HARP MUSIC OF THE AZANDE AND RELATED PEOPLES IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC[1]

(Part I — Horizontal Harp Playing)

by

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Since the days of Schweinfurth and other early explorers the Azande have been famous for their beautifully-shaped harps and their fine playing of this instrument.

When I came to the Central African Republic I did not know much more than that about them, because it is one of my habits to read the literature about a people after I have studied there for myself first.

I had come all the way from Oshogbo in Nigeria on a small Solex autocycle. This tour took me about four months until I arrived at Gamboula (a border post between Cameroun and the Central African Republic) on the 17th March, 1964.

From there I went first to the Mbimo in the southwestern corner of the R.C.A., but by the beginning of April I was back on my way to the east, via Berberati and Carnot. It only took two days driving on the lonely road for a bad discovery; the tyres were finished . . .

This happened somewhere near Carnot. How I got to Bangui on the sandy tyre-consuming track was a miracle, thanks to my unknown African friends on the road. Wherever I broke down, the village youngsters patched up the torn tyres; later they sewed them with iron or copper wire, exchanged broken Solex spokes for bicycle spokes, tied together the broken carrier with lianas, and some inventive men repaired my current motor troubles. In this manner I was passed on from village to village until somewhere near Boda, from where military units took me to Bangui in a jeep. Here I was able to get my cycle repaired and prepare for the second part of the tour to the east.

It was during the long evenings in the villages that I became conscious of a characteristic of this country: the great popularity of harp playing. It is no exaggeration to say that the Central African Republic is a land of the harp.

I met the harp for the first time in the African quarter of the Plantation Molois near Carnot, where I stayed for the night. The player was a *Karre*, who had come from the area of Bozoum to work here for a white "patron". His five-string harp which he called *Kundeng*' was tuned pentatonically and he played it in the "vertical" position, with the neck of the harp leaning against the body. His harp playing was the basis for a female choir, singing mainly in unison with occasional fourths. The music had that typical Centrafricain "flavour" that is so difficult to describe, but so easily recognized from recordings[2].

[1] *Acknowledgements*: My musicological research trip to the Azande become possible by kind permission of the Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Information in Bangui. I particularly thank Monsieur Christian Toleque of the Commission de Controle due Service de l'Information, and Monsieur Victor Teteya, Director of the Radiodiffusion Nationale Centreafricaine, who very much facilitated my project. I am most grateful also to the technicians of the radio station, who repeatedly helped me out of troubles with my tape recorder.

My sincere thanks go to the Azande harp players, especially to Maurice Gambassi, Jerome Assas, Jerome Sournac, Samuel Ouzana and Mockys Dieudonné Yves, who taught me how to play the Azande harp and helped me as interpreters. In addition to that I am grateful to David Kamoundé, who transcribed most of the songs recorded in Zande.

My warm recognition goes to the fathers of the Catholic Missions at Zemio, Rafai and Bangassou, who lodged me whenever I happened to stay in these places. I particularly should like to thank Father Piet van Horne, C.S.Sp., who kindly translated some of the songs into French.

Finally I thank my unknown African friends in the villages of the Central African Republic, who willingly housed me on my way and helped me forth. I never had any difficulty. In every village of the R.C.A. houses are open to a stranger.

[2] At this place I also recorded the remarkable music of a young *Gbaya-Kara*, who played a two-string guitar, manufactured by himself. He called it *Baizo*, a word obviously derived from "banjo" (in the French pronunciation). He could produce four notes by two alternating fingerings. His music was almost indistinguishable from traditional harp music. Listening to the recording alone one would hardly believe that it is *not* a harp. A similar thing is reported from an area I have not visited. The Radiodiffusion Centrafricaine has a recording of a Banda guitarist named André Savat who plays a "real" guitar, but entirely in the harp style. In Rafai I later met two Azande guitarists (the only ones I saw), one of whom played some compositions of his own that were close to Azande harp music as well. With the exception of band guitar music in Bangui, which is tuned to the hits of Brazzaville, guitar playing of the Banda, Azande and other peoples of the Central African Republic is mainly an extension of harp playing. But in spite of this, the harp is by far the more popular instrument today.

Harp music as I heard it everywhere on my way from west to east all had a great similarity both instrumentally and in singing. The various harp styles of tribes such as the Karre, Buru, Banda, Nzakara, Azande and other seem to be related. There is a current exchange of themes, tunes, patterns, etc. Tunes are invented somewhere and spread in all directions.

At Galafondo, north of Bangui on the road to Fort Sibut, I recorded a harp player of the *Buru* tribe: Jean Nquimale. He, like his relative, Dimanche Malekete, a very talented thirteen-year-old harp player, held the five-string harp in an oblique "horizontal" position in the lap. He used a pattern of fingering that I saw again later in harp playing of the Banda and Azande. (Compare the "Banda" beat).

Some pieces were sung solo. For other pieces the harpist just provided an instrumental basis to the harmonies of the women. They were singing in parallel pentatonic harmony. (Compare in this context my remarks on Azande harmony later in this article).

For comparison with Azande and Banda patterns one of the harp patterns recorded at Galafondo is reproduced at the end of the Scores.

It took me five days on my Solex to get from Bangui to Rafai. Once again the tyres were finished. I arrived at the Vovodo river late in the night of the 23rd April. The ferry was closed. On the other side of the river was Rafai, the first town of the Azande country. Through the evaporating humidity of the river I distinguished the shimmer of kerosene lamps on the other side. I tried to shout, but in vain. Nobody would come to the river by this time.

So I looked for a place to pitch my tent and escape the greedy buzzing of the gathering mosquitoes. Tomorrow I would go and see the Catholic priest, Father Piet van Horne, to whom I had been recommended. I had heard a lot about his Zande church compositions, so I was anxious to meet him . . .

Rafai was a surprise. I have never seen so many harp players amusing themselves in the streets of a town. They were mostly young people playing the harp, walking up and down near the market, where honey wine was being sold by the women. I arrived at the mission, a house of raw bricks with a grass roof on top, and found Father van Horne sitting in front of the house surrounded by a swarm of children. He was very surprised when I explained what I had come to Rafai for. I must mention that my intention was still to study *Kponingbo* xylophone music in order to see if there was any similarity to East African xylophone playing, which I had known before. Fortunately, I was told there would be a *Kponingbo* dance in the town that evening.

Attracted by the event of my arrival, a number of harp players came to the Mission and after some talk said they would be glad to teach me the harp. This overthrew my original plan and in the following weeks of my stay in the Azande country it was harp music that I would mainly study.

There were many difficulties to overcome at the beginning, because I had never really played the harp before. But my various teachers proved patient and they had a remarkable pedagogic gift, being able to explain slowly, and play at reduced speed the right and left hand parts.

I spent a week at Rafai learning to play the harp and recording all kinds of Azande music. Here, like in Zemio and some other places, I learned the *contemporary style* of Azande harp playing and it is this music that will be analysed on the following pages. My tutors were all young people. In Rafai I was taught by Maurice Gambassi, aged 16, from the village Agoumar, 5 kms northwest of Rafai; Jerome Assas, aged approximately 23, catechist of the Catholic Mission, Rafai; Jerome Sournac, pupil of the Jeunesse Agricole Bangassou, aged 17, from Rafai. In Dembia I was taught by Mockys Dieudonné Yves, aged 15, and in Zemio by Samuel Ouzana, aged 12. Various other harp players gave me occasional instruction. I should like to mention: Antoine Gbalagoume, aged approximately 30, from Djema, and Bernard Guinahui, aged approximately 30-35, from Makanza near Rafai.

When Father van Horne went to Zemio, the larger Mission station, I came along with him and made Zemio my base for long foot-slogs as far as Djema in the north and Dembia (the seat of the great Chief Zekpio) in the west.

These walks through Azande country lasted several weeks and they were all in the company of two 12-year-old schoolboys from the Mission School at Zemio: David Kamoundé and Samuel Ouzana. During our walks through the wide savannahs, Ouzana used to play a small, high-tuned *Kundi* (harp) as he walked, carrying at the same time on his head the bag containing my small tape recorder. Kamoundé carried our food (on his head as well), and I carried a big rucksak with our camping equipment, camera, tapes, paper and other stuff. In this manner we toured large parts of the Azande country and touched on the best of *Kponingbo*, harp and other music.

K. and O. were often quarreling jealously and accusing each other so to make me prefer one of them. Only in areas where we were frightened of a buffalo appearing at any moment from the vast and lonesome bush, was it quiet: no laughing, no quarrels, no sound from Ouzana's harp.

My two companions had remarkably different characters. Ouzana was an artist, a charming dancer and composer of his own harp songs. (His famous song is called "Ouzana" and about himself. See the scores). On our journey he steadily increased his repertoire by learning with phenomenal speed from harpists we had been recording on the way and whose music we used to play on the tape-recorder in the evenings. I learned very much from Ouzana, not only his current songs, but what he himself had picked up on the way. For example he could quickly find out the fingering of a harpist just by listening to the tape, and teach me later. Kamoundé was entirely different. He neither played the harp well nor could he dance very well. He was an intellectual. It is to him that I owe the transcription of seven hours recordings of harp and vocal music, word by word in Zande. In addition to that he transcribed with grim persistent 21 *Sangbatule* stories from the tape. In spite of a "special" orthography of his own, his Zande text transcriptions are of great value. We spent four to five hours every day transcribing, Ouzana transcribed at the same time, at the same table, for the sake of comparison, but his writing was unsatisfactory. He had no concentration. He was "distrait" as I once criticized him in Kamoudé's presence and so unfortunately grieved his artist's heart and gave K. new arguments.

Without the considerable work done by these two Azande boys — each one contributing according to his own special talent — this paper could never have been written.

The following map shows all the places where we recorded harp and other music. I have not been able to visit the area of Obo on the Sudan border, where a number of refugees of the Azande tribe have recently come from. This paper only deals with harp playing as I studied it in the area shown in the map. (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1

Azande harps can frequently be seen in the showcases of museums in Europe. These samples mainly come from that large portion of the ancient Azande Empire which is now under Congolese administration. Usually they are tall instruments with a carved head at the end of the neck.

In the region visited I very rarely came across harps with a carved head. Even the old players, such as Lazaro Tourgba from Zemio, who possesses a harp constructed in the days of Chief Ikpito, or the Chief Zekpio from Dembia, did not play carved instruments. One small harp with a small, not very elaborate, head (approximately 3.5 cms high), I bought at Djema. It was very old and broke on the way to Europe. I cannot estimate the factors responsible for this unexpected absence of carving. Personally I do not think that the absence of carved instruments is a recent phenomenon. It seems that the Northern Azande (and I know only these well) are different in some of their cultural patterns from those living in the Congo, who have had cultural contact with the Mangbetu and with Bantu tribes. (In 1960 I recorded an Azande *likembe* player at Bondo, Congo, who played a kind of music which today I would determine as largely "Bantu"-influenced. His music had a highly developed I-R.-effect)[3].

I shall confine myself to a general description of harps as I have seen them in the region shown on the map.

The construction was always the same. The resonator consists of a piece of hollowed-out wood having at one end a tube-shaped hole. Along this resonator "boat" a hard wooden rib with five holes is laid. (Fig. 2).

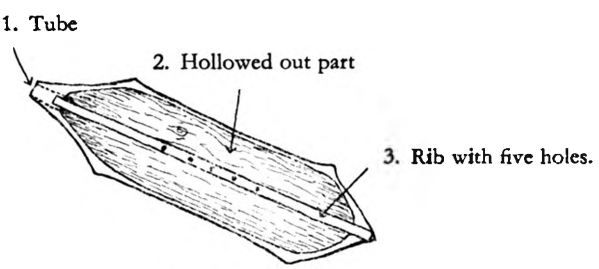


Fig. 2

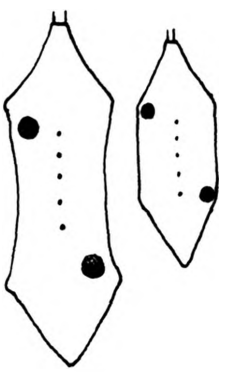


Fig. 3 (*a*) and (*b*)

The resonator body appears in various forms. In the region visited I have seen the following shapes, which are simply variants of *one* basic idea for the shape of the harp. (Fig. 3).

Now the resonator body (with the wooden rib across) is covered with antelope skin, which is sewn together on the under side with a cord. (Fig. 4). On the top surface five small holes are cut into the skin directly above the holes in the rib below. Two big holes are cut into the top surface of the skin, lying obliquely opposite each other. (Fig. 3). These are not only "sound holes" but essential for threading the strings.

The neck of the harp is cut from the *fork* of a very hard bough. Its definite shape depends on the natural angle of the fork. Usually one branch of the fork is cut off completely, but it is always evident where it was. Only a fork has enough strength to prevent the neck from bending when the strings are tightened. In one case the stump of the second branch was left on by the maker giving the shape *b*) in Fig. 5. The following neck shapes are frequent:

[3] Inherent rhythms effect. The Likembe tune was transcribed in "The Phenomenon of Inherent Rhythms in East and Central African Instrumental Music", *African Music*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1962.

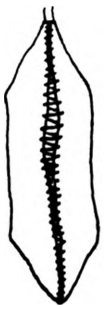


Fig. 4

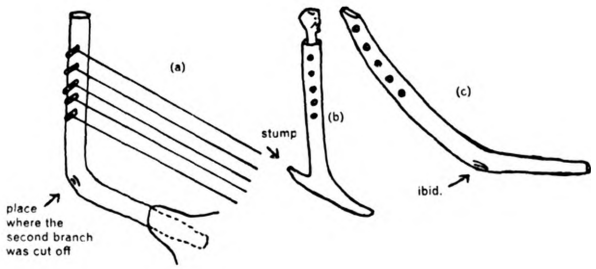


Fig. 5

The neck of the harp is pushed into the tube but not attached; it can easily be pulled out again. It is held mainly by the tension of the strings. Five holes are pierced for the pegs through the upper part of the neck.

Now the strings are put on. Everywhere nowadays in Azande-land of the R.C.A. they use nylon strings which they cut from fishing lines sold in the shops. Each of the five strings is passed from outside into one of the holes in the rib and pulled out through the nearer of the two big holes in the skin. (Fig. 6).

The string is now tied round a little piece of wood and pulled back so that the "anchor" is held against the inside of the wooden rib.

The procedure is the same with all five strings of the harp. Then each string is simply attached to its peg as in Fig. 7. The pegs are slightly split at one end.

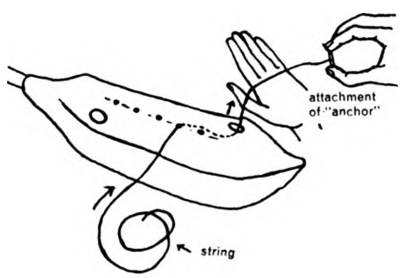


Fig. 6

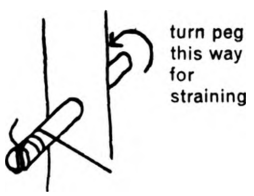


Fig. 7

Harps of mainly two sizes were used by the various musicians I met: the first a very small instrument, about 40-45 cms long, measured from the top end of the neck to the front end of the "boat". The body itself is about 25 cms long. This kind of harp is very often played while walking. The second type is a large harp with a body almost twice as big as the small harp (ca. 40 cms), and a total size of 60 to 75 cms from end to end.

The harp is held for playing in one of two ways. The elder generation in the region plays "vertical" harp: the musician holds his instrument with the neck to the body. For plucking the strings, the old harpists use three fingers of the right and two fingers of the left hand. The old men's harp technique is more difficult to learn.

Almost all the younger people I have seen played "horizontal" harp with the neck away from the body, or, as Ouzana explained it: "one holds the harp like the *Sanzu*" (= *Likembe* of the Azande). The "walking harp" is also played in this way. I have never seen a player of the "vertical" harp walking with his instrument.

Horizontal harp playing and dancing to *Kponingbo* xylophone music are at present the most popular kinds of entertainment among the Azande of the R.C.A. The *Sanzu*

is very rare. I only recorded it in Djema. But I have heard of a *Sanzu* player at Rafai and there is probably one in Zemio too. Guitars are also very rare. There is, however, plenty of thought association between these instruments and the horizontal harp. Ouzana's remark is probably not a random idea. The idea of playing a small harp walking might have come from imitating the attitude of the *Sanzu*. Likewise there is an association with guitar playing. In French conversation young harpists always refer to their instrument as "guitar" and when singing, quite often one can hear the triumphant exclamation "Gita!" (guitar) or "Guitariste!" at climax points, particularly when they want to give a "push" to an instrumental interlude after the last sung verse.[4] Many young horizontal harpists play their instrument in the fond belief that they are famous guitarists! Once in a village on the road from Rafai to Bangassou — I do not know whether I was in Azande or already into Nzakara territory — I saw a harp with a body exactly the same shape as a small guitar, being covered with a "skin" made of sheet iron and painted red.

