

forming a membrane is lost. This delicate and beautiful experiment very clearly shows that physiological impulses of the most profound importance pass across these protoplasmic bridges, by which the nucleus of one cell regulates the membrane-forming power of a protoplasmic mass from which the nucleus has been removed.

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## THE TRIBES OF THE TANA VALLEY

BY A. WERNER.

The Tana Valley is the meeting-point of several different races, and therefore of peculiar interest from an ethnological point of view. Moreover, it is the dividing-line, for this part of Africa, between Bantu and non-Bantu, and an examination of the racial conditions as we find them to-day suggests a series of fascinating problems for the ethnologist.

The Bantu tribe of the Wapokomo form, as is well known, the main population of the Tana Valley. They have been impinged upon, first from the north-east, afterwards from the south-west, by the Galla; at a later date by the Somali from the north-east and the Masai from the south-west. (These last, whose advance is always checked by any great body of water, were stopped by the Tana in 1887, and seem since then to have fallen back and never recovered the lost ground.) And, scattered among them, in the forest on both banks of the river, are little groups of the hunter tribes—the Wasanye and Waboni.

The Wapokomo are divided into thirteen tribes, each occupying a district named after it—though of late years there is a tendency for them to break up, fractions of some tribes settling within the districts of others: thus, there is a small colony of Buu people at Benderani, in the Ngatana district, and another of Bure (Ngatana) in the Kalindi district.

The names of these tribes, beginning with the highest and going down river, are as follows :—

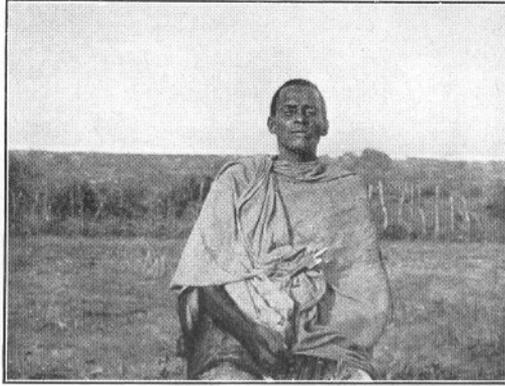
Korokoro	Kinakomba	Ngatana
Malakote	Gwano	Dzunza
Malalulu	Ndera	Buu
Zubaki	Mwina	Kalindi
Ndura		

Sometimes Kulesa is counted as a separate tribe ; but it is really a branch of the Ngatana.

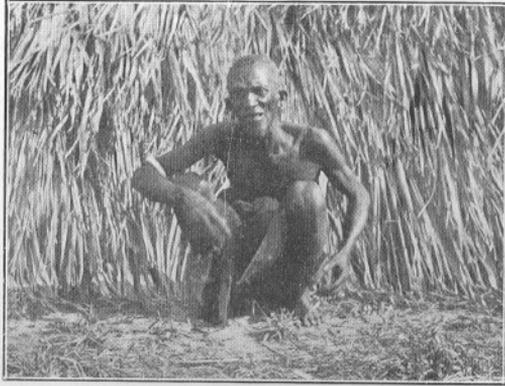
As far as Mwina, the tribes are called collectively Wantu wa Dzuu, or ' up-river people ' ; Mwina and the four following tribes are Wantu wa Nsini. While recognising each other as Wapokomo, these two sections are in many respects distinct : they have separate *Ngadzi* (an expression corresponding more or less to the *Kambi* of the Wagiryama), and they do not, as a rule (unless quite recently), intermarry. It is impossible to say at present whether there are any Pokomo traditions of a common origin for all the tribes : I have not hitherto found any tribe attempting to account for more than itself and one other ; but I shall come back to this point presently.

The Korokoro tribe, like the Wasanye of the Malindi district, have adopted the Galla language and have quite ceased to use their own. The rest of the up-river tribes speak a dialect of Pokomo differing considerably from that of the Lower Tana, and there are important variations of custom ; e.g. the Wantu wa Dzuu practise circumcision, while the Wantu wa Nsini, I am informed, have never done so in the past, though occasionally, in recent years, conforming to the Muhammadan custom where they have been much in contact with the coast people.

