

\*\*\*There is strong evidence that “the Reshe language community may be undergoing a shift in their primary language from Reshe to Hausa (2),” and information about the Reshe people is quite lacking. Therefore, I have filled in as much as possible about the Reshe people — mostly history and RCR — and used information regarding the Hausa people to detail cultural aspects that are incorporated into the lives of the Reshe people already. The information regarding Hausa is noted in italics, the Reshe in normal font.

## 1. Description

### 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

- Society: Bareshe
- Language: Reshe, Bareshe, Gunga, Gunganchi, Gungawa, Tsureja, Tsureshe, Yaurawa (1)
- Language Family: Niger-Congo (1)
- Language Group: Western Kainji (2p9)

### 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

- ISO 639-3: res

### 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- South Kebbi state, Yauri LGA; west Niger state, Borgu LGA; banks of Niger River, north of Busa (1)
- 11° N, 5° E (1)
- “The Reshe people live primarily in and around Yelwa (also known today as Yauri), an important port on the east side of the Niger River in Kebbi State, Nigeria.” (2)

### 1.4 Brief history:

- “Other researchers generally agree that the Reshe are a mixed group, ‘formed by a union, over time, of members from a number of different ethnic groups who adapted to a riverine environment...’” (2)
- “Harris associates the legend of the founding of the ruling house of the Reshe ... with the introduction of Islam to the Reshe. ... Islam arrived among the Reshe through traders and religious teachers who came primarily from Kebbi. The ruler of the Reshe people, generally known as the Emir of Yauri, was a Muslim by the end of the seventeenth century.” (2)
- “The present-day ruins of the walls of Bin Yauri, five miles in circumference, indicate the size and importance that this ancient capital of the Reshe once had. It appears that the town and its people were independent of external control for a period of time before the turbulent nineteenth century.” (2)
- “Under the pressures of nineteenth-century raiding and wars, the capital of the Reshe moved from Bin Yauri to the islands and then to Yelwa. Today both Bin Yauri and Yelwa are considered Hausa centres, and the villages resettled from the islands are the main centres of Reshe life, though Yelwa continues to be the seat of the Reshe king (the Emir of Yauri).” (2p9)

### 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- “Until 1968, many of the Reshe inhabited islands on the Niger River. ... In 1968, the island-dwellers were moved at government expense to new settlements along both banks of the Niger River. This move was necessitated by the construction of a large dam which flooded the islands and formed Lake Kainji.” (2)
- “Many consider it advantageous to convert to Islam, and others feel tremendous social pressure from the missionary efforts of the carefully trained government-sponsored *mallamai*.” (2p7)

### 1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- “three seasons: the rainy season (June to October), the harmattan (November to February), and the hot season (March to May)” (2)
- “annual rainfall in the area is about 1000 mm, and the altitude is between 180 and three hundred m.” (2)

### 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

- “population estimate of 44,000 Reshe for 1993” (2)
- 450 people per square mile (4)

## 2. Economy

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- guinea corn, beans, rice, onions as cash crop (2)

### 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- fish

### 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

### 2.4 Food storage:

### 2.5 Sexual division of production:

- “Men are responsible for agriculture, collecting activities, marketing, sewing, laundry, building repairs, and transport. Women cook, owing their husbands one cooked meal a day, clean house, take care of children, pursue their craft specialties, and sometimes engage in trade.” (5p3)

### 2.6 Land tenure:

- “Farming is the chief occupation of the Reshe.” (2)

### 2.7 Ceramics:

- “Pottery is an occupation of long historical standing in Hausaland. Like most traditional occupations, the knowledge is passed from father to son.” (6p60)

- *“A very large number of articles are made from clay, such as pots of different shapes and sizes “randa”, “tulu”, “kula”, “shantali”, big, small and medium sized bowls or basins, money safes and lamps.” (6p61)*

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- *“Occupations which supplement farming are fishing, canoe-building, and mat- making” (2)*

### 3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- *“No Hausa adult is regarded as an adult until he becomes a parent...Furthermore a woman’s status is determined not by her husband’s status but by the number of children she has.” (5p115)*

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

- *“The compound, made up of a man, his wife or wives, and their children is the smallest social unit. Other family members, clients, and their families may also inhabit the compound.” (5p2)*

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- *“Marriage is common for young girls between the ages of ten and twelve.” (5p134)*

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- *“Divorce is a common fact of life, and women often act in such a manner as to prod their husband into divorcing them, for the life of unmarried women is less restrictive than that of a married one.” (5p3)*

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- *“As Muslims, each Hausa male may have four wives and as many concubines as he can support.” (5p3)*

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

- *“The bride is never present at a traditional Hausa wedding...The woman receives her guests and gifts at her father’s home.” (5p136)*

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- *“Inheritance is by primogeniture.” (5p2)*

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- *“The baby is surrounded by love from his birth. The point is that he receives this love from a number of sources other than his parents, for in later life he must come to regard his family as being composed of more than the nuclear family. ... Further, the mother refuses to breast feed the child for only three days, the period when modern science recognizes her milk to be of poor quality.” (5p115-116)*

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- *“Most Reshe are bilingual in Hausa, but the majority still speak Reshe at home. They intermarry with the Hausa.” (3)*

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

- *“If a man is unable, for some reason, to impregnate one of his wives, he may turn a blind eye to adultery in hopes that someone may get her pregnant. ... The husband will continue to be the social father of the child and add it to his family.”*