The young harpists' tendency to identify themselves with guitarists might even be one of the factors that have *prevented* the Azande from so far taking to the real guitar, because in their opinion they are already playing the "gita".

The proper names of the Azande harp in the R.C.A. as used both by the older players and the youth are *Nzanginza* and *Kundi*. *Kundi* is understood not only by the Azande but throughout the Central African Republic.

The horizontal and vertical attitudes of playing have a deeply different psychic effect on the player. One only comes to realize this after having tried both for oneself. When playing vertical harp, the neck of the instrument leans against one's breast, while the end of the body is propped in the lap. When plucking the strings, one feels the vibration going through one's breast and resonating strangely in it, as if the harp were part of one's body. I can imagine that this must create a music of different contents than the horizontal harp does. It is an inward music, while one is tempted to call modern Azande harp playing, especially the walking music, a forward music.

How is the harp tuned?

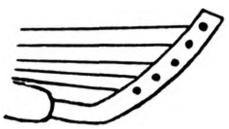
All the harp players that I met — except the great Chief Zekpio who plays another kind of Azande harp music — tuned the harp to the speech melody of a spoken formula which is: *Wili pai sa sunge*. (*Wili* is sometimes pronounced *Wiri*). The approximate translation of this phrase into English is: "Something a little, that is of work". (Quelque chose un peu, c'est du travail). The harp players explained the meaning of the phrase to me thus: This is an encouraging advice to the harpist: "Something of value needs work. Only a little effort and there will be a good result."

Musically, this spoken pattern yields a descending pentatonic scale with the *approximate relative notes* E. D, C, A, G. (Fig. 8). The Azande scale is always thought of descending. There is further evidence for this besides the descending tonal structure of the tuning formula. At Zemio and at Fizane I noticed a funny habit with players of the twelve-key *Kponingbo* log xylophone. Normally the xylophone keys are kept apart from their banana stems in a hut. In order to rearrange the keys quickly at actual performances — without testing the pitch of each key first — the musicians had painted numbers on them! And these numbers always went from the smallest to the biggest note (key).

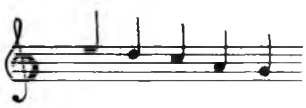
When tuning the harp, it is the phrase "Wili pai sa sunge" which is engraved in the harpist's mind and *not* a sequence of wholetone plus wholetone plus minor third plus wholetone. On the other hand, because a harmonic sound is expected between certain left and right hand notes plucked simultaneously, there is some tendency towards pure intervals. The actual tuning seems to be a sort of compromise. Tuning circles around a nucleus that is determined by the intervals of the speech pattern, the desire for harmony

[4] Hugh Tracey recorded an Azande harpist from the Congo more than ten years ago, who steadily sings the phrase "Gitari na Congo", obviously referring to his harp as guitar. Record: LF 1171, Music of Africa Series, No. 6, Side 2, Zande/Bandiya tribe, "Gitari na Congo".

HOW THE HARP IS TUNED TO THE SYLLABLES OF "WILI PAI SA SUNGE"



String No.	Syllables:
5	-nge
4	su-
3	sa
2	pai
1	Wili



Key for transcription in the scores:

String No.	1	2	3	4	5
Syllables:	Wili	pai	sa	su-	-nge

Fig. 8

and the margin of tolerance. Azande harp tuning is not usually constant over long time periods with one and the same musician but often a little diverging. When two harp players performed together as I recorded once at Makanza there was also some difference between the notes of the two harps that were thought to be in unison. By measuring the notes of the two harps we can perhaps estimate the amount of tolerance generally to be expected from an Azande musician. (See below Jones' measurements).

Example of vertical harp playing: Lazaro Tourgba, one of the oldest harpits at Zemio.

Photo: Kubik, Zemio, May 1964.

Flattening of the E for up to a quarter tone is usual with Azande harp players, in singing too. A few musicians, as for example the middle-aged harpist, Raymon Zoungakpio, from Fizane, one of the best musicians I recorded, incline to a very self-willed layout of the speech formula employing narrower intervals down to a semitone and a neutral third. I heard similar tunings in Rafai.

It would be devious to calculate the mean value of all deviations from pure tuning, and finally conclude from it that Azande harp tuning might be equidistant. There is a clear *key note* in this music. It is the note over the syllable SA of the spoken formula. And there are harmonic progressions. Moreover, the speech pattern and its scale can appear on the harp in a transposition, as we shall see later, and in this transposition of the scale one note is *altered* about a half tone by the musician. If the Azande scale were thought of as equidistant, transposition would not require alteration of the pitch of a single note, because in transpositions through an equidistant cycle, all intervals necessarily remain the same. The Azande scale, therefore, *cannot* be thought of as equidistant by the Azande themselves.

There is no absolute pitch for tuning commonly agreed on by all Azande harpists today. "Wili pai sa sunge" can be spoken by a boy with a small voice and by adults. Similarly it can appear at tone levels according to the size of the harp. Each player seems to tune his instrument to fit best the range of his voice and that of the choir, if there is any to respond to him. The various players I recorded at Rafai, Zemio, Djema, Dembia, Fizane and Makanza, had tuned their harps to different pitches.

On the other hand, I could observe that one tuning pitch was particularly frequent, one where the biggest note (NGE) was around an A or an A-flat. Further, harp players from the same village often had the same pitch. When a *Kponingbo* xylophone was near, the harp was often at the same pitch as the xylophone. (Although *Kponingbo* and harp are not played together, harp tunes are played on the *Kponingbo* and the reverse).

The following results of measurements of some of my recorded Azande harp scales I received *after* I wrote the sentences above. It may be interesting therefore, to compare these independent results with my above statements emerging entirely from aural observation.

The Rev. Dr. A. M. Jones has kindly undertaken the work of measuring them, for which I am indeed very grateful to him. He used the Stroboconn at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

All these instruments were played by excellent and representative Azande musicians. Here are the results:

I. Two harps playing in unison. Musicians: Bernard Guinahui and FranJois Razia, age: ca 30—35, recorded at Makanza, near Rafai. Horizontal position.

Absolute pitches:

(a)	(b)
(1) 734.5	(1) 711
(2) 676	(2) 666
(3) 595	(3) 584
(4) 495.5	(4) 495.5
(5) 451	(5) 450

II. Tuning of the old harp player Lazaro Tourgba, age: 60—65, recorded at Zemio.

Vertical position. *Relative* pitches. (I had lost my pitch-pipe).

(1) 697
(2) 639.5
(3) 562
(4) 463
(5) 420

For comparison now the tunings of two *Kponingbo*-xylophones, since these instruments are also tuned to "Wili pai sa sunge":

III. *Kponingbo* xylophone from Rafai. The instrument was regularly played and rather carelessly treated. Some notes are probably slightly out of tune. But this was still acceptable to the players who worked it daily with vigour. I suppose that the instrument once had 13 keys, because the scale starts with SA, and that the biggest key was lost.

Absolute pitches:

(1)	791	SA
(2)	682	SU
(3)	606	-NGE
(4)	498	WILI
(5)	457	PAI
(6)	389	SA
(7)	333	SU
(8)	293.3	-NGE
(9)	250	WILI
(10)	229	PAI
(11)	201.5	SA
(12)		SU

IV. *Kponingbo* xylophone from Fizane. Played by very virtuous and careful musicians.

Absolute pitches:

(1)	971	SU
(2)	844.5	-NGE
(3)	698	WILI
(4)	636	PAI
(5)	562	SA
(6)	485	SU
(7)	426	-NGE
(8)	357	WILI
(9)	325	PAI
(10)	280.6	SA
(11)	236	SU
(12)	212	-NGE

These scales are interesting in many respects. At first, I think all of them show the character of "Wili pai sa sunge" very well. The two big gaps from SA to SU and from -NGE to WILI are at once recognizable to any reader.

From the skill of the performers I have presumed that the *Kponingbo* of Fizane is a very well-tuned instrument.

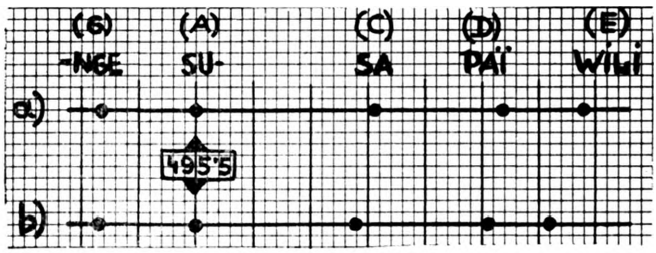
The two harps of Makanza show to what extent deviations from pure unison are acceptable to these excellent players. After I had taken the tuning they immediately continued to play; it was apparently all right like this.

A very strange thing occurs with Tourgba's harp. If we compare his tuning with that of the *Kponingbo* from Fizane, we see that both have practically the same tone level. Of course, I have only *relative* pitches for Tourgba's harp, and for the *Kponingbo* of Fizane, Father Jones had to add 10 *cents* to each vibration number to arrive at the absolute pitches. But even if we are very suspicious of the speed of the tape recorder and admit a certain amount of cents to be added or subtracted from Tourgba's harp, still the two instruments have the same audible tone level.

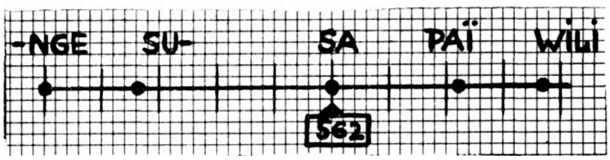
I do not wish to make a theory out of his coincidence, since I do not know a similar case so far. But the fact that the harp of a personality like Tourgba is nearly in perfect tune with an excellently tuned *Kponingbo* in a village 15 kms away from his town is at any rate remarkable.

COMPARISON OF ZANDE TUNINGS

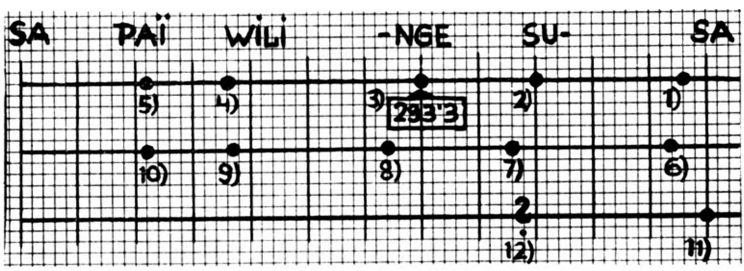
Graph I



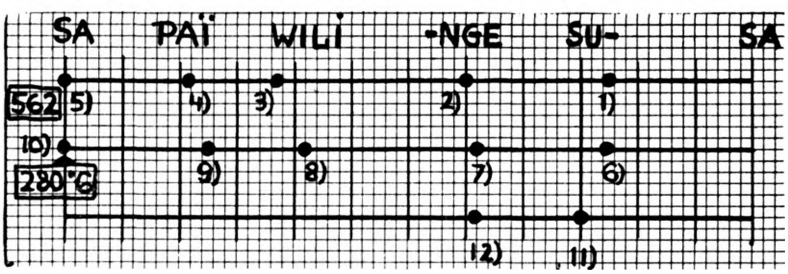
Graph II



Graph III



Graph IV



By looking at the graphs we can see that the interval Wili — pai is *regularly* smaller than a second, at least in these four representative examples. The two notes are pitched towards each other. In comparison with the European notes both Zande notes are a little off. Pai appears to be augmented and Wili lowered. Pai-sa is regularly wider than a second, and the interval Wili-sa is a little smaller than a major third, but never quite reaching a neutral third, in these four examples. Secondly, we can observe that when notes appear diverging it is always a *chain* or sequence of notes diverging *in the same direction.* Look at the notes Wili-pai-sa in the scales of the two harps playing in unison (I), at notes No. 6, 7 and 8 in relation to 1, 2 and 3 of scale III, and at 7, 8, and 9 in relation to 2, 3 and 4 of scale IV. There is hardly any *isolated* divergency of a note in these scales. This might be due to the fact that Azande musicians primarily "think" the scale in intervals of *neighbouring* notes when tuning.

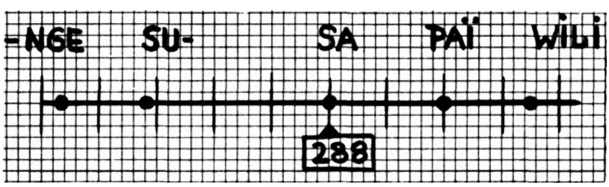
Further, the divergencies look so "organized" that we may ask whether these are not almost classical examples of a deliberate distortion of the octave and the unison

sound, to obtain the desired dissonant "friction" effect. More, since there are always some "reference notes" in pure octaves or unison.

Hugh Tracey has been kind enough to send me a number of harp and xylophone scales of the Azande that he measured in 1952 in the Congo. This material is most interesting for comparison. The two harp scales are very familiar to me. One is identical with the strange tuning I met with Chief Zekpio at Dembia, and the other one is clearly the "Wili pai sa sunge" tuning. I should like to give here both the vibration numbers and the graph of the second tuning measured by Hugh Tracey.

ZANDE HARP TUNING TAKEN BY HUGH TRACEY IN THE NORTHERN CONGO
(Reference No. 74W-8)

(1) 352
(2) 324
(3) 288
(4) 240
(5) 220



In the following analysis of Azande harp music, we shall be confined to horizontal harp playing as it is mainly but not exclusively practised by the younger generation. (In Zemio I recorded an elderly blind musician, who held the harp horizontally. This was the only case, but the country is vast and I do not know anywhere near all the harp players. Occasionally one may find a player of the vertical harp, singing a tune that is popular with horizontal harp players and the reverse. Ancient and modern harp traditions are not completely separate in the Azande country).

All harp players with "Wili pai sa sunge"-tuning are expected to play an introductory phrase before starting with the tune. The phrase is this:

Wili pai sa sunge. (2x)
Mu ta Kundi ki bi bialeu kindi.
Kuluo pai sa sunge.

Approximate translation[5]:

Something a little, that is of work.
One must play the harp and sing its song too.
The old things are the work.

The tone patterns of these words are played on the harp. Fig. 9 gives the phrase as played in the horizontal technique. I have written the text below, so that it may be clear which note represents which syllable. But the text is *not* sung. Further, the durational value of the notes and the tempo are not exact, it is a free (speech) rhythm.

By means of the phrase "Wili pai sa sunge" the harpist tries the tuning, playing it twice. With "Mu ta Kundi ki bi bialeu kindi" he tries the pentatonic harmony in "arpeggio": E/C, D/A, C/G. And by playing the third phrase he confirms the scale. Then he starts with the tune:

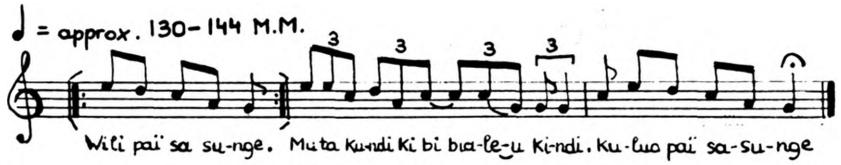


Fig. 9

[5] Original French translation as given to me by my interpreters:
Quelque chose un peu, c'est du travail.
Il faut jouer de la guitare et chanter sa chanson.
Les vieilles choses sont le travail.

The structure of the introductory pattern reveals very well the main principles by which the harpist tunes his instrument: spoken pattern *and* harmonic sound. One can often see harpists playing the introductory phrase for some time, and suddenly stopping at one point, because they are not yet satisfied with the sound. Some notes are then altered. And the harpist starts again until the phrase sounds satisfactorily.

The fingering of the pattern is easy. The same is given in Fig. 10 below. In more formal performances the introductory phrase is always played. But otherwise harpists often just start without it, particularly when walking alone on the road.

Horizontal harp playing as found in the region visited all consists of *two parts:* a left and a right hand part, which are functionally different.

The musician starts the tune with the right hand (unless he is a left-hander like the above-mentioned blind harpist).

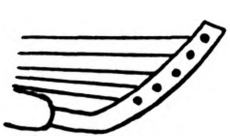
In the FIRST TYPE of harp music that we shall study, his right hand plays a short *basic pattern* of two or three notes. Then he adds the left hand part, which is often an *interlocking pattern*, sometimes a pattern in another meter, or simply a pattern phrased "off beat" at times.

