C. HISTORICAL ASPECTS

It was emphasized in the theoretical section that the economic, social and ideological structures of a people are a product of a long historical process. Therefore, in order to fully understand the present structures, at least the main phases of the historical development should be known. In this historical review I shall concentrate on those themes only which are relevant to this study. Fortunately some of the main lines of the Parakuyo history are already known, although in very general terms. As it is typical of illiterate societies that the recollection of historical events by means of memorizing extends normally only a few generations back (Jacobs 1968:11; Ndagala 1974:42), the oral accounts of the Parakuyo elders record events back to the beginning of the 19th century. Evidence of events before that time has to be sought by archaeological, cultural and particularly linguistic methods.

Christopher Ehret has used the linguistic comparison successfully in outlining the history of the Southern Nilotes (1971) and has also contributed to understanding the early phases of the Eastern Nilotes. The subsequent historical outline is based mainly on the results of the historical investigation of historians (e.g. Ehret, Low, Kimambo, Huntingford, Berntsen, Iliffe, Rigby) and, in regard with recent history, on the oral traditions of the Parakuyo.

15. THE ANTIQUITY OF PASTORALISM IN EAST AFRICA

The first point is that livestock breeding as a principal mode of subsistence is of considerable age among most Maa-speakers, though not all (e.g. the Arusha). Although presently living on the fringes of pastoralist areas, in close contact with economically and culturally very different people, the Parakuyo have a history of thousands of years of pastoral development along with other pastoral groups.[1] On linguistic

criteria, the Parakuyo are presently regarded together with other Maa-speakers as Eastern (or Plains) Nilotes, who, together with Western (or River-Lake) Nilotes and Southern (or Highland) Nilotes form the Nilotic language group (Ehret 1971:107; 1974:157; Sutton 1974:82-83). It has been asserted that these Nilotic groups dispersed from the south-western fringe of the Ethiopian highlands north of Lake Rudolf. The Southern Nilotes (e.g. Tatog and Kalenjin), who still occupied much of the area of the present Maa-speakers around 1500 AD, had many characteristics in common with these.[2] The Eastern Nilotes, and among them the Maa-speakers, emerged as a significant group in the northern part of East Africa only during the present millennium (Ehret 1974:161), but they must have lived as pastoralists and in close contact with other Nilotes for perhaps thousands of years, and as a single undifferentiated pastoral proto-Nilotic group even earlier.

Evidence for the antiquity of pastoralism in East Africa is found also in written records from the second century B.C. A Greek historian, Agatharchides, recorded that a people called Trogodytes subsisted on blood mixed with milk, were reluctant to slaughter cattle for food, practised circumcision, and buried their dead in a contracted position covering them with a mound of stones (Huntingford 1966:70). A Chinese maritime chronologer (died 863 AD) recorded details of people and their habits in a country called Po-pa-li, which was lying inland from the Somali-Kenya coast (Jacobs 1965c:22). Also archaeological finds in Narosura, Kenya (Odner 1972), and in Seronera, Tanzania (Bower 1973), support the currently accepted view that pastoral cultures have a long history in East Africa, with origins over 2000 years of age.[3] The pastoral Parakuyo are among the groups whose pastoral culture has deep historical roots.[4]

16. INTERACTION WITH PEOPLES OF OTHER ETHNIC ORIGIN

Another theme central to this study is that the history of the Parakuyo is not one of the unilinear development of a closed system. In fact they have been in continuous interaction with peoples of other ethnic origin, such as other Nilotic groups (particularly the Pastoral Maasai and Dorobo),

but also with early Eastern and Southern Cushitic and several Bantu groups. As indicated by the cultural and linguistic evidence, these contacts, particularly those with other Nilotes and Eastern and Southern Cushites, had a tremendous effect on the development of the distinct social structures. The practice of circumcision of youth and clitoridectomy of girls, as well as the prohibition against eating fish, have been adopted either directly from the Eastern Cushites or, more probably, through the Southern Nilotes, who had earlier adopted it from the former (Ehret 1971:53; 1974:158). It is not yet clear whether the politically important age-set structure was adopted from the Galla, an Eastern Cushitic group (Huntingford 1966:76), or, as Ehret suggests, it was developed among the Nilotes themselves. He states that the Eastern Cushites "may have borrowed the idea of age-sets and habits of more intensive cattle keeping from Nilotes" (Ehret 1974:158).

