



THE PERO

A collection of ethnographic and historical data from fieldwork 1989-1993

Series

Ethnographic and Historical Profiles of the Peoples of the Muri Mountains
- The Northern Groups

by Jörg Adelberger

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Ethnographic and Historical Profiles of the Peoples of the Muri Mountains - The Northern Groups

The Pero

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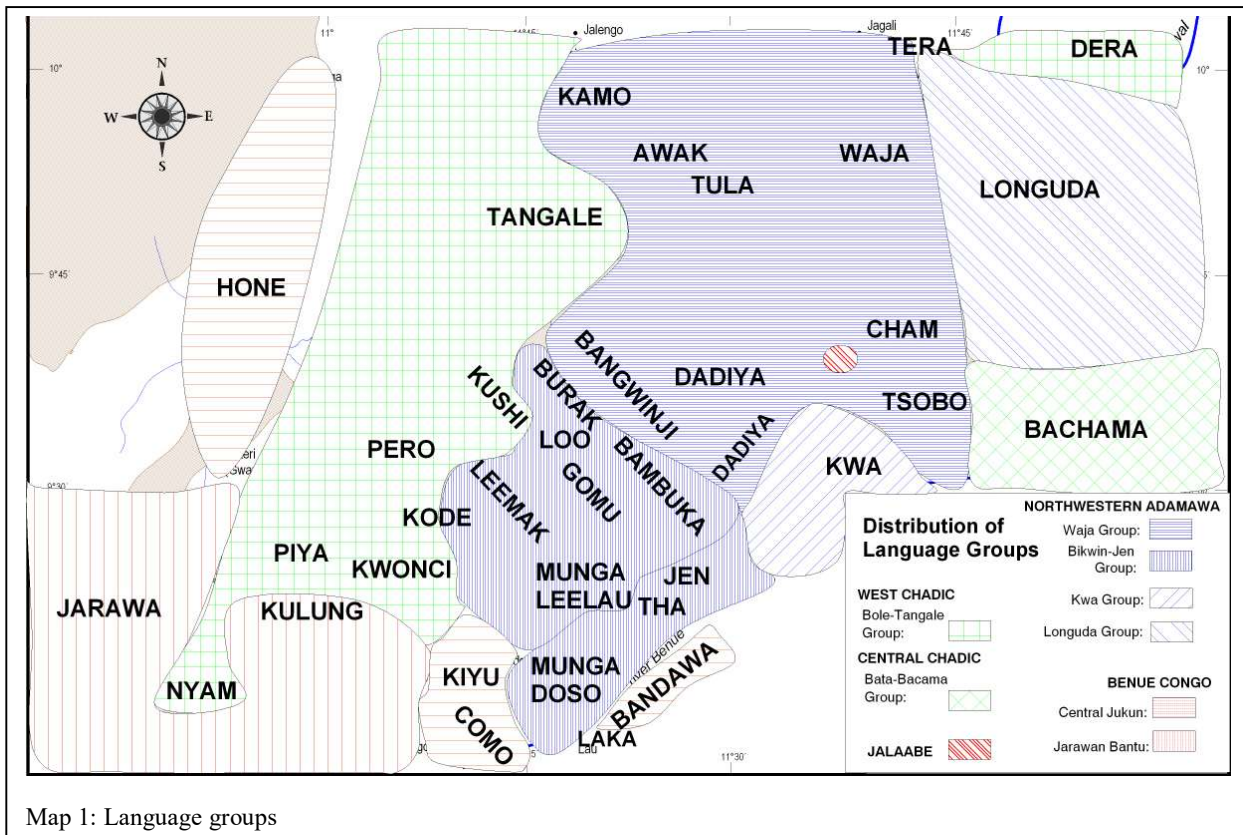
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Introduction

Ethnographic field research was undertaken within the framework of the interdisciplinary research project "Cultural Development and Language History in the Environment of the West African Savannah" (SFB 268) in the years 1989 to 1993. The information provided below reflects the situation at that time.¹

The Pero, who call themselves Pibérò, are a large ethnic group consisting of a number of patrilineal descent groups or clans, distributed over the main settlements Filiya, Gwandum and Gundale.² The language of the Pero [pip] is classified as a member of the Bole-Tangale group of the West Chadic languages.³ Informants maintain that there are differences in dialect between the Pero of Filiya and Gwandum on the one hand and Gundale on the other. Culturally, as well as



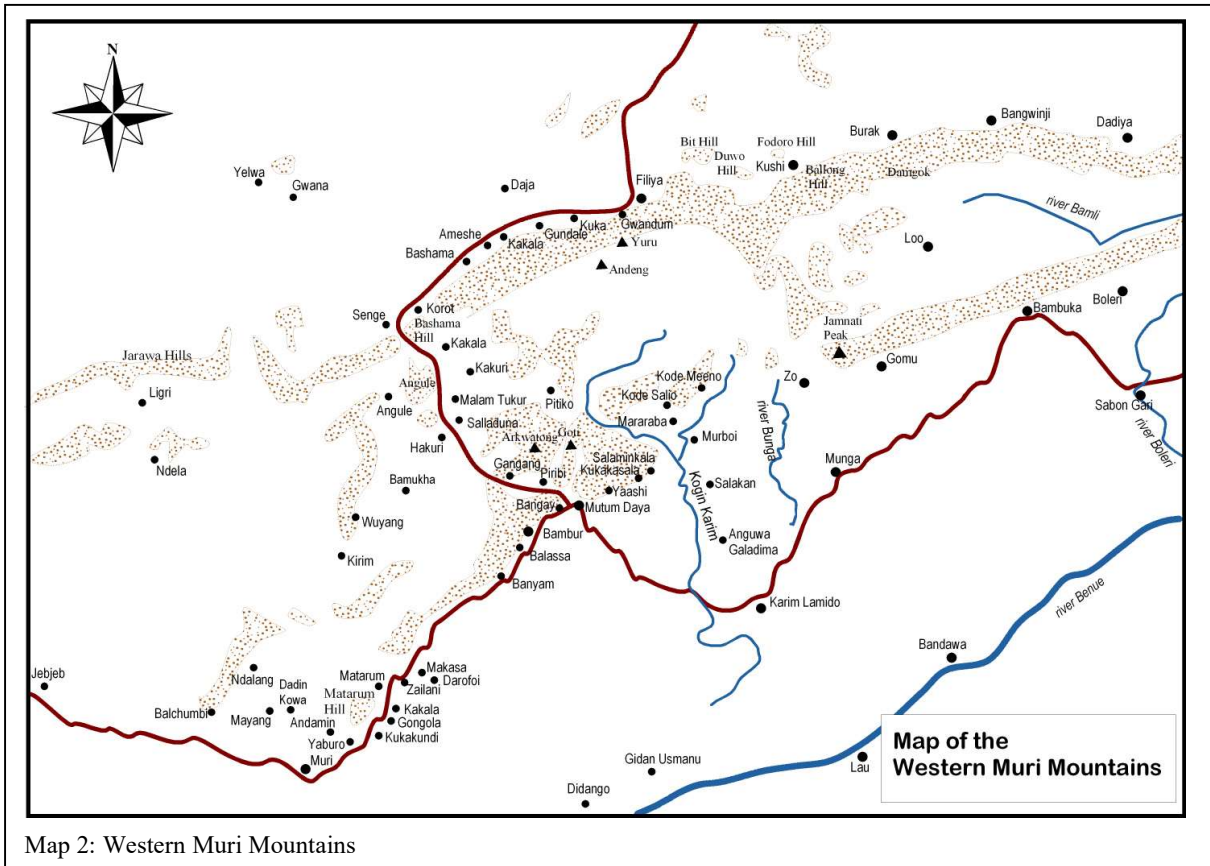
historically, the Pero have much in common with the Piya [piy], their western neighbours.

¹ I am grateful to Adamu Gypsy, Al-Haji Amadu (VH of Filiya), Ali Gunni, Alkali Lili, Amadu Pay, Ari (VH of Gundale), Dan Bauchu and Amina, Danboy Musa, Dang Wansam (*sarkin aiki*), Gau, Harry Raymond Filiya, Haruna Ayuba (VH of Gwandum), Ibrahim Iliya, Jalla Waya, Rev. Jarama, Jatau (*sarkin dambang*), Joseph Guffas, Pastor John, Pastor Malam Dembus, Mai Koronde, Malle, Mohammed Salehu Dogo, Musa Filiya, Waziri and for their co-operation during my research. My special thanks go to Abdullahi Jatau (A. J. Filiya), Yohanna Kasuwa (Y.K. Filiya) and Elan Musa Filiya for their untiring and invaluable assistance, and to A. J. Filiya and Muazu Garba for their hospitality. I am grateful to Pete Eccles for correcting my English.

² Pero and Pipero are used synonymous in the ethnographic survey by CAPRO (1995: 283-289).

³ In square brackets are the ISO-639 names. Unlike other groups living in the Muri Mountains, the Pero are relatively well represented in written studies: Zygmunt Frajzyngier (1980, 1985, 1989) has published extensively on the Pero language and the missionary Arthur Faust (1945) has written a voluminous thesis on various aspects of Pero society and culture with an emphasis on their religious beliefs and institutions.

Settlement area and demography



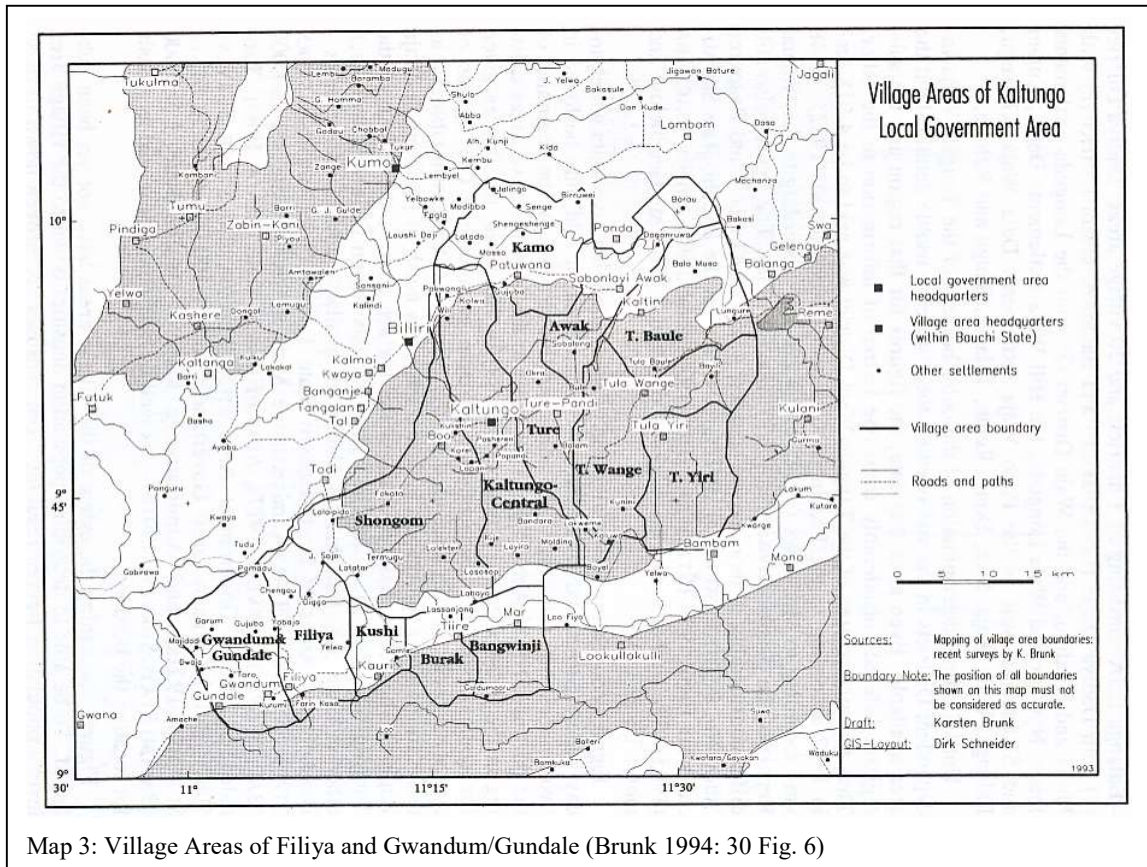
Map 2: Western Muri Mountains

The Pero are settled in the northern part of the Muri Mountains. Their main settlements are Filiya, Gwandum and Gundale, additionally there are numerous villages and hamlets where the Pero also reside, such as: Kuka, Dwaja, Gwere, Kwaya, Tudu, Shengu, Jawro Sajo, Yarana (near Kushi), Yelwa, Lapandintai, Yabilo, Digga, Chengau, Jenye, Pamadu, Gujuba, Yaganga, Funguru, Damushi, Bambara Mutum, Angargu, Yawuro and Farin Kasa. Towards the west, the territory of the Pero merges with that of the Piya, and Gundale is inhabited by the Pero as well as the Piya. The settlement area of the Pero is divided into two parts: the area to the east of the Pongum stream is called Piliya (Filiya), and the area to the west of that stream, is Angkhombo. The village area of Filiya consists of the following settlements (from east to west): Farin Kasa, Dadin Kowa, Tsofongari, *Yagbandi, *Pilami, *Dimbira, *Degam, *Pesho, Anyagubi, Anguwarogo, Sabon Layi, *Cwere, Urshalima (=Jerusalem), Yoghodo. Names with an asterisk are derived from the clan affiliation of the founder of the settlement.

At the time of research, the following numbers of taxpayers (TP)⁴ were recorded in the main settlements: Filiya 1,109, Gwandum 1,089, Gundale 275, adding up to a total of 2,465 TP. The

⁴ Tax Payers List of Sept. 30th, 1989.

total population number of the village areas of Filiya (14,731), Gwandum (13,572) and Gundale (3,807) in 1991 was 32,110 according to Brunk (1994: 70-71).



Map 3: Village Areas of Filiya and Gwandum/Gundale (Brunk 1994: 30 Fig. 6)

It should be noted that in many settlements, especially in the larger ones, different ethnic groups are living together.

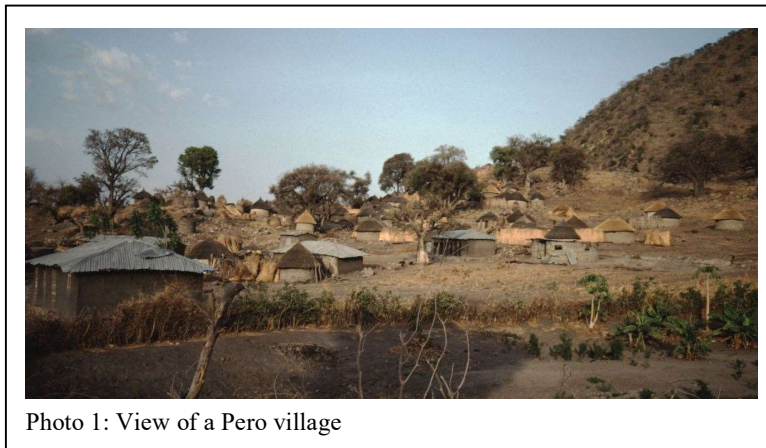
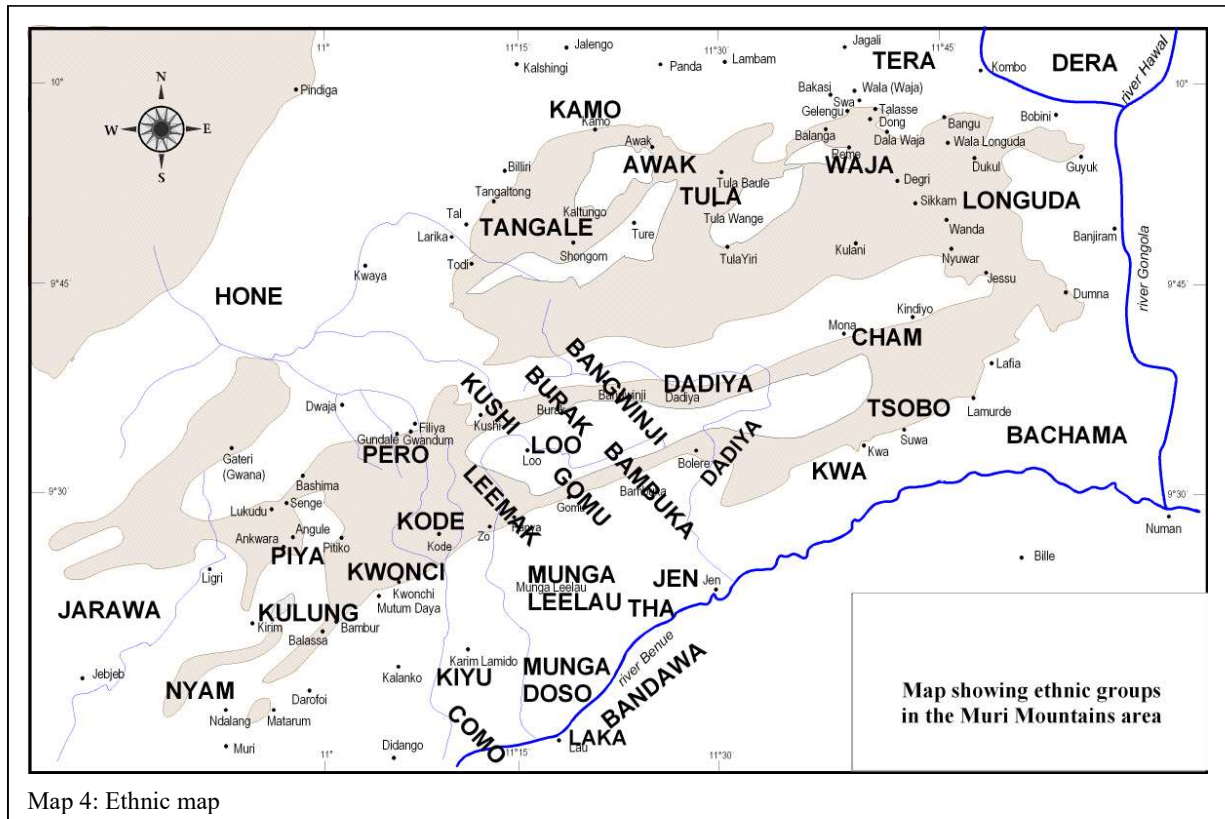


Photo 1: View of a Pero village

Interethnic relations

Their neighbours to the north are the Hone [juh] and Tangale [tan], to the east the Kushi [kuh], to the south the Kode [gmd/ktc], and to the west the Piya [piy].