We should like to learn first a composition called "Nzanginza mu du kporani yo". (The harp is in our village). Two performances of it are reproduced in detail in the Scores. (Nos. 1 and 2). Maurice Gambassi will be our tutor:

We hold a small high tuned harp horizontally in the lap and place the fingers in a way that they are near to their restricted areas. As in all horizontal harp playing of this country we use just three fingers: thumb and index of the right hand, and thumb of the left hand.

For the composition "Nzanginza . . ." as well as for many others the range of the fingers is this:

FINGERING PATTERN I



String No.	Written as:	Plucked by:
5	G	right thumb
4	A	right index
3	C	
2	D	left thumb
1	E	

Fig. 10

Now we learn to play the right hand part, at a comfortable speed at first. It is a simple two-note pattern repeated over and over:

Fig. 11

We now try to play the left hand part separately, using only the thumb. It is this:

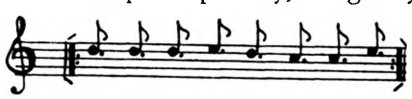


Fig. 12

The combination of the two parts is *bimetric:*

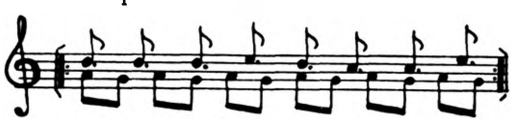


Fig. 13

This is what the harpist plays throughout the song at the speed of 144 m.m. to the dotted quaver. There is no variation of the instrumental part for this tune.

The vocal line develops along this basis. But before learning to sing to the harp, I believe we have to clarify one important point: How does the harpist *think* about the above bimetric pattern? Where does he feel his beat? (if he feels one at all). Does he feel it in accordance with the right or the left hand's part?

This is, indeed, a difficult question to answer scientifically. Although personally it is entirely clear to me where the beat is. How can I prove it to the sceptical reader? I became absolutely certain of it from the moment I learned to sing the first vocal phrase to the harp pattern. It is simply impossible to "get" it to a wrong beat. But is this enough proof?

Theoretically there are three metrical conceptions possible for the harp pattern. You can think it in any of the following ways:

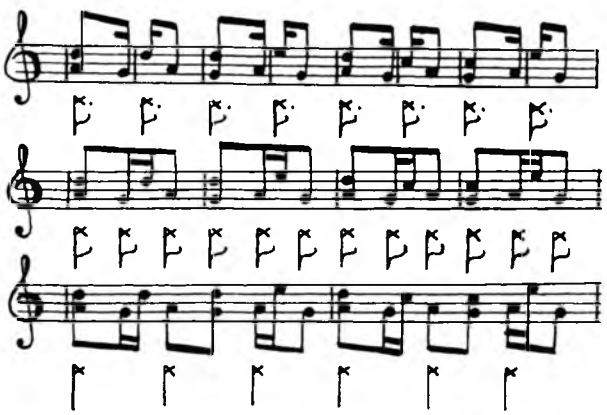


Fig. 14

How can we look into the harpist's mind? We cannot ask him, because *as* he thinks it, that is his natural way and therefore unquestionable to him. He cannot understand our question, because he is not conscious of an alternative to what he is doing.

The harpist normally does not beat with his foot either and even if he did, this would signal the opposite for the Azande because they "lift" the beat and incline to an emphasis of the "weak parts" of the meter, at least in those harp and Kponingbo tunes that are monometric[6].

I can only offer one significant observation to the reader: at Dembia, while one harpist was playing this theme, I suddenly noticed a small boy beating on the table with his right hand in a regular pulse. It was exactly that beat which I had also known. On another day I tried to get my harp tutor to beat when *I* played the tune. But he was entirely perplexed, and I could not, of course, *show* him what I wanted without running the risk of influencing him in some way.

I had better let on now where the beat is felt. It is as indicated in the *first* figure above (a). This beat, however, is no more than a kind of "background" orientation. The right hand part is *not* conceived as "off-beat" but as a pattern in its own right.

As for the rest I am afraid I can offer nothing more than the advice to the sceptical reader to play the harp himself and try to sing the vocal part of "Nzanginza . . ." to a wrong beat. See whether you can manage it and feel comfortable.

I am not so certain as to the beat of the harp solo passages. In African music I have often come across what I should like to call an *ambivalent conception of meter* or simply an

[6] I shall deal with this in a forthcoming article on *Kponingbo* xylophone music.

ambivalent beat. It is possible that the harp player sometimes "switches" to another metrical conception (b, or c) for a short time, only to return soon to his old beat. I have practised this for myself with pleasure, and I know that other musicians in Africa are doing the same in bi- or polymetric music. But I am not quite certain whether the Azande harpists do it.

Let us learn now to sing to the harp!

Generally, one just sings at the natural level of one's voice. Occasionally Azande harpists prefer head voice or falsetto. Quite often the tone level of the harp is higher than the voice, usually when playing a small instrument.

At first, it is necessary to acquire a certain repertoire of "text phrases". In performance these are just intelligently "strung together" in the horizontal development of the music, and quite often interrupted by instrumental interludes. The singer has much freedom in arranging the text phrases. He does this spontaneously during the performance. But he is always bound by two rules: (*a*) to return sometimes to the main phrase or "refrain" and (*b*) to observe the *meaning* of the text. You can alter the sequence of phrases *ad lib.*; you can start at various points or cut it into the half — for example, you may start with the second half of the phrase as in bars 1, 2, 10, 19 and 20 of "Nzanginza . . .", *if* it gives a verbal sense, *if* it gives a desired meaning in Zande!

This is practically all the "free improvisation" an Azande harpist can do. Azande harp music, like African music in general sounds much "improvised" to an outsider. But this is a delusion. Azande harp music is essentially composed, by which I mean that the player knows before in detail what he is *possibly* going to sing and play. He knows the "material" of the tune. And if there are instrumental variations, as we shall get to know later, he has played them many times before. They are likely to be standard variations. It is comparatively rare for a really new phrase to be invented during performance. Nothing like free improvisation as we know it from jazz can be found in Azande harp music.

Score No. 1 shows *one* performance of the tune "Nzanginza . . .". There are a hundred others and all a little different. For example, the singer could well start with the basic form of the "refrain" as it appears in bar 6. Or, when there is a repeat made three times, next day he will repeat it only two times or leave the phrase entirely out and sing it in another context. He may also take sections of the text ahead, or he may sing *melodic variations*. (See the melodic variations of the refrain in bars 3, 14, 15, 20 and 21). The latter however, has to follow certain rules as we shall see soon.

If we regard Score No. 1 (and the other ones) with an analytical mind, we immediately recognize one striking fact concerning the relationship of the voice part to the instrumental part: *Practically every note in the voice part is represented by the same note in the instrumental part.* Very rarely, and we estimate only for some particular reason, this law is broken, to create a sort of transient heterophony.

This law is valid both for modern and ancient Azande harp music. Let us learn to sing the "refrain" of the tune and at the same time pursue the notes of this vocal phrase to their origins in the instrumental pattern.

RELATION BETWEEN VOICE AND INSTRUMENTAL PART IN AZANDE HARP MUSIC

We can see from Fig. 15 how the voice part strictly follows the constituent notes of the instrumental part. The words "Nzanginza mu" duplicate notes of the right hand part. But then the melody jumps into the left hand part with the syllables "du-kpo" duplicating the E of the harp pattern. In the next moment the voice goes to G of the right hand part with the syllable "ra" and back to the left hand D in a nice counter movement. Contrary movement from unison into octave and the reverse is a frequent practice in Azande harp music.

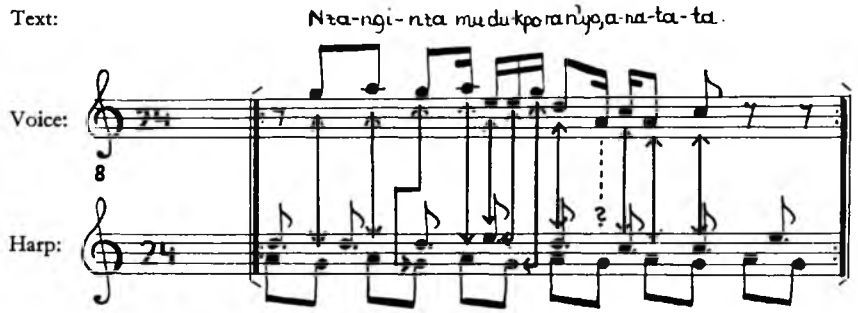


Fig. 15

We can also see from Fig. 15 that, as a *result* of this technique, the voice part *necessarily* shows some rhythmic features that have come to be described in such terms as "off-beat" phrasing of melodic accents (from the vertical point of view) and "additive" (from the horizontal point of view). This terminology I feel is rather inappropriate in this music. The voice part is not thought of as "off beat" or "additive" but rather as *coincident*. The notes of the voice part coincide with (or: are "on the beat" of) notes in the instrumental basis. This is an African way of thinking rhythm patterns that is widespread in Central and East Africa.

We can notice that the voice part is nothing "new", but that is somehow hiding in the total structure of the instrumental part. It is indeed, as African musicians from various other places in Africa have often said to me: one can hear the voice part looming out of the notes of the instrumental part. And the slightest accentuation of certain notes of the instrumental part can bring it out clearly at once. This seems to be true for all those African musical traditions where the voice proceeds in unison with constituent notes of the instrumental part. The term unison, of course, I take here in a wider sense, including octaves, since the octave is generally regarded by African musicians as the same note only of different magnitude.

In Azande harp music the voice part can "pull out" any notes of the total pattern of the right and left hand parts and duplicate these either in unison or at an octave. In Fig. 15 there is one exception to the unison principle: the note A to the initial letter of the phrase "Anatata" coincides with a G in the harp pattern. This note, I believe, is *thought* of by the harpist as a G. There may be various reasons why it did not become one. I suggest that G was too low (too big) and out of the range of the singer's voice, so he sang the nearest note, an A! The unison principle is occasionally broken in variation too, in parallel harmonic singing, and through passing notes.

A frequent form of variation (which I have met also in other African music subject to the unison principle) is the substitution of different notes by a sequence of equal notes at a certain tone level. This seems psychologically to have a "relieving" effect and thus the emerging heterophonic dissonance is motivated and "justified" to the singer. (I should mention here that, of course, every variation sung has a psychical effect on the singer, it can raise or calm down his excitation. It is a never ending game with the emotional "level" and makes one addicted. That is why it is sufficient to play the harp when walking alone. The end effect is psychocathartic). In the variation of bars 20 and 21 we can see that the notes A, E, E, G for the syllables "mu du-kpo-ra" are substituted twice for four G's, which are no longer in unison relation to the harp part. This is a "strong" variation and can only occur at a climax of the "level". It has a relieving effect and could not be found for example at the beginning of the score. It would lead us too far to give a detailed musical and psychological explanation of all variations that occur. The attentive reader will make his own discoveries in the scores. That is why I have preferred to transcribe some in "live performance."

If we try to invent the melody of a text phrase, we understand, there are always *two* possibilities for setting it out. Quite contrary to other traditions of African music further east (as for example in Southern Uganda), Azande harp playing has a harmonic aspect. The durational values of the left hand's notes for example are really thought to be as written. Thus there is simultaneous sound at any point of the harp pattern. The word "Nzanginza" sung to G, A, G could in principle be sung to three D's since the D is present all through the first (small) bar and half of the second one.

The possibility of logical melodic variation and of harmony lies in the fact that there are always two notes of the harp basis at the singer's choice for composing the voice part. In all this the second restricting and modifying factor for variation comes, of course, from the character of the tonal language. Although in the harmonic singing of the Azande all kinds of movements are possible, tone language minimizes contrary movement and favours parallel movement. The predilection for parallel harmony with many African tribes has in my opinion one of its main origins in tonal language, and secondly is inspired by parallel movement of partial tones (particularly as they appear with the musical bow). The Zande language, however, is not as tonal by far as Yoruba for example or other African languages. Hence we frequently find contrary movement both in melodic variation and in harmonic part singing. Text invention in Azande harp music is largely subject to two musical factors: the unison principle and tonal laws.

There are essentially two ways of starting to compose a tune. The musician may first have the idea of a text phrase, usually of topical contents, referring to a recent event, and try to put under it a fitting harp pattern. The latter usually contains fill-out notes, and so will have more notes than the text phrase. Or, he may have an instrumental idea and try to fit words to it. Whatever the start may be, the second and more difficult part of the creative process is to invent additional text phrases, which now have to fit into the repeated instrumental basis.[7] From this stage on at any rate he has to follow the second technique: fitting words to a given instrumental structure. Here the training of the African from early childhood, to think of melodies as representative of words and the reverse, comes to his help.

One can try going to any African village to make the experiment. Beat a short random sequence of notes in front of an assembled group of children and let them associate words and sentences with it, by saying: "What did I play?" or "What do you think this can mean?" One will probably be surprised at the abundance of ideas that occur to them. I actually applied this technique, derived from Freud's association method, with African children at first for psychoanalytical investigation, to find out what makes an African child laugh. But soon I became conscious of its value for musicological research and found a phenomenon which I have called "involuntary verbal associations from instrumental melodies"[8] which is an important factor for text invention in much of Africa's accompanied vocal music. It also explains a good number of so-called "nonsense texts".

It is rather this way that the Azande musician gets ideas for additional text material. This simple and natural way is only too easily veiled by too much analysis. The Azande musician certainly does not compose his tune in the anatomical way we necessarily had to go through for describing his results. He does not "pull out" notes. Nor does he *com-pose* his text phrases by putting note by note together. He simply *listens* to the structure of the harp basis and hears the looming inherent melodies, which represent in their tonal pattern possible text phrases, and soon some ideas occur to his mind. It is interesting in this context to observe how the singer gets different text themes by following different parts of the total structure. (Compare for example how Ouzana gets

[7] Unless the instrumental basis itself is being changed to fit the various text themes. Slight changes are quite frequent. Compare particularly "Nakepengele", Score No. 6, bars 7 and 8; "Limbiayo", No. 3, bar 11; "Agbe ni nduandu ngboro", No. 5, bar 24 and "Tade so zo koue M.E.S.A.N.", No. 15, bars 6, 7 and 15.
Such changes should not be mistaken for "variation".

[8] "Unwillkuerliche Worterweckung durch Instrumentalmelodien". See G. Kubik: "Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Sprache in Afrika", *Neues Afrika*, Heft. 1, Jan. 1962.

his second and third theme in "Agbe ni nduandu ngboro", No. 5; particularly the words "Ako! Ako ai!" and "ku ndawayo").

Although the harp is very much used as a soloist's instrument, we often find harp players gathering a choir of girls in the evening and singing with them in antiphony. The choir is basically singing in unison with frequent harmonic variation. The Azande do not strictly sing in harmony like some other tribes in Central Africa, but rather sporadically. Their harmony often emerges from simultaneous variants *ad lib.* What kind of variants, we may ask? When one singer of the choir follows the left hand notes on the harp and another one the right hand notes, the result is a harmonic sound.

A kind of "polyphony" emerges from simultaneous singing of different text phrases, especially in duets. But here as for all singing the same rule is valid: The singers usually sing a harmonic sound that is already present in the harp's part.

Score No. 7 with extracts from a performance of "Limbiayo" will give you an idea of the possibilities. In Example I one vocalist sings a sort of "riff" while the other one sings independent text phrases. (This is not the organization of singing *throughout* the performance, but only one episode). A similar kind of polyphony emerges between voice part and whistling part. (Example II of Score No. 7). In group performances of Azande harp music there is often a "whistle" (*Nvililí*): The performer blows at the edge of the tightened skin between thumb and index of his right hand. The *Nvililí* is talking. In Example II it says: "Araba tissaro Kpyoza", a remark about the ancient Azande harpist Kpyoza, who is said to have invented harp playing.

We can see that polyphony in Azande harp music has quite a different origin as for example European polyphony. In addition to these two examples an item of *parallel* harmony can be found in Score No. 8, "Wena de gbua", for the reader to study. (Here the unison principle is broken at one point for the sake of consequent parallelism). The examples of parallel harmony in Azande music always show the characteristics of *pentatonic* parallelism.

