

THE AGE SYSTEM OF THE NILO-HAMITIC PEOPLES

A Comparative Analysis

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PREFACE

The aim of the present work is a comparative study of the age-systems of the Nilo-Hamites and of their functions in the whole setting of the Nilo-Hamitic social organisation.

It was our original plan to cover the whole area of East Africa influenced by the Hamites, and study the age-systems of such peoples as the Hamitic, the Nilotic, the Nilo-Hamitic, and the Bantu-Hamitic peoples. The reason for such an ambitious plan was the still widely held opinion that the age-systems of all those peoples originated from the Galla. This opinion is voiced by Driberg under the issue "Age-grades" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. He writes: "The Galla, with their very complex system (of age-grades), are the centre and source of this (Hamitic) culture, and from them it has permeated all the Nilo-Hamitic tribes which cluster round them, the Masai, the Nandi, the Topotha, the Turkana and the Didinga." A superficial comparative examination of the age-systems of all these peoples is sufficient to convince oneself of the essential differentiations which make a borrowing of the systems from the Galla a rather improbable Hypothesis. The age-system of the Galla is known under the term Gada, and it is the conclusion of A. Jansen (see Bibl.) that the Galla have derived it from the Conso. The culture of the Conso is typically paleonegritic. Janesen's conclusion is consonant with Baumann's description of the paleonegritic culture for he gives the age-system as one of the typical traits of that culture.

Our knowledge of the Nilo-Hamitic societies is, on the whole, poor. There are too many gaps to be filled even in cases such as the Masai, where the available literature is comparatively voluminous. Nevertheless, the whole amount of

this literature is sufficient to make a comparative analysis of the age-systems advisable and possible. Recently, during these last years, new field research has been carried out among some of the Nilo-Hamites (Turkana, Suk, Lotuho), but the reports have not yet been made available to the reader. The present study, therefore, is to be considered as a preliminary critical evaluation of the extant literature, which we hope to complete as soon as the new evidence is produced.

In the latest classification of the African cultures the Nilo-Hamitic peoples have been grouped by H. Baumann (see Bibl.) as a separate cultural province (Kulturprovinz). Baumann states that the ethnographical and linguistic unity of the Nilo-Hamites is not very clear. Perhaps a more confident assertion of their cultural relationship can now be made.

The Nilo-Hamites occupy a continuous strip of land. It extends on the north above the 5th parallel, and on the south below the 4th parallel; it reaches on the west the 32nd meridian and on the east it extends over the 36th meridian. The country is for the most part typical African savanna, almost treeless, but generally grassy and thus offering good grazing for cattle. Usually there are two regular rainy seasons. In the north, especially where the Turkana and the Toposa live, the savanna gives place to a semidesert country where grass is scarce and the rainfall very poor.

According to Bryan and Tucker (see Bibl.) the linguistic unity of the Nilo-Hamites may be considered as warranted. They constitute a single linguistic family. This is established on the following criteria: 1. a large common vocabulary of Nilotic stems; 2. a large common vocabulary of non-Nilotic stems; 3. a large common vocabulary of Hamitic-like prefixes and suffixes." The amalgamation of the two basic vocabularies (Nilotic and non-Nilotic) says Tucker, is brought about by phonological laws of sound change, which provide the basis for the classification of the languages within the family.

There are five Language Groups in the Nilo-Hamitic family:

1. BARI: a single language with subsidiary dialects; 2. LOTUHO: a single language with subsidiary dialects; 3. TESO: a language group with three languages: TOPOSA, TURKANA, TESO; a dialect cluster; KARAMOJONG; and various dialects; 4. MASAI: a single language; 5. NANDI: a language group with two languages, NANDI, with subsidiary dialects; SUK, with subsidiary dialects.

The linguistic divisions do not entirely coincide with the ethnographical characters of the peoples. Thus, the BARI are ethnographically classified with the Nilotic cultural province. Similarly, the Dorobo, who speak Nandi dialects, stand apart ethnographically. They are best considered to be among the "eurafican hunters of the steppes" (die eurafrikanische Steppenjagerkultur) described by Baumann. Except for these cases, the linguistic classification of the Nilo-Hamites made by Bryan and Tucker fits the ethnographical traits very well, and we follow it for the general divisions of our present analysis.

Cattle-breeding or pastoralism together with some kind of agriculture are typical ethnographical traits of the Nilo-Hamites. The two cultural aspects may vary greatly from one people to another. Thus, some Masai tribes and the Turkana are almost entirely shepherds and live a semi-nomadic life, while some of the Nandi-Suk are predominantly agriculturalists and some (the Marakwet and the Endo) are skilled in irrigation technique.

