

EDITORS' NOTE.—Simon Mashoko, an *njari* mbira player in the traditional style who is famous throughout Rhodesia, has also been recorded in the I.L.A.M.'s Sound of Africa Series on TR. 211, performing three traditional songs, as well as the Passion according to St. John.

LA SUPERSTIZIONE ZANDE, by F. GERO. Editrice Nigrizia, via Meloncello, 3/3 Bologna, Italy. 304 pp., 15 musical exs. L.2,200.

DEATH AMONG THE AZANDE OF THE SUDAN (Beliefs, Rites and Cult), by F. GERO. Translated from the Italian by W. H. PAXMAN. Editrice Nigrizia. 184 pp., ill., 13 musical exs., map. L.5,000.

F. Gero, as the author is called by the Azande, is none other than Fr. F. Giorgetti, F.S.C., a name familiar to the readers of this Journal.

In his foreword to "La Superstizione Zande", Dr. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, formerly of the Institute of Social Anthropology of Oxford, an authority on the Azande people, writes: "Fr. Filiberto Giorgetti of the Verona Fathers Mission spent 30 years among the Azande of the Sudan and in the course of them has acquired a remarkable knowledge of their customs and language . . . It is a relief to me to find that in essentials we are in agreement. But I must add that Fr. Giorgetti's book is based on his own original research and also that it records much new information of great ethnographical value." In the early 30's this reviewer had the good fortune of working with Fr. Giorgetti who was then in charge of an extensive territory among the Azande and was at the same time the accredited civil magistrate of his mission station when, among other things, routine court cases and meetings with other local chiefs were hardly more than offshoots of his pastoral duties.

These qualifications should suffice to situate the author and his work on any scale of values. Further than that, one has to admit that the book defies one's ability to review it adequately; one may only hope that a good translator be found to offer it to English readers in a style that would preserve the richness of the original.

What is implied in the title (*lit.*: The Superstition of the Azande) is the concept of life as understood by the Azande in their belief that the universe is governed by good and evil spirits; and that the life they live from the womb to the tomb meanders through a maze of (a) Witchcraft, (b) Magic and (c) Divination. This forms the three main divisions of the work that runs into 106 short chapters or articles, and thus we are brought to a down-to-earth elaboration of the beliefs of the Azande that often goes, directly or indirectly, counter to the systematic "La Philosophie Bantoue" of Fr. P. Tempels (Paris, 1949).

As was to be expected of the author, music and dance are given a full and expert treatment in three longer articles: (a) Technique of the divination dance, (b) Sensational performances of the sorcerer and (c) Fire dance. (An excerpt from article (a), see "Counterpoint in African Music", follows this review. This will illustrate better than any comment the approach the author follows throughout his work. Incidentally, it also confirms an observation made by another researcher, Marjorie Davidson, as recorded in the Journal, Vol. 3, 1964, p. 124).

"Death among the Azande of the Sudan" comes as a natural sequence to, and an extension of, "La Superstizione Zande". It expands in 53 short chapters with the sharpness of almost clinical descriptions, from the time of isolation of the sick person to the dances of the social feast following burial. As in "La Superstizione Zande" the amount of factual information is astounding; and here again, music and dance receive along the way a thorough exposition, giving to the whole work its most important aspect, for without a proper appreciation of their music and dance the beliefs, rites and cult surrounding death among the Azande would have little consistency as an ethos which, admittedly, clashes with the tenets of Christian ethics, but none the less holds a people together, makes it different yet at the same time preserves its identity — a conclusion Fr. Tempels' long dissertation quoted above cannot easily dismiss.

The translation is excellent. An alphabetical index has been added (inexplicably missing in the previous volume; also, in both volumes, occasionally a musical example lacks clarity for its being reduced to fit the format of the page). The book opens with a message of the 'talking drum' which sets the pace, as it were, to subsequent events; the drum will often sound again, its message always clear, direct, not simply as symbolic call to mourning but as an energiser to a prostrate people; and when the drum will stop pounding, when reluctantly the reader closes the book, only to keep it at an easy reach for frequent reference, he is left with the conviction that the author must have still enough material in store to enrich the ethnographical field — and African music — with several volumes of his original research. For seldom has a researcher been better equipped to commune so intimately with the subjects of his researches and offer these with more compelling authority.

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