Map 4: Ethnic map

The Pero acknowledge being part of the array of ethnic groups who speak closely related languages, calling themselves *ambandi* or *ampandi* (meaning “owner of mountain”), including the Kode, Kwonci [piy], Piya and Pero. However, the Pero do not consider themselves as being part of the Wurkun cluster of groups,⁵ but reserve this term for the Piya and the Kulung [bbu]. Historically, the aforementioned groups have very close ties and it is only at a yet to be determined period in time that the ethnic identities existing today seem to have emerged.

There were frictions between the Pero and the Tangale, especially with the Kaltungo- and Shongom-Tangale. Rivalry over natural resources such as hunting grounds or saltings seem to have contributed.⁶ Prisoners taken during intertribal fights became slaves, but could be bought free by paying 50-60 pieces of traditional iron money (*gbaame*). If a slave was sold on, for example to the Jukun or Hausa, the seller also received 50-60 *gbaame* from the buyer.

They have amicable relations with and intermarry with the Kushi, Kode, Kwonci, Piya, Loo, Burak, Bangwinji and the Jukun of Gwana and Pindiga (Hone). There are ritual relationships between the Pero and ethnic groups in their vicinity: the Burak may join the Pero at the

⁵ For the term Wurkun and the Wurkun groups see Adelberger 1992.

⁶ Report on Wurkun Patrol 1909 by Resident Elphinstone (NAK SNP7 5093/1907).

occasion of some rituals concerned with ancestral veneration, and the Pero went to Pindiga for certain celebrations. There are said to be close ties, based on historical relations, linking different ethnic groups on the level of descent units or clans: between the Gbaya (Pero), the Kwaya (Billiri-Tangale) and the Yange (Kushi) clans, between the Anyakhakharad (Pero) and the Gubno (Kushi), and between the Dagam (Pero) and the Pewurang (Kushi).

Table 1: Pero names for neighbouring ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Pero
Bangwinji	Janga
Burak	Buurak
Fulani	Andanga
Hausa	Kulata
Jarawa	bayari
Jukun	Gbana, Kwana
Kode	Dara
Kulung	Kulung miraddi
Kushi	Laame, Goshi
Kwanci	Fulan
Loo	Shongo
Tangale	Tungali

History

Pre-colonial migrations and movement of settlements since the beginning of the colonial period

As the Pero are made up of different sub-units or clans, their traditions of origin are also diverse. According to clan histories collected, the first clan to have settled in Pero land were the Dimbira, followed by the Anyakhakharad (see chapter 'Clans'). In their traditions they say that they met Jukun living on Mount Yuru on their arrival (see also Faust 1945: 180 f.).

According to information gathered by Abdullahi Jatau (ms 1992), with the coming of the Pero, the Jukun left and founded Antang Kwana, a settlement between Filiya and Gwandum, the ruins of which are still visible. Later the Jukun moved to Pilau (Pindiga) and Gwana.⁷ There was no fight between the Pero and the Jukun, to the contrary, the Jukun bartered with the Pero and taught them their cults. Among the Pero there are clans related to the Jukun, for instance the Galgawe and the Perkhuma. The Jukun produced shoes, woven cotton cloth, beads, rings, red blankets and red caps which they sold to the Pero. A red blanket is used in association with the *dodo/kinnima* cult only and may not be worn in public. Further the Jukun taught the Pero blacksmithing, pottery, and mat weaving, as well as methods of divination and traditional worship. Therefore, any Jukun coming to Pero land today is allowed to visit the *kinnima* shrine. Before

⁷ Probably these Jukun were the Jan Awei, a no longer existing Jukun group mentioned by Storch (2011: 191) and Blench (2022b).

the British colonial era, every chief of Filiya or Gwandum was invested with his staff at Pi-lau/Pindiga and as part of his investiture was circumcised, therefore the Jukun are also known

as *An Karu Kwalle* = 'those who circumcise'.

There is a tradition that the first Pero man, called Pibaagu, emerged from the ground together with his wife. He left his footprint on the rock of Mount Yuru, while his wife left the imprint of a pot (*lájùli*) in which she kept water for their son. Pibaagu later called Batibaara into being as his brother. These imprints in the rock can still be seen on Mount Yuru. In general, Mount Yuru, towering over Filiya, is considered to be the central historic place by most of the Pero. The extent of settlement terraces, built with dry stone steps and now largely abandoned, along the mountain slopes in the Pero area is impressive. There are

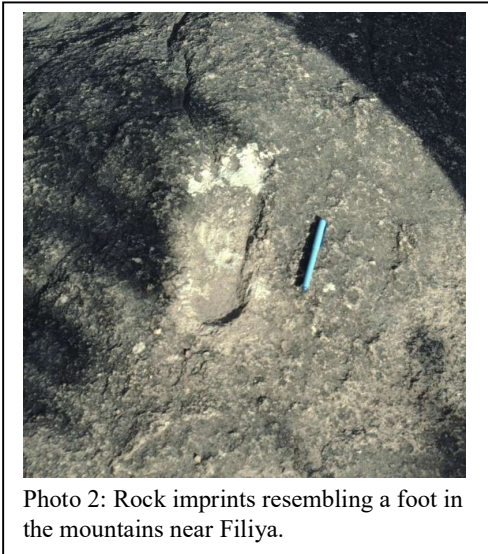


Photo 2: Rock imprints resembling a foot in the mountains near Filiya.

also traditions mentioning an origin from Kwararafa, for instance, the founder of the Anyakhakharad clan, named Bicukhu Pandi, is said to have come from Kwararafa. The British officer Mathews (NAK Bauprof 231E) states that the Gwandum were settled in the area before the Filiya people arrived. The mountains of the Gwandum area are regarded by numerous sub-groups of the neighbouring



Photo 3: Areal view of terraced slopes near Gwandum

Piya and Kulung as a place of origin or as an essential point of passage on their migration further west.

It is difficult to pin-point the time when these movements may have taken place, obviously slave raids by Emir Yakubu of Bauchi in the first half of the 19th century triggered a wave of migrations to the west, (see Adelberger 2009; NAK Yola Prof K.5/SII, Gazetteer of Adamawa Province 1936: 99). An earlier initial migration from Gwandum to the west is suggested in a British colonial report, putting the date around 1750:

"...some older men and one in particular at the village of Walkali state that quite 150 years ago the Wurkumawa immigrated from Gwendon [Gwandum] in the North East and originally settled on the summit of Balassa hill, from where they pushed out colonies north and west, namely Angule, Ankwara, Walkali and Bashima (...). Simultaneously with this movement from Gwendon, many Jukums from Kwona crossed to the north bank of the Benue and formed a colony at the foot of Kulum Hill in the

south eastern portion of the district within a few miles of Balassa. They also pushed out colonies west, and the ancestors of the present generation are said to have founded the town of Kirum 30 years ago."⁸

The migrations at that time may also probably be linked to a heavy period of drought affecting



Photo 4: Abandoned terraced settlement above Filiya

the whole region around 1740-1750 (cf. Tarhule, Woo 1997: 613).

During the colonial era a general downhill migration took place and many settlements in the plains were founded.

Relations with the Fulani emirates⁹

Bauchi Emirate was founded by Yakubu, who had already received a flag from Uthman dan Fodio prior to 1804. Bauchi town was founded in 1809 and in the following years a vast area, including the Wurkun hills in the western Muri Mountains, down to the rivers Benue and Gongola, was conquered. Yakubu pitched a war camp in front of Bambur Hill (McBride, n.d.:15; Fremantle 1972: 27) and it is said that he destroyed Kode and Gomu and received slaves as a sign of submission, but no regular tribute was paid.¹⁰ Under Yakubu's successors, however, the control over the subject peoples weakened, especially under Umaru (1883–1902). The region inhabited by non-Muslim peoples in the south of Bauchi Emirate was a regular target for slave raids (Yakubu 1992:147).

Mounted warriors could employ their military tactics to great effect on the undulating plains of the Northern Nigerian savannah, but could not exploit their superiority in the craggy and hilly landscape of the Muri Mountains area nor in other mountainous regions. The inhabitants of the plains surrounding the hills, especially in the Tula area, built defensive stone walls and thorn hedges, which were successfully used to check attacks by horsemen. As a protective measure,

⁸ NAK Ministry for Local Government – 4377/1912, Muri Province: Wurkum Pagan District, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton. See also Fremantle 1972: 27.

⁹ The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009; see also Adelberger 2018.

¹⁰ NAK SNP 10 - 77P/1913, Muri Province, Gwomu District, Lau Division, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton.

the villages were strategically well-placed in the steep and rocky hills. Usually, they were protected by stone walls and could only be reached through narrow, winding paths, partly obstructed by gateways. These could be well defended against emirate raiders, even if they approached armed with rifles.

Firearms were part of the weaponry of the emirate forces, especially since the middle of the 19th century, but since they were of the front-loader musket type and, compared with contemporaneous European standards, few in numbers, their effect was mostly psychological inducing fear through their loud discharge. The arms of the mountain dwellers consisted of spears with varying, often quite vicious, tips, bows and arrows, the latter often poisoned, daggers, short swords and clubs. For protection, shields made of buffalo hide and elephant ears were used.

Thus, although the different emirates exercised considerable pressure by undertaking frequent raids on the population groups of the wider Muri Mountains area and adjacent regions, their control of the area was rather loose and varied over time. Supported by a suitable terrain, the mountain dwellers could successfully defend themselves or were able to withdraw into even more inaccessible regions. The acephalous nature of their societies and the existence of a multitude of factions on the one hand made it difficult to form alliances for more successful defence, on the other hand the subjugation of a single community did not entail the conquest of any wider political network.

Mountain dwellers, such as the Awak, Cham, Dadiya or Pero, were able to retain their independence against the Fulani (Temple 1922: 34, 87, 88, 365).

Colonial encounters¹¹

A combined patrol of forces from Gombe and Muri, with officers from both provinces, toured the Muri Mountains proper in May and June 1909.¹² They went along the northern edge, then crossed the hills to the south and returned along its southern edge. Several places in that mountain refuge were visited for the first time. At Gomu, a violent conflict arose which resulted in about 30 Gomu being killed. The Gomu warriors were defeated at the same place where they had beaten the Fulani forces years before.¹³ The proclaimed intention of the patrol was to bring

¹¹ The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009; for the events at Gomu see also Adelberger 2018.

¹² NAK SNP 7 - 147/1911, Boundary Muri - Bauchi: Extract from report on Wurkum Patrol, 1st July 1909 by Elphinstone;

NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909:

- Report by Col. Sergeant C. Bailey 15th June 1909,
- Report on Wurkum Patrol by Resident Lau Division Elphinstone 1st July 1909,
- Extract from report from AR Gombe to Resident Bauchi by Lt. Hugh de Putron, OC Nafada.

¹³ NAK SNP 7 - 147/1911, Boundary Muri - Bauchi. NAK SNP 7 - 3803/1909, Patrol Tangale-Waja, Report on: From the Resident Bauchi Province to the Secretary to the Administration, Zungeru, by E. H. Lewis Resident Bauchi 5th July 1909.

NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909.

NAK Yola Prof Acc. 15, Misc. Papers re Wurkum and Muri 1912: Gwomu District Wurkum Country Assessment Report Nov. 1912 by AR T. H. Haughton.

NAK SNP 10 - 77P/1913, Muri Province, Gwomu District, Lau Division, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton.

the area under control and to stop offences being committed on traders disturbing the important trading centre of Lau.

On 20th April 1909 Colour Sergeant Bailey, with 22 rank and file, left Nafada and marched via Deba Habe, where they joined Assistant Resident of Gombe Carlyle, to the Jukun town of Gateri where they arrived on 28th April. Here they expected to meet with the party from Muri Division, but, due to an illness of the Assistant Resident Fitzpatrick, the meeting was delayed. Eventually on 12th May they were joined by Resident Lau Division K. V. Elphinstone, Assistant Resident Brice-Smith and Lieutenant Feneran with 54 rank and file. The combined patrol left Gateri on 14th May.

From here they first marched east and then south along the boundary line on which, however, both parties had differing views. That stretch of country was covered for the first time by a British patrol. They first visited the Pero settlements of Gwandum and Filiya, and Elphinstone remarked that he was repelled especially by the Pero. As the Pero and Tangale claimed the same saltings on the river, that topic was discussed during the visit by the Galadima of Tangale and Sarkin Filiya. The next settlements they reached were Kushi and Burak. The Burak expressed their contentment with the new administration protecting them against the neighbouring Loo and Pero, and they prepared a road to Gomu. Then the patrol continued to Loo, Gomu and Bambuka. Bambuka had been visited by W. P. Hewby in 1900 (he was an agent of the Royal Niger Company on the Benue and, later, Resident of Benue province) and the Bambuka were said to have been subject to the Emir of Yola. Recently there had been a series of disputes between the Gomu and the Bambuka. When the patrol approached Bambuka, the people, armed with spears and shields, were working in the fields, and, at first, they assumed that the patrol were Gomu warriors. To settle the discord, Resident Elphinstone decided on a fine of spears and shields from both groups, but the Gomu resented the fine. After waiting for one day, the patrol marched into Gomu town on 25th May. Half way up the pass the force was met by the Gomu ready to defend their town, so the soldiers fired two volleys at them and fighting ensued, in which the Gomu were joined by the Loo who were their allies. At the end there were 31 Gomu killed and 19 wounded, and one Loo killed and 9 wounded, with no casualties on the British side.

The patrol continued to Kode. They considered the Kode people to be at a low stage of development but friendly and co-operative. Then they passed through Panya, Bambur and Kwonchi without incident and continued to Pitiko, Bashima, Kirim, Balasa, Ankwara and Batingo. The inhabitants of these settlements were considered to be friendly with the exception of those of Angule. Angule had been burnt three times and fought twice in the past, but now the inhabitants showed no resistance. The patrol did not collect the full amount of tribute, and nothing was given to the Emir of Muri as they felt he had not earned it, for the villages were not administered by him. Although the district had been placed under the Emir by the British administration in 1900, he had never visited it. The route taken by the patrol was determined to be impractical and it was recommended that it should never be taken again. On 27th May the two

parties split and the Gombe party proceeded to Tangale country, arriving at Nafada on 14th June.

From November 1910 until January 1911 an extensive patrol under Assistant Resident Carlyle and Captain Wolseley traversed the countries of Waja, Tula and Tangale and marched through hitherto untouched areas in the north-eastern parts of the Muri Mountains. In addition, Longuda country, which had only been marginally touched by the patrols in 1904 and 1906, was further explored. Fighting broke out with the previously unvisited Kindiyo (Cham) and Bangwinji, which left one Kindiyo and 12 Bangwinji dead, several wounded and the obligatory burnt compounds. The so-called 'pacification' of local conflicts in the Tangale settlement of Tal led to the destruction of a village and the death of one man.¹⁴

Assistant Resident Carlyle left Deba Habe on 17th November 1910 and went via Panda, Ture and Kaltungo to Tangaltong, where he arrived on 20th November and built his camp at Tal. The objectives of his patrol were to settle friction in the Tangaltong area, to enquire into disturbances in the Waja area and to arrange the boundary with Yola Province.

On 3rd December Carlyle arrived at the Waja town of Gelengu where he was joined a day later by a force of 41 rank and file and a Maxim gun under the command of Captain Wolseley and accompanied by the Medical Officer of Nafada Dr. Lobb.