The religious ideas of the Nilo-Hamites are centred on the notion of God. His manifestations are generally connected with atmospherical and celestial phenomena. Prayers and sacrifices are offered to Him individually and corporately. The influence of religious ideas on the social organism of the Nilo-Hamites, especially of the Masai, has been exaggerated in the past following the misinterpretation of the social role of the prophet and the rain-maker. It is now certain that the types

of Nilo-Hamitic societies do not offer an instance of any form of theocracy. That the influence of the prophet and rain-maker on social organisation is very limited is a conclusion which has been confirmed by our analysis.

The social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites is based on a system of clan divisions, of territorial divisions and age-classes. Politically it belongs to the decentralised type of societies. There is no political chief, nor any other state machinery to control political affairs. It has been for long a puzzle for the anthropologists to find the proper institution which integrates the Nilo-Hamites politically. Though the attention has always been focussed on the age system, this had been usually over-formalised and over-systematised, and it is always difficult to make sense out of the descriptions of the age-systems offered by our authorities on the Nilo-Hamites. We are confident of having shed some light on the subject by way of analysis and comparison, and of having definitely confirmed that the age-system provides the basis for the political integration of the Nilo-Hamitic societies.

From the first approach to the subject we have been faced with the problem of terminology. Much confusion in the Nilo-Hamitic literature has arisen from the want of proper terms for describing the structure of the age-systems. Radcliffe-Brown and others have made suggestions for the use of definite terms, but what they propose has proved in the course of our analysis inadequate and unsuited to the Nilo-Hamitic age-systems. We have had, therefore, to choose and define our own terminology.

Analysis shows that among the Nilo-Hamites the age-system is instituted by the performance of several and different ceremonies. There is a congeries of very detailed descriptions of such ceremonies. It has been necessary to analyse and compare them in detail in order to find out their real value and put them in their correct perspective with relation to the institution of the age-system. Not always an easy task! As far as possible we have avoided the detailed description

of any ceremony, except when details were relevant as showing the significance or insignificance of the ceremony for the structure of the system.

Our analysis is based entirely on the literature, and it occupies the first five chapters. The first two deal with the Masai and the Nandi-Suk, and must be regarded as fundamental. Only for these peoples is there sufficient materials for fairly complete analysis. The evidence for the other Nilo-Hamites takes on a comparative value from the conclusions of those first two chapters. These five analytical chapters should not be considered as disconnected. They all provide the evidence for the final evaluation of the age system, and constitute a necessary stage of work. The general conclusions are discussed in the last two chapters. First we describe the general features and principles of the Nilo-Hamitic age systems, and then, the functions of the age system in relation to the whole social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites. The conclusion issuing from all this analytical and comparative work shows that the age system provides the basis for the political integration of the Nilo-Hamitic societies.⁽¹⁾

(1) In July and October issues of "Africa," 1951, Dr. Peristiany has published a study on the Age System of the Pokot (the Pastoral Suk. See p.). The material provided is extremely good, and we regret of having been unable to use it for this work which had already been typed when the October issue appeared. The age system of the Pokot as described by Peristiany is a combination of the age system of the Nandi-Suk and the age system which obtains among the Turkana, the Karamojong, the Toposa, the Teso. It is this second system, the sapana system, that Peristiany describes and tries to interpret. His work has great comparative value. New problems arise, and it is to be hoped that similar studies on the other peoples who follow the sapana system are soon published to make possible a comparative discussion of such problems. As is known, for none of those peoples do we possess a reliable and scientific account of the age system (Gulliver's report on the Turkana is only "preliminary" and not yet published). On the whole Peristiany's interpretation coincides with the main conclusion of our analysis, namely that in the Nilo-Hamitic societies the age system serves many a function and provides the structural basis for their political organisation.

It is with pleasure that I record here my grateful thanks to Prof. I. Schapera for his generous supervision. Through him, and by the good offices of Mr. H.E. Lambert of the Secretariat, Nairobi, I could borrow and use some unpublished reports from the files of the Native Affairs Department, Nairobi. I wish also to acknowledge Mr. P.H. Gulliver's help. His suggestions and my perusal of his unpublished "Preliminary Survey of the Turkana" have made possible for me to try a tentative analysis of the age system of the Turkana which appears in Chapter III. It is finally an honour for me to acknowledge the encouraging assistance I received from Prof. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Oxford, who was good enough to read over my work.

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J.A.S. - Journal of the African Society.

J.E.A.U.N.H.S. - Journal of the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society.

J.R.A.I. - Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

K.L.C.E. - Kenya Land Commission - Evidence.

NAD - Native Administration.

R.S.E. - Rassegna di Studi Etiopici.

S.N.& R. - Sudan Notes and Records.

T.N.& R. - Tanganyika Notes and Records.

U.J. - Uganda Journal.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

TERMINOLOGY and THE AGE CATEGORIES.