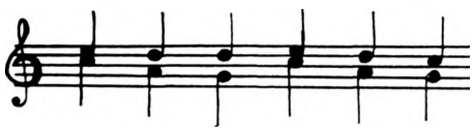
From the presence of harmony we should also expect a progression of different tonal steps. Frankly, I have very rarely heard any African music where there is no shifting of the tonality level within the melodic theme — be it music containing no harmony, like the Kiganda-Kisoga tradition in Uganda for example, or music containing chords as with the Azande. There are almost always *two*, quite often three and sometimes even four tonal steps in African music, within which the melody clearly proceeds. (When Africans play the guitar they normally do find the nearest European equivalents to the tonal progressions of their own tradition, usually taking Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant chords, but they arrange them quite often in "infinite" sequence, that is sequences ending on the Subdominant or Dominant chord, as they also do with the tonal steps of traditional music).

African tunes, where the melody always remains on the tonic are very rare. At the moment I do not even remember one. In Azande harp music one can always distinguish *two* or *three* tonal steps, one of which we can confidently call the *tonic*. The other ones, to avoid the somehow inadequate terms dominant and subdominant, I would call *contrasting steps*. Looking into the scores we see that many of the tunes in Zande tradition contain similar progressions of chords in one or the other variant, which we shall give in Fig. 16 below. By "chord" I mean here a sound of two notes. No triads are played on the harp or sung. When two strings are plucked simultaneously, they will always represent (with very few exceptions emerging from purely melodic or motor reasons) one of the four chords shown in the standard progression of Fig. 16. (This is not valid for the tunes of Banda origin).

It is striking that most of the horizontal Zande harp themes end on the *tonic*. (Exceptions are: "Wena de gbua", No. 8, and "Gba duleo", No. 9).

A STANDARD HARMONIC PROGRESSION IN HORIZONTAL AZANDE HARP MUSIC

T. = tonic
CS I = contrasting step I
CS II = contrasting step II
Int. Ch. = intermediate chord



| Int. Ch. | CS II | CS I | Int. Ch. | CS II | T. |

Fig. 16

The impression of a harmonic contrast is mainly created by how the notes of the left hand part are set, the most contrasting chords, CS I and T having the same lower note.

Now let us learn the harp pattern of a second tune, called "Limbiayo". It is typical for another series of tunes for the Azande harp with slightly overlapping ranges for the fingers. Jerome Assas will be teaching us:

FINGERING PATTERN II
(Ranges for "Limbiayo" and other pieces)

5 — Right thumb
4, 3 } Right index
3, 2, 1 } Left thumb

Fig. 17

Here, unlike "Nzanginza . . .", the basic pattern consists of *three* tones:

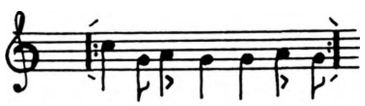


Fig. 18

This right hand part has to be repeated twice to fit the length of the left hand part, which is the following, in combination with the basic one. (Left hand notated with uptails):

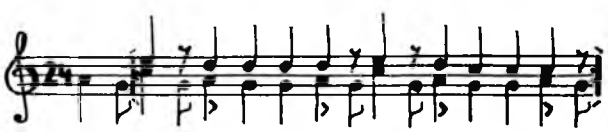


Fig. 19

This pattern seems to be stimulating for instrumental variation. When varying, however, only the left hand part is usually altered in horizontal Azande harp music. The "bass" of the right hand is fundamental and invariable. (An exception are some variations in "Agbe ni nduandu ngboro." See the Score).

The variants are often achieved by the subtle means of shifting just one or two notes, but it immediately gives a new aspect to the pattern. I think that only someone who has actually heard the performance or who tries to learn to play from the scores will be fully able to appreciate this.

In addition to the score of Jerome Assas' performance of "Limbiayo", I should like to give here a standard variation to the same tune as played by Jerome Sournac and by Bernard Guinahui.

STANDARD VARIATION OF "LIMBIAYO" — HARP PATTERN

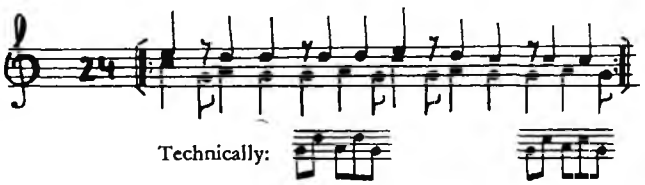


Fig. 20

The SECOND TYPE of horizontal harp music does not so much emphasize rhythmic independence of the left and right hand parts as *parallel movement in harmony*. It is represented in the scores by Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11. The rhythm in these examples is determined by the dominance of *asymmetric* or irregular phrases, particularly groups of 5 + 5 *within* the regular summary meter of 24 units. It would be, in my opinion, a regrettable misunderstanding to term this kind of rhythmic formation an African "hemiola style." Certainly on the paper all asymmetric forms can be reduced to duplets and triplets. But this is not how the African thinks it. The African musicians do not think of such forms as "additive", they do not think in metric particles, but in larger entities: in phrases and patterns. In the Scores of "Wena de gbua" (No. 8), "Gba duleo" (No. 9) and "Ouzana" (No. 11) I have shown where the phrases are with horizontal parentheses.

Likewise musicologists of the camp who would reduce these rhythms to the off beat will not be able to play the above-mentioned tunes successfully. It cannot be done that way. What I call asymmetric patterns are not conceived of as off beat but as phrases in their own right. The constituent notes of such patterns cannot be divided into off-beat and on-the-beat notes. It is a primary mistake, I think, to relate *every* note to a beat. The worst and most primitive mistake would be to think of a duple beat (crotchets) behind it.

How are such asymmetric patterns really played?

There is a vague and general awareness of an orientation "screen", which, however, runs much quicker than any "beat". It could be described as a series of quavers — the smallest units. But this is not a beat. I may put it in a metaphoric way: This capability of rhythmic orientation is just the same orientation that enables Africans to carry a heavy load for hours on their head and not let it fall. Remember, an African musician does not normally beat with his foot like a jazz musician! And when you play the "walking harp" or the Likembe, you do not think of your notes as being *on* or *off* your walking feet, but both fingers and feet move quite independently.

For practical use: those phrases which *appear* "off beat" on the paper as for example the second phrase in parentheses of "Wena de gbua" are simply played *retarded or anticipated as a whole* just as one retards or anticipates in order to "fall in" in interlocking xylophone styles. This is, of course, only transient here.

Whenever you do this shifting the orientation screen is unconsciously present. The second and third phrases of "Wena de gbua" are thought in exactly the same way as the first one, but anticipated or retarded.

There is a large number of harp compositions that are said to be of Banda origin, which are preferably played by boys. The Banda are a tribe living to the west of the Azande. The Banda element seems to be the most recent one in present-day Azande harp music. "Banda" tunes were all sung in *Sango* by the Azande harpists — that is the communicative language of the R.C.A.

One can easily distinguish them from the majority of the "Zande" tunes by the movement of the "bass" (right hand), which is always a quick two-notes pulse. The music is essentially monometric and very rarely contains asymmetric passages, such as

we have seen in the second type of Zande tunes. The notes of the left hand divide this unvarying two-notes pulse usually into halves, sometimes constantly interlocking as in "Mbi kote kote ngo" (No. 14), sometimes temporarily as in "Tade so zo koue M.E.S.A.N." (No. 15) and sometimes just in the form of a rhythmic click as in "Kolongo" (No. 13). There are many other elements to distinguish this music from the tunes of Zande origin, but it would take us too far to discuss them all here.

The most frequent right hand part of the "Banda" tunes is the one we already know from "Nzanginza . . .". Here, however, it is not a component of a bimeter. In this context, I should like to point out that it is possible that the right hand part of "Nzanginza . . ." might be a recent adoption of the Banda beat. Moreover, it is the only case of a Banda beat in harp songs sung in the Zande language. Ouzana once made a strange remark, claiming that "the old people played the right hand part of "Nzanginza . . ." differently. And he showed it to me, holding the harp, however, in the horizontal position. The pattern is interesting and also sounds very nicely. One can sing the tune in the same way to it:

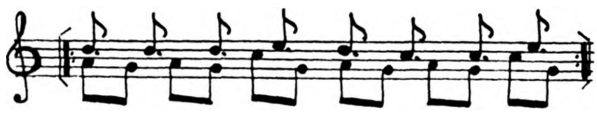


Fig. 21

The most interesting composition in the Banda style in the scores is the political song about the M.E.S.A.N.[9] as performed by Jerome Sournac. (No. 15). The harpist starts very fast with a four-note pattern having the G-A Banda beat and interlocking E notes.

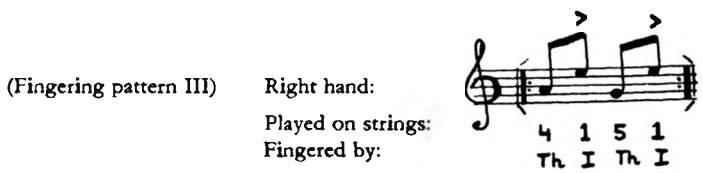


Fig. 22

Now the left hand is played *in between* this pattern, in between both rhythmically and melodically. It is transcribed in this way in the score. Here I should like to give the resultant rhythm that is heard from it:

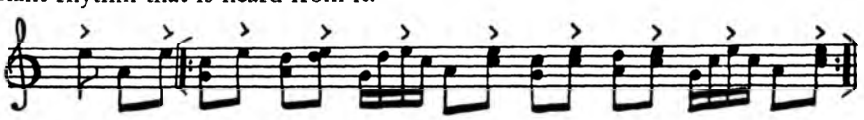


Fig. 23

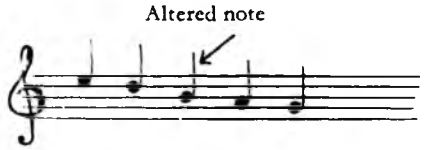
By subtracting the notes given in Fig. 22 from the resulting pattern, the reader will easily find out how the pattern is played, even without looking into the scores. At one place there is a clash between E and D, emerging, however, purely from melodic necessity.

One day Ouzana inaugurated me into something very new and exciting: he said the tuning of the harp as we had used it was not the only one. There existed a second tuning to be used for certain tunes. "On peut jouer aussi en anglais!" he said. (One can also play in English!). I began to listen. What did he mean by this? And I asked

[9] The M.E.S.A.N. is the political party of the Central African Republic.

him to explain it to me. Now Ouzana lowered the third string of the harp a half-tone and said that the notes "Wili pai sa su-nge" were now to be sung like this:

Fig. 24



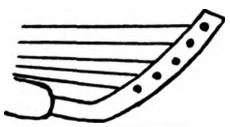
String No.:	1	2	3	4	5
Syllables:	su-	-nge	Wili	pai	sa

START HERE ↑

I slowly began to understand. There can be *transposition* of the scale. When the harp is tuned "en anglais" by lowering the third string the tuning formula begins at another place and with it *the position of the fingers is also exchanged accordingly.* (Fig. 25).

HOW THE HARP IS TUNED "EN ANGLAIS"

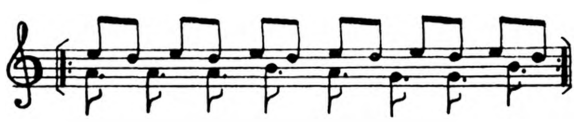
Fig. 25



String No.	Syllables:	Position of fingers for the tune "Nzanginza . . .":
5	sa	} left thumb
4	pai	
3	Wili	
2	-nge	— right thumb
1	su-	— right index

Now Ouzana explained how the tune "Nzanginza . . ." can be played "en anglais". According to the shifting of the starting points of "Wili pai sa su-nge", the two parts of the harp pattern are turned upside down, the right hand part ("bass") now appearing in the treble, and the left hand part in the bass. (Fig. 26).

Fig. 26



This was a novel experience to me. The singing, of course, and all the harmonic intervals are entirely the same, only transposed. (See the full score No. 2). Ouzana said that all the Banda tunes can be played "en anglais", but not tunes like "Limbiayo" with a three-note bass. And there are also special tunes composed to be performed "en anglais" such as "Ana ka binga dara kumba" (No. 12). I often heard this tune being played by boys when walking.

I have racked my brains over the question how Ouzana and other boys have come to this remarkable terminology. None of them could give me a Zande term. Ouzana normally distinguished in this way: the tuning in question is "en anglais" and the other (normal) one is "la vraie guitare" (the true harp). After some time on the journey with me he started to say "la vraie harpe", after he had heard me calling the instrument harp. I have thought of the possibility that the tuning comes from the "English" side of the Azande country, from the Sudan, and hence the term. (I should be glad indeed, to hear from Father Giorgietti, whether he has heard of anything similar in his area at Yambio).

Ouzana's term also made me think of another strange expression. At Rafai I heard about the "Mami wata" or "Mama ime", a female water spirit that is thought to have a body with a human upper part and a belly like a fish. This woman is said to live in

rivers such as the Vovodo river at Rafai. The "Mami wata" legend was common knowledge in all the places I visited. Any real good harp player (or guitar player) is supposed to have some obscure relation to this woman. And he opens his engagement by correspondence. A letter is carried to the river and left under a certain stone. But once a man has entered a relationship with the *Mami wata* many things change strangely. For example he loses his shadow. He cannot see his shadow in the sun any more. (Others, of course, can see it).

Besides the fact that all this — only briefly related — is a marvellous illustration of Jung's theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious, it very soon became clear to me that "Mami wata" is nothing else but two English words: "Mammy water", Mother (in or of) the Water. Whether this is the second example of something coming from the "English" area, I do not dare to claim.

THE SCORES

In the writing of the scores I have followed tape recordings, but *after* I had learned to play and sing the songs myself. I have preferred to transcribe the *recorded* versions in order to give a demonstration of "live" performances, so that we can study some of the variation techniques of the harp players both in singing and playing. I hope to show by these transcriptions how the preconceived text material is actually spread out and arranged in each performance. It is, however, to be understood that every performance is different; only the "material" of the tune is always the same.

For the harp part the right hand notes are written with downtails and the left hand notes with uptails, — except in the tunes of the second (parallel) type of harp playing, where all the notes are written with downtails.

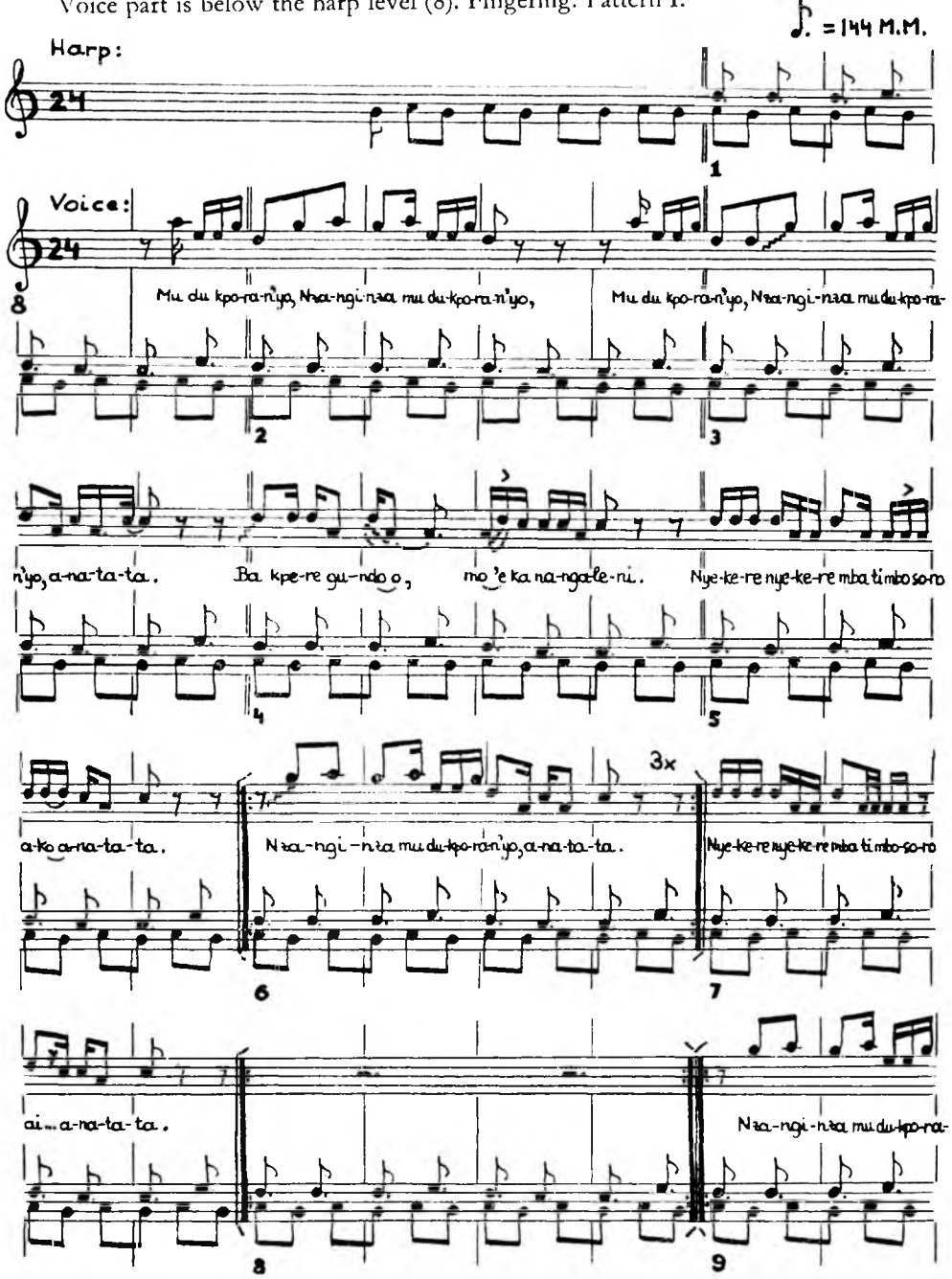
At the beginning of each score there is an indication as to the special fingering used for the piece. The tuning of the harp in the particular performance is indicated as well. It always refers to the actual pitch of the key note — the note sounding to the syllable SA and written as C, respectively as G in the "en-anglais" transpositions of the scale.