The patrol started towards Cham country on 7th December, visiting Degri on the way and then Sikkam, which they left on 9th December 1910, then proceeding via Nyuwar to Kindiyo, which is one of the main settlements of the Cham. Here they stayed until 11th December. Carlyle observed that the plain between the Muri Mountains range and Tangale country was full of elephant and big game and a portion was infested with tse-tse fly. He stated that the Cham had been driven out of Degri by the Fulani. This, however, is doubtful, as all evidence suggests that the Cham were pushed to their current territory by the Waja.¹⁵ According to Carlyle, Kindiyo was once visited by officers from Yola Province in 1906; Mona and Dadiya, however, had never been visited by British officers before.

Then the patrol marched along the foot of the mountain range to Mona.

The patrol stayed at Mona and went to Dadiya on 12th December where they were welcomed. On 14th December they proceeded to Bangwinji (or Kwim, as it is called in the report, Kwim being the Dadiya name for Bangwinji), where they camped at the foot of the hills. Title holders from Dadiya, i.e. Sarkin Dadiya and Galadima of Dadiya, accompanied the patrol. As the in-

¹⁴ NAK SNP 7 - 5401/1910, Waja District, Escort to Tangale Patrol:

- Report of November 26, 1910 by Assistant Resident Carlyle, Assistant Resident Deba Habe to the Resident Gombe. The Tangaltong group of Tangale
- Assistant Resident Carlyle to Resident Gombe. Waja - Tangale Patrol
- Tangale - Waja - Longuda Patrol by Capt. E. J. Wolseley.

NAK SNP 7 - 1881/1911, Bauchi Province Annual Report 1910. NAK SNP 7 - 952/1911, Bauchi Province Quarterly Report ending December 1910.

¹⁵ Cf. Kleinewillinghöfer 2001: 242; NAK SNP 17 - 9150, Cham Tribe, Ethnological Notes on, by S. W. Walker, DO Gombe Division, 1929; NAK Bau Prof 231 B, Pagan Administration, Gombe Emirate: Pagan Administration by Mr. Drummond-Hay, DO Gombe Division, 1934.

habitants of Bangwinji refused to come down from their mountain settlements, the patrol advanced on the village on the summit of the hill, where two attempts were made to stop the patrol which were answered by gunfire leaving 12 Bangwinji dead and three wounded. Again, the violence may have been aggravated by local interests as the relationship between Dadiya and Bangwinji was strained. The chief of Dadiya served the patrol as guide and interpreter at Bangwinji, thus it is quite likely that he manipulated the situation to have the Bangwinji punished. Evidence from oral traditions supports this interpretation.

The patrol stayed at Bangwinji until 15th December. From here they marched on 16th December further in a westerly direction to Kushi and proceeded on 18th December to Filiya. At the Jukun town of Gateri (Gwana) a WAFF station (West African Frontier Force) was established. Carlyle pointed out that there was some friction between Filiya and Gwandum. Pero, Cham and Dadiya were told that they had to pay tribute for the years 1911–12.

From Filiya the patrol went to Tal on 20th December. The patrol remained at Tal until 25th December, then went back to Waja country halting at Ture on 25th, Tula Wange on 26th and arriving at Gelengu on 27th. The report sums up that in total 180 shots had been fired and no casualties had been suffered on the British side.

From January to April 1913 Assistant Resident Carlyle undertook another extensive patrol through the southern region of Gombe Division and he left a trail of destruction. A skirmish with the Pero at Gwandum resulted in 16 Pero being killed and four wounded and the destruction of the settlement; Kindiyo was again destroyed, as was the Waja settlement of Wala and a part of Ture.¹⁶

The patrol, consisting of 30 soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Geoghegan, left Nafada on 21st January 1913 and marched via Tongo, Deba Fulani and Deba Habe to Panda, where they arrived on 26th January. They then went to Awak and Kamo and on the 30th back to Awak. Next day they proceeded to Ture where they stayed until 2nd February. On 3rd February they continued to Kaltungo and on 6th to Tal. A local fight which had occurred at the village of Larika in October 1912 had left two Tangale dead, thus a fine of 75 shields and 300 spears was imposed. Kalmei was fined 30 shields and 100 spears for an attack at Banganje.

On 11th February the patrol went to Filiya and Carlyle observed that no road clearing had been done. The chief of Filiya came in to meet him but the chief of Gwandum refused.

Thus, on the next day Carlyle, Lieutenant Geoghegan and 23 soldiers marched to Gwandum and climbed Gwandum hill. Carlyle estimated its population at 2,323 with 829 male adults. As the Gwandum people came close, the soldiers started shooting and a skirmish ensued. The patrol fired their way up to the top and destroyed the town. In the evening the chief of Gwandum came in and reported that 16 of his men were killed and four wounded.

¹⁶ NAK SNP 10 - 263P/1913, Central Province - Gombe Division, Pagan tribes, Report by Mr. T. F. Carlyle on his visit to:

- South Gombe Pagan Patrol, January–April 1913, Diary of Itinerary by Lt. J. R. Geoghegan,
- To the Resident Central Province re Your 236/A and subsequent correspondence by AR Gombe T. F. Carlyle.

The force returned to Filiya where they stayed until 17th February and ordered the road to be cleared as far as Bangwinji. On 18th they marched to Kushi, on 20th to Banwinji and then to Dadiya. On 3rd March they continued to Mona and on 8th to Kindiyo. Because of an antagonistic attitude towards the British, a part of Kindiyo was destroyed on 12th March. Two days later they went to Jessu, then visited Nyuwar on 16th, Sikkam on 17th and Kulani on 19th March. On 21st they arrived at Degri and on the 22nd at the town of Wala, which was destroyed without opposition. Next day they went to Jalengo and on 25th March to Tula Wange. On 26th the patrol went by night to Ture in order to arrest some offenders. On 28th March a part of Ture was destroyed. The patrol returned to Panda and marched via Deba Habe, Deba Fulani, Tongo and Bage to Nafada, where they arrived on 2nd April 1913.

At the end of 1913 Assistant Resident Carlyle, who obviously believed in bringing in the taxes by force of a patrol, again made a tour through Waja, Cham and Longuda country. Kindiyo (Cham) refusing to pay its tax was involved in a clash and eight Kindiyo men were killed. At Jessu the headman's compound was burnt. With the help of 2,000 Waja and 1,000 Tula who were asked to gather, Kindiyo was then forced to bring in their tax.¹⁷

Carlyle arrived at Nyuwar on October 29th 1913. The taxes from Dadiya, Tula and Tangale had been paid, and Nyuwar paid on the spot. He camped at Jessu and found that here no tax was paid. The Galadima was left to collect the tax and Carlyle proceeded on 31st October to Kindiyo, where he arrived on 1st November. Next day Carlyle went to Mona. Mona paid their tax and Jessu also sent their tax to Mona. Carlyle sent for 12 soldiers and stayed the 4th to 5th November in Dadiya. The next eight days were spent preparing the road from Dadiya to Filiya, assisted by Dadiya and Tula Wange. He arrived at Kushi on 12th November and collected the tax from Pero. On 14th October Carlyle was joined by Houghton, Assistant Resident Lau Division Muri Province, and engaged in boundary demarcation from 15th to 21st November, which brought them to Lo and Bolere. On 18th November at Lo they were joined by 11 WAFF soldiers from Nafada. At Bolere they also met Mr. Ryan, 3rd Resident Numan Division Yola Province, who was there because the trade road to Lau via Bolere had been closed due to some incidents. Carlyle learnt that all Cham and Pero, except for Kindiyo, had paid their tax. He left Bolere on 24th November passing through the Tsobo towns of Suwa (or Wobongil) and arrived at Kindiyo on 25th November. A fight broke out which left eight Cham dead and one wounded. The military escort left for Nafada on 5th December.

A combined patrol, consisting of officers from Gombe and Numan Divisions with 20 rank and file, toured the common border and the Tangale-Waja area in 1918 without causing any violent incidents.¹⁸

The ADO of Gombe Division, Pembleton, met with his military escort of 20 soldiers under the command of Colour Sergeant Mackenzie at Deba Habe on 10th March 1918. They first visited

¹⁷ NAK SNP 10 - 745P/1913, Military Escort for Mr. T. F. Carlyle: From 3rd class Resident I/C Gombe Division to the Resident Central Province, Naraguta (by T. F. Carlyle).

¹⁸ NAK SNP 10 - 640P/1917, Bauchi Province - Waja-Tangale District, Military Escort to: Waja-Tangale Escort, March-June 1918 by E. S. Pembleton, ADO Gombe Division.

Tangale area and collected the tax of all Tula and Tangale communities with the exception of the southern villages. At Kampandi quarter in Western Tangale all inhabitants had fled because they had rescued a certain Lautulo who had been arrested for murder in February. Then they continued via Pero to Kindiyo where they met W. C. Moore, ADO Numan Yola Province, on 1st April. Moore collected tax from the Tsobo who had been subjugated the previous year. Kindiyo and Jessu also paid their tax. Pembleton and Moore together investigated the Yola-Bauchi border near Dadiya. From Dadiya, Pembleton then went to Filiya to collect tax. Here the Pero people had suffered from a smallpox epidemic. At Kampandi he found that the inhabitants had returned and their ward head Lawili was arrested. On 2nd May they went to Waja district where some men were convicted of murder. On 8th May Pembleton met Moore again at Kombo to continue with border matters. Pembleton then proceeded to Gelengu to collect the Waja tax and returned to Western Tangale on 20th May. On 23rd May he went to Kwaya and Pindiga, before returning to Nafada where he arrived on 2nd June 1918.

In November 1930 a commotion occurred among the Pero; this was caused by a local *dogari* (chief's bodyguard) beating a Pero man, which led to the District Head nearly being attacked. The angry villagers were calmed down by the missionary Walter of the Sudan United Mission. The ADO Carr went to Filiya with 19 policemen from Gombe and restored peace.¹⁹

The British colonial power had difficulty in grasping the attitude of the so-called pagans, shaped as it was by their former experiences with Fulani raids and domination. Carlyle, the only British officer who is still well-remembered in the northern Muri Mountains area today, compared the seizing of tax by force to the Fulani raids of emirate times. Nevertheless, he recommended the burning of compounds. He felt justified in his views by referring to the chief of Dadiya who "(...) once deliberately proposed to me that every pagan town should be burnt once a year."²⁰

Non-Muslim groups were often despised by British officers, for example, the Resident of Lau Division, K. Elphinstone, stated that Pero and Burak people were the lowest and most degraded people he had ever met:

"At Gwandon and Borok I have never seen lower men, and I thought I had visited or had come in contact with most pagan tribes on the river Binue. They are lower than any I have ever seen in Muri, Nassarawa, or Adamawa and far lower according to Mr. Carlyle than the Tangali or Wajas. Every village is cannibal [sic] and the worship is the lowest form of fetish. (...) I have never taken a thorough dislike to any pagan tribe out here before, but I certainly did in this case [Gwandum and Filiya]. They are perhaps the lowest we visited. Their smell, when talking to us, was so horrible that even the native soldiers and people could not stand it. (...) But I know perfectly well they are a people who will have to be 'broken' before they will do anything required of them."²¹

¹⁹ NAK SNP 17 - 14672 vol.1, Bauchi Province, Annual Report 1930. See also Faust (n.d.: 17–18). For the history of the mission in the area see Adelberger & Kleinewillinghöfer 2016.

²⁰ NAK Yola Prof - F.3, Administration of Pagans, Collected Papers 1910–1927: DO T. F. Carlyle to the Resident Yola Province (1921: 5).

²¹ NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909: Report on Wurkum Patrol by Resident Lau Division Elphinstone 1st July 1909: 6, 10.

Social structure

The Pero are subdivided into three regional sections which are also their major settlements: Filiya (sometimes also called Piliya) in the east, Gwandum and Gundale in the west. The latter two (Gwandum and Gundale) are also referred collectively to as Angkhombo. However, this subdivision into sections is not as pronounced as in other ethnic groups in the area, and nowadays most clans are found distributed over all three sections.

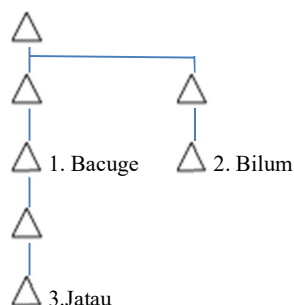


Figure 1: Genealogy of chiefs of the Cwekhe clan

Clans

The Pero comprise a number of named, patrilineal descent units or clans. Usually, the clans are also ritual communities venerating an idol (*kíndímà*; or *dodo* in Hausa) representing the collective ancestral spirits of the clan. Clans tracing their ancestry to a common founder share one idol; for example, the Pilaami, Cwekhe and Dimbira are united in the cult of one *kindima* because they trace their ancestry to a founder called Tokiya, and the Galgawe share one idol with the Pilaami. Traditionally, the cult priest was also the chief of the clan. Clans

are usually co-residential units living together. Joking relationships exist between certain clans, for instance, between the Cwexe, Pilaami and Yange clans, or between the Galgawe and the Pilaami. The joking relationship entails that members of these clans may abuse and mock each other without incurring anger.

There were/are marriage preferences between clans, based on historical ties between them, for instance between the Galgawe and Anyagbandi clans.

The clans, or major lineages, are partly subdivided into smaller units or lineages, (sometimes qualified by the word *yaminaano* meaning “in the house”). The lineages are strictly exogamous units.

If there are variants of clan names, these are due to variations given by informants.

Table 2: Pero clans

Clan	Lineage	Section	Origin	Comments
Anyagbandi/ Anyagwandi		Gwandum (Angkhombo)		
Anyaminna		Filiya		
Anyakhakharad/ Anyakharkhar		Filiya	Farin Kasa (=Filiya) on mouth of river Pengum, or Kwararafa/ Pindiga	founder Koddong was a Jukun from Pindiga, first settled at Lo, then at Yuru hill where he met the Dimbira. In other traditions the founder was Bicuxu Pandi from Kwararafa
Anyakhakharad/ Anyakharkhar	-Jonge	Filiya		
Anyakhakharad/ Anyakharkhar	-Jonge- Miriraddi	Filiya		miriraddi = upper one
Anyakhakharad/ Anyakharkhar	-Jonge- Mirireng	Filiya		mirireng = lower one

Clan	Lineage	Section	Origin	Comments
Anyakhakharad/ Anyakharkhar	-(yaminaano) Lappa	Filiya		
Anyakhakharad/ Anyakharkhar	-(yaminaano) Wanye	Filiya		
Bebere		Filiya		
Bere/ Gbere		?	hill near Lilik in Kode area	
Beeli/ Gbeeli		Filiya	Beeli hill near Tudu	
Banggindang		Gwandum (Angkhombo)		first clan in Gwandum
Beci		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/ Filiya	area near Kushi	
Buula		Gwandum (Angkhombo)		
Cangkha / Canga		Filiya	from east	settled at Pandi Cange in front of Mt. Yuru. Had wooden idols in human form
Cengo / Cyenko		Filiya (Farin Kasa)		
Cwekhe		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/ Filiya	Kode, Andeng & Kwonci	have one <i>dodo</i> with Pilaami and Dimbira because their founder was Tokiya
Dagam / Degem		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/ Filiya	Dagam hill east of Yarana near Kushi, or from Shongom	
Dara		Filiya		
Dimbira		Filiya/ Gwandum (Angkhombo)	a hill near Yarana	were first at Mt. Yuru and the first Pero clan, founder was Tokiya, probably from Dadiya. In other traditions they are from Kalyala east of Filiya. Have one <i>dodo</i> with the Cwekhe and the Pilaami.
Faakho/ Pwaakho/ Pukhaakho		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/ Filiya	Mt. Kakala/ Piya	did not know death
Fokhocokholo		Filiya		
Gbaya/ Kwaya		Filiya/Gwandum	Tangale from Tanglang	
Gbere		Gwandum (Angkhombo)	Buru near Lilik (Kode)	did not know death
Gware		Filiya/ Gwandum	Shongom	did not know death
Kula/ Kule		Filiya	from direction of Kode	provide the priests for <i>peebe</i> celebration
Peberang		Filiya		
Peesho		Filiya	Tangale of Todi, or Kalyala hill near Kushi	
Perkhuma		Gwandum (Angkhombo)	Kwaya near Billiri	have a relationship with the Jukun
Pekhema		Filiya		
Pigulum		Gundale		
Pijemmo/ Pijeemo		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/ Filiya		

Clan	Lineage	Section	Origin	Comments
Pijilang		Filiya		
Pilaami		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya	Wurkun/ Kode/ Kwongi from SW of Yuru, or from Gok S of Yuru	have one dodo with Cwekhe and Dimbira because their founder was Tokiya
Pilaami	-Andei	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya	Debes near Piribi	<i>andei</i> means 'white'
Pilaami	-Anjorokoma-tunjo	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya	Mt. Yuru	
Pilaami	-Fukhutu	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya	west of Gwandum Mountain	
Pilaami	-Galgawe	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya	Gwana Hill	live at Gwandum, related to the Jukun through marriage with a Jukun woman Anwana
Pilaami	-Munding	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya	Debes near Piribi	<i>munding</i> means 'black'
Pilaami	-Pindele	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya		
Pilaami	-Kalagbindin	Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya		
Pilimbo		Filiya		
Pilokhobe		Filiya		
Shaakham		Gwandum (Angkhombo)		
Shanga/Shangkha		Filiya	Shanga Hill near Kushi	
Shenggo		Filiya	eastern part of Kode	
Shuwana		Gwandum (Angkhombo)		
Windali		Gundale		
Windali	-Ambokhbo-khoje	Gundale		
Windali	-Ampokhoram	Gundale		
Windali	-Peina	Gundale		
Windali	-Piyanggang	Gundale		
Windali	-Pigdigo	Gundale		
Yange		Gwandum (Angkhombo)/Filiya		

In the following paragraphs, I present further information on various clans culled from the manuscript by Yohanna Kasuwa (ms 1991-93).

