans fuse together under a single name. Thus, to give a few examples, I was told that the Akpura clan, the Abakpuro clan, and the Amigano clan were all related offshoots from a

common, single, original clan. The Abananga are said to be a true and original Adio clan from which some of them have separated out under the sobriquet of Akowe, and to these have attached themselves (*zi tiyo na* or *kpamia tiyo na*) some clans of totally different, probably Amiangba, origin (Abaranga, Apise, and Abakowe) who now claim to be genuine Adio. The Abaake, Abakpaku, Abainara, and other clans say, I was told, that they are sections of the Abadara, an Ambomu clan, but are really of foreign stock. The Angbaga clan are a composite group, it is alleged, consisting of an Ambomu clan with various foreign accretions; and the Aboro are likewise a *kpamiakpamia* clan, a coalition of various elements. All this is exceedingly confusing, and a study of totemic affiliations and the etymology of clan names only serves to increase the confusion.<sup>54a</sup> The difficulties are perhaps insuperable. All I can say, therefore, is that if we accept the 20 clans I have listed as being Ambomu, as such, then, together with the Avongara, they form some 29% of the Zande population of the Sudan, a bigger percentage than we would be likely to find in other parts of Zandeland. This estimate is based on a census of 33,635 adult males made in 1929 and 1930.<sup>54b</sup> Even if we allow all doubtful or disputed cases to count as Ambomu they would still not exceed half the total population.

What are the results which may be regarded as being of some social significance of this large-scale absorption of foreign peoples? One result is pointed to by the Azande themselves, and the evidences support their opinion. They say that it is where the foreign element is strongest that the Avongara rulers are the most autocratic. The colonialism of the Azande, as we might put it, has reacted on their own class structure, the paternalism of the Avongara, with its traditional intimacies and familiarities, tending to be replaced by a more distant and impersonal relationship between rulers and ruled, the Ambomu themselves becoming increasingly indistinguishable in the general mass. The result seems to have been that the word *vuru* lost some of its earlier sense of "follower" and took on more of the tone of "subject", and the cultural term "Azande" came to be used in

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<sup>54a</sup> See the author's papers "Zande Clan Names," *Man*, 1956, 62, and "Zande Totems," *Man*, 1956, 62.

<sup>54b</sup> E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "The Distribution of Zande Clans in the Sudan," *Man*, 1958.

social and political contexts as synonymous with *avuru*, all alike being subjects of the Avongara whether they spoke only Zande or their own language as well. Whether the Ambomu clans ever had a more than vaguely social role cannot now be determined, but Azande think of them as having been in the distant past corporate local communities which were to a large extent politically autonomous. What is certain is that they could have no political significance after having been scattered over hundreds of miles and their members fused in community life with numerous foreign peoples. Clan affiliations could only be of negligible interest compared with political allegiances; and every effort was made by the rulers to eliminate slowly local and ethnic particularisms and to impress on all alike that personal loyalty to their masters and service at court and in the administration counted more than claims to good birth. An examination of the clans of administrative agents—commoner governors, deputies, captains of companies, etc.—makes it abundantly evident that loyalty and efficiency overrode all other considerations in appointment to public office. Nevertheless, as I have mentioned earlier, descent does still play some part in social life. There has survived some feeling of Ambomu superiority, though it is expressed in terms of obligation and manners rather than of privilege or wealth. Boys and girls of Ambomu families are more strictly brought up; and their young men are taught to regard their attachment to their rulers as a hereditary right of service, a right conferred on them by generations of precedent.

A further consideration, which must receive separate treatment elsewhere, would be the effect, difficult to estimate, of cultural borrowings brought about by ethnic fusion, borrowings of food plants, arts, institutions, etc. Without, however, discussing this aspect, it may be suggested that the facts known to us about so great an ethnic and cultural amalgamation point to a further conclusion, hard though it be to define it or prove its correctness: that the sophistication and, we might say, the cultural and social plasticity the Azande display in comparison with many primitive people derives from their historical experience. They have been a conquering people who have migrated and established themselves among foreign peoples and have for generations been accustomed to hearing foreign languages and to seeing foreign ways of life and also to adjusting themselves to

the processes of cultural assimilation and political integration. They have demonstrated through their institutions a remarkable capacity to absorb foreign stocks and foreign customs. The resilience so acquired, it may be supposed, enabled them the more easily to come to terms with Arabs and Europeans and to support the humiliations and tribulations their presence imposed, for in spite of all they had to endure they were able, even their proud kings and princes, to adjust themselves to the new situation and by so doing to retain their essential values and institutions.

Lastly, attention may be drawn to the significance of the Zande empire in its latest historical phase, its significance for European dominion and administration. The European, instead of being confronted with fifty different peoples, each with its own culture and institutions, took over a nation with a single culture, or at any rate a nation advanced in the process of developing one, and with a common set of political institutions. This greatly facilitated their task, for, apart from being able to ignore many cultural diversities, they had at their disposal an organized and efficient administration through which they could operate their own, and, indeed, had no alternative but to do so. As Lelong says (p. 81),<sup>55</sup> "Il est même permis d'apprécier certains bienfaits de l'expansion des Azande. Un de leurs partisans convaincus, comme ils sont nombreux parmi les administrateurs (il est plus facile de gouverner avec des chefs indigènes obéis et craints que de régenter l'anarchie), regrettait devant moi que l'occupation belge ne fût arrivée un peu plus tard. Elle a surpris, en effet, les Azande en plein mouvement d'expansion."

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<sup>55</sup> Lelong, M. H. *Mes Frères du Congo*, 1946, p. 81.

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