In the history of the Parakuyo there has also occurred intermingling of peoples of different ethnic origin, sometimes because of the necessity to take refuge among the neighbouring agricultural people due to the sudden loss of cattle, but generally through peaceful intermarriage between culturally acceptable groups. Among these groups are other Maa-speakers, such as the Pastoral Maasai, and the Arusha, but also people of other origin. The Parakuyo have intermarried also with the culturally significant Southern Nilotic groups grossly termed 'Dorobo'[5], and several groups of Bantu origin, such as the Kikuyu, Kamba, Chagga, and the Gogo. On the other hand, the Parakuyo of the Western Bagamoyo District do not generally intermarry with their Bantu neighbours. The Parakuyo preferably marry girls from such ethnic groups which clitoridectomize their girls.

The readiness to adopt people of other ethnic origin is further substantiated by the rather obvious fact that the first **oloiboni kitok** (pl. **iloibonok kituaak**), the ritual leader, was adopted from the Cushitic Bugu group about four generations ago. This new lineage soon pushed aside the former sub-clan of **iloibonok**. This change is reported to have happened because of the exceptional skills of the Bugu experts.[6] It is also commonly known that several Kikuyu medical experts have settled among the Pastoral Maasai, and others are invited occasionally to cure diseases.[7]

The mode of assimilation rather than annihilation has been the common pattern in encounters of different groups also in earlier times. The heavy word borrowing of the Maasai from the Southern Nilotes and of the Southern Nilotes from the Eastern Cushites (Ehret 1971:38, 43) can most naturally be explained by assuming a long and peaceful contact between these peoples. The large number of Kalenjin loanwords in Maasai (Ehret 1971:168-71) and a moderate number of Maasai loanwords in East Kalenjin (Ehret 1971:176-77) show that the Southern Nilotic Kalenjin occupied much of the present Pastoral Maasai area, and that there was interaction of a long duration between them. The diminution of Southern and Eastern Kalenjin peoples to small scattered groups living isolated in the Maasai area may similarly be a result of assimilation. The dominant and powerful Maasai may have gradually absorbed them through adoption and intermarriage (Ehret 1971:73).

On the other hand, there is strong evidence that an assimilation of pastoral people into various sedentary (usually agricultural) groups as a consequence of famine, human and livestock diseases, wars, etc. is a widely occurring phenomenon. For the Parakuyo it has generally been a temporary solution to ensure survival, and the pastoral ideals have materialized again gradually. For others, such as the Maa-speaking Njemps (Iltiamus) of Lake Baringo, fishing (greatly despised by the Pastoral Maasai and Parakuyo) has become the mode of subsistence. Hjort (1981:53-59) has described the permanent move of Maasai into the Tigania Meru society, which they were forced to make after a series of epizootics, wars, draught etc. in the beginning of this century.

17. ADHERENCE TO PASTORALISM IN CHANGING CONDITIONS

The third theme is that the Parakuyo have tried to adhere to the pastoral economy in varying environments of their territorial expansion. It is obvious that pastoralism was the most rational mode of adaptation in the rather harsh ecological conditions of the Lake Rudolph area, considered to be the 'home' region of the Maa-speakers. When sufficient rain for successful agriculture was absent, pastoralism lended itself as a rational choice for appropriation of nature.

The present adherence of the Parakuyo to pastoralism must be seen in the historical perspective. Most of the time of their known history they have lived in areas, where pastoralism was almost the only alternative. There has been time enough to develop social and political structures, and even ideological systems, which are congruent with the mode of the ecological adaptation. It is no accident that they have retained and developed an elaborate age-set system, which allows the formation of an efficient defensive force to protect the livestock. But more than this, it also ensures a sufficient degree of coherence and means of communication despite long distances between localities.