The Pokomo language is interesting, as being the farthest north-westerly outlier of the Bantu field. Its vocabulary contains a large non-Bantu element, most of which is recognisable as Galla, e.g. *balguda* ' ostrich,' *hare* ' donkey,' *hamata* ' to become bad,' *binensa* ' an animal,' *gafi* ' perhaps,' &c. But there are also a number of words which cannot, so far as I can ascertain, be thus accounted for, such as *natodhe*



A GALLA.



OLD GIRYAMA, KIPEPO OF THE AMWA-NGOWA.



POKOMOS ON THE BANK OF TANA RIVER.

*From photographs by Miss A. Werner.*

'leopard' (Galla *kerans*), *sara* 'name' (Galla *mak*), *puru* 'zebra' (Galla *haredida*), *asi* 'grave' (Galla *dibe*).

It is possible that these words are due to the Wasanye, from whom, as we shall see presently, the Wapokomo seem to be in part descended. (It is not too late to recover their language, which is still spoken in the neighbourhood of Witu.)<sup>1</sup> But, so far, I have been unable to trace any of them.

Pokomo has several features in common with the neighbouring Nyika dialects (e.g. Giriyama), especially a strong objection to the consonants P and T, which are replaced by 'bilabial F' (written *f*) and H respectively. Thus the people do not call themselves Wapokomo, but Wafokomo; *hapa*, 'here,' becomes *hafa*; *tatu*, 'three,' is *hahu*; *kutenda*, 'to do,' *kuhenda*, &c. (P is found in a few words for which, when not derived from the Swahili, it is difficult to account. I believe the sound does not exist in Galla.)

Pokomo also avoids L whenever possible, either omitting it or replacing it by Y: e.g. *yaa* = *lala*.

It would be interesting, and would probably throw a great deal of light on the origin and affinities of the Pokomo as a whole, to collect and collate the separate traditions of each tribe. I have only been able to obtain information from two out of the thirteen. The fullest, that relating to the Buu tribe, is important, because it seems to indicate that this tribe at any rate is partly descended from the Wasanye, a fact which, if established, might furnish the key to several problems.

<sup>1</sup> The Wasanye now living in the forests about Pumwani and Marafa (a few miles inland from Mambrui) say that their original language was that spoken by the Waboni, and that they and the Waboni were originally one. They call themselves, and are called by the Galla, 'Wat.' The latter are to be found in the forests near Witu (I saw a few of them at Witu in December 1912) and apparently further north. I am told there are many in the neighbourhood of Barawa. I also saw at Witu some so-called Wasanye, whose language was different from that spoken by the Waboni, but was certainly not Galla. (I give their numerals below; it is to be noted that they do not go beyond 5.) The Wasanye of the Malindi district call these people 'Juan,' and say they are a distinct tribe, called Wadahalo by the Swahili and Galla. Their numerals are: 1 *Watukwe*, 2 *Lima*, 3 *Kava*, 4 *Sa'ala*, 5 *Tawate*, 6 *Tawate olu Watukwe*, 7 *Tawate olu Lima*, &c., as far as 10, for which I failed to get any other word than Kumi. I collected a few Boni words and sentences, which partly, but not entirely, correspond with some kindly furnished me in MS. by Mr. Hollis.

The Buu are a fairly large tribe occupying the district which contains the German (Neukirchen) Mission Station of Ngao, and consisting of eight clans. These, and more especially the Karya, trace their descent from one Vere, who, six or eight generations ago, according to the pedigrees given me, came into the Tana Valley alone, no one knows whence. Some make him a supernatural being devoid of human parents, who produced, without a mate, the progenitor of the Buu tribe, but nothing in the account given me by Mpongwa (Government Elder of Ngao and himself a direct descendant of Vere) necessarily implies this: only that his parentage is utterly unknown, and though he eventually obtained a wife no one can now tell who she was.

