

*Inger Callewaert*

The Birth of Religion  
among the Balanta  
of Guinea-Bissau

LUND STUDIES IN AFRICAN AND ASIAN RELIGIONS

Volume 12

Edited by

Tord Olsson

Department of History of Religions. University of Lund  
Lund Sweden

# Contents

Acknowledgements	9
I What Happened and What It Is All About	13
II Intentions and Methods	17
III Transcription and Translation	23
IV Balanta Migrations Related to the Genealogy of the Prophetess and to the Origin and Spread of Kiyang-yang	28
V The Balanta without Their Prophetess	48
VI Ntombikte by Herself and by the Researcher	58
The Prayer of Ntombikte at Caboxanque in 1995	58
Presentation of the Approach	64
The Semola Ritual in Its Symbolic Environment	66
The Core of the Ritual Events – Leave-taking from the Tradition	73
Ntombikte's Own Understanding of the Phenomenon	82
VII Kiyang-yang and the Transformation of the Traditional Structure according to Ntombikte	102
The Break with a Life Dominated by Interaction with the Spirits	102
The Consequences of the Break with the Kinship Structure	104
The Child of the Promise and the Exodus of the Prophetess	107
VIII The Emergence of a Kiyang-yang Ritual Practice from the Balanta Form of Life	121
Presuppositions	121
Elements of Description of the Environment	123

The Specificity of this Ritual of Immersion	127
Description of the Ritual	128
Discussion and Conclusion	170
<b>IX Fyere Yaabte, a Traditional Women's Curative Movement</b>	
<b>A Comparison with the Kiyang-yang Movement</b>	177
Presuppositions	177
Description of the Community	179
The Ritual	183
Themes of the Fyere Yaabte Songs	187
The Fyere Yaabte Corpus of Songs	189
Ritual and Urban Setting	209
Comparison with Kiyang-yang	210
Fyere Yaabte and the Origin of Kiyang-yang	213
<b>X Hasaru, the Tacit Cornerstone of my Fieldwork – a Path towards Conclusions</b>	219
The Main Field Revisited	219
Hasaru in between the Different Kiyang-yang Tendencies	244
Where the Path Leads	255
<b>Resumo em Português</b>	271
<b>Summary in English</b>	276
<b>Glossary</b>	280
<b>Appendix</b>	284
The prayer of Ntombikte in the Balanta language	284
<b>Map I</b>	287
<b>Map II</b>	288
<b>Map III</b>	289
<b>Bibliography</b>	290