Although we do not know why the proto-Maasai originally adopted circumcision, clitoridectomy, prohibition against eating certain animals, and other foreign customs in the times of the late pre-Southern Nilotes (Ehret 1971:53), we know that now these distinctive features serve as symbols of cultural identity. While these traits are associated with pastoralism practised principally in the main pastoral areas of Kenya and Tanzania, they emphasize the pastoral identity also, and particularly, in the new ecological conditions on the fringes of pastoral areas, where the danger of assimilation by other groups is imminent.

The Parakuyo are faced with other economic alternatives (particularly cultivation) when living among the more numerous agriculturalists and also with a danger of losing identity. So it seems at least to the outsider. In the investigated area they have, however, been able to resist successfully the pressures towards assimilation. It seems as if the total structure of the society would work towards ensuring the continuity of the existing system. The symbolism in these changed conditions is emphatically pastoral (Photo 29, p. 221). The presence of other ethnic groups with different cultures and economies has also made the emic classification of people here more concrete than it is in large pastoral areas. The separation of **Ilmeek** (s. **Olmeeki**) from genuine pastoral peoples, **Ilmaasai**, is an expression of the basic need to classify the universe (Douglas 1970a, b; Lévi-Strauss 1973). The history of the Parakuyo is a demonstration of how they have defended their pastoral identity in widely varying ecological environments and sought for areas suitable and free for pastoral pursuits.

18. INTERTRIBAL FIGHTING AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE PARAKUYO

The fourth theme is the intertribal fighting which greatly influenced the external conditions of pastoral peoples in East Africa prior to the colonial domination. These wars were fought mainly between groups generally referred to as Pastoral Maasai and Iloikop. The largest wars were in the middle of the nineteenth century in the area around Lake Naivasha and Nakuru.

It is not clear whether the Parakuyo were directly involved in these big wars, but it is obvious that groups which formerly had been associated with them were among the Iloikop, who alternately were called Kwavi and Lumbwa (Thomson 1968:241-42). These wars can be only marginally characterized intertribal, since both groups claim a common origin and were obviously one people in the past. Although the reasons for fighting are still largely unknown, the particular political situation at that time made it possible to attack one another without being threatened by external forces. Quarrels over grazing rights and water resources and eagerness to acquire more cattle have recurrently given rise to fighting, and these factors were obviously effective at that time.

Moreover, it seems that adherence to different ritual leaders has been a basis for grouping, and that some of these leaders have played an important political role in acquiring allies. At least some of the wars from the 1860s onwards were between the Iloikop groups (e.g. Laikipia, Wuasinkishu, and Samburu) supporting Koikoti and some of the Pastoral Maasai (e.g. Purko, Kisongo, Damat, Loita) adhering to Mbatian, who succeded his famous father Subet in 1866 (Low 1966:304-06). In these and other successive fights the Iloikop were beaten repeatedly, and although the Parakuyo were apparently not directly involved in the battles carried out in the Nakuru - Naivasha area, the increasing strength of the Pastoral Maasai made the position of the Iloikop also in other areas critical.

It is difficult to describe accurately what the Iloikop groups actually were. From the viewpoint of the Pastoral Maasai the principal criterion

is whether a group subsists purely on pastoral products or not. An important point here is that the distinctive criterion is not an ethnic, nor even a cultural difference, but the success in adhering to the purely pastoral mode of life (Jacobs 1979:35-36). With this in mind, the difficulty in identifying the Iloikop groups on the basis of accounts of the early travellers is understandable.

The oral traditions of the Parakuyo suggest that the separation from the main body of the Pastoral Maasai took place some time before the first decades of the 19th century. It is not known how much earlier this was.[8] Both the Parakuyo and the Pastoral Maasai share a tradition that they once were a single group. The former have a commonly known tradition that the separation was effected by a quarrel over a young bull (**olbungai**), which was dotted in colour, as opposed to the plain colours of the cattle of both parties. One day this bull was found drinking in a shallow river and both parties, living on opposite river banks, claimed the bull. Fighting and separation of the groups was a result of this incident, unimportant in itself.[9]

The Parakuyo also have a tradition that their group was separated into three (or two) parts on the route southwards from the place known to them as Kerio, one of them returning to the northwestern direction.[10] The historical evidence from other sources indicates that in the beginning of the 19th century one of the groups was located in the Naivasha-Nakuru area, while the other inhabited the area around Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Although the historical evidence of the connection between these groups is scanty and even contradictory (Low 1966:304-05), there is nothing contradicting the Parakuyo oral historical traditions. They maintain that the Parakuyo passed **Oldoinyo Oibor** (white mountain, probably Mt. Kilimanjaro) and **Oldoinyo Orok** (black mountain, possibly Mt. Meru).[11] At least the former was a place with Iloikop settlements in the middle of the nineteenth century, but was later occupied mainly by the Pastoral Maasai.