On the other hand there is a tendency, frequently observed among people whose history is entirely traditional, to date their legends at a period immediately before the earliest generation of which they have any certain knowledge; so that, whether mythical or not, Vere may belong to an epoch several centuries earlier than could be inferred from the native chronology. Other people have supplied me with bits of the same story, but no one else seemed to know anything about the miraculous plate.

Be that as it may, Mpongwa's account is as follows:—  
 ' Vere came and appeared over there at Matsanzuni, and he first built (his house) on the north bank of the Tana; <sup>1</sup> he lived alone, he had no wife or child. He also had neither food nor fire, and thus he lived a whole year. Then (one day) he saw food on a plate, together with meat and its gravy; he took and ate, washed the plate, and went into his house to sleep. When he came out in the morning the plate was gone. (Another time) the plate appeared with hot cakes (*mikahe*). He took the cakes and ate them, and when he had finished eating, the plate rose (into the air) and disappeared, and

<sup>1</sup> Old Buu—Buu Ya Kae—is on the old course of the Tana (Tsana Ndeya = 'the long Tana,' or Tsana Ya Limotho), some distance to the north of the present Lake Sumiti. It can be reached in seven to eight hours from Mijeni, above Ngao. (The river has twice changed its course since then.) Matsanzuni is said to be in the same neighbourhood. Ngambwa and Kombeni still exist.

he never saw it again. Another time, there was caused to descend for him cold water, very good, sweet as sugar. He remained for two years, and at the end of that time he saw a *nswi* fish on the Watsa (the sand-banks along the margin of the Tana, which are sometimes under water, sometimes exposed), and thought, "I have no fire. What shall I do with it?" He saw a *chalikoko* (fish-eagle) eating (a similar fish) with its beak, and said to himself, "This thing is food after all." Next time he saw a *nswi* he ate it, like the *chalikoko*, just raw as it was. (All this time) he remained alone—he saw no man. After a European year,<sup>1</sup> he saw a fire burning on the plains (*yuandani*), and thought "Who can it be who has lit a fire?" He went on to Matsanzuni, till he reached Old Buu. Then he wandered on in the same way till he came to Ngambwa; and then went on again over the plains and came to a place called Kombeni, where there appeared to him his companion (*mwenziwe*): his name was Mitsotsozini. (Vere) called to him: "Sir, where do you come from? I have been walking here; where should I see a man?" Mitsotsozini answered, "Since I set out I have not seen a man, and this is the fifth year since I have met any." Vere said to him, "Very well, come—let us go to my place," and they did so. Vere then went and took out his fish-trap (*mono*) and killed one *mpumi* (a large fish with spines on its back, which groans when caught: Mpongwa illustrated this very dramatically) and one *nswi*, and brought them to his friend, saying, "Come out and let us eat this *nswi*." Mitsotsozini came out and asked, "Is this fish raw?" Vere answered, "I eat it raw just like this." Mitsotsozini said, "No, let us light a fire." "Where shall we get fire? I know no news of fire—if you know, come and show me." (It does not appear that Vere was unacquainted with the use of fire—only with the means of producing it.) Mitsotsozini went and chopped up a tree and cut a stick of this size (indicating a length of about a foot

<sup>1</sup> *Mwaka wa kizungu*. The Pokomo 'year' is six months: a rainy and a dry season; hence the two years mentioned a little further back are to be taken as equivalent to one European year. The Pokomo, unlike most other Bantu (but like the Wasanye), do not reckon by months, only by seasons.

and a thickness of half an inch), and took another and held it like this, and cut a hole like this and put a bit of rag (*kitani*) beside it like this, and twisted it like this (till he had kindled a fire). He then took a pot, filled it with water, and set it on the stones (*dzikoni*); (when the fish was done) he took it out (*kevura*) and said to Vere, "Come, let us eat." When they had finished eating, rice appeared, and it was in the husk. Vere carried it to Mitsotsozini, who took up a little in his hand (*ku mega*), put it into his mouth and said, "People do not eat it like this." Vere asked, "How do they eat, then?" So Mitsotsozini went to cut down a tree and made a mortar and pestle for pounding; then he took the pestle and pounded.'