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

- *“The Hausa prefer cousin marriage on either side, although patrilineal parallel cousin marriage in the Fulani style has greater prestige than any other form of marriage.” (5p3)*

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- *“...easy access women have to the market and in their ability to compete freely with men.” (5p117)*
- *“In Africa some Muslim women do get additional sexual rights under local practices.” (5p134)*

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

- *Ghost marriage: “In this practice, a man’s younger brother inherits his older brother’s widow. Any children they have are counted as those of his older brother. The younger brother is bound to raise children as his brother’s.” (5p134)*

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

- *“It is true that there is a lifelong avoidance relationship between parents and children.” (5p116)*

- *A Hausa, in theory, must give obedience to his superiors, but no superior of intelligence will demand too much of any Hausa.*” (5p116)

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

- *A newborn often “receives his life-long nickname at [the time of birth] from his grandparents.”* (5p116)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

- *“The Qu’ran does not specifically allow a woman any voice in choosing, accepting, or rejecting a husband.”* (5p133)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

## **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

4.18 Cannibalism?

## **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- *“Muslim Hausa social organization is characterized by a complex system of stratification, based on occupation, wealth, birth, and patron-client ties. The Hausa tend to rank all specialties in a hierarchical and hereditary system.”* (5p2)

5.4 Post marital residence:

- *“Men generally stay out of women’s quarters in other homes and only rarely enter these quarters in their own homes.”* (5p136)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

- *“Women can only visit their friends after nightfall.”* (5p136)
- *“Friendships tend to be distinguished by age groups first. Then they talk about friends of fortune and neighbors. These friends of fortune are people with whom they greet and whom they invite to various feasts. The next level of friend is the “bond-friend,” those who have mutual obligations of support and gift-exchange. Above these friends are the “most-trusted friends,” those with whom people share their most intimate secrets. This relationship generally lasts longer than most marriages. It transcends living near one another.”* (5p137)

5.8 Village and house organization:

- *“The people who live in villages in Hausaland make their round huts with small sticks and corn-stalks which they then cover with mud from the inside. Over this structure they place a conical thatched top. The house is then surrounded on all four sides with a corn-stalk or grass fence.”* (6p47)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

5.12 Trade:

- *“Commerce in Hausaland is an important occupation and the Hausas have acquired the reputation of being astute businessmen. Present day commerce can be classified into three types. The first is direct trade with outside countries in the hands of the government, European, Arab, and Southern Nigerian firms. ... The second is the itinerant trade; trading with Southern Yorubaland, Ghana, Adamawa, Tibati, Ngaundere, Bornu province and areas around Fort Lamy, and also Agages and Niamey, as of old. The third class of commercial activity is the internal trade within Hausaland itself; between one province and another, between one town and another, between one village and another, and even between on part of town and another part.”* (6p53)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- *“Muslim Hausa social organization is characterized by a complex system of stratification, based on occupation, wealth, birth, and patron-client ties. The Hausa tend to rank all specialties in a hierarchical and hereditary system.”* (5p2)

## **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- *“Evil is appropriately punished, for shamans or diviners work with the spirits to ensure good and counteract evil.”* (5p5)
- *“Mallamai, or mallams, are men of Quaranic learning who teach the faith and often serve as healers.”* (5p6)

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

- *"No Hausa adult is regarded as an adult until he becomes a parent. Therefore, parenthood is an important stage in the development of a person's life marking the passage youth to adulthood." (5p115)*

6.4 Other rituals:

- *"pilgrimages, daily prayer, attendance at mosque ceremonies, adherence to Islamic law, and the stress on Quaranic learning, and alms giving." (5p3)*
- *"Rituals and prayer dedicated to the spirits of family and place reinforce loyalty to communal virtues and the authority of the elders in defending ancient beliefs and practices." (5p5)*

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- *Origin of Spirits: "According to the myth, Allah called Adama ("the woman" and Adamu ("the man") to Him and bade them to bring all their children. They hid some of their children. Allah asked them where their children were. They said that they had brought all their children to Him. He then told them that the hidden children would belong to the spirit world." (5p5)*

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- *"Wrestling is traditionally the chief sport of Reshe young men, with intervillage contests taking place between September and December each year. There is a strong association between wrestling, the traditional religion, and ethnic identity." (2)*

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- *"Women are expected to be modest and to stay within the household unless accompanied by male family members or older post-menopausal women." (5p4)*

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

- *"During the nineteenth century, which was characterized by slave-raiding and civil war, becoming a Muslim was some defense against enslavement and was the only avenue for political advancement." (2p8)*

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- *Body is washed, shrouded, then buried in very specifically measured grave. "When the prayers are over, the body is carried to the grave. It is carefully lowered into the inner hole of the grave and pieces of broken pots are used to cover it." (6p24)*

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

- *"A majority of the Reshe now claim to be Muslim. Salamone estimates that seventy percent of the Reshe are Muslim and thirty percent practice the traditional religion. Certainly the percentage of Reshe who are Christians is under one percent." (2p7)*

## 7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

- *"Most people wear clothes made of cloths bought from modern shops, except perhaps the cattle Fulani, villagers and very poor people. But chiefs and their courtiers as well as very old people who can afford it, still prefer to dress themselves in white native gowns together with the "tsamiya" and "saki" gowns." (6p67)*

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## 8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- *"The mallams who are highly ranked serve in state-level offices combining religious and secular powers." (5p6)*

## Numbered references

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