Being repeatedly a losing party the Parakuyo had to retreat from much of their previous areas which they had occupied. They were probably

Picture 5. Engassmet, a famous water well in the Kisongo Maasai area.

Picture 6. Typical tree savannah of the Mindu Tulieni village area.

Parakuyo who tried to extend their grazing areas south in the 1930s and were beaten back by the Gogo and Hehe.[12] Soon thereafter they were defeated by the Kisongo Maasai, whom they had attacked in need of cattle and grazing land. The Parakuyo had previously occupied at least parts of the Maasai area east and south of Naperera and Engassmet[13], but by the 1860s this area had been lost to the Kisongo Maasai. As a result of losing territory a number of Parakuyo had to seek refuge in Taveta, Kahe, on the lower slopes of Mt. Meru and in Arusha Juu. While still others were driven southwards, a significant number of them cleared the way back to the Wuasinkishu and Laikipia Plateau. The Parakuyo of the Western Bagamoyo District were probably among those who found a place for settlement in the areas of Zigua, Nguu, and Shambala (Thomson 1968:241-42).

The Parakuyo oral histories contain several place names of the present Southern Maasai area previously occupied by them. Such places are: Loonderkes and Kiteto in the Kibaya Division (Kiteto District); Loiborsoit and Loiborsiret in the western part and Naperera, Engassmet and Ruvu Remit in the eastern part of the Naperera Division (Kiteto District); and Lolkisalie in the Kisongo Division (Monduli District). This covers practically all the present Kisongo Maasai area (see Map 1)[14].

On the basis of contradictory oral traditions it is not possible to determine the exact times or even sequences of these moves. Probably the pattern of moves would be complicated, directed by two major factors: the need to search for richer and healthier grazing areas and the pressure of the expanding Pastoral Maasai (Berntsen 1979:133-34).

It is very probable that the Maa-speaking people whom the Pastoral Maasai found when pressing southwards to north-central Tanzania before 1700s (Ehret 1971:72, 75) were ancestors of the present Parakuyo. It is also probable that the Pastoral Maasai expansion and the Parakuyo retreat was rather slow, taking a time of generations. There is no reason to assume a rapid and once for all retreat of the Parakuyo, because the area was vast and the need for pasture of the Pastoral Maasai increased according to the population growth.

For example, there was a raid of about 800 - 900 'Maasai' warriors in 1881 against the coastal town Sadani. The warriors passed Mandera Catholic Mission station but left it untouched. In the raid about 10 warriors were killed. It is probable that these warriors were the Parakuyo of the Handeni area, who, pressed by the Pastoral Maassai from the west and north, attacked the coastal settlements.[15]

19. EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION

Although the advent of the British and German colonialism in the 1880s and of immigrants (European and Asian) meant diminishing grazing grounds, it had one positive effect. The intertribal wars were reduced to a minimum.[16] On the other hand, by the arrival of the European settlers the strength of the Maasai had already been diminished by locusts, cholera and rinderpest, probably much more than through internal fighting (Thomson 1968:241:43). These disasters had reduced the number of the Maa-speakers to a degree, that the colonial government of Kenya felt it justified to demand certain Maasai areas of the Kenya Highlands for white settlers. Similar demands were made also in the area of Tanzania.[17]

These arrangements were made seemingly peacefully, with the consent of the Maasai leaders, but gradually the strain towards good pasture increased by the growth of the Maasai population and the simultaneous expansion of European settlements. The Maasai and Iloikop in Kenya and Tanzania were taken off their best pastures, many of which were crucially important as dry season reserves for grazing. Pastoralists were driven to dry plains, and in the struggle for good pasture and water resources the Parakuyo were commonly the losing party.