The ancestor of the **Anyakarkar** [=Anyaxaxarad] was Koddong; he came from the east and first settled at Lo, but moved further to settle at Mt. Yuru behind Filiya. Those having moved with him were called Anyakarkar because they had first camped among thorn trees (*karkar*)

behind Yuru Mountain. In another tradition, Koddong was a Jukun from the village of Pilau near Pindiga. When he settled in Pero land, he met the **Dimbira** clan who were from Kalyala to the east of Pero land. The two groups intermarried and produced off-spring, and other groups immigrated and joined them. In a divergent tradition, the ancestors of the Dimbira came from the area of the Dadiya where they left due to fighting. They were the first to settle on Yuru Mountain where they lived in a cave under a big tree, living on wild fruits only. The **Pilaami** (from Kode or Kwonci area) and the **Faaxo** (from the Piya area) came from the south and settled on Yuru Mountain too. According to other traditions, some Pilaami came from a place called Gok behind Mt. Yuru, and some from a place called Gurungu. The Pilaami also settled at Gwandum and Gundale.

The **Gware** clan originally lived at a place called Buru with the Kode people near Lilik. Because they did not die, they were not allowed to take part in the burial ceremonies (including beer drinking) of others. Thus they killed a dog and arranged its burial as if for a human being, henceforth they started to die. That made them afraid and they scattered from their place to Filiya, Gwandum, Gundale and even the Wurkun area.

Like the Gware, the **Faaxo** clan did not know death; when becoming old, they entered a hole under a baobab tree and returned as a young person. Because they never died they were rejected to take part in the burial ceremonies of other clans; so they killed a dog and performed a burial ceremony as if for a human being and from that day on they started dying. They became afraid and scattered all over Pero land.

The **Canga** came from the east of Filiya because of conflicts and to escape Islamisation by force and settled at a place called Pandi Cange in front of Mt. Yuru. They came with their carved wooden idols in the form of a human being; their leader was Munagappa. The Canga have relations with the **Cengo** for they lived together at the foot of Yuru Mountain before they moved uphill.

The **Cwekhe** came from the east and settled first at Tamni Gaiya high on the mountain, uphill from where they are living now. From here they moved down to a place called Cobro Gaturun. The Cwekhe are believed to have the ability to remove a body part and put it back without problems. They had to share this magic power with the clan **Kula** who came from Kalyala to the east of Pero land.

The **Degem** also came from the east due to armed conflicts and settled at Pandi Degem east of Filiya on the way to Kushi.

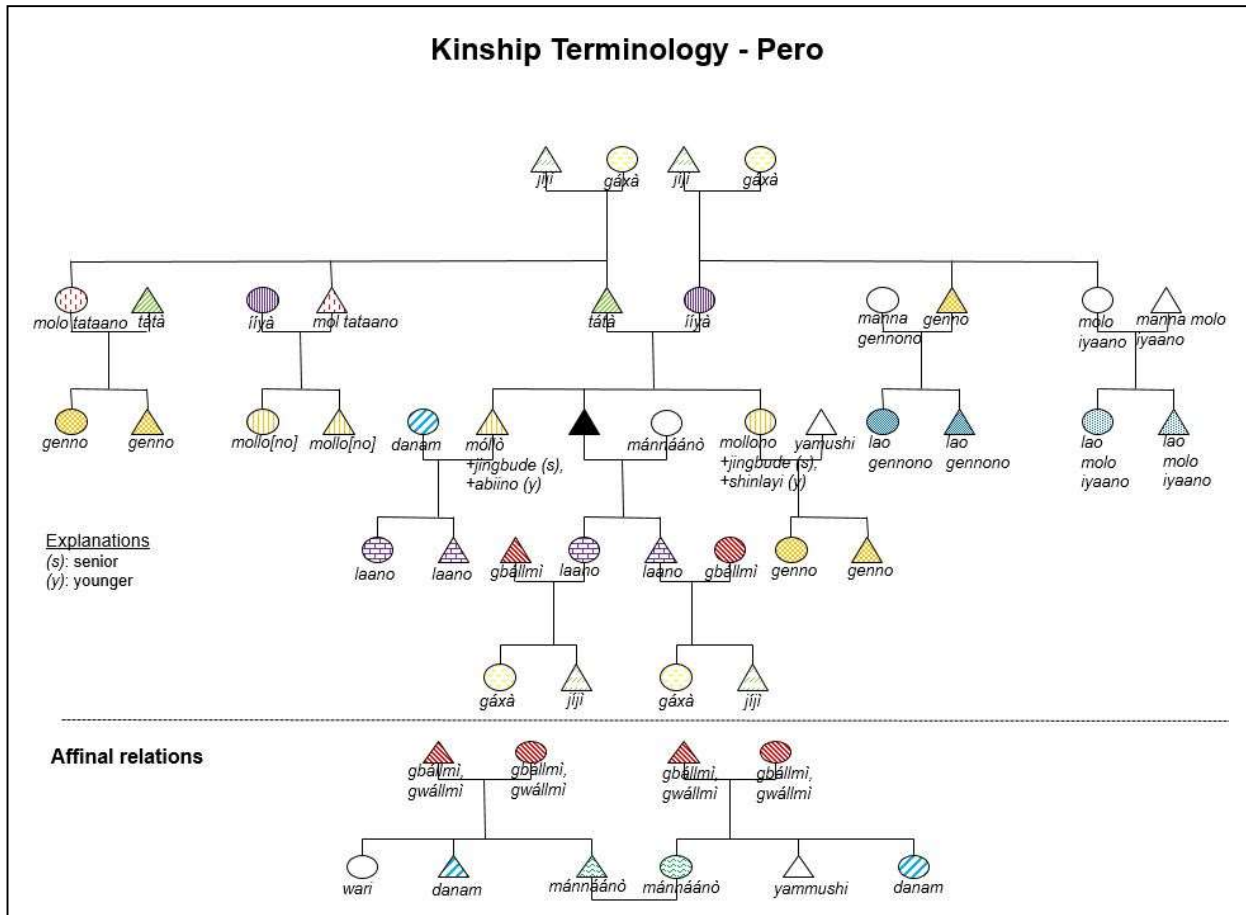
The **Galgawe** are a sub-clan of the Pilaami in Gwandum. The Galgawe have a relationship with the Jukun who had settled at Mt. Yuru before the Pero arrived, making the Jukun move westward to settle at Gwana and Pindiga (or Pilau). A Jukun woman called Anwana married a man from the Galgawe clan, some of their descendants went back from Gwandum to live at Gwana.

The **Windali** are a clan of Gundale, they came from Chad and Cameroon along the river Benue moving with the Jenjo, Chomo, Bandawa and Kwonci. They left the Benue area and settled at Mt. Andeng, from where they moved to Gundale.

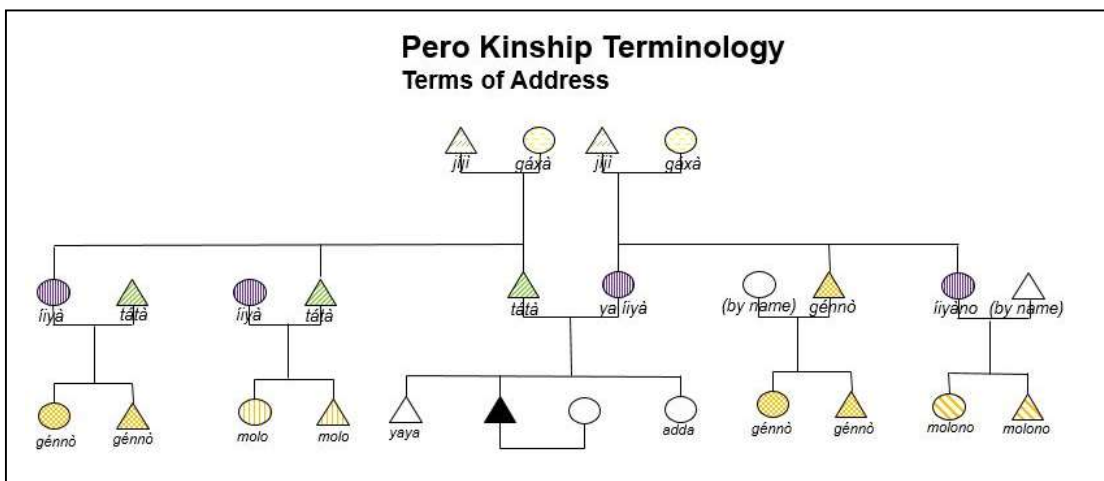
The Pero clans lived on the mountain slopes and had their farms on the foothills and plains. The settlements as well as the farms were organised according to clans. Each of the clans had its own gathering place under big trees and for men only, called *cobro*, the leaders of each *cobro* were the *angbakha* (trad. priest). Later that *cobro* was developed into a shrine for judgement and worship called *kola* or *mina gwelen* by building huts and fences consisting of physic nut trees (*Jatropha curcas*), these places became the ritual shrines called *mina kin-nima*, and only male initiates of the traditional religion are allowed there.

Kinship terminology

The kinship terminology of the Pero evades every established classification. It shows some selected features of a Hawaii system, insofar as the same or similar terms are used for siblings



and patrilineal parallel cousins, but the remaining cousins each have terms setting them apart from this system. Neither fits the terminology a Sudanese system, where cousins and siblings each have their own term.



In the first ascending generation, it is a bifurcate collateral system where Fa, Mo and their siblings each have their own term.

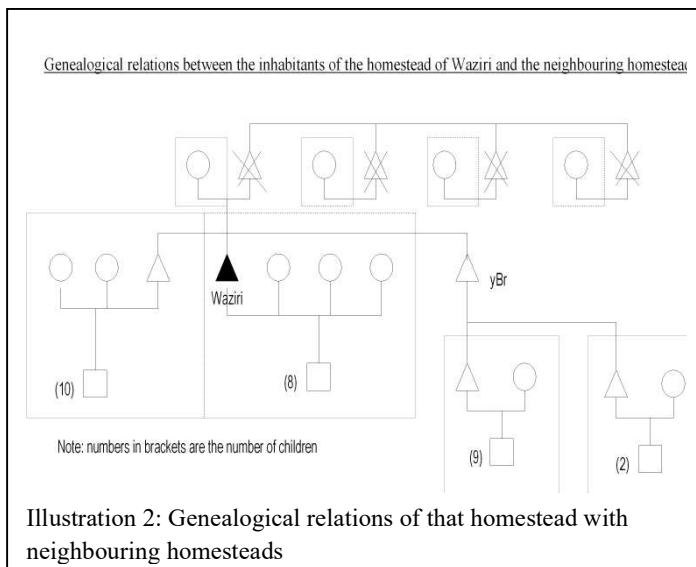
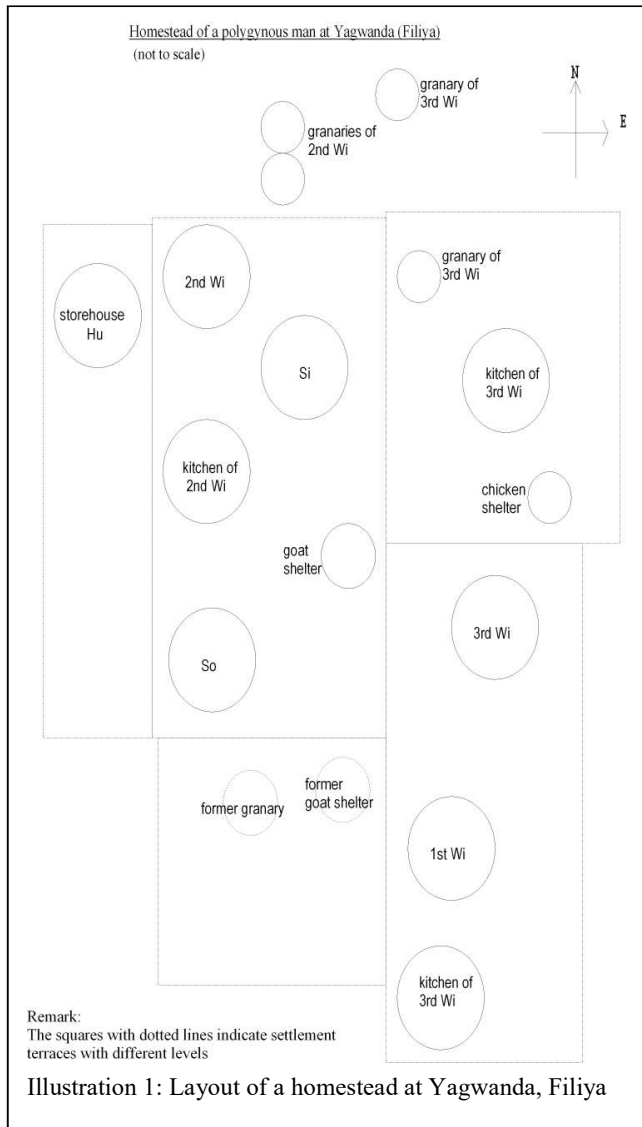
If terms of address are taken into consideration, it is a different story: then it qualifies as a generational system in the first ascending generation, and the cousin terms move it partly towards a Hawaiian system.

Family

A core family consists of a man with his wives and children. Only a married man will build his own homestead. A polygynous husband usually does not have a house of his own, but visits each wife in turn. A husband has to build and maintain the houses of his compound and work the farms. Obligations of a wife are cooking, fetching firewood and water and helping the husband on the farm. The husband can assign a field to his wife where she can cultivate her own crops. However, this is not always the case. The wives will also help the husband by working together on his fields. The supply of the household comes from the yield of the husband's fields. If a woman has a field of her own, she usually stores the yield in her own granary, which she uses for her purposes and often contains cash crops. However, in more conservative families, wives may not have their own granary but put their stock into the granary of the husband. Still, she can freely dispose of her grain and also sell it. If a wife does not have her own field on which to farm for their own needs, the husband is responsible for all the wife's clothing and shoes. A polygynous husband must provide his wives with clothes that must all be of the same quality and colour. Further, the father is responsible for the children's clothes. It is said that traditionally, a polygynous household has only one kitchen, where the wives take turns cooking for the household, the task is taken over by another wife every two days. However, there are cases, such as the one documented below (Illustration 1), where each wife has her own kitchen, taking turns to cook for the whole homestead.

Some informants assert that the phenomenon of women having their own farms, including the production of beer from their yields and the sale of beer or porridge on the market, is a relatively recent occurrence. In the past, women brewed beer only for private or communal consumption and as provision for work parties.

In a situation where both parents die, the father's brothers or his clan peers will take over responsibility for the orphans. Only in the event of a dysfunctional relationship between paternal relatives, is it possible that maternal relatives may assume responsibility.



Marriage

In principle, the clans are exogamous units, but in practice, the exogamy rule is mainly observed at the sub-clan or lineage level. A man may marry from his mother's clan. However, the relationship may not be close, such as a maternal cousin. There is no prohibition against taking a second wife from the same clan as the first. Levirate is practised: the widow of a deceased man will be married by one of his brothers. There is no sororate.

There are said to be marriage preferences between clans: for example, the Galgawe and An-yagbandi clans often intermarry. Post-marital residence is virilocal.

Marriage in general is called *dfigà* and there are different categories:

- *dfigà wúlà*: man and woman both marry for the first time. If a man takes as a further wife a woman who has not married before, this marriage is also called *wula*. *Wula* refers to a traditional marriage performed by adherents of the traditional religion whereby the customary ceremonies are performed and the full bride price is paid, even if a man marries his second or third wife. This category is held in high esteem and is considered to be the most respectable form of marriage. Virginity of the bride is considered honourable and brings honour to her parents, this condition is rewarded by the husband's parents with gifts, for example 10 bundles of guinea corn and one basket of sesame seeds.
- *dfigà*: means marriage in general and refers both to a marriage between partners of whom one had already been divorced as well as to a marriage between followers of the Christian or Islamic faith. The bride price which is paid for a divorced woman is only about a third of that paid for a never before married woman (*wula*). The bride-price is received by the parents of the bride, in particular her father. If he is no longer alive, his brothers or other male relatives receive it. If there are none, no bride price is paid at all.
- *kwóndó kólò*: levirate, a man 'inherits' the wife of his deceased brother, who may also be a



Photo 5: Hoes used in the context of engagement and marriage

classificatory brother, i.e. he is from the same clan. The deceased is usually older than his successor. It doesn't matter if the woman is older than the man. If the deceased man had several wives, either each wife is married by a different brother, or one brother marries them all if he is wealthy enough. Whichever of the widows he marries is a matter of discussion between the new husband and the women. For the man, a first

marriage with such a woman is also possible. The widow may enter the marriage with her children, who are then regarded as if they are the children of the new husband. There is no

bride price to be paid and no wedding ceremony. The wife may stay in her old homestead and the husband either moves in with her or visits her. The general idea behind the levirate is that someone will take care of the widow.