Here Mpongwa broke off somewhat abruptly, only adding 'Vere got a wife from Malikakombo.'

(Malikakombo was explained as being 'near the Ozi,' though another informant said it was near (the northern) Kilifi.)

Naturally one wanted to know a little more about Mitsotsozini, but Mpongwa either could not or would not tell any more, and the above (considering that he had dictated another story immediately before) is by no means a discreditable achievement for an old gentleman not invariably sober. (I found it a profitable practice to haunt the *duka* at Ngao during the early part of the forenoon, when customers and others would drop in for a gossip, but had not yet had time—if so inclined—to look very deep into the *mochi* gourd.)

But, after various inquiries, I one day received an answer—given in the most matter-of-fact manner—which took my breath away; Mitsotsozini was a Musanye! Not only so, but he was the ancestor of the Katsae clan; and if I wanted any further information, Mataguda, of that clan, was the man to give it me. I may remark at once that Mataguda proved a disappointment, and I was never able to carry out a cherished plan of tracing the Katsae back to Mitsotsozini, as Mpongwa had traced his clan (the Karya) back to Vere.

Mpongwa's pedigree, as he gave it me, is as follows :

Vere  
 |  
 Malikei  
 |  
 Buko  
 |  
 Koroso  
 |  
 Nkondo  
 |  
 Kaimu  
 |  
 Nkondo  
 |  
 Mpongwa or  
 Koroso.

But a younger member of the same clan said—if I understood him rightly—that Malikei was either the daughter or the son of a daughter of Vere—so Mpongwa would not be a direct descendant after all.

He also wanted to knock out either the first or the second Buko on the list (all the Nkondos are also named Buko), but I have thought better to leave it as the old man dictated it.

Owing to the Pokomo system of nomenclature (similar to, but, I think, not quite identical with that in vogue among the Giryama), there are really only two names in this family tree (i.e. as it stands here, excluding the younger members of each generation), viz. Buko and Koroso. The rest are aliases. It would take us too far to consider this system in detail, but it is extremely interesting.

The important points that emerge from the above are (1) the Sanye descent of one or more Buu clans, (2) that the Pokomo acquired some at least of the arts of life from the Wasanye, who, moreover, would seem to be the aborigines of the district, since Mitsotsozini had been there five ' years ' to Vere's two.

It also seems probable that the Pokomo derived their *Ngadzi* at least in part from the Wasanye. At any rate it seems certain that the *Fufuriye*, the first degree of the lesser *Ngadzi*, is the *Foforikiwan*, the mystery of the Wasanye which (so Abarea, the Galla chief of Kurawa, tells me) no Galla is allowed to look on.

It was difficult to get any definite information about

the *Foforikiwan* from the Wasanye, beyond the fact that it seemed to correspond to the *Kambi* of the Giriyama and the *Gada* of the Galla. Among the Pokomo its insignia are two flutes, sounded in response to one another—one with a higher, one with a deeper note. I have not heard of anything resembling these among the Giriyama, though the instrument of the highest rank, the big friction-drum (*mwanja mukuu*), is certainly the Nyika *mwanza*. The Pokomo say that they derived this *Ngadzi* from the Wa-Rabai.

It would seem as if the Pokomo had parted off from the other 'Nyika' tribes at a comparatively early period and settled down permanently in the Tana Valley while the rest went on their way southward.

Bulushi, brother of Mzee Mkoa, the Giriyama chief (at Garashi, near Malindi), told me that the Giriyama, Taita, Kauma Digo and Pokomo tribes all came from Sungwaya. Another account, obtained from a very intelligent Kauma man now living at Ngao, represents the Wakauma as the parent stock of the Wa-Rabai and Waduruma. ('We are few in number now, but formerly we were a powerful tribe.' Their old *Kaya*, Kivara, is north of Kaloleni and about eight hours' march from Rabai.) They were the first to migrate southwards, and were followed by the Wa-Giriyama. At that time the Wasegeju occupied the country between 'the old Ozi' and Chadoro on the Tana, and the Wapokomo were already settled in the Tana Valley. Driven south by the irresistible onset of the Galla, the Wakauma and Wasegeju migrated together to the Vanga district (where the latter found a permanent home), while the Wapokomo, who preferred submitting to the conquerors ('They agreed to be conquered, but we did not,' said my informant) remained in the regions which they inhabit to this day.