In this light it is understandable that attacks were made also against coastal villages in order to recover funds for acquiring livestock enough to make the pastoral life again possible. It is probable that they were these Iloikop groups (apparently Parakuyo), who through their attacks on the Pastoral Maasai attempted to gain access to the richer grassland plains, and when driven back, even launched desperate expeditions to the coast (see above).

The claims of Jacobs that the Pastoral Maasai have unduly been given the reputation of being aggressive and warlike, while the actual aggressors were the Parakuyo and other pastoral or semi-pastoral groups, is only partially true.[18] The victors of the Iloikop wars had occupied the best pastures left over by the invading European settlers, and the Parakuyo were left to a dilemma, where the only solution was to acquire livestock and grazing land by any means at hand. The other alternative, of course, would have been to become disintegrated and to scatter among various agricultural groups. But this alternative was tantamount to cultural death.

20. LOCAL MIGRATIONS

The Parakuyo of the Mindu Tulieni village in the Lunga Division are rather recent settlers in this particular area. The immigration of the first settlers between 1936-1938[19] was caused by the need for more healthy and richer grazing lands, their former area in the Sangeni village south-west of Handeni being drought-stricken and infested by cattle diseases.[20] Population increase has probably been another reason, for the Sangeni area is still populated by the Parakuyo. At present they inhabit areas, which are generally not suitable for cultivation, but neither ideal for grazing.

In these areas, however, the most natural adaptation is still pastoralism, in spite of many cattle diseases and only satisfactory grass quality. They should not be seen as intruders into the areas of other ethnic groups, but rather as utilizers of such areas, which until recently were either totally unused or at least underutilized. The minor disputes between the Parakuyo and their agricultural neighbours over water rights and land use are inevitable, but their significance is small compared with the advantage which the pastoralists bring to the area by appropriating the otherwise useless soil and by producing meat and skins for the external market.

In the Mindu Tulieni village area there is a number of ecological constraints which still necessitate temporary moves (Hurskainen 1983),

although the principle of settling permanently in villages has been accepted. The Parakuyo hope, however, that the moves caused by arrogant population pressures and cattle raids is past history, and an era of planned livestock development is at hand.

There is one recurrent theme repeated by the Parakuyo elders in their historical accounts. It is the strong feeling of identity with the other Maa-speaking groups. "**Kira opa olorere obo pookin**" (One time we all were one people); "**Kira ake pookin nabo**" (But we are all one); "**Nikiboitunye opa te Kerio oo Ilmaasai**" (In ancient times we came from Kerio together with the Maasai).[21] Descending from the same ancestors they feel that they should be one people with similar interests.

NOTES to Chapter C

1 According to Murdock, a pastoral mode of life where subsistence is based primarily upon milk, meat and blood has "existed from the dawn of recorded history" among the peoples between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea; Murdock 1959:20-21. Being originally Nilotes the Parakuyo can be regarded to have historical roots similar with other Nilotes. Particularly the modern archaeological findings have shed light on the long history of pastoralism in the eastern and northern parts of Africa. There is substantial evidence to support the view that pastoralism in those areas has roots which extend to the pre-cultivation period over 4000 years ago; Siiriäinen 1982: 206; see also Jacobs 1975:410-13. It has been argued (Bower and Nelson 1980) that people with domestic stock have been living in Kenya and Northern Tanzania as early as 5 500 BC, possibly still earlier. Robertshaw and Collett (1983:294-95) have, however, rejected these early dates on the grounds that the dating methods on bones alone without additional (e.g. charcoal) simultaneous proof are too shaky for such conclusions.

2 Milking and bleeding cattle, pre-puberty custom of extracting lower incisor teeth, and some kind of age-set organization were features of these early Southern (or Highland) Nilotes, and they can still be found in sections of this branch, e.g. Barabaig; Ehret 1974: 157.

3 The remains of these early cultures in the Narok District, Kenya have been radiocarbon-dated to the beginning of the first millennium BC, and, among the finds more than 5 000 bones were identified, many of which belonged to cows. This is an indication of a pastoral culture with knowledge of milking; Odner 1972.