- *wúlá jiri*: marriage by elopement or abduction: when a girl is asked by her parents to marry a man who has already paid the bride-price, but she runs off with another man who did not pay any bride-price. During the night she will sneak off to her lover, the father of the boy will shave her head and a horn is blown, signalling that they are ready for anything that may come their way. Usually, the riposte is that a girl is also taken from the clan of that boy. After about a year, a wedding ceremony is performed, but no bride-price is paid. The parents have to give back the bride-price to the boy who was deceived of his bride.
- *díngà cínò*: an illegitimate type of marriage: a married woman who marries another man without being divorced. This type is usually taken to court and a compensation has to be paid. The procedure of a *díngà wúlà* is as follows: when a boy likes a girl and wants to marry her, he



Photo 6: A cache of *gbaame* iron money left at an abandoned hill settlement

will show his affection by giving her guinea corn or groundnuts in a woven basket (*kogo*) or a calabash as a gift and, assisted by his clan mates, he will build a pile of stones in front of her homestead. Then he will give her an iron hoe (*bángálà*) without handle as a symbol of their engagement (*wárókúmà díngà*). When her father asks the girl about the reason for the pile, she will show him the hoe and reveal the

secret. The hoe is returned to the bridegroom after the marriage ceremony has been concluded. The suitor then will do bride-service by performing agricultural activities (cultivating, weeding, harvesting) on the fields of the girl's father in which he is assisted by his friends. Further he will give part of his hunting spoils to the girl's parents. If he does not do this, he has to compensate in kind by either giving them ten bundles of guinea corn, two baskets full of peanuts or 35 pieces of traditional iron money (*gbáámè*). In the process of courtship the girl will ask the boy to bring her a basket full of beniseed as a sign of their being firmly engaged (betrothal: *merongo*). After about one year, the parents of the boy and girl will decide that it is time to pay the bride price consisting of a number of *gbáámè* (iron rods, traditionally used as money), 20 bundles of guinea corn, one bag of groundnuts, one bag of beniseed and two or three goats, of which one is given to the clan idol (*kinnima*) of the girl, and the others are taken by her parents. The number of *gbaame* may vary from 30 to 300, depending on the outcome of the negotiations and the wealth of the boy's parents. His parents and other relatives will help

the boy to raise the bride price. When visiting his relatives to collect items for the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom will carry a special object (*déèng*) resembling a sickle. He will start with his mother's brother with whom there is a special relationship.

After the bride price has been paid, the wedding ceremony can take place in the next year (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

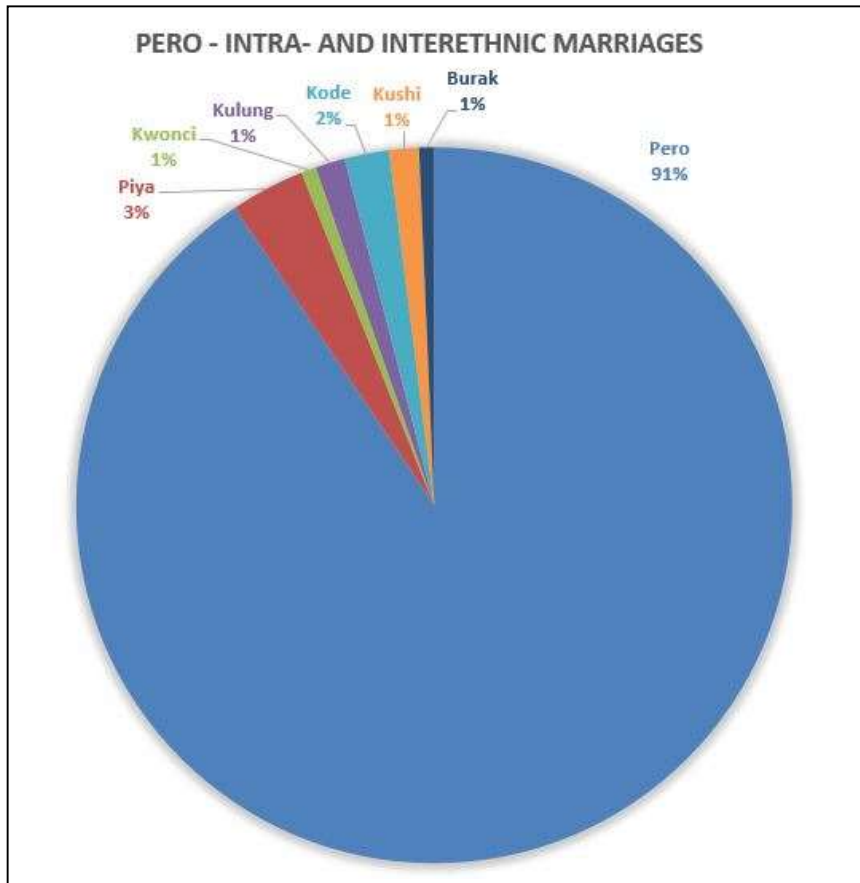
During that time, the girl will collect items for her new household, such as large and small calabashes or pots of various sizes. On the eve of moving to her husband's house, the bride will visit her relatives to bid them farewell and will receive gifts like guinea corn, ground nut, chickens, goats, beniseed, calabashes or pots. All these items will be moved by her relatives into the homestead of the bridegroom (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992).

While the bride bids farewell to her relations, she carries a stick (*gbale*, made of Savannah bamboo *Oxytenanthera abyssinica*) and sesame seeds or tobacco, some of which she will give to her relatives. Then the bride will go to the house of the bridegroom for a time of seclusion, spending seven days inside without eating, it is even said that she will not drink. The bridegroom will live on millet beer only. He alone is allowed to go outside, but he will not go far. This only applies if a woman marries for the first time. When a man marries a second wife, he is allowed to go out to work in his fields during these seven days. On the seventh day, the bride's head is shaved and her body is rubbed all over with a mixture of peanut oil and haematite (*kúrjî*). The bride takes tobacco in her mouth, to which a millet stalk is tied. She then steps out of the house wearing only leaves and being adorned with two bead necklaces and bells. Her mother claps her hands three times and takes the tobacco and the stalk out of her mouth. Then the bride will dance with her friends in the bridegroom's homestead, thereby proving her strength and fidelity. Should the bride die due to the hardships during the time of seclusion, it is considered to be proof of her guilt, namely that she may have slept with other men. This custom was stopped by the administration because it was too harsh. After these seven days, she moves back to her parents' homestead for a period of one year, cooking there and providing the food for her husband whom she visits in the evening. After one year, she finally moves into the home of her husband, who will have used that period to build his homestead.

The pieces of iron money (*gbaame*) and iron hoes (*bangala*) are kept centrally in a heap in the compound and managed by the oldest inhabitant of the homestead.

Some statistics

In a sample of 71 married Pero men, there were a total of 149 wives, of which 135 were from the Pero, and 14 were from neighbouring ethnic groups.



The overall polygamy rate was 2.1, the polygamy rate with concurrent wives (i.e., wives who were divorced or deceased were not counted) was 1.5.

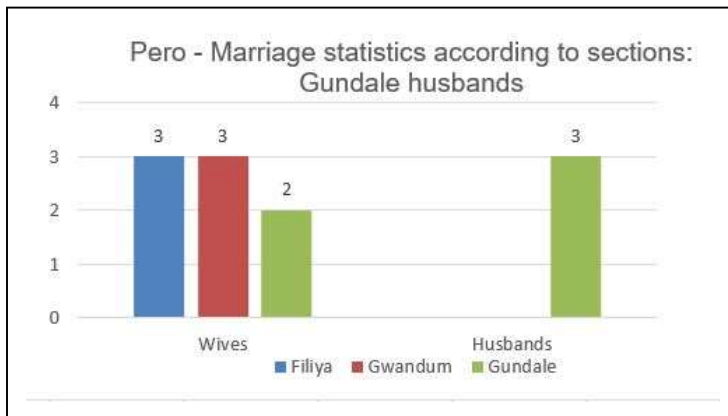
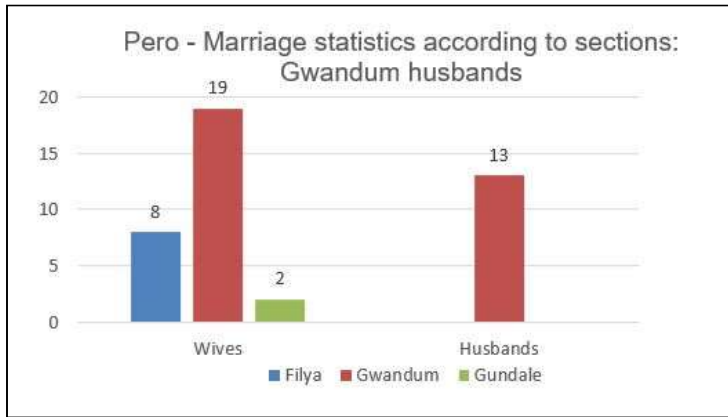
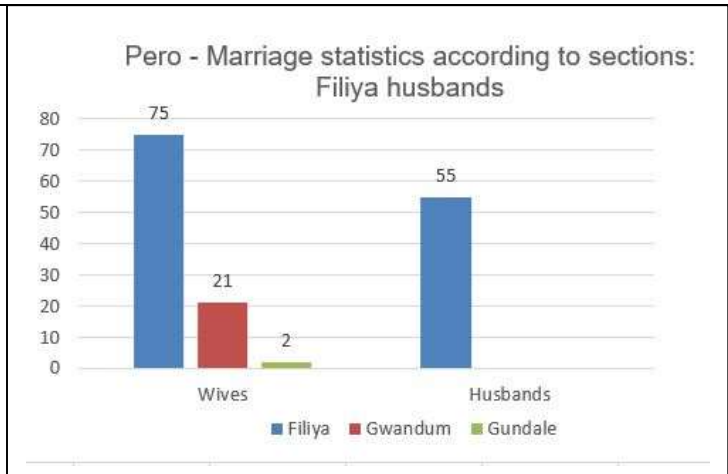
Marriages with partners from the same section are prevalent.

Marriage within the same section: 71.1 %

Marriage with a wife from a different section: 28.9%

Marriage outside the ethnic group: 9.4 %.

The census was conducted at Filiya, therefore a disproportionately high number of Filiya men are represented, and the incidence for men from other sections may not be representative.



Granaries

Granaries (*búndù*) of a homestead are used jointly by the husband and wife. They are built by men and they are filled up by men with the yield carried from the farms by women, but the removal of the stocks is only done by women. There are expert craftsmen for building granaries who are paid for their work except if they are related to the client. Some informants say that in a polygynous household, the task of grain distribution rotates annually between the wives, others say that it is the privilege of the first wife to distribute from the granary, but she may delegate the task to a co-wife.



Photo 7: Pero granary with decoration (*búndù m̀ndá*)

The stock taken from the granary should last the woman whose turn it is to cook for two days. Ultimately, the power of control rests with the husband. If a sealed granary is opened for the first time, an offering of porridge with a special sauce (*miyang dargazaa* H., prepared from *Grewia mollis*) is given to the clan idol *kinnima*.

Birth

Children are born in the father's homestead. Only illegitimate children are born in the mother's/mother's parents' home. Informants maintain that the practice of going back to the mother's parents' home for delivery of the first child was taken over from the Hausa. The afterbirth is buried in the bath room of the mother with a potsherd. The umbilical cord is wedged into a split guinea corn stalk and wrapped with bark of the *fúgì* plant (*Grewia mollis*), this is then stuck into the ceiling of the mother's house until it decays of its own accord.

Traditionally, the Pero did not practise circumcision. The practice was introduced by the Jukun and the Hausa.

Babies are first given generic names (*jiji* - meaning both grandson/grandfather - for a boy,



Photo 8: Ritual pot with decoration

gakha - meaning both granddaughter/grandmother - for a girl – see 'Kinship terminology') until they get their real name after some years. With a boy, the name giving is accompanied by offerings to the clan idol *kinnima*, with a girl, there are offerings to the *tunjo* (fertility idol of women). For the naming ceremony, the head of the child is shaved. (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992).

Burial

If a married man dies, his male relatives will sacrifice a dog on the day of his death and consume the meat. Dogs are cooked in special pots that are only used for this purpose; no woman may touch the cookware for dogs. The dead are buried outside the homestead. It is believed that the soul of a deceased moves to the clan idol *kinnima* and reports the cause of its death. Males are buried with the head to the east and the legs to the west, facing the south, i.e. Yuru Mountain. Women are buried in the same position but facing north. With a male there will be sacrifices of chickens and the roasted meat is consumed by the age mates during the ceremony; with the death of females there is no sacrifice.

If a ritual expert or priest dies, the burial is different from that for a common person. For instance, if the *an pepe* (leader of *Peebe* festival from the Kula clan) dies, his death is announced by blowing a horn; his body is bathed and the corpse carried to the grave, which is circled three times before the body is lowered into the grave, then covered with a grass mat. The Kula have only one grave on Yuru Mountain for their priests where the corpses are laid to rest. Three days after the burial there is a dance and a goat and a dog are sacrificed.

The *kinnima* priests each have their own grave downhill where they are buried. After bathing, the corpse is adorned with the ritual dress and a red cap and covered with a red blanket ornamented with beads. At the grave all this is removed and the body is buried naked and covered with a grass mat. (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

Village

Local communities are usually based on clan affiliation; members of a clan live together



Photo 9: Compound at Gundale, in the background deserted settlement terraces

The first settlers have the power of disposal over the land and allocate plots for housebuilding and farming to people who wish to settle with them. New settlers are questioned about their origin and they are under observation for a certain length of time.

Age groups

Age groups (*ilit*) are rather informal groupings uniting mates of a certain age within a span of about 3 years. Usually these are initiated together into the cult of *kinnima*. During communal hunts or collective (agricultural) activities they play a role, as these may be organised according to age categories.

Those being initiated together into the *kinnima* cult form an age group. Only boys are initiated into the *kinnima* cult. The initiation is organised on a clan basis, during which they are taught the rules of the cult and to endure hardships, the secrets of the cult may not be revealed to females, strangers or any non-initiated person. This is the rite of passage to adulthood and the older an age group becomes, the more it gains respect (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992).



Photo 10: Attaching the roof to a new house

Political organisation

Village Head

The title of Village Head (VH) was introduced by the British colonial administration.

Malam Ibrahim was the first Muslim Village Head of Filiya. The chief of Filiya before the arrival of the British was called Baushi.

The present Village Head of Gwandum is from the clan Pilaami-Munding. The chief before the arrival of the British was called Maddi.

The first Village Head of Gundale named Gashi was from the Windali-Peina clan, the present Village Head is from the Windali-Amboxboje clan. The chiefs of Gundale were *galadimas* and collected the tribute in their settlements for the chief of Gwandum.

In pre-colonial times, the title for chief was *gúb mína* or *máì*. His insignia were a sickle-shaped object (*déèng*) and a fan made of horsehair. He was the leader in secular and spiritual matters, recognised by the community and one of his major tasks was to settle conflicts; he did not collect any levies. The *gub mina* was not necessarily the war-leader; as any strong and brave warrior could become a war-leader who was elected *ad hoc*. The *gub mina* was appointed by the Pero, and then was confirmed and installed by the Jukun of Pindiga.



Photo 11: *deeng* (right) and horsehair fan (photo taken among the Kwonci)

Economic activities

Market days rotate in the settlements in and around Pero country. On each day of the week there is a market in another village:

- on Monday at Filiya
- on Tuesday at Lekal
- on Wednesday at Dwaja
- on Friday at Gwandum (established in 1989) and
- on Saturday at Burak.

Crafts exercised by the Pero are pottery, blacksmithing, calabash cutting and decorating, weaving of mats and baskets as well as wood carving.

Division of labour

Table 3: Gender specific division of labour among the Pero (m: male, f: female)

Activity	Gender
clearing	m
sowing	m & f
weeding	m & f
harvesting	m & f
irrigating	-
threshing	f
prepare threshing ground	f
winnowing	f
build house walls	m
build house roof	m
prepare house floor	f
cut wooden poles	m
cut firewood	f
collect firewood	f
build well	m
build terraces	m
build fence	m
weave food cover	f
weave mats	m
weave baskets	m
make ropes	m
fetch water	f
pounding	f
grinding	f
cooking	f
brewing beer	f
clean house	f
make pots	f
weaving cotton	m & f
spinning	m & f
tailoring	m & f
blacksmithing	m
wood carving	m
butchering	m
hunting	m
collect honey	m
produce salt	f

Agriculture

The Pero cultivate guinea corn, maize, beniseeds, ground nuts, beans, cotton, yams and cas-sava. Ground nuts, beans and cotton are used for consumption as well as cash crops.