In our present work we shall make use of the following terms:

- AGE SYSTEM. This indicates the whole phenomenon by which members of society are instituted into association on the basis of their physical or social age. AGE ORGANISATION is used as a synonym.
- AGE CLASS. This refers to the association of all those who have been initiated during the same period approved for the institution of the class.
- AGE UNIT. This refers to the temporary association of initiates, which leads to the final institution of the age-class.
- AGE SUB-UNIT. This describes the internal divisions of the age-units. It is ceremonially instituted as an association, and it is subservient to the institution of the age-unit. In the following pages the term is used only in connection with the Lotuho age-system.
- AGE MINIMAL DIVISION. This is a synonymous term for age sub-unit, but it differs from it for the minimal division is not ceremonially instituted as an age-association.
- AGE SET AND AGE GROUP. These two terms are generically applied to any of the above mentioned associations. By using these terms no reference is made to the specific structural value of the association involved, but solely to the fact that the association in question is based on "age". We use these two terms specifically whenever the nature of the association is not clear.

AGE CATEGORY. This refers to the broad and general divisions of society members based on physical or social age but not instituted as formal age-associations.

As appears, we do not accept the suggestion of Radcliffe-Brown for the adoption of the term "set" instead of "class". Radcliffe-Brown believes the latter to be "ambiguous and otherwise objectionable." (1) Although it is true that "class" has now various implications in social science, it is difficult to agree that the term "set" is not just as ambiguous and objectionable. The reasons why we prefer "class" to any other term, are founded on the history of the word. As known, "class" was first used to indicate the social divisions into which the constitution of Servius Tullius arranged all Roman citizens according to their property and their ability to contribute to military activity. In this sense, "class" not only refers to a generic social division, but it implies a well defined partition of society with members whose common status and function mark them out from all other classes. Such a meaning and such implications are not foreign to the present use of the term. The possible ambiguity with other accepted meanings of it is entirely avoided by the qualification "age". This qualification specifies the extension with which the term "class" is used. (2)

The existence of the age categories in East Africa as an

-
- (1) Radcliffe-Brown, p. 21. It is significant to note that disagreement with Radcliffe-Brown's suggestion was expressed in the same issue of "MAN" in which the Radcliffe-Brown correspondence appeared. F.H. Richard "ventured to suggest that his (Radcliffe-Brown's) choice of the word 'set' was unfortunate." Richard insisted on the term "group" as "more appropriate." But even "group" is certainly not better than "set". Both terms have never been universally accepted.
- (2) In a discussion with Prof. Schapera the term "fraternity" had first appeared as a good alternative for both "set" and "class". It would express well the bond of solidarity which is brought about between class-members by their coeval initiation into the class. Such a bond is often expressed in terms of classificatory kinship. A more careful examination of the point made it evident that "fraternity" implies a religious significance which is entirely foreign to the age-systems of the Nilo-Hamites. Also, it does not convey

established institution is always assumed without discussion.⁽¹⁾ We believe the matter marginal to the analysis of the structure of the age system, and we wish to dispose of it at this early stage.

Radcliffe-Brown in the above quoted correspondence suggests a definition of the term 'age-grade' as follows: "This term should be kept for recognised divisions of life of an individual as he passes from infancy to old age. Thus each person passes successively into one grade after another, and if he lives long enough, through the whole series, infant, boy, youth, young married man, elder, or whatever it may be. In East Africa, where the age-organisation is highly elaborated, each age-set normally passes from one grade to another as a whole." ⁽²⁾

Our approach to the matter is based on the variety of the information offered by our authorities.

a) Johnston, p. 827, reported that the Masai "young boys are classed" as Laioni, pl. Loiook. He distinguishes also the warriors and the old men.

Merker reckons five 'age grades' among the Masai, as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1. <u>ol aijoini</u> , | pl. <u>el aijok</u> | - till circumcision |
| 2. <u>os siboli</u> , | pl. <u>es sibolio</u> | - from the preparation of circumcision until the wound is healed |
| 3. <u>ol barnoti</u> , | pl. <u>el barnot</u> | - "during the introduction into warrior life" |
| 4. <u>ol morani</u> , | pl. <u>el moran</u> | - "full warriors" |
| 5. <u>ol moruo</u> , | pl. <u>el moruak</u> | - married man "until his life's end" |

We find no special mention of the "age grades" in Hollis.

Note 2 continued from previous page.

- (2) the meaning of social differentiation which is brought about by the institution of the age classes, and which is implied by the term "class".
- (1) Typical of this method is the following passage from Merker, p. 66: "Wie bei fast allen kulturarmen Völkern, so wird auch bei den Masai den einzelnen Individuen im allgemeinen durch die Altersstufe, der es zugehört, die soziale Stellung zugewiesen." Cp. also Huntingford (e), p. 62.
- (2) Radcliffe-Brown, p. 42-43.