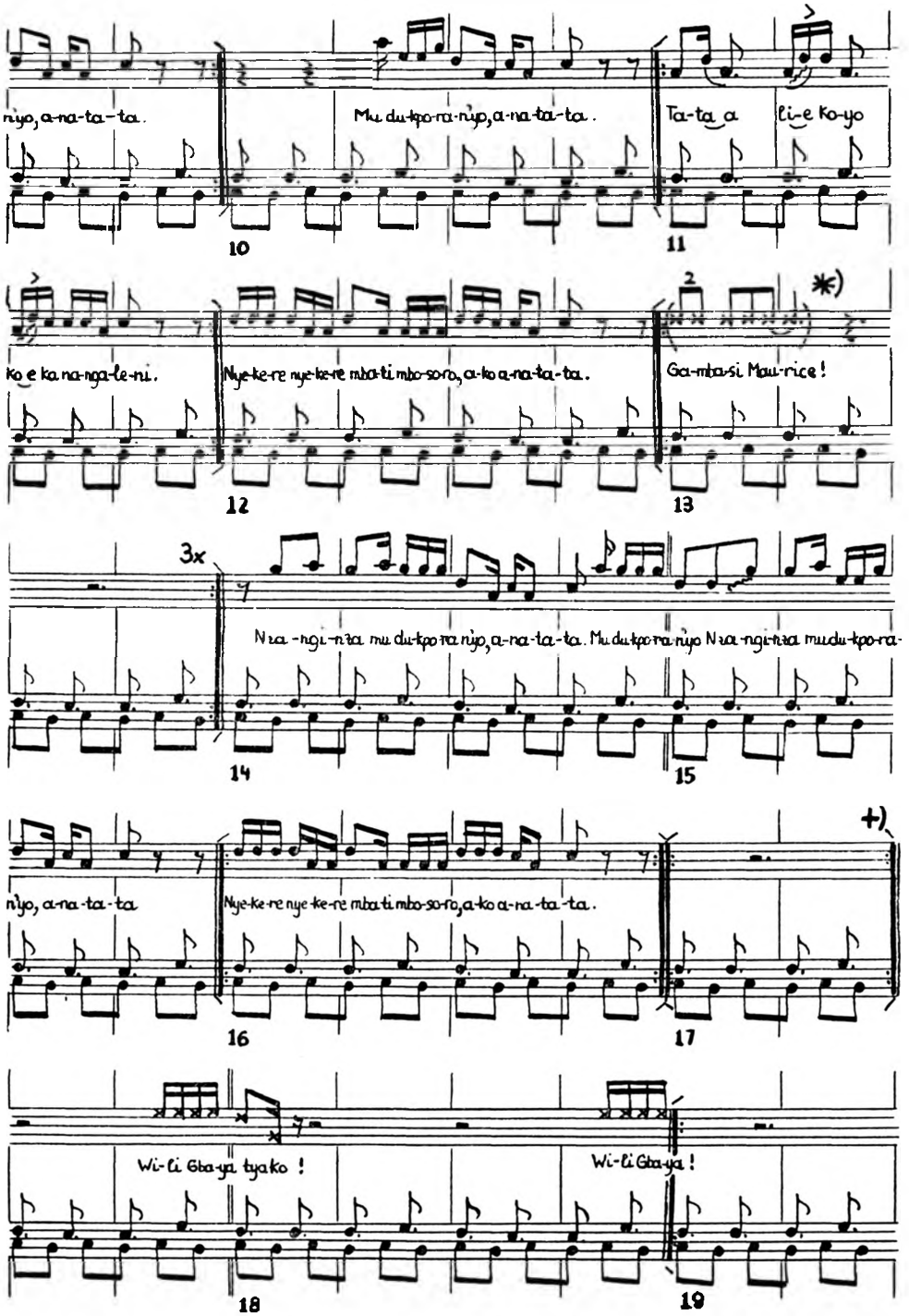
All tunes have been notated with "reduced" bar lines. The double bar lines indicate the expiry of one formal unit or summary meter of the harp pattern.

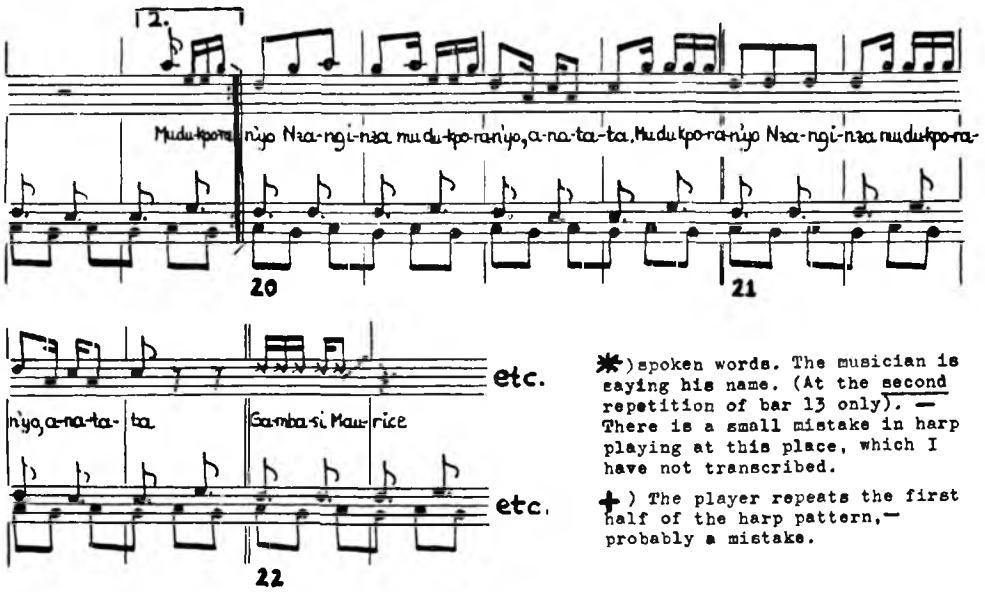
In the writing of the *Zande texts* I have followed the intuitive orthography of my interpreters, since it often reflects better the actual pronunciation of the words in dialect than any standard orthography. Sometimes I have deliberately altered their orthography for musical reasons. Thus I have written "du kporan'yo" (No. 1) and "du kpuran'yo" (No. 2) instead of "du kporani yo"; — or "Nadwakit'yo" instead of "Naduakiti o!" (No. 10). In the *Sango* texts I have followed the official orthography of this language, which reads like French. (ou = u etc.).

A translation of the songs will be given in Part II of this paper.

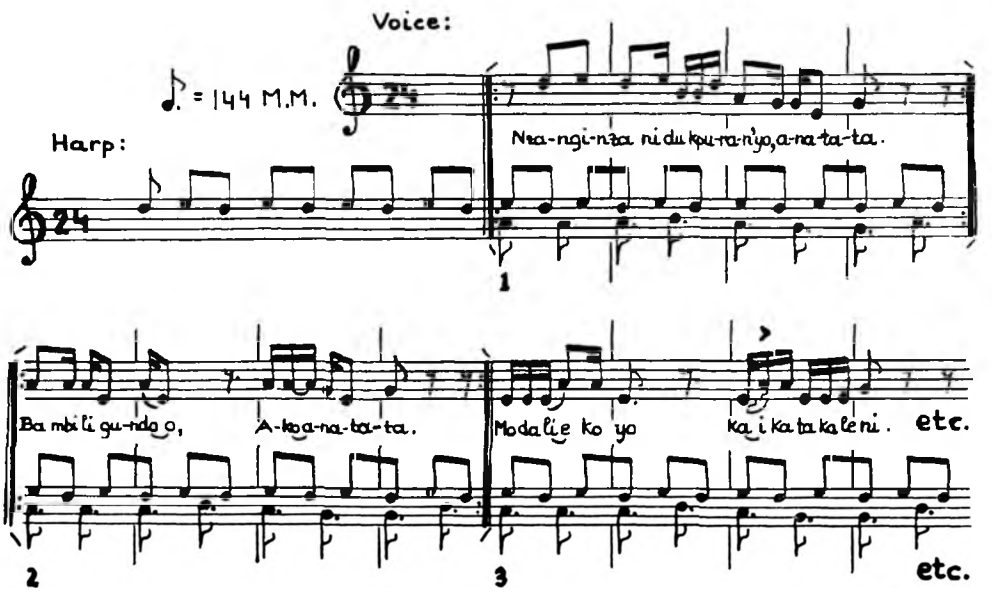
1. "NZANGINZA MU DU KPORANI YO" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Maurice Gambassi, aged 16, from the village Agoumar, near Rafai. Recorded on Original Tape R 44 B, in April 1964. Tuning: SA = approx. an F." Voice part is below the harp level (8). Fingering: Pattern I.




n'yo, a-na-ta-ta.
Mu du-kpo-ra-n'yo, a-na-ta-ta.
Ta-ta a
li-e ko-yo
10
11
ko e ka na-nga-le-ni.
Nye-ke-re nye-ke-re mba-ti mbo-so-ro, a-ko a-na-ta-ta.
Ga-mba-si Mau-rice!
12
13
3x
N'ra-ngi-n'ra mu du-kpo ra n'yo, a-na-ta-ta. Mu du-kpo-ra-n'yo N'ra-ngi-n'ra mu du-kpo-ra-
14
15
n'yo, a-na-ta-ta
Nye-ke-re nye-ke-re mba-ti mbo-so-ro, a-ko a-na-ta-ta.
16
17
Wi-li Gba-ya tya ko !
Wi-li Gba-ya !
18
19

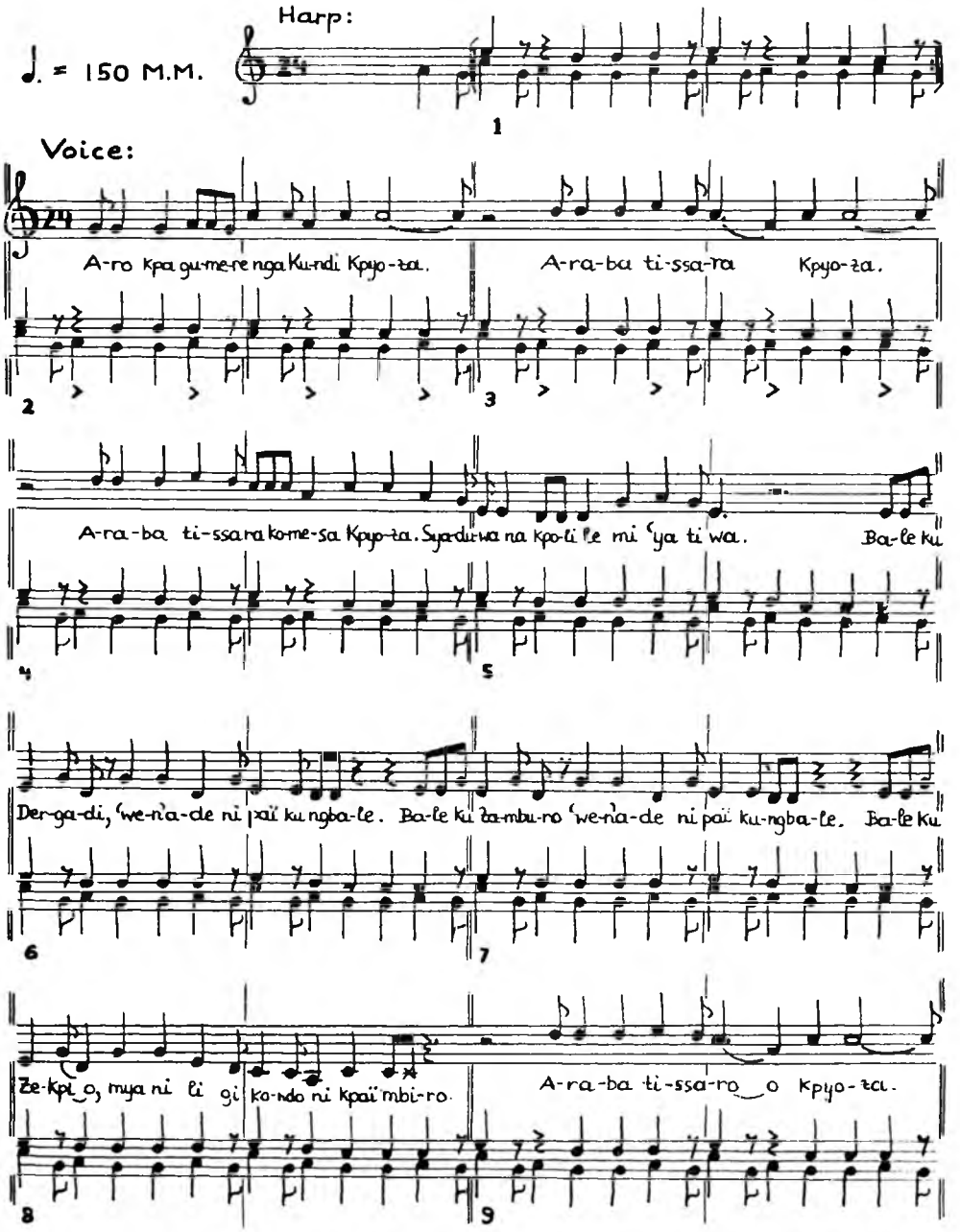


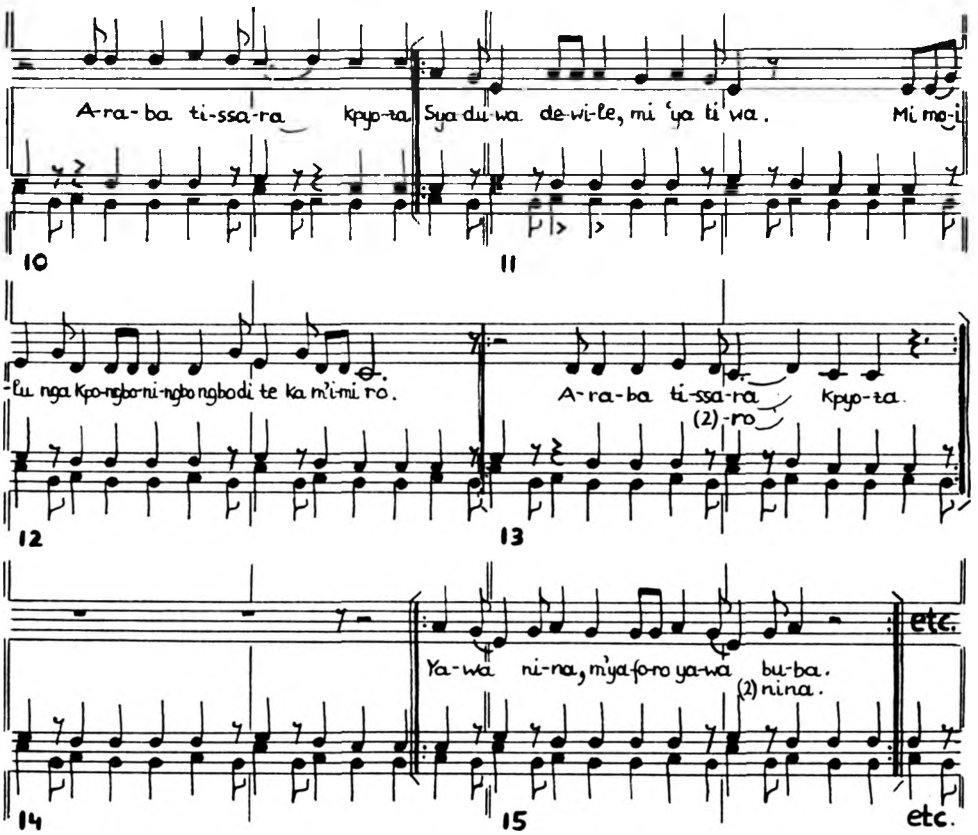
2. "NZANGINZA NI DU KPURANI YO" Language: *Zande*
(Condensed version). Tuning: "En anglais", S.A. = approx. E.
Fingering: Transposed pattern I. Performed by Samuel Ouzana, from Zemia.