Guinea corn, being the traditional staple crop, is held in high esteem and is considered to have human-like qualities (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992).

More demanding agricultural activities such as sowing, weeding and harvesting are usually accomplished by communal labour. There are two kinds: *jérà* is a small work-party consisting of friends and age mates of the host, participants are provided with millet beer and food as compensation; *tángli* is a large work-party consisting of the inhabitants of a ward, comprising both men and women who will be entertained with millet beer and food as compensation. The latter can only be afforded by relatively wealthy persons.

Useful trees, like baobab or locust bean tree, belong to the person on whose farm they grow.

They are inherited; if fruit falls from a tree, the fruit still belongs to the owner.

Farmland is property of the clans; boundaries of fields are marked by stones, trenches, trees or other plants. Land can be leased on a temporary basis. Land disputes are brought before the Area Court (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

When there is not sufficient rainfall, a rain ceremony called *pido kelen* is performed (ms Abduallah Jatau 1992).



Photo 12: Harvesting beans near Gundale

Ethnic Group: **Pero**

1

Table: **Annual Agricultural Cycle**

Crop	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Comments
g/corn (white) <i>gbalkham</i>				_____		1. _____	2. _____			3. _____			loamy & clay soils
millet (late) <i>borong</i>							1. _____	2. _____	3. _____				sandy & loamy soils, intercropped w. groundnuts
millet <i>modo</i>				_____	1. _____		2. _____	3. _____					sandy & loamy soils, intercropped w. groundnuts
rice <i>gappa</i>							1. _____	2. _____					due to a lack of fadama soil, it is hardly cultivated
maize <i>komo</i>				_____	1. _____	2. _____	3. _____						loamy soils, with g/corn & beans
beans (<i>kanannado</i> H.) <i>kondolong</i>				_____									intercropped with g/corn, millet & maize
beans (<i>waakee</i> H.) <i>dom</i>				_____									intercropped with g/corn, millet, maize & cotton
okra <i>komvurom jene</i> <i>komvurom shukuluk</i>				_____									clay & loamy soils, near anthills mixed w. g/corn or maize
cotton <i>leelou</i>								1. _____		2. _____	3. _____		clay & loamy soils, inter- cropped w. beans & g/corn
groundnuts <i>jura</i>						1. _____		2. _____					rich sandy soils, with millet, g/corn & beans
bambara nut <i>turbo</i>						1. _____		2. _____					rich sandy soils, with groundnuts
tiger nut <i>piya</i>													rich sandy soil
sesame <i>adau</i>									(only little weeding)				is a pioneer plant, clay & loamy soils
tobacco <i>taaba</i>								nursing _____		transplanting _____			on river banks
finger millet <i>dinyak, shershi</i>				_____		1. _____		2. _____					sandy soils
sweet potatoes <i>kunduku</i>									(only little weeding)				loamy soil
yam <i>shande</i>													loamy porous soils
cassava <i>roogo</i>								1. _____ (1 year later)		2. _____			sandy soil, grown as insurance against locusts
rizga <i>gak</i>				_____		1. _____		2. _____					rich sandy soils
pepper (hot) <i>anjitta</i>				nursing _____				transplanting _____					sandy manured soils, at shady locations under tamarind or locust trees
garden egg <i>denga</i>							nursing _____	transplanting _____					loamy soil

planting: _____
weeding: _____
harvesting: _____

Crop	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Comments
pumpkin <i>conji</i>				before rains									clay, loamy & sandy soils, with g/corn, m illet maize & groundnuts
melon <i>twaalo</i>													intercropped with millet
onion <i>erumshukuluk</i>						transplanting							clay & loamy soils
onion <i>erumjene</i>										transplanting			clay & loamy soils
garlic <i>biwaari</i>													clay & loamy soils

planting: _____
 weeding: _____
 harvesting: _____

Animal husbandry

The Pero traditionally keep goats, sheep, chickens and dogs as domestic animals; goats and sheep were of a small breed. The value of a goat was equivalent to seven pieces of *gbaame* iron money.

Table 4: Domestic animals and their uses (m: male, f: female)

animal	kept by	uses	comments
cattle	m & f	meat, leather, milk	
dwarf cattle	m	meat	sold to butchers
horse	m	riding	used by title holders only
pony	-	-	-
donkey	m & f	riding, beast of burden, meat	the meat of old donkeys which died is consumed
goat	m & f	meat, leather, milk	children who tend the goats drink their milk. Goats are also used for sacrifices
sheep	m & f	meat, leather	
pig	m & f	meat	
dog	m & f	meat, guardian, assisting in hunting	in the past, women did not consume dog meat
chicken	m & f	meat, eggs, feathers used in rituals	in the past, women ate no eggs
duck	m & f	eggs, meat	
guinea fowl	m & f	eggs, meat	
pigeon	m	meat	
cat	m & f	meat, protection against rats	

In a census of 25 households at Filiya, the following numbers of domestic animals were determined:

Table 5: Pero - Domestic animals kept by 25 households

	Cattle	Donkeys	Goats	Sheep	Pigs	Dogs	Chickens	Ducks	Guinea Fowls	Pigeons	Cats	Hares
total	19	5	56	32	24	9	110	189	53	22	5	19
mean no.	0.8	0.2	2.2	1.3	1.0	0.4	4.4	7.6	2.1	0.9	0.2	0.8
median no.	2	5	5	5.5	12	1.5	6.5	9	9	11	1	9.5

Other activities

Hunting is done either individually by a hunter assisted by his dog or in groups consisting of several hunters. There are three categories of collective hunts: *késh*, *kéngà* and *para*.

késh is a large communal hunt lasting a whole day and is performed after the crops have been harvested; it is organised on a clan basis, the hunting leaders are also the war leaders. The participants swarm out in three groups: left, centre and right (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

The hunters go into the bush in the evening and sleep there. In the morning, the hunter who initiated the activity will say a prayer and lead the others during the hunt. The group may consist of people from several villages. The spoil is roasted and eaten in the bush, but not brought home.

A *kéngà* is a collective hunt organised *ad hoc*; people meet in the morning, the hunting lasts for the period of one day and the spoils are brought home in the evening.

Para is collective hunting at the occasion of a ritual event, for example the annual festival *dambang*, then it is called *para dambang*.

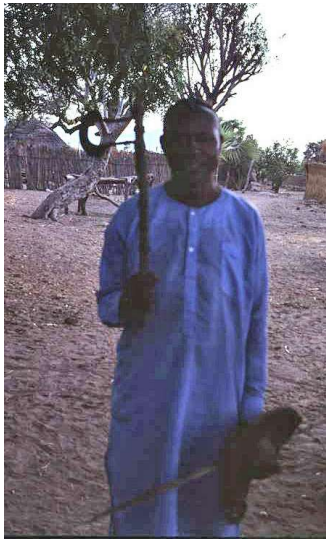


Photo 13: Pero hunter with hatchet *barindam*, shield and spear



Photo 14: Pero shield



Photo 15: Pero shield – rear side

Salt is extracted from the soil along the banks of some streams, for example at Pakka near Gwana. In order to produce salt, the soil is put in a sieve made of plant fibres, a pot is placed underneath and water is poured over it. The brine that collects in the pot is then boiled. After thickening, the salt is heaped up with a spoon to form a cone. These salt cones can then be sold on the market.

The Pero used to have blacksmiths. Nowadays, the blacksmiths forge their objects from scrap iron as raw material; during the colonial era they received fence wire from the British. In pre-colonial days, they smelted iron from ore that they found at the mountain of Kwaya near Filiya. Only men were allowed to be present during the process of smelting, and these were not allowed to sleep with their wives during this time. A piece of iron was hung up out of sight of the place where the iron was smelted, and when the women brought food, they struck the iron to alert the blacksmiths that they could collect it.

At Filiya there are about ten blacksmiths headed by a chief blacksmith (*mai anguba*).

Blacksmiths also engage in decorating objects made from calabashes and in wood carving and

decorating. The large calabash depicted on the photo is used as a headgear (*kwaili kulau*) to



Photo 16: Pero blacksmith decorating a calabash used as protective headgear for babies.



Photo 17: Types of decoration on wooden cooking sticks.

protect young children from the sun and has the typical design for such an object.



Photo 18: Decorated pot for storing water at Gundale.



Photo 19: Different clay pots at an abandoned site

Material culture

Táyò: a headgear made from woven straw, coated with resin and decorated with the seeds of



Photo 20: *tayo* headgear (front view)



Photo 21: *tayo* headgear (side view)

the *fururayo* plant. It is worn at the occasion of *dambang* dances and the celebration (*nibit*) in honour of a successful hunter who had killed a larger mammal.

déèng: sickle-shaped ritual object; at the occasion of the appointment of a chief (*gúb mina*) he holds it in his right hand, in the left hand he has a horsehair fan. The *déèng* is held in high esteem, if it is broken, a goat must be sacrificed to the clan idol *dodo*. There are sectional/regional differences in its use: while the aforementioned refers to Filiya, at Gwandum it is an insignia of a traditional priest. And at Gundale it was used like with the Piya: before the marriage ceremony the bridegroom visited his relatives carrying a *déèng* with him for collecting gifts and indicating that he brought a new wife to the clan. The first person he visits is his mother's brother. Every clan has one *déèng* which is kept in the cult hut of the clan.



Photo 22: narrow woven basket (*kógò*)

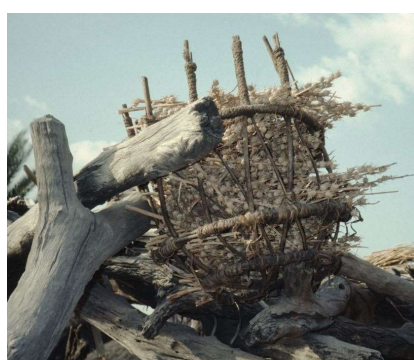


Photo 23: wide woven basket (*shàrà*)

cámi: metal rattles worn on the lower leg during traditional dances. They are kept in the *dodo* shrine hut.

ándágéli: literally 'hail', a bead necklace worn by the bride.

ámbónò: brass bell fixed to the bead necklace.

klándàm: brass bracelet worn only by women during traditional festivals.

cúli: bead necklace, also worn during a marriage ceremony.

wájà: nose jewellery made from the bones of the animal *ányánshári* (*gadu* H., wart-hog).

wùdóyàrà: ivory or bone bracelet worn by successful hunters to demonstrate their bravery.



Photo 24: Iron rattles *cami* at an abandoned site



Photo 25: Decorations made from animal bones or teeth

gàdányááji: headband worn by the bride after she had spent seven days of fasting.

àngúúrúgè: cowrie shells, they replaced *gbaame* as money.



Photo 26: Pero objects: *andageli* necklace (top)



Photo 27: *gadanyaaji* headband (right), *ambono* bell (left)

gúúrù: sickle used to cut the grass for the roofings.

wájígùùrù: trad. harvesting knife for millet or guinea corn

kwárik kàsh: balancing weight for spears

lájùli: clay pot for carrying water

dóórò: a flute,

àngúnnà or *báákhá angabi*: horn trumpet

bwátè: rattle

pàràu: wooden trowel used for tapping clay plaster smooth, often decorated with geometric patterns.



Photo 28: Wooden trowel *parau*

Like other ethnic groups belonging to the Wurkun cluster, the Pero have “victory drums”;²² these come in sets, usually consisting of three or more drums: the one standing on three legs is called



Photo 29: Set of victory drums

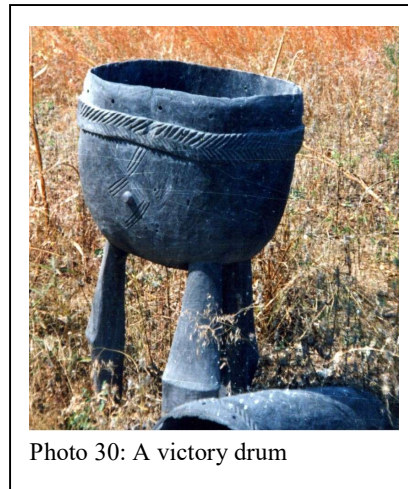


Photo 30: A victory drum

píjji, accompanied by drums without legs. Quite often a smaller-legged drum is also part of the set. In this area at least, these three-legged drums are found only as parts of these sets of victory drums. The small drum is considered to be the senior of the two. The small one is not beaten, only the others. They are only beaten on special occasions such as success in big game hunting, victory in war or in some ritual contexts. The drums are decorated with carved geometrical patterns, characteristic of different clans or sections. I was told that the ornamentation once followed the traditional cicatrization of the human body. I found no evidence to support this, but the remark implies a homology between the body of the drum and the human torso, as is further suggested by the protrusion in the middle of several drums resembling an umbilicus.

Although - to the best of my knowledge - all other groups in the Muri Mountains have the concept of "victory drums", it is only among the Wurkun peoples and the Pero that they are carved in such a distinctive shape.

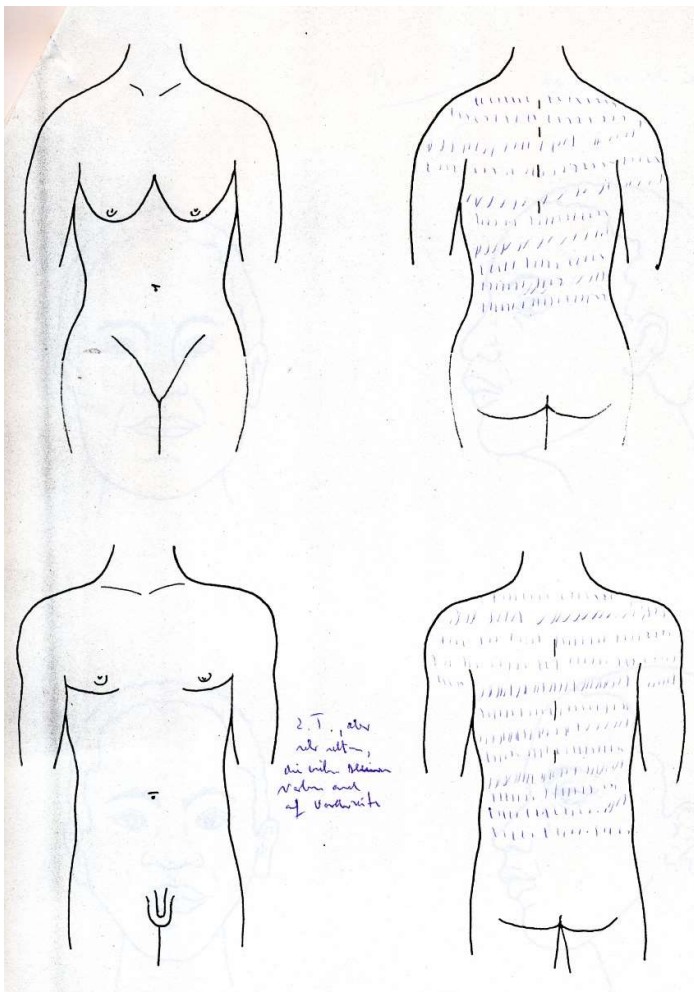


Photo 31: Pero reaping knife *wajiguuru*

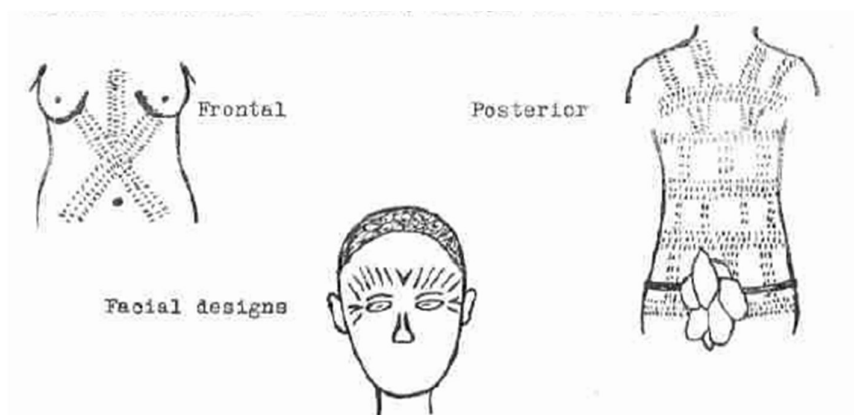
²² For victory drums see also Adelberger 2011: 435.

Scarification/cicatrisation, bodily ornamentation

I was told that Pero have no face markings. In a few cases, men may have the scarification pattern on the back as well as the front side.