But in the grammar section of his work, p. 28, under the entry "names of communities of peoples" he inserts the following ones:

Engeru, pl. in-gera - child.
 O-sipolioi, pl. I-sipolio - the recluse.
 Ol-barnoti, pl. Il-barnot - the saved ones.
 Ol-murani, pl. Il-muran - the warriors.

Under the same entry are found such names as: the natives, the strangers, the hypocrite, the Suk, the Aimer age, the Aiser clan.

Leakey, p. 197, describes the initiation in different stages as follows: the candidate stage, the novice stage, the junior stage, and the senior stage.

Other authorities on the Masai do not make any attempt to enumerate the grades, although they refer in a general way to the boys, the warriors, and the elders or old men as distinct groups. (1)

b) Hollis, p. 11, writes that among the Nandi proper "the male sex is divided into boys, warriors, and elders."

Huntingford, p. 10, defines the age of the Nandi classes by stating that of all the classes four are composed of the "old men", one of the "fighting age", one of the "circumcision age", and one of the "small boys".

Peristiany does not introduce any series of Kipsigis "age grades", nor do the other authorities. But Evans-Pritchard in his introduction to Peristiany's monograph, p. xxviii, states that among the Kipsigis "the boys by being initiated into an age-set, enter at the same time into the age-grade of warriorhood. There are three age-grades: boyhood, warriorhood, and elderhood."

Beech, p. 5. writes that "socially the Suk are roughly divided into Karachona - boys, murani - warriors, booi - elders."

(1) We find very significant the fact that authorities like Fosbrooke and Fox, generally so well informed on the social system of the Masai, did not find sufficient ground for a special description and definition of the "age grades", as suggested by Radcliffe-Brown.

c) The following are the different series of Turkana "age grades":

Dundas, p. 67, states that the Turkana are divided into

1. nidue - young boy
2. egile - warrior
3. kasikou - old man

Barton, p. 207-208, lists them as follows:

1. ngabanak - boy under 15
2. ngesurok - boy from 15 to 20
3. ngillok - warriors from 20 to 60.
These are subdivided as follows:
 - a. ngwalemongin (21-33)
 - b. ngchedomesiken (30-35)
 - c. ngoiyaren (35-40)
 - d. ngetera (40-45)
 - e. ngmergwara (45-50)
 - f. ngerowi (50-60)
4. ngkasiko - men over 60.

Enley, p. 164, states that there are "4 main classes" among the Turkana:

1. ude - "young boys, who have passed the epethe (child-in-arms) stage but have not yet performed the ceremony of spearing a bullock."
2. ngabana - "bachelors, who have been through the ceremony of spearing the bullock, and are, therefore, competent fighters."
3. ngillok - "all able-bodied men.... the flower of the Turkana."
4. ngethikou - "the aged and infirm."

Gulliver gave me the following list, to which, however, he did not want to attach any special meaning as these categories, he stated, "are the same age-gradations as found among all peoples":

1. edia, pl. ngdie - boy
2. ekile, pl. ngillok - man in a general sense
3. ekile netherokit - man economically independent
4. ekasiko, pl. ngikesikok - old man

d) The Toposa "age grades" are reported by Nalder, p. 69, as follows:

1. nyede - young boys: their heads are shaved except for a circle on the crown of the head.
2. nyikapanak - youths approaching puberty.
3. nyath - young men, beginning to grow the warrior's head-dress.
4. netherok - warrior's head-dress grown.
5. nyikurunok - elders.
6. omogongit - old men.

e) Wright, p. 70-71, says that a Teso during his "lifetime of roughly 70 years" passes through "stages or age-grades (atyakatyaka)", as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Imokeru - babe | up to 2 years of age. |
| 2. Ikoku - child | " " 6 " " " |
| 3. Elepat - boy | " " 14 " " " |
| 4. Etumunan - youth | " " 18 " " " |
| 5. Esapat - young man | " " 28 " " " |
| 6. Ekilokit - full grown man | up to 42 years of age. |
| 7. Apolon - elder | " " 66 " " " |
| 8. Emojong - old man | until death. |

f) Seligman, p. 322, reports the following 'age-distinctions' of the Lotuho:

1. Leidoli, pl. leidole - suckling.
2. Leto, pl. longiyaiyai - child.
3. Leto Korowong, pl. aduri korwong - youth
4. Leita, pl. leitak - middle aged.
5. Lamarwani, lamarwakh - old man.

Nalder, p. 92, states that among the Lotuho "there are only three grades":

1. Laduri khorwong - boys behind, i.e. supporting rank in war.
2. Monