

ABSTRACT

CATTLE AND CULTURE:

The Structure of a Pastoral Parakuyo Society

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The aim of the study is to analyze the structure of a pastoral Maa-speaking Parakuyo society, in Tanzania, using a two-level analysis (paradigmatic and syntagmatic) from symbolic anthropology. Via the analysis of the economic structures, the circulation of property (intra- and intersocietal), the social structure, the classification of the universe, the symbolic communication, and the processes of change within the society, an attempt is made to infer the principles which are the basis of, and give impetus to, the realization structures.

The study is based on fieldwork carried out in conjunction with the Jipemoyo Project in Eastern Tanzania, in 1975-76, 1982, and 1983; and relevant literature is also used extensively.

The study shows that the tangible phenomena within the Parakuyo society are based on a dualistic principle, which is realized in all the above-mentioned syntagmatic structures, although the degree of realization varies. Ecology and history also influence the degree of realization of this principle.

Thus, ideally, economic relations and transactions are based on reciprocity and mutuality, so that the socio-economic balance between the exchange partners is maintained. The kinship system is formed of moieties and of dualistically subdivided clans and sub-clans.

In the age-set system, there are two streams of age-sets, each stream being formed of alternate age-sets, which are linked with bonds of sponsorship. Relations between proximate age-sets and between the streams of age-sets are antagonistic. In symbolism, the dual structure

is communicated by a number of means. The intensity or importance of the object to be symbolized is achieved by multiplications of dualism, i.e. by the numbers four, eight, sixteen etc. The universe, too, is dualistically classified in terms of dualistic qualities of divinity, and with an emphasis on auspicious and inauspicious directions, time periods, and places.

PREFACE

This study is the result of a long process with roots in a time when I was teaching at the Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, northern Tanzania. After having moved there in 1974 from the Southern Highlands, I was faced with a rather different ethnic and cultural situation, where groups of two distinct ethnic origins (Bantu and Nilotic) inhabited the area. For various reasons my interest was drawn by the adjacent Pastoral Maasai, whose ethnic identity seemed to have been strong and dynamic enough to resist the pressures towards modernization, while the majority of ethnic groups in Tanzania were deeply involved in modern development. This initial curiosity was soon combined with theoretical interest in the dynamics of societies, and after having joined the Jipemoyo Project in the Bagamoyo District, also with practical problems of development. Rather than being an initially theoretical enterprise, the research has grown out of the experience of life with the people in Tanzania, and later on it has received theoretical formulation accordingly.

In all phases of the work I have received assistance from several people. I should like to mention the names of Naathan Lengutai, Isaac Landei and Stewen Wanga for introducing me to the Maasai culture and language and assisting me during the first visits to the Kisongo Maasai area. Rev. Gabriel Kimirei, the Vice-President of the Synod in Arusha Region - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), has assisted me in collecting comparative material of the Kisongo Maasai age-set structure. In the Lugoba area I was first oriented to the village situation by Reuben Wanga, whose assistance has been readily available ever since, and whose son, Yonas Wanga, was my principal co-worker. Mtumia Samsindo, the Chairman of the Mindu Tulieni village, and Laban Moreto, the Village Secretary, have been resource persons concerning village development plans and various aspects of Parakuyo social structure and culture. I should like to mention the names of the following elders who have greatly contributed to the information on oral history, age-set structure and rituals connected with it, kinship, ideological structure etc. These are: Abdala

Samsindo, Subuke Samsindo, Yangalai Kamunyu, Msamau Kitasyekuo and his elder sons Juma and Rashidi Msamau, Lelingo Lusekere, Keke Loita and his son Magogo Keke, Sambingu and his son Steti Nyasi. Outside the research area, discussions with Mtare Moreto, oloiboni kitok of the Parakuyo, and his younger brother Paulo Moreto, were very useful. Information received from Sailen Launoni, Parirong Tumaina, and Daudi Loogan in the Handeni District clarified issues related to age-set leadership. Of the younger generation I should like to mention Ikoyo Mtumia for his very cooperative role in analysing the age-set structure and its function.

Among those who contributed significantly to the success of fieldwork two persons deserve a special note: Yonas Wanga and Paulo Chaparisi. Yonas was my invaluable right hand in everything which concerned my fieldwork in 1975-76. He increased considerably my knowledge of the Maa language, interpreted into Swahili whenever needed, assisted in interviews and discussions, transcribed the tapes and translated part of them into Swahili. During the field period in January 1982 Paulo Chaparisi worked intensively with me, and much of the additional information acquired at that time has to be credited to his wholehearted devotion, excellent memory, and his exceptionally good knowledge of the people and culture. He himself was a reliable source of information, eager to inform and learn, and at times it was difficult to know which one of us two was conducting the research.

The cooperative assistance of government officers from the Ministry of National Culture and Youth down to the village level was necessary for facilitating research. Particularly I wish to mention the names of Dr. Israel Katoke, Director of the Research Department of the Ministry, and his successor A. Odhiambo Anacleto, both of whom were also directors of the Jipemoyo Project. Also the expert knowledge of Dr. Daniel Ndagala on the Pastoral Maasai and Parakuyo has been of assistance. Of the Jipemoyo team members I want to thank Melchior Matwi, who as an insider gave helpful criticism on several details in early drafts of this study. Through theoretical criticism and discussions Prof. Peter Rigby contributed to the renewed orientation in the early stages of fieldwork. In later stages of research, professors Edmund Leach and Ioan Lewis have given fruitful suggestions in questions of theory and

analysis. I also recall the name of Dr. H. A. Fosbrooke who through several articles since the 1930s has accumulated knowledge of the Maasai. He encouraged me in the first stages of the research and gave me access to his excellent library in Arusha.

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Especially I want to express my gratitude to the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) for giving me training in African languages and orientation in various aspects of African culture. I see the role of these agencies as an invaluable prerequisite for the successful completion of this work.

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I had the privilege of using the university libraries of Daressalaam and Nairobi, and the library of the Nordic Institute for African Studies for background information. The services of the Helsinki University Library and the Ethnological Library of the Finnish Literature Society have been efficient and flexible.

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Vantaa

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