Much more might be said as to their traditions, but space will not permit. I will only remark that of late years there seems to be a tendency on the part of the Wa-Giriyama to migrate northward again, in the direction of their original home. I saw the family of Kipepo, of the A-mwa-Ngowa clan, settled near Lake Sumiti, north of the Tana, when I was at Ngao in October 1912. These were, later on, joined

by Kipepo's brother, Mae. They had no cattle, but a fair number of goats and sheep. Bulushi, already mentioned, accompanied Mae, but, I think, without intending to settle permanently, as he has since returned to Garashi.

The Galla, who thus swept down on the Tana Valley from the north, were in their turn driven beyond that river by the Somali, whose raids began about 1868. In 1878 they used to cross the Tana above Masa and graze their cattle between that river and the Sabaki, but as a rule the former has been their southern limit.

The Galla call them Jidu, the Pokomo Gavira and (formerly) Wakatwa. The latter sometimes call the Milky Way (usually known as Madziko—being looked on as the smoke from the cooking-fires of 'people in the sky') *Njia ya Gavira*—the road by which the Somali come southward. Of course this name cannot have been in use much over forty years.

The Wapokomo are, like most genuine Bantu, essentially an agricultural people—but, whether from force of circumstances or from the Wat element in their composition, they have always made part of their living by hunting, fishing, and that search for unconsidered trifles in forest and steppe which German ethnologists have agreed to call 'collecting' (*sammeln*). That hunting has been practised from time immemorial appears from the elaborate system of Taboos (*miiko*) connected with it, as well as from the old traditional songs of the lion, the hippopotamus, and the crocodile.

They are the only people I have heard of who habitually eat the latter animal. Having hunted it through generations, they have acquired not only an exhaustive familiarity with its ways and manners (a Pokomo imitating the action of a crocodile—or, for that matter, of a hippo—is perfectly *impayable*), but a kind of friendly give-and-take attitude towards it that can only be described as 'sporting.'

They are expert swimmers and divers, and scorn to take any precautions where crocodiles are concerned. 'Oh yes—we know they are there, in the water—just as the fish are! The Swahilis get caught sometimes—but then they're afraid of them!' And if one dares, as sometimes happens, once too

often—why, *à la guerre comme à la guerre*. ‘Why not?—we eat each other!’

Fishing is carried on with a hook and line, by spearing, with a conical basket called *chiha* (which is lowered into the water, enclosing the fish like a bell-net), or in a trap, *mono*,<sup>1</sup> on the principle of the lobster-pot, and of a shape which, I believe, is the same all over Bantu Africa and quite different from the *ema* used by Swahili coast-fishermen. The *mamba* (lung-fish?), which sometimes reaches a length of 3 feet 6 inches and over, is during the dry season speared in the nest which it makes for itself in the beds of variable lagoons like Shaka Babo.

The Pokomo hut is of the same shape as that made by the Galla and Wasanye (when the latter is more than the most elementary shelter), with this difference, that the wattles are tied together at the top, instead of crossing each other in a series of arches. The three ridges into which the thatch is cut in the best-finished huts are also a feature of Galla construction: which race borrowed it from the other it is hard to say.

The limits of this paper forbid a fuller discussion of the Pokomo ‘secret societies’ (I fancy ‘age-classes’ would be a better term), and more especially the complicated subject of the *luya* and its relations to the Galla institution of the same name. It would indeed be premature to do so with only the facts at present available. But further investigation may perhaps point to the conclusion that both parties derived them from the Wasanye.

<sup>1</sup>The Nyanja word for the same thing. It is curious that Pokomo, especially in the upper river dialects, has words (e.g. *ku gona*, ‘to sleep’) which occur in Chinyanja, but not, so far as I am aware, in any geographically intervening language.