4 The Parakuyo should not be confused with the early pastoralists of the Dadog (Tatoga) sub-group, of whom the Barabaig and

Kisamajeng of the Mbulu District are examples; Oliver 1966:201; Sutton 1974:83.

5 The best known of these formerly widespread Southern Kalenjin groups in Tanzania is the Akie who inhabit the southern fringes of the Pastoral Maasai area. Their language has retained loans from an ancient Maasai dialect, which has been taken as an indication that there was a Maa-speaking group in north-central Tanzania before the present Maasai occupied the area; Ehret 1971:72-75, 179-79.

6 A significant number of Mbugu have been absorbed also into the Pare and Shambaa groups, but a few clans still have survived and retained the Mbugu language in the Usambara Mountains; Kimambo 1974: 199. See also Gutmann 1938:55-57.

7 This was confirmed by my observations and discussions in the Kisongo Maasai area. Also historical investigations show that the presence of Kikuyu settlers among the Pastoral Maasai of Tanzania was quite common before the Mau-Mau revolt; Smedjebacka 1973:190.

8 Msamau Kitasyekuo (**Ilkijaru** age-set) was of the opinion that all the remembered Parakuyo age-sets were circumcised in Tanzania. The age-set of his grandfather (**Iltwati**) was circumcised when they were already in Olparatia (means the Handeni area). This was from 1835 onwards; UTA 1975/15A/1-2. Contradictory to the above was Lelingo Lusekere's (**Ilkijaru** age-set) account that the **Ilkisaruni** age-set (initiation started around 1850) was circumcised in the 'original' home place Kerio, and that his grandfather Riko was among those who left Kerio; UTA 1975/21/1-2. Nobody else of the elders could give a continuous genealogy to the times of Kerio. It is apparent that the time span has contracted when memory has failed to recollect the details, and history has turned to myth; Lewis 1970:XI; 1976:122-23.

9 UTA 1976/113/5; UTA 1976/132/1-2.

10 UTA 1975/21/1-2; UTA 1975/15A/2.

11 UTA 1975/21/1-2; UTA 1975/15A/1.

12 Thomson 1968:240-41, 414. Also the Parakuyo oral history refers to Aisanga (means the Dodoma area) and Iringa (means the Usangu plain) where part of the Parakuyo proceeded; UTA 1975/21/2; UTA 1975/15A/2.

13 UTA 1975/15A/1-2; UTA 1975/14/1-2; Baumann 1891:257-60.

14 UTA 1975/15A/1-2; UTA 1975/14/1-2; UTA 1976/101A/1-2.

15 Bulletin Géneral de la Congrégation du St. Esprit et du St. Coeur de Marie, Tome XIII, 1883-, Paris, p. 98.

16 Ole Sankan 1973:4-7; UTA 1975/21/1.

17 Iliffe states that most of the land needed for white settlers in Tanzania was taken from the Maasai; Iliffe 1974:298. Loss of land and the need to recover stock made the Maasai accept a kind of informal alliance with the British government in Kenya. Through Olonana, the **oloiboni kitok** of the Kenya Pastoral Maasai, the government was able to pacify the arrogant warriors and recruit labour for government enterprises. Service in road building and in government military forces was used as a form of paying taxes. Particularly must be

noted that the government allowed the Maasai warriors to aquire cattle from other ethnic groups by means of raiding. As a consequence, many of the Maasai could abandon temporary economies, viz. road building, hunting, cultivation, selling ivory and rhino horns and resume pastoralism. Waller 1976:533-35, 552; Tignor 1972:278-80. For the Kenya Maasai see also Low 1968:34-38.

18 Jacobs 1965c:Ch. II; 1975:412.

19 Most informants gave the year 1936; UTA 1976/125/4; UTA 1975/21/1. Some mentioned a year later, but none later than 1938. The year 1936 is given also by Ndagala 1974:32. The first group of immigrants was composed of six elders, Sambingu, Tingi, Langwa, Roika, Parsangui and Olemalama, and their families; UTA 1976/101A/3.

20 UTA 1975/14/1.

21 UTA 1975/15A/1; UTA 1976/113/5-7.