About 50 years earlier, Faust (1945: 101) recorded different information and patterns:



The application of body cicatrisation (*bérá*) is intended to enhance the physical attractiveness and to convey a sense of courage, with the objective of attracting the attention of a potential wife. The patterns on the female body are applied at the request of her fiancé, who pays the scarificator (*ámberá*) with a basket full of peanuts.

The incisors of both men and women are subjected to a process of sharpening for aesthetic reasons. Men and women may have a pierced nasal septum. This is done with a spike of the desert date palm (*angbakum*).

Rituals and religion

Spirits and associated rituals²³

While in the traditional religious belief *ángúyà* or *yamba* is the creator god, *ángúyà* is too far removed from the sphere of humans, and other deities or spirits have a more active role.

"To the Peros, the principle quality ascribed to Yamba, or God, is that He is the Creator. The Peros have a tradition which says that God created all the world, including the people, and after He had finished, he climbed up to the Kwana range of hills (just west from Pero land) and went up into the sun. ... The Peros do not worship the sun, however." (Faust n.d.: 140)

Kinnima (*dodo* H.): represents the collective spirits of the ancestors, the *kinnima* are clan-specific deities and are considered to be at the apex of the spirits. Some clans share the veneration of one *kinnima*, for instance the Pilaami, Cwekhe and Dimbira have one *kinnima* together. Traditionally, the *kinnima* priests (*àngbáxà*) were also the clan chiefs.

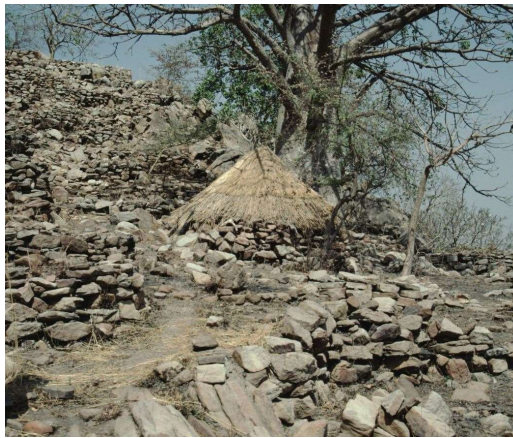


Photo 32: Shrine house at a deserted hillside settlement.

Wonge are spirits of twins, who become *wonge* after death.

Tunjo was described to me as being an idol for women ensuring their fertility, usually accompanied by a small pot *teba* for offerings. Although the *tunjo* cares for the spiritual welfare of women, the idol is made by men only. According to Faust (1945: 257 ff.) a *tunjo* is manifested by the neck of a water pot in which a wooden stick is put, often standing within a little shrine, and a *teba* is a clay pot half buried in the ground to which offerings are made if a misfortune has struck, but also at the birth of twins.

Yohanna Kasuwa in his ms (1991-93) relates the following details about the physical manifestation of idols and the paraphernalia usually accompanying them in the shrine house without, however, specifying which of the idols he is referring to:

the souls of the deceased go to the netherworld and speak to their relatives through the idol. Idols may be made of wood or clay in human form. There are male and female idols: male ones act on behalf of men, female on behalf of women, both speak for the deceased, telling the cause of a sickness or reason of death. Further, relevant steps in agricultural activities need the sanction of the idol. In the shrine house, an idol goes together with different items: a spear adorned with leather and cowries, an iron ring, a wooden stick, a gourd, a clay pot, axe & hoe and a pad. The spear, together with the iron ring and the magic stick are used by the priest in finding out the reason for an illness. For a marriage, the blood of a chicken is sprin-

²³ Faust (1945) had intimate knowledge of the Pero and his thesis is a detailed study of the traditional religion of the Pero. See also CAPRO (1995: 283-289) for some information on rituals and traditional beliefs of the Pero. For a comprehensive study of sacred objects and associated beliefs in the area see Adelberger 2011.

kled on the clay pot and some feathers are attached to it to ritually confirm the union of husband and wife. The spear may not be touched by anyone except the priest. Axe and hoe are exclusively used for works in connection with the idol, for instance extracting or preparing plant remedies for curing sickness. The pad is made of wood and covered with animal skin, and is used for putting offerings of food or beer on it.

Abdullahi Jatau in his ms (1992) offers more information on a variety of spirits which I summarise here, the full text can be found in facsimile in the appendix:

Limbi are spirits who may be personal spirits, clan spirits or *genius loci*, they may be benevolent, capricious or malign. Other than tutelary clan spirits, there are various other forms of spirits.

An Kabar: the spirit of a deceased haunting the living, usually to settle an outstanding debt. With the help of a diviner (*an kundul*) the cause is determined and settled by a sacrifice to the *kinnima* idol.

An Shundu-Shundu: lizards or other small reptiles with spiritual powers causing discomfort to sleeping persons; a small yellowish gecko (*tsaka* H.), for instance, can seriously disturb the sleep. An offering to *kinnima* usually helps.

An Gwalli-Gwalli: a one-legged spirit instilling fear in people travelling at night or in lonely places.

Angwaro: this is the crown bird (*gauraaka* H.) to which hunters ascribe spiritual powers. The Pero have great respect and fear this bird. Items put close to his nest will be safe from being stolen.

Fok Bou: a place inhabited by spirits, one may avert danger by placing an item there, for example a stone or a corn stalk.

Kúndúl: carved, wooden, columnar statues, usually occurring in male/female pairs. The male



Photo 33: Set of Pero *kundul*

effigy is distinguished from the female by a crest on the head, signifying a certain headdress worn in ceremonial contexts. They are used in rituals concerned with healing and well-being. A person suffering from a disease will visit a traditional healer (*an kundul*) who, after consulting his own *kundul*, may instruct him to procure a pair of these figures as a remedy; in this case, offerings of beer and the sacrifice of a chicken are made to the *kundul* and should be repeated after each annual harvest. The figurines may further serve as a protective device when, after having killed certain animals, a hunter is haunted by the spirit of the animal. Among the Pero, *kundul* can also be placed in the farms to protect the crops from theft as well as pests.

Case study: I could document a well-carved set of three *kundul* in the possession of a man who was also a carver (*anguba*) of these objects. He had learned the craft from his father. The largest of the statues is considered

to be male and is called *panjal*, its 'cloak' made of bast is called *dérùm* and the bead necklace *ashuwa*. The smaller statue with the peg-like protrusion on the head is considered to be female and is called *màngùláltà*, the other statue of similar size with the crested head is male and is also called *panjal* like the large one. All three formerly had wooden nose pegs (*wawushin*). The two smaller figurines are said to be a couple and the large one their son.



Photo 34: *kundul* in Jukun-Gwana style

At Filiya I discovered a humanoid-shaped *kundul* that was explained to me as corresponding to the Jukun-Gwana type.

Ritual calendar

The Pero do not practise the possession cult *mam gabra* (*boori* in Hausa) which is otherwise widespread in the area. Their own possession cult is called *kuppan* whereby men show extraordinary behaviour. It occurs, for instance, after having successfully hunted a leopard.

The following annual rituals/celebrations with a link to agricultural activities were elicited. They are all intended to ensure a successful season and good harvest.

Name of festivity	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>nakka</i>			—									
<i>dambang jene</i>				—								
<i>dambang shukuluk</i>								—				
<i>peebe kinima</i>											—	
<i>kau</i>										—		
<i>foddomina</i>											—	

Nakka takes place between in March to April, after all the harvests have been brought in, it is a joyful event with men and women taking part and precedes the time for the traditional marriages, including the fasting periods for the new brides. A certain dance *kog* is performed at a special place on the mountain, offerings are made and neighbouring ethnic groups may also join (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93). Female dancers decorate their legs and faces with red colour made from a red stone called *koya* (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992). The farms may be cleared and prepared for the next season only after *nakka* has been celebrated. Some informants expressed the opinion that in the past, *nakka* was the most lavish and important festival in Pero Land, surpassing *dambang*; however, it has lost its significance and *dambang* has become more important.

Nakka is a regional celebration, and the neighbouring Piya took it over from the Pero of Gwandum who call it *podopok*. The Pireego section of the Piya also call this festival *podopok*, the Kulung call it *malapiu*. *Nakka* is performed in different localities in a successive order: it is started at Filiya, then it is celebrated at Gundali, then Dwaja, Ameshe and Senge, before it is performed among the Pireego-Piya, here first at Hakuri (Baaku), then at Pitiko, then at Mutum Daya. After the Piya have performed *nakka*, the Kwonci and then the Kode continue with it.

Dambang is the most important period for traditional worshipping.²⁴ The cult was taken over from the neighbouring Loo. *Dambang* is generally intended to ensure sufficient rain and a bountiful harvest. The ritual expert *ango dambang* calculates the time for the *dambang* celebrations by using the lunar calendar. *Dambang* is celebrated twice in a year: *dambang jene* marks the end of the dry season in April, and *dambang shukuluk* is performed in the latter part of the rainy season in August/September to express gratitude for a good season and sufficient rainfall so far and ask for its continuation for the remaining period. There are four *dambang* celebrations in the different localities: the first takes place at Filiya, but there are differing views about who comes next: while some informants say that the second is at Cwexe, the third at Gwandum and the fourth at Dagam, other sources maintain that the second takes place at Dagam, the third at Cwexe and the fourth at Gwandum. In any case it is an indication that the ritual was originally imported by Filiya. Before the celebrations commence, a collective hunt (*para dambang*) takes place and the first animal killed during the first *dambang* hunt, i.e. that of Filiya, is sent to the Loo, acknowledging that *dambang* was taken over originally from the Loo. A Pero man once married a wife from Loo, at the time of *dambang* she returned to the Loo to take part in their *dambang* celebrations, and it was agreed that her husband could transfer the cult to the Pero. The Loo may also take part in the *dambang* festivities of the Pero (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992). *Para* is a collective hunt associated with such festivities: early in the morning the hunters gather and hunt until evening, the spoils will be carried to the *dambang* shrine on Mt. Yuru with a nearby dancing ground. The priest will pray to *kinnima* for good health, peace and sufficient rain in the season. Dancing and celebrations last for three days (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

Péébè kinnima takes place at the time of harvest in early November with offerings of beer and new crops (guinea corn and beans) to the idol *kinnima* at the shrine in the mountains. The dances associated with the festival take place down the hill, distant from the shrines. Only after this has been performed may the Pero consume the new crops; it is a kind of thanksgiving. The festivities are organised on the basis of locality, i.e. at Filiya, Gwandum and Gundale, and last for three days. The leader (*an peebe*) of the *peebe* celebrations comes from the Kula clan, he announces dates for the festivities; there is only one leader for all the Pero (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93). After having made offerings to *kinnima*, the men return with their faces painted white with a chalk-like substance (*peru*) to frighten women and children (ms Abdullahi Jatau 1992).

Another *kinnima* related ritual is performed in August during the growth of the leaves of the traditional beans *kondolong*. These leaves are used as a sauce ingredient.

While *kau* indicates the end of the traditional year, *foddomina* indicates the beginning of the new annual cycle and is performed before the harvest of guinea corn, there are no dances during *foddomina*, it is only a ritual. *Kau* is called *kewu* among the Piya and is a regional celebration - like *nakka* - performed by various ethnic groups in chronological order guided by

²⁴ See also Faust (1945: 252 ff.) for detailed information on *dambang*.

the lunar calendar: one week before the new moon the Pero start it, then the Piya follow 2-3 days before the new moon (in the sequence 1. Kulu – 2. Pireego – 3. Wallo), and at the new moon the Kulung perform their festival (which they call *zolo*), about two weeks later the Kwonci celebrate *kewu*, then the Kode, Leemak, Gomu, Bambuka and Karimjo (Kiyu) follow (ms Andrew Haruna).

Kùng takes place after the harvest of guinea corn in the period from November to January.

Miscellanea

It is believed that certain snakes live in water sources and provide the flow of water.



Photo 35: Natural well at Filiya

Menstruating women may not fetch water or cook food for their husbands, and they should not touch food with their hands but use a spoon made from bones during the time of their menses, as it is believed that they are impure as long as the condition lasts.

In intertribal fighting, the head of a slain enemy was taken by the victorious warrior and his victory was celebrated by a victory dance that is also performed after having killed a predator like a leopard.



Photo 36: Fetching water from handpump at Gwandum

There is a magical jar on Mt. Yuru, which was already there when the mythical Koddong arrived, the ancestor of the Anyaxaxarad. There are items in the jar, like clothes, which one can take out but never bring them down the hill as either the way will be obstructed or one cannot even move further when in the possession of such an item.

Diseases like smallpox or leprosy were believed to be caused by evil spirits who infect a person due to his or her having committed a

sin. The affected became an outcast, and when such a person died there was no burial ceremony. Illnesses can also be caused by witches. If a witch dies, the soul continues to haunt people. If someone was found guilty of witchcraft, the person was taken to a cave on the mountain, pushed into it and left to die. (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

Taboos

Lion are taboo for the Pero and may not be hunted or killed, because they are considered as friends, and, in turn, these animals would not harm or kill a Pero person. A lion would even share his prey with a Pero. The view was expressed that lions are like humans in a different form (ms Yohanna Kasuwa 1991-93).

The chameleon is feared because it is believed that if a person touches the reptile, that person will also change colour and get spots on the skin. The ant eater (*kúrbì*, in Hausa *daabugii*) may not be eaten for it is believed that the person doing so will change colour and one part of his body becomes light, the other spotted.

There are also clan-specific taboos. For instance, the Gbere, Cwexe and Pijilang clans may not kill or eat vultures (*fonso anbogboje*), African black kite (*pagale*) or monitor lizard (*shanga*).

Faust (n.d.: 95) reports that a man was plagued by an illness and the cause was said to have been his killing of a large lizard which is taboo for his clan.

Members of the Anyagbandi clan may not use the *pábàrà* tree (?) for firewood and should not even touch the tree.

Women were not allowed to eat the meat of porcupine, warthog, ant eater or dogs.

Glossary²⁵

Pero	gloss	comment
<i>ámberá</i>	tattooer, cicatrisation artist	
<i>ámbyá gáráyà</i>	lute player	
<i>ámbonò</i>	brass bell	
<i>àngbákhà</i>	priest, ritual expert	<i>sarkin dodo</i> (H.)
<i>anguba,</i> <i>anjhuba</i>	blacksmith, also woodcarver	
<i>àngúnnà</i>	trumpet made from horn,	also <i>bááxá angabi</i>
<i>ángúyà</i>	high god, creator	more often: <i>yamba</i>
<i>angwaro</i>	crown bird	Balearica pavonina, <i>gauraaka</i> (H.)
<i>àngúúrúgè</i>	cowrie-shell	
<i>ándágéli</i>	sp. bead necklace	literally: 'hail'
<i>ányánshári</i>	wart-hog	<i>gadu</i> (H.)
<i>àracúwà</i>	bead	
<i>àrxásh</i>	spearhead	
<i>bákà</i>	salt cone (Gundale, Damushi, Anpandi)	used in Gundale area
<i>bángalà</i>	iron hoe, also used for paying bride price	
<i>bérá</i>	decorative scar, cicatrisation	
<i>bèrindàm,</i> <i>bàrindàm</i>	hatchet	
<i>bokoloji</i>	dwarf cattle	
<i>bòkòráábà</i>	spherical/globular snuff container, made of <i>kwadínkwadda</i> fruit, covered with goat leather	
<i>búndù</i>	granary	
<i>bwátè</i>	rattle	
<i>cámi</i>	iron rattle worn at ankle	
<i>cílòng</i>	iron rattle	
<i>cobro</i>	gathering place for men	
<i>cúkán táábà</i>	tobacco balls	
<i>cúli</i>	bead necklace	
<i>dambang</i>	annual festivity connected with agriculture	cult taken over from the Loo
<i>déèng</i>	sickle-shaped object	
<i>dígà</i>	marriage	
<i>dígá cíndò</i>	second marriage of a woman who is not yet divorced	
<i>dóórò</i>	flute	
<i>foddomina</i>	ritual marking the start of the trad. year	
<i>fonso anbogboje</i>	vulture	<i>angulu</i> (H.)

²⁵ H. = Hausa term.