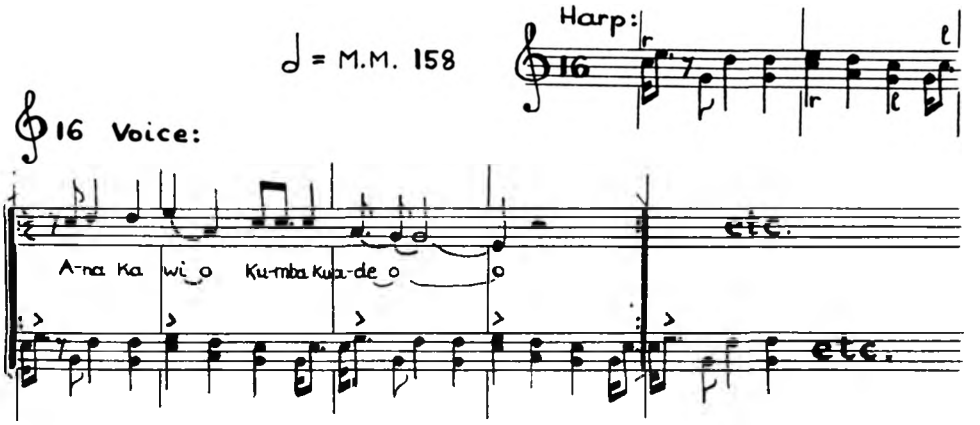
2. *Alternative text versions by other players:*
3. (a) "Mo da li e ko yo o, ka i ka yo da ni" (from Rafai).
(b) "Ba mbi li gundo o, kumba ku natata" (from Dembia).

3. "LIMBIAYO" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Jerome Assas, aged approximately 23, from Rafai. Recorded on Original Tape R 42/B, in April 1964. Tuning: SA = approximately B♭'.
Fingering: Pattern II.

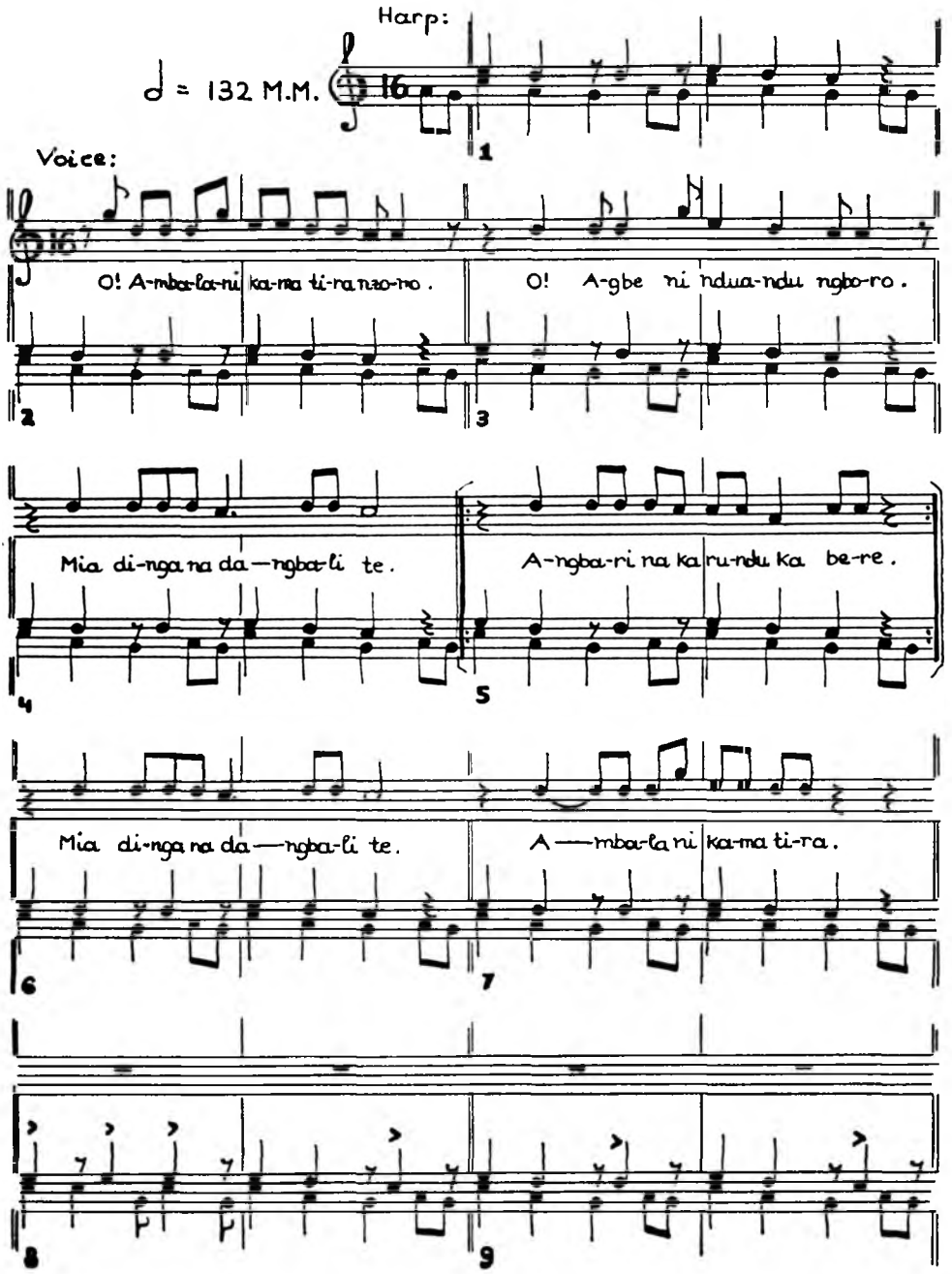


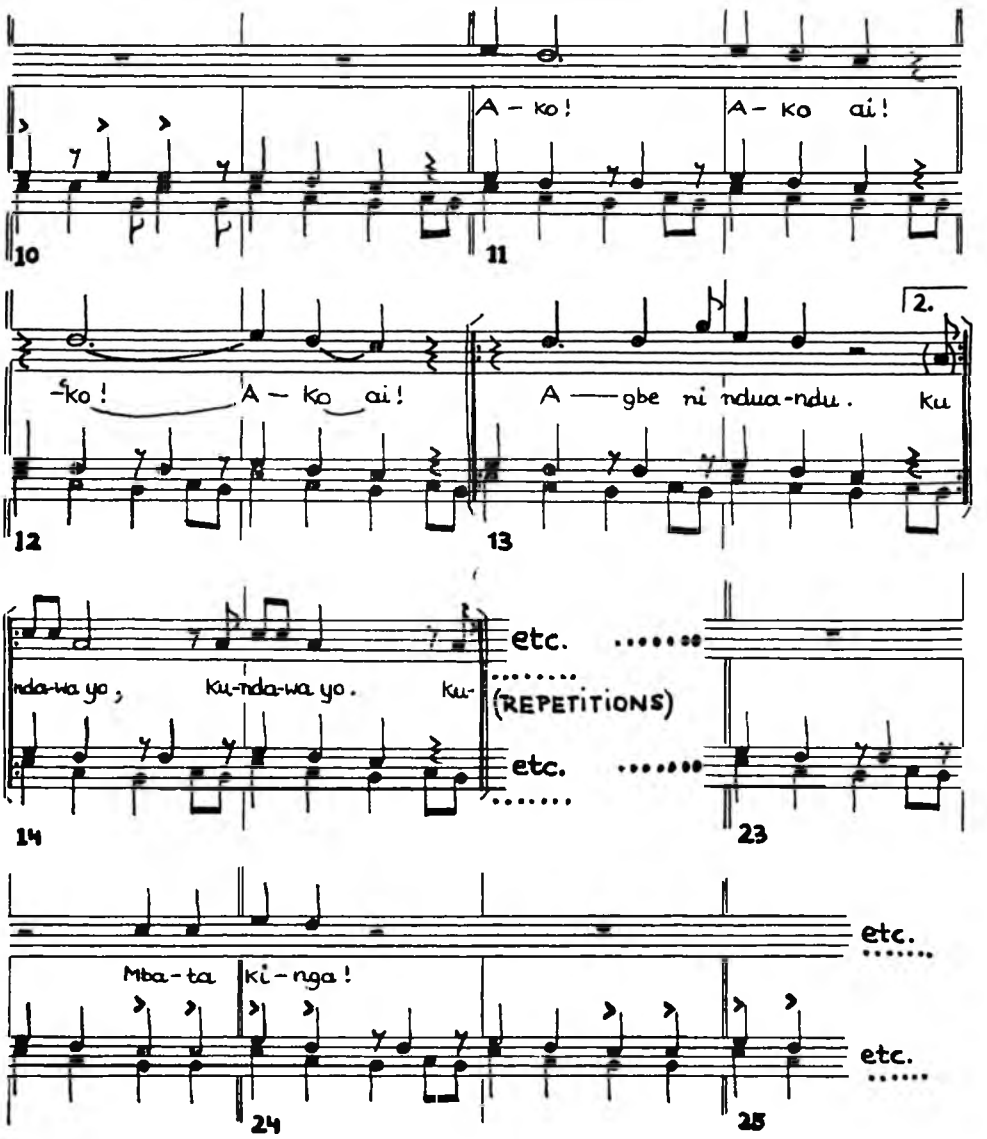


4. "ANA KA WIO KUMBA KUA DE O" (short extract) Language: *Zande*
Performed by Jerome Sournac, aged 17, from Rafai. Recorded on Original Tape R 44/A, in April 1964. Tuning: SA = B♭'. Fingering: Pattern II. The note C is plucked as indicated by the letters r and l below.

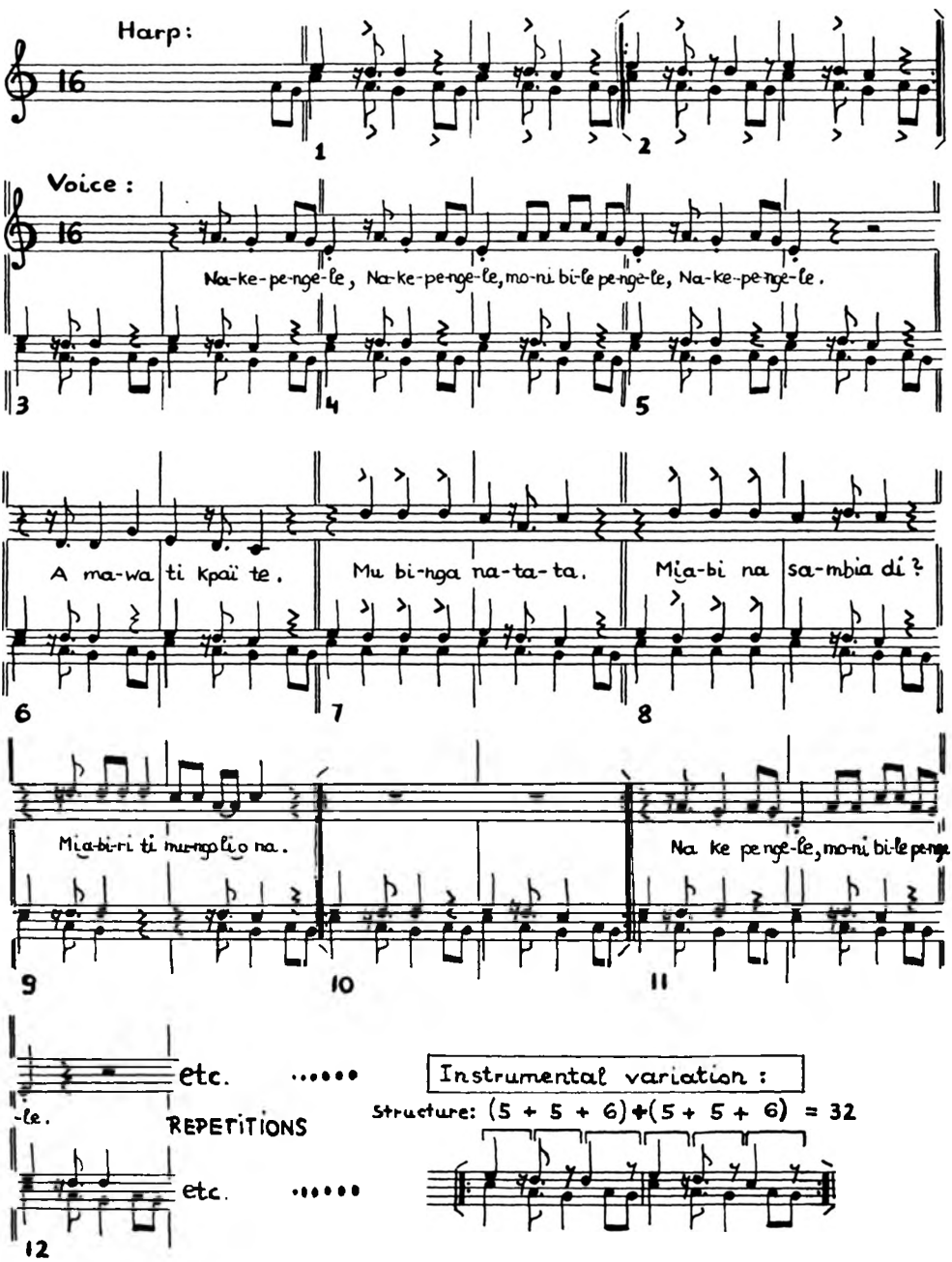


5. "AGBE NI NDUANDU NGBORO" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Samuel Ouzana, aged 12, from Zemio. Recorded on Original Tape R 45/B, in May 1964. Tuning: SA = approximately A'. Fingering: Pattern II.



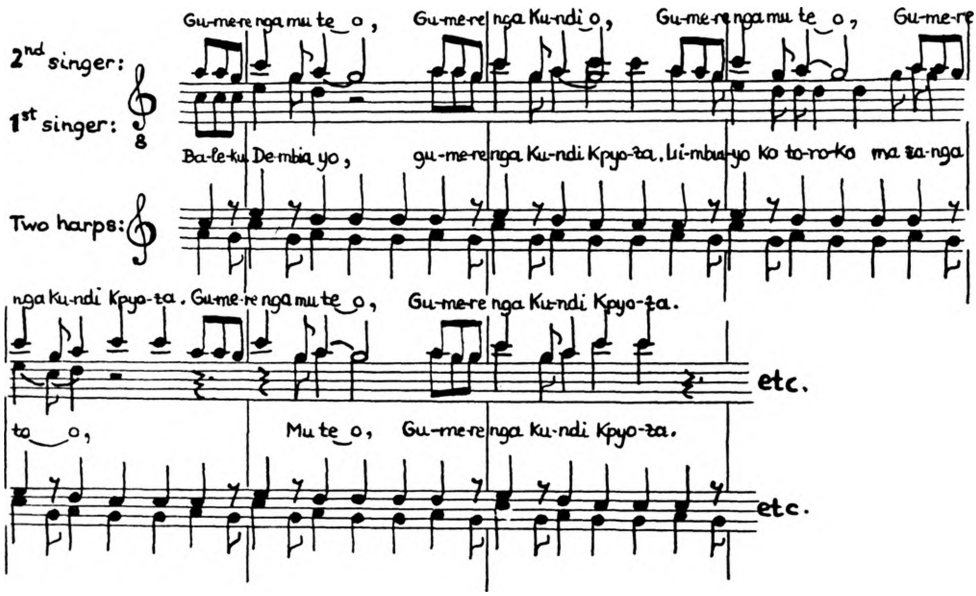

A – ko!
A – ko ai!
10
11
-ko!
A – ko ai!
A — gbe ni ndua-ndu. Ku
2.
12
13
nda-wa yo ; Ku-nda-wa yo. Ku-
etc.
(REPETITIONS)
etc.
14
23
Mba-ta ki-nga!
etc.
etc.
24
25

6. "NAKEPENGELE" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Jerome Assas, aged approximately 23, from Rafai. Recorded on Original Tape R 42/B, in April 1964. Fingering: Pattern II. Tuning: SA = B♭'.