Pero	gloss	comment
<i>fùdùk táábà</i>	tobacco cone	
<i>gàdányááji</i>	headband	
<i>gáájò</i>	salt cone (Filiya, Gwandum)	used in Filiya/Gwandum area
<i>gátù</i>	knife for cutting off heads	
<i>gbale</i>	sp. stick that the woman carries with her before seclusion during the wedding ritual	
<i>gbáámè</i>	trad. iron money in form of a rod	
<i>gúb mína</i>	chief of the people (secular)	see also <i>mai</i>
<i>gúúrù</i>	sickle	
<i>ilit</i>	age group	
<i>jérà</i>	small work-party	
<i>kash / káj</i>	small spear	
<i>kau</i>	ritual marking the end of the traditional year	
<i>kéngà</i>	collective hunt	
<i>késh</i>	large communal hunt	
<i>kinnima</i>	idol of a clan	
<i>kog</i>	sp. ritual dance	
<i>kógò</i>	tightly woven basket	
<i>kótòng</i>	shield made of the hide of buffalo or elephant	
<i>koya</i>	a red stone used for preparing red colour	
<i>kuppan</i>	spirit possession	
<i>kúrbì</i>	ant-eater	<i>daabugii</i> (H.)
<i>kúríjì</i>	red soil, haematite	
<i>kwaili kulau</i>	protecting headgear for children	
<i>kwalikobo</i>	millet beer	<i>burkutu</i> (H.)
<i>kwárik kàsh</i>	counter weight for spears, fixed at the end	
<i>kwóndó kólò</i>	levirate	
<i>làábáátò</i>	small calabash container for feeding babies	
<i>lájùli</i>	sp. clay pot	
<i>léébè</i>	large spear	
<i>mai</i>	chief	
<i>mai angkhuba / mai angguba</i>	chief of blacksmiths	
<i>merongo</i>	betrothal	see also <i>wárokúmà dígà</i>
<i>nakka</i>	annual celebration preparing for the season	
<i>nibit</i>	celebration of honour for a successful hunter	
<i>pagale</i>	African black kite or swallow-tailed kite	<i>shirwa</i> (H.)
<i>para</i>	collective hunting in ritual context	
<i>pàràu</i>	trowel for smoothing clay walls	

Pero	gloss	comment
<i>péébè</i>	annual celebration in early November	
<i>peru</i>	chalk-like substance	for painting or decorating
<i>pido kelen</i>	rain ritual	
<i>píiji</i>	three-legged 'victory' drum	
<i>podopok</i>	Gwandum name for <i>nakka</i>	
<i>shanga</i>	water monitor lizard	<i>guza</i> (H.)
<i>shàrà</i>	wide-meshed woven basket	
<i>sheda</i>	terrace	
<i>tángli</i>	large work-party	
<i>táyò</i>	trad. headgear of the Pero for <i>dambang</i> festival	
<i>teba</i>	sp. pot for offerings to an idol	
<i>túincùk</i>	small iron chisel	
<i>tibìn láárúlà</i>	adze	
<i>wábòng</i>	necklace for the bride	
<i>wájà</i>	nose decoration	
<i>wájígùùrù</i>	trad. harvesting knife for millet	
<i>wáájìlò</i>	knife	
<i>wáá júxúlè</i>	razor blade	
<i>wárókúmà dígà</i>	betrothal	see also <i>merongo</i>
<i>wòjá kásh</i>	spatula for applying arrow poison	
<i>wonge</i>	idol for twins	
<i>wùdóyàrà</i>	bangle made of ivory or bone	
<i>wúlà</i>	marriage of traditionalists	
<i>wúlá jiri</i>	marriage by abduction	
<i>yamba</i>	high god, creator	see also <i>anguya</i>

Plants:

Pero	Hausa	English	scientific name	comment
<i>adau</i>	<i>riidii</i>	sesame	<i>Sesamum orientale</i>	
<i>angbakum</i>	<i>aduuwaa</i>	desert date palm	<i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i>	
<i>anjitta</i>	<i>barkoonoo</i>	pepper	<i>Capsicum sp.</i>	
<i>ara denden</i>	<i>shiwaakaa</i>	bitterleaf	<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> ; <i>V. colorata</i>	
<i>banna-banna</i>	<i>cuweika</i>	sp. tree	? [<i>tsuwuku</i> = sensitive plant <i>Biophytum peter-sianum</i>]	
<i>biwaari</i>	<i>tafarnuuwaa</i>	garlic	<i>Allium sativum</i>	
<i>borong</i>	<i>maiwaa</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>	late variety, dry season millet
<i>bula</i>	<i>roogoo</i>	cassava	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	
<i>conji</i>	<i>kabeewaa</i>	pumpkin	<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	

Pero	Hausa	English	scientific name	comment
<i>dambang</i>	<i>ceediyaa</i>	fig tree	<i>Ficus thonningii</i>	
<i>dɛɲa</i>	<i>gautaa</i>	garden-egg	<i>Solanum incanum</i>	
<i>dibit</i>	<i>yaakuuwaa</i>	roselle	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>	
<i>dinyak, shershi</i>	<i>tamba</i>	finger millet	<i>Eleusine coracana</i>	
<i>dom</i>	<i>waakee</i>	beans, cow pea	<i>Vigna unguiculata</i>	straight variety
<i>dugni</i>	<i>bauree</i>	fig tree	<i>Ficus spp.</i>	
<i>erum</i>	<i>albasaa</i>	onion	<i>Allium cepa</i>	<i>erum jene</i> : dry season onion, <i>erum shukuluk</i> : rainy season onion
<i>fúgì</i>	<i>dargazaa</i>	sp. shrub	<i>Grewia mollis</i>	
<i>fururayo</i>	<i>itace yakare</i>	sp. tree	?	
<i>gak</i>	<i>rizgaa</i>	rizga	<i>Plectranthus esculentus</i>	
<i>gappa</i>	<i>shinkaafar</i>	rice	<i>Oryza sp.</i>	
<i>gbalkham</i>	<i>daawaa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	white variety
<i>gili</i>	<i>kadanya</i>	shea tree	<i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i>	
<i>gwagum</i>	<i>tauraa</i>	tallow tree	<i>Detarium microcarpum</i> ; <i>D. senegalense</i>	
<i>jura</i>	<i>gyadaa</i>	groundnut	<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>	
<i>kakala</i>	<i>durumii</i>	fig tree	<i>Ficus polita</i>	
<i>kamo</i>	<i>fafaraa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	white variety
<i>kande</i>	<i>daawaa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	red variety
<i>komo</i>	<i>masaraa</i>	maize	<i>Zea mays</i>	
<i>komvuron, k. jene, k. shukuluk</i>	<i>kubeewaa</i>	okra	<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>	<i>komvurom jene</i> : dry season okra, <i>komvurom shukuluk</i> : rainy season okra
<i>kondolong</i>	<i>kananade</i>	beans	<i>Vigna unguiculata</i>	curved variety
<i>kunduku</i>	<i>dankalii</i>	sweet potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	
<i>kwadinkwadda</i>	<i>kookon biri</i>	snuff-box tree	<i>Oncoba spinosa</i>	
<i>kwali</i>	<i>kwaryaa</i>	bottle gourd	<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i>	
<i>leduk, nyiire, baayo</i>	<i>karkashii</i>	false sesame leaves	<i>Ceratotheca sesamoides</i>	
<i>leelou</i>	<i>audugaa</i>	cotton	<i>Gossypium sp.</i>	
<i>moɗo</i>	<i>geeroo</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>	wet season millet, variety taken over from the Jukun
<i>pábàrà</i>	?	sp. tree	?	
<i>parum</i>	<i>kanya</i>	West African ebony	<i>Diospyros mespiliformis</i>	
<i>pidaakho</i>	<i>daawaa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	yellow variety
<i>piya</i>	<i>ayaa</i>	tiger-nut	<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>	
<i>shakjak</i>	<i>kiriya</i>	false locust	<i>Prosopis africana</i>	
<i>shande</i>	<i>dooya</i>	yam	<i>Dioscorea spp.</i>	

Pero	Hausa	English	scientific name	comment
<i>shande pandi</i>	<i>dooyar</i> <i>duutsee</i>	rock-yam	<i>Dioscorea praeheensis</i>	
<i>taaba</i>	<i>taabaa</i>	tobacco	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	
<i>tondo</i>	<i>dooyar bisa</i>	aerial yam	<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>	
<i>tumatir</i>	<i>tumaatur</i>	tomato	<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>	
<i>turbo</i>	<i>gujiiyaa</i>	Bambara nut	<i>Vigna subterranea</i>	
<i>twaalo</i>	<i>guna</i>	melon	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	
<i>yoogεε</i>	<i>jinin kafiri</i>	blood plum tree	<i>Haematostaphis barteri</i>	

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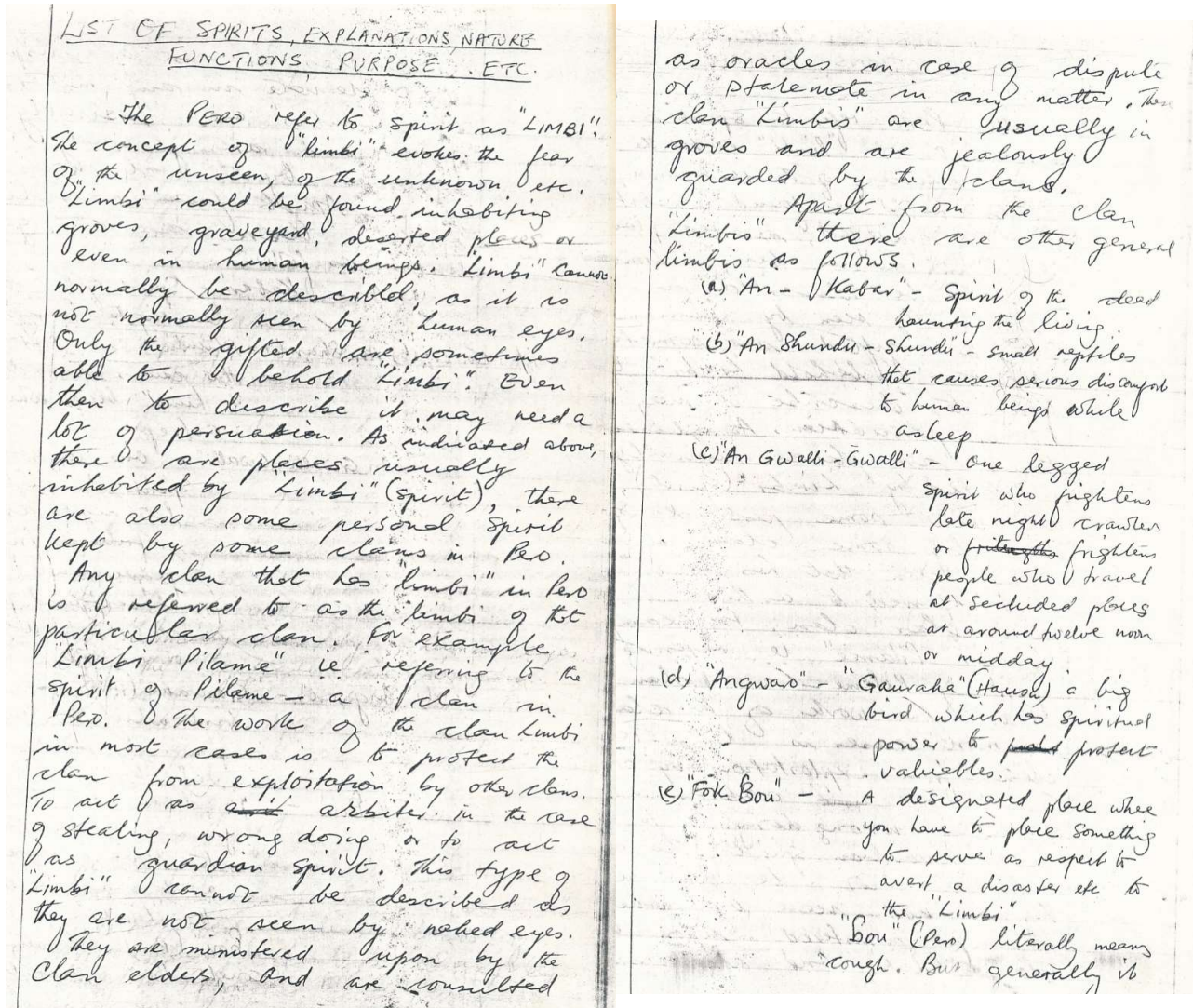
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Appendix

Facsimile of selected pages of manuscript by Abdullahi Jatau Filiya (1992)

The late Abdullahi Jatau compiled a manuscript with notes on the history and culture of the Pero, of which these pages on which he presents ideas about different spirits are reproduced here.



means "limbi" (spirit), epidemic or disaster.

As earlier stated, it is difficult to explain the nature of these spirits. As people spoken to, always hold the spirit in awe. They revere, fear and talk about them in hush-hush voices. They are always something of a mystery. However, I shall try to make some brief explanations etc. from what I was able to gather and from my own personal experiences.

AN-KABAR - means a spirit, usually the spirit of the departed. It is not seen with naked eyes. It is felt only through its action. It appears in sleep to revenge or settle an old score. If this persists to a living person, he or she consults an oracle through a seer or a diviner (An-Kunduk) to determine the cause. After determining the cause, the usual sacrifice is made to the "KINNIMA" so that whoever is being molested by the "An-kabar" is set free. If this is not done, the molestation will continue unabated, or may lead to serious sickness or death. The Pero hold this belief to date. "An-kabar" therefore appears to settle score etc.

and it is claimed to be the spirit of the dead.

(b) AN SHUNDU SHUNDU - The Pero claim that some lizards or reptiles have some spiritual powers; that these powers they use to ~~some~~ torment people asleep. There is one small yellowish lizard "tsaha" (Hausa) which if they happen to be at the top of your bed, will make you to cry or gasp for breath or require help in your sleep all to no avail. This the Pero claim is a sign of bad omen. If it persists, there will be need to offer sacrifices to the Kinnima to appease the Gods. However, the spirit could not be seen with naked eyes. Only the lizard at times could be seen ~~on~~ on waking up. This gives the Pero the belief that the lizards have the power of the spirit "An-shundu shundu".

(c) AN GWALLI GWALLI - The Pero claimed that it is a spirit and sometimes seen with naked eyes. They claim that it has one leg and sometimes short and smallish in a form of a human being. It serves to instill fear in those who keep late nights, or to instill fear in those who travel

in desolate places at noon. It is fearsome and people always pray not to come across one. It is a bad spirit and could appear to anybody. It must be noted, that generally, whatever happens to Pero, he/she must make sacrifice for good or bad omen. Sacrifice is intertwined in the Pero culture, even one when dreams! Therefore it is pertinent that whatever happens, a form of sacrifice has to take place either to "Iunjo", "Kinnimo", "Kundul", "Vongi" etc.

ANGWARD Hausa - "GAURAKA". Please note that this bird is revered, feared and respected by the "MAHARBA", "MASU TARKO" (HUNTERS GENERALLY) not only in Pero, but among the generality of most of the people in Northern Nigeria. Just as the "BAREWA" has great respect and credited with plenty of spiritual power, so is the "Angwaro" or "GAURAKA". Hunters ascribe mythical powers to this bird. And only the real hunters do kill them, and sometimes they are not killed for fear of repercussion.

The Pero fear this bird. To kill and eat it may lead one to an earlier demise or deformity. So vast the awe in which this bird is accorded that there are many

stories adduced to it.

We shall ~~take~~ take only one which the Pero do believe in. According to Pero, the "ANGWARO" has spiritual powers. As a result of this, many valuables eg tobacco, spirits, gold, corn, "gujira" etc. are kept where the "Angwaro" shelters. This makes it impossible for anybody to steal. The "Angwaro" therefore, according to Pero acts like a guardian angel. For anyone to steal where such valuables are kept within the shelter of the "Angwaro" will meet terrible things. He is ~~not~~ either beaten by a snake or see a "Jimbi" or become mad. ~~Such~~ Such is the power of the "Angwaro" ascribed to it by the Pero.

LIMBI As earlier indicated "Limbi" means spirit. There are good ones and bad ones. They can enter people, inhabit trees, grave yard or groves. They cannot be seen with naked eyes. They can however be exorcised by people who had their own personal "Limbi". Some people keep their own "Limbi" for good. Whenever anybody is being tormented by a bad limbi,

as a result of misdeed, misconduct or breaking the norms of Pero, the limbi is exercised by the man who it is his duty to exercise such limbi. People also go to people with bad "limbi" for revenge on their enemies. When this happens the man/woman becomes mad etc. An oracle will then be consulted to determine whether the cause of the madness was as a result of bad limbi, revenge etc. Whenever the cause is determined, necessary sacrifice and medicine are offered to free the limbi from the mad man/woman in order to restore the sanity of the person concerned.

"Fok Bori" (Pero - literally means mouth of cough) means the habitat of the spirit. In the old days and usually on footpaths, people use to pass some places where they were regarded as "Fok Bori" or the habitat of the spirit. In such places, it was mandatory for people to put in something there. It could be stone, a stalk of corn, a shrub, a stick or anything. This is done for many reasons. Some of which are to ensure safe journey, to get a sort of blessing (especially by barren women) from the spirit. It is also done to avert disaster and as

mark of respect to the spirit. Many people did believe that by placing something as these points, joints or on a flat stone, made their journeys shorter and provided very good luck. One sees mounds of stones, pebbles sticks etc. on passing these places. It is still observed to a lesser extent by people who travel on foot, where there is no accessible motor road.

The above are some explanations about the way Pero people view spirits, nature, work purpose etc. Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to have a full description or nature of the spirit due to the conservative nature of the society, and the fear of the people in which they hold this spirit.

"GOGOI" is also a spirit. Mostly a foreign spirit, (Hausa) is not fully known by the Pero. It is referred to as small and very terrible. It acts like the "An Kabari", and like the "An Shundi", "Shundi" all rolled into one.