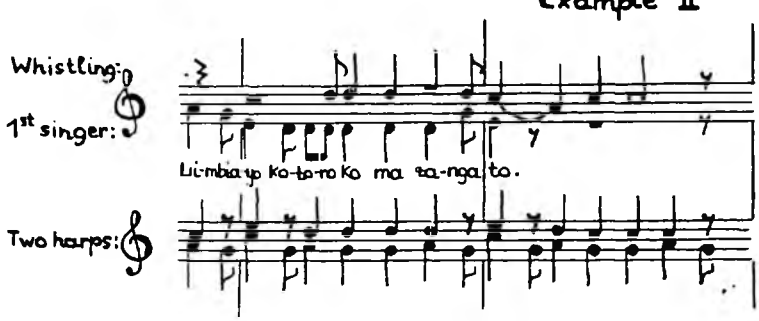


7. Extracts from "LIMBIAYO" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Bernard Guinahui and François Razia, with two harps. Aged 30-35. Both musicians are from Makanza near Rafai. Tuning of the harps: SA = near to D". Fingering: Pattern II.
Example I: Duet of the two harp players.
Example II: Passage with *Nvilili* (whistling) and vocal part.
Both extracts have been taken from the same performance.
Recorded on Original Tape R 44/B, in April 1964.

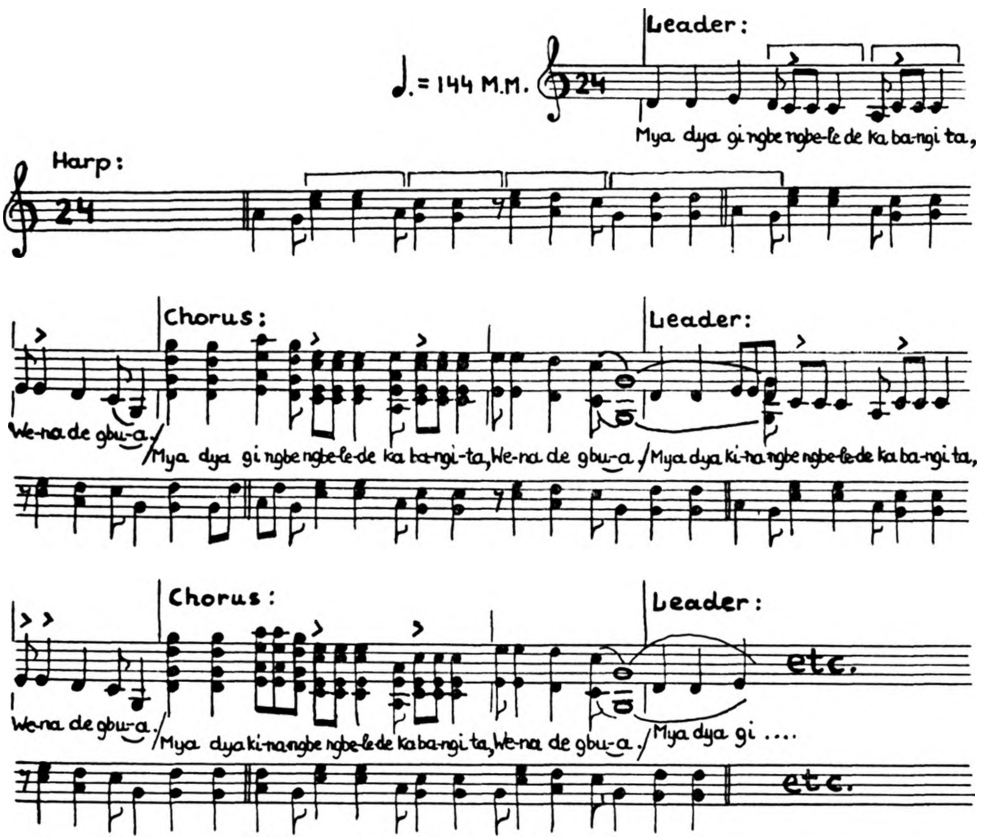
Example I ♩. = 162 M.M.



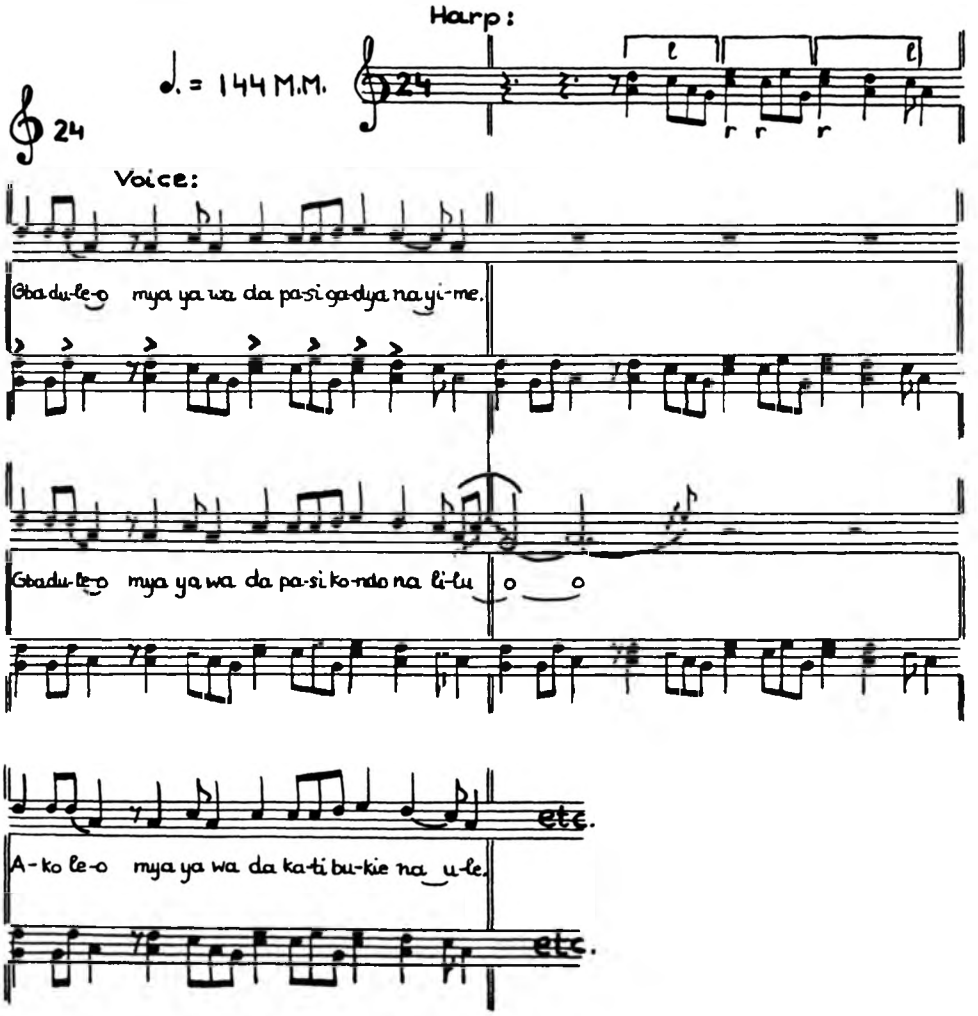
Example II



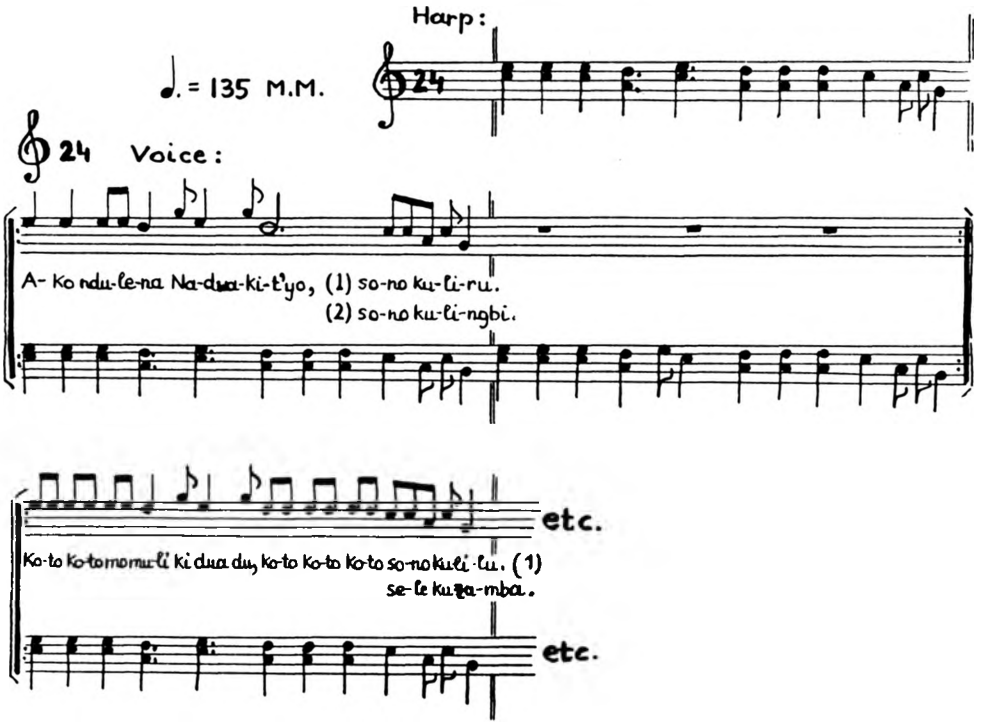
8. "WENA DE GBUA" Language: *Zande*
(Condensed version). Performed by Antoine Gbalagoume, aged approximately 30, from Djema. Mixed choir. Recorded on Original Tape R 47/B, in May 1964. Tuning: SA = approximately E♭'. Fingering: Pattern II. (The note C is plucked by the *left* thumb, when alone or in a C/G chord).



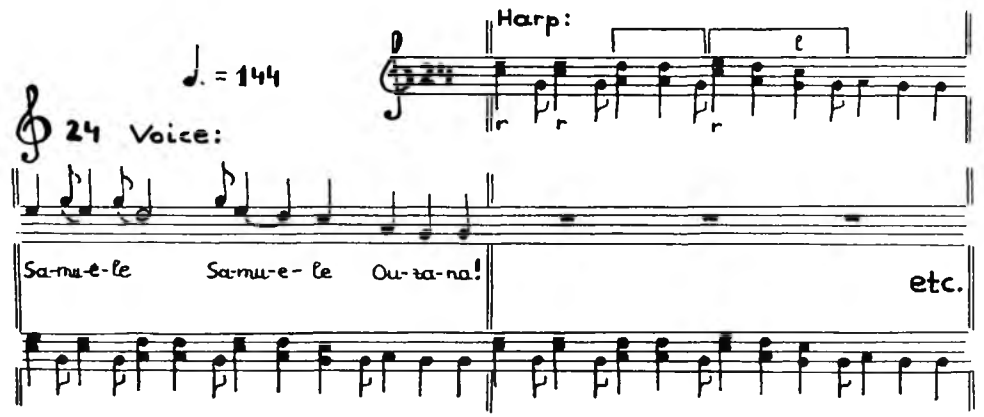
9. "GBA DULEO" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Samuel Ouzana, aged 12, from Zemio. Recorded on Original Tape R 45/B, in May 1964. Tuning: SA = approximately A". Fingering: Pattern II. (The note C is plucked as indicated by the letters l and r in the score).



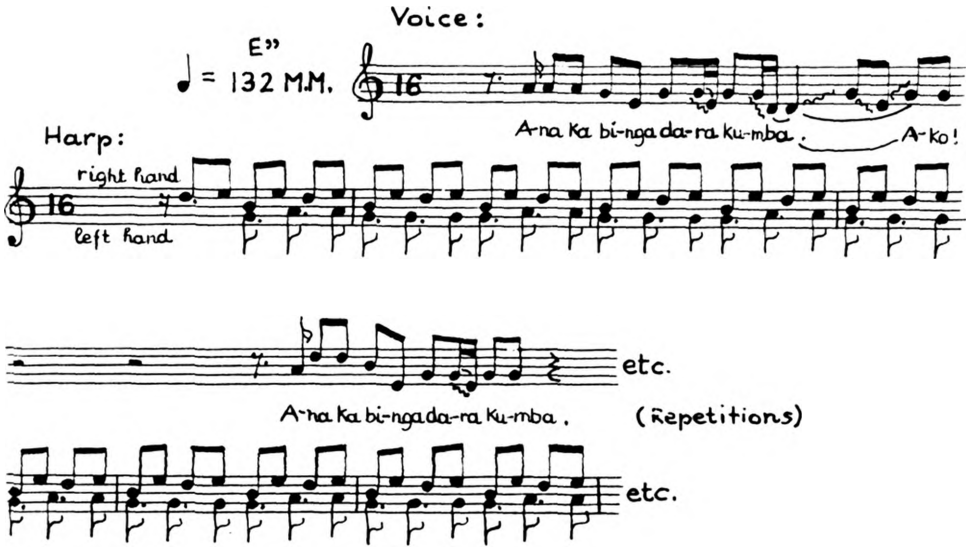
10. "AKO NDULENA" (Condensed version) Language: *Zande*
Performed by David Kamoundé, aged 12, from Zemio. Recorded on Original Tape R 45/A, in May 1964. Tuning: SA = G". Fingering: The note C is plucked *always* by the right index, the note A *always* by the right thumb.

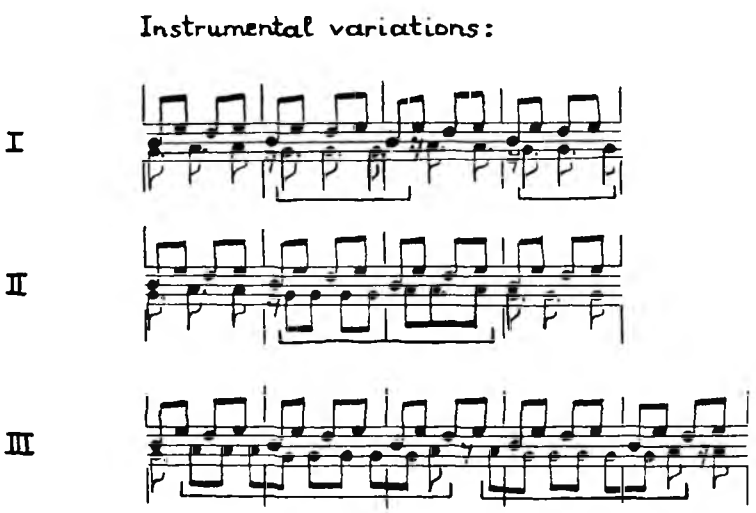


11. "OUZANA" Language: *Zande*
(Shortened version). Composed and performed by Samuel Ouzana, aged 12, from Zemio. Recorded on Original Tape R 45/B in May 1964. Tuning: SA = A". Fingering: Pattern II. (The note C is plucked as indicated by the letters r and l in the score).



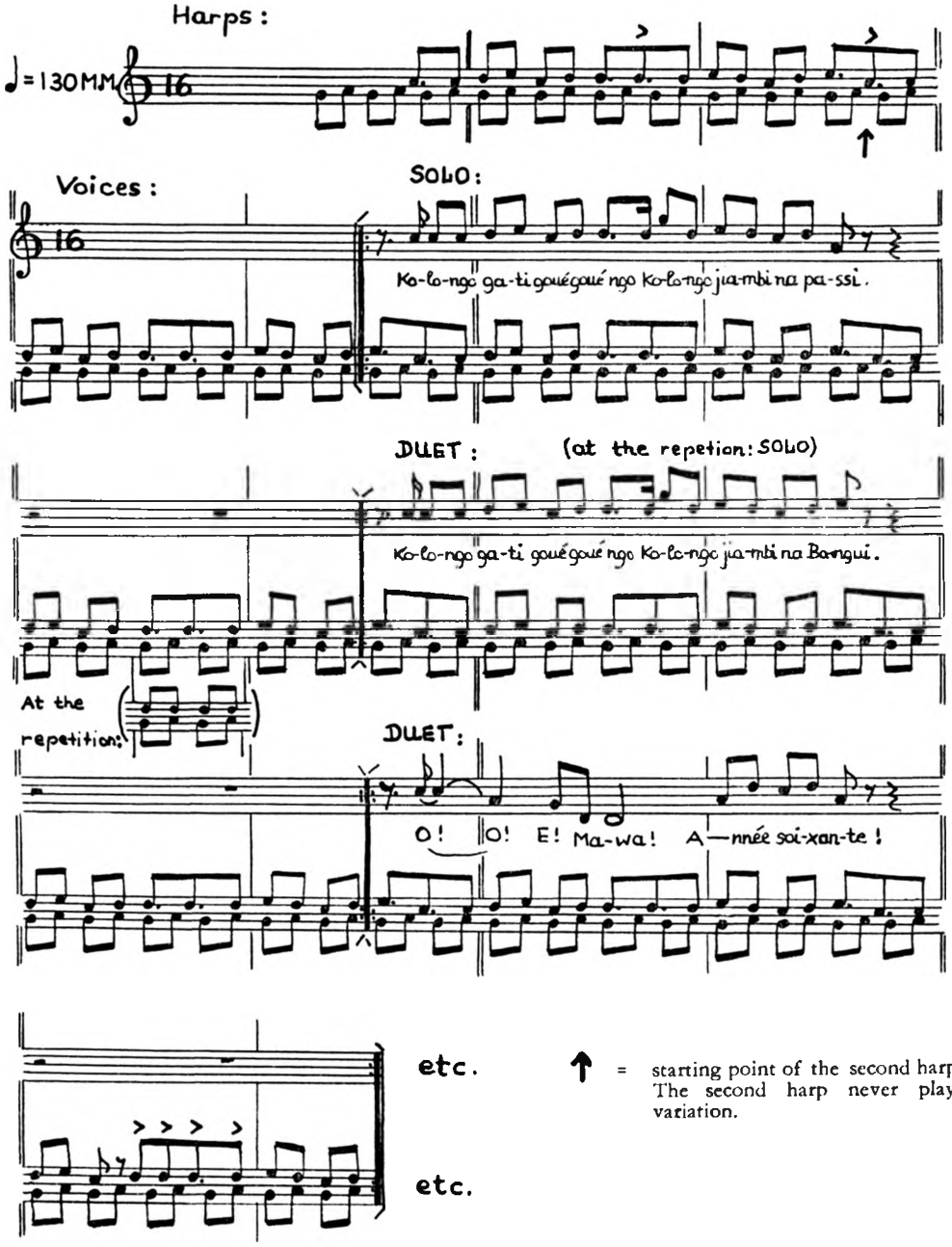
12. "ANA KA BINGA DARA KUMBA" Language: *Zande*
Performed by Samuel Ouzana, aged 12, from Zemio. Recorded on Original Tape R 45/B, in May 1964. Tuning: "En anglais". SA = approximately E".





13. "KOLONGO" Language: *Sango*

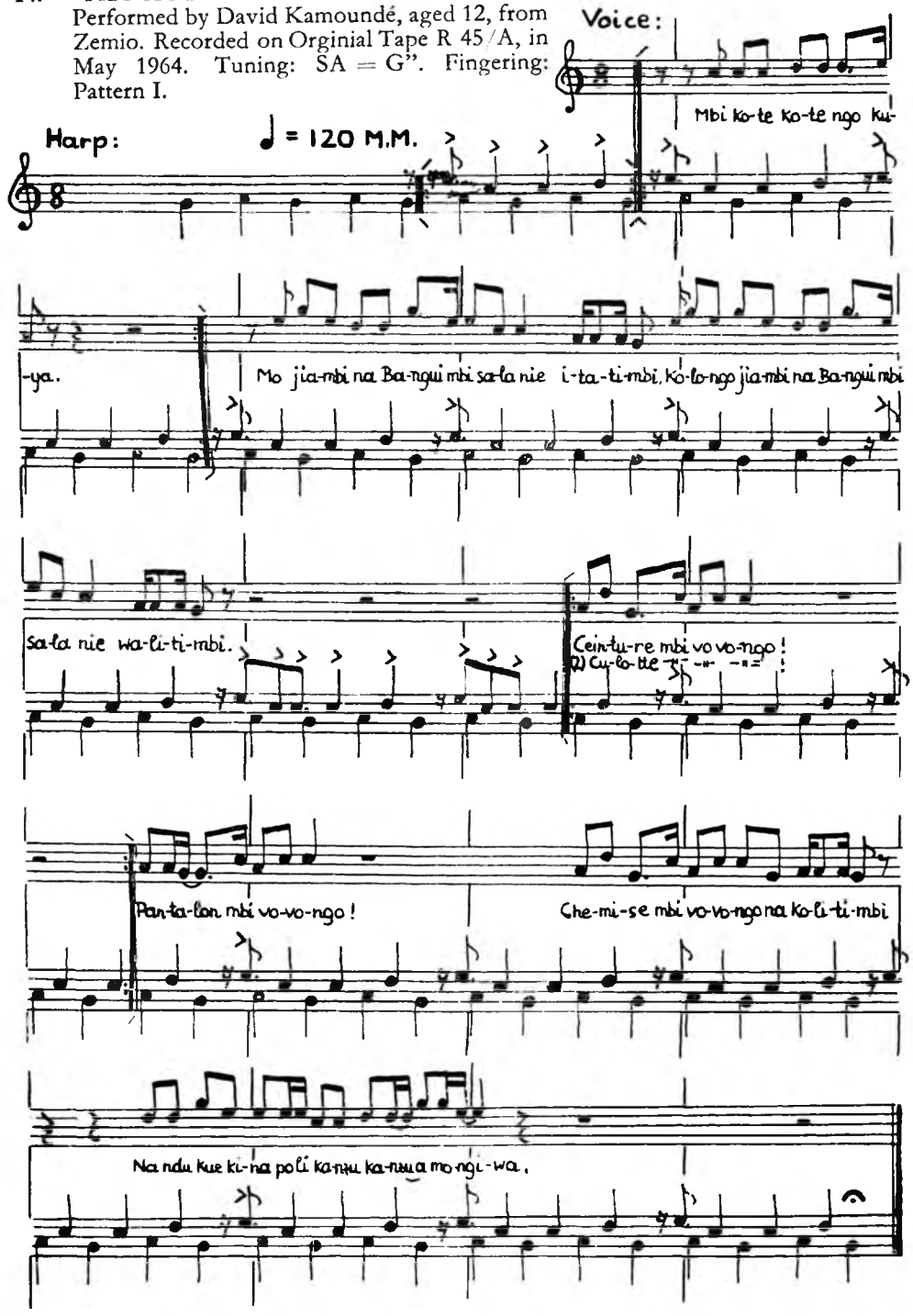
Performed by Mockys Dieudonné Yves and his friend, with two harps. Approximate age of the boys, 15. Recorded on Original Tape No. R 49/A, at Dembia, in May 1964. Tuning: SA = approximate G". Fingering: Pattern I.



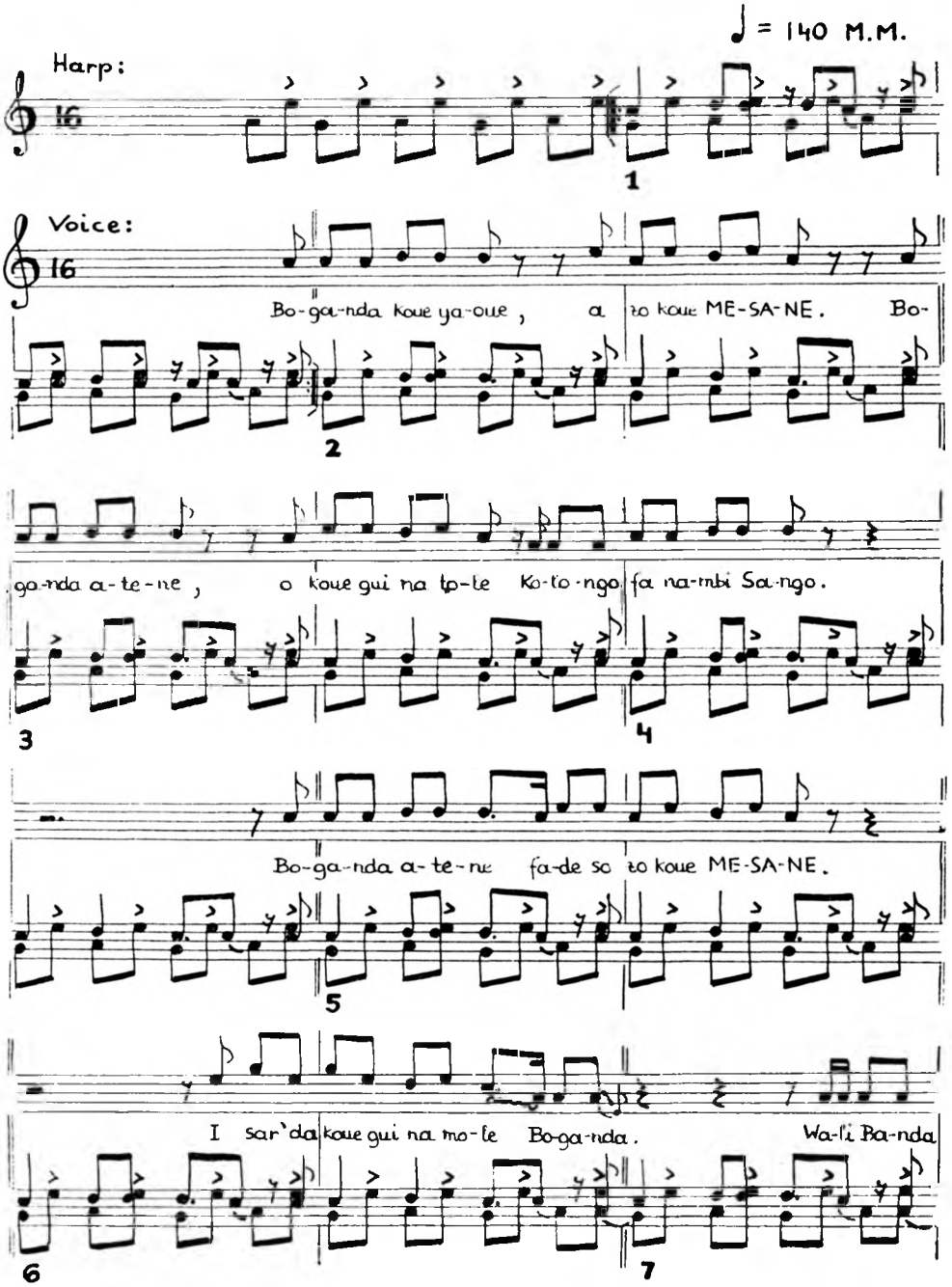
↑ = starting point of the second harp. The second harp never plays variation.

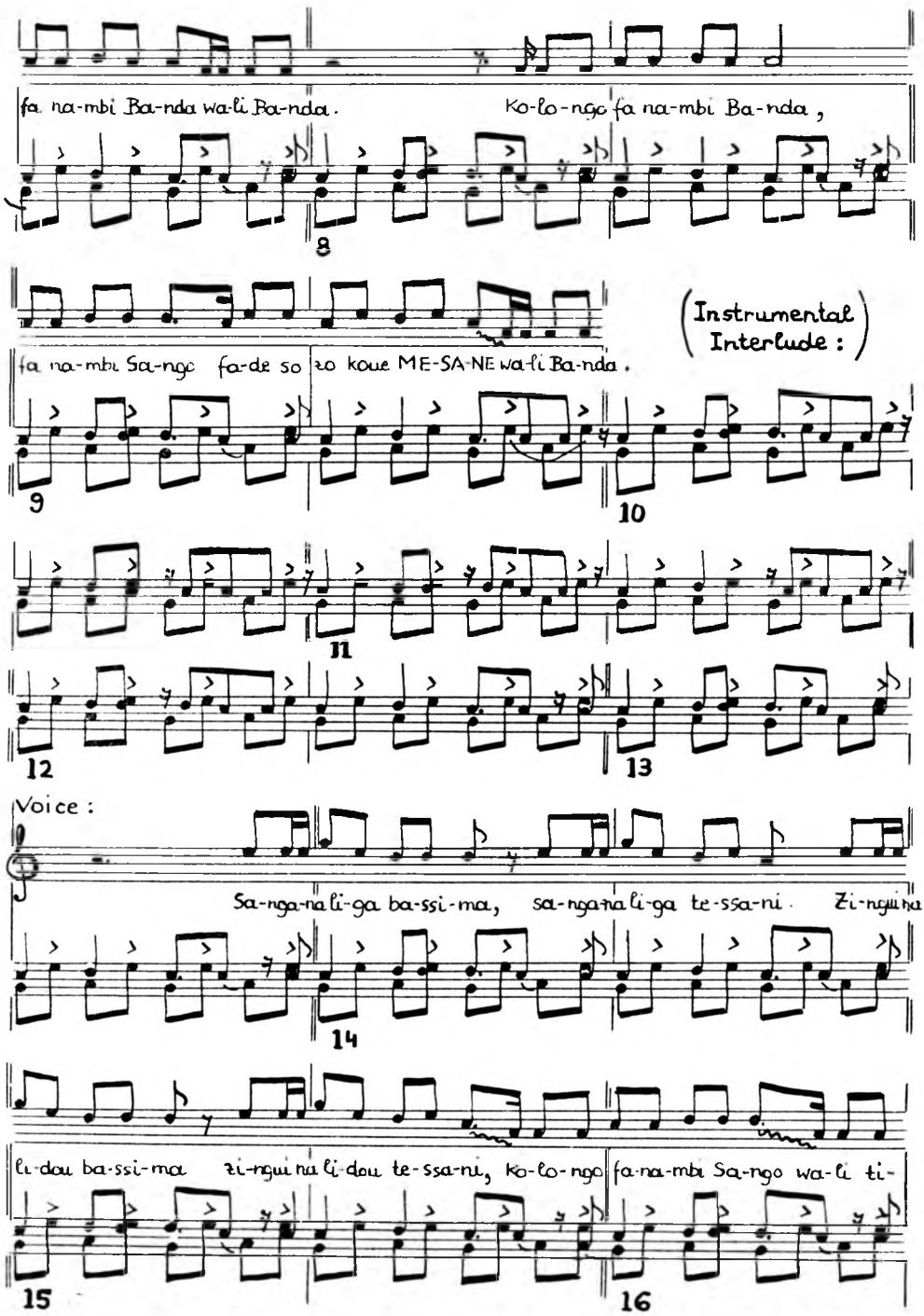
14. "MBI KOTE KOTE NGO" Language: *Sango/Zande*

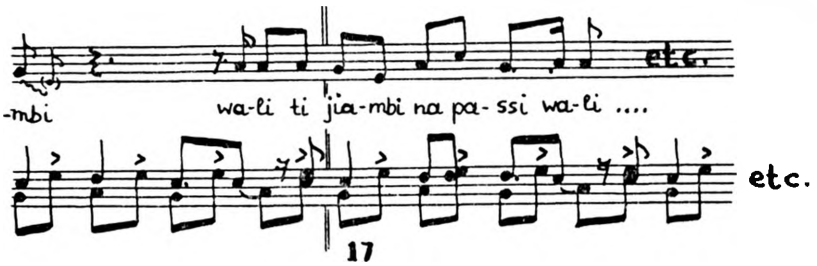
Performed by David Kamoundé, aged 12, from Zemio. Recorded on Orginial Tape R 45/A, in May 1964. Tuning: SA = G". Fingering: Pattern I.



15. "TADE SO ZO KOUE M.E.S.A.N." Language: *Sango*
Performed by Jerome Sournac, aged 17, from Rafai. Recorded on Original Tape R 44 / A, in April 1964. Tuning: SA = approximate B♭". Fingering: Pattern III.




fa na-mbi Ba-nda wa-li Ba-nda.
Ko-lo-ngo fa na-mbi Ba-nda,
8
(Instrumental Interlude :)
fa na-mbi Sa-ngo fa-de so ro koue ME-SA-NE wa-li Ba-nda.
9
10
11
12
13
Voice :
Sa-nga-na li-ga ba-ssi-ma, sa-nga-na li-ga te-ssa-ni. Zi-ngui na
14
li-dou ba-ssi-ma zi-ngui na li-dou te-ssa-ni, Ko-lo-ngo fa-na-mbi Sa-ngo wa-li ti-
15
16



16. Harp pattern of Jean Nquimale, a *Buru* musician, aged approximately 30, from Galafondo, near Fort Sibut. Recorded on Original Tape R 42/A, in April 1964. Tuning: the note written as C is near to E". Right hand part with downtails, left hand part with uptails. The G/A Banda-beat is played on the *third* and *second* string of the harp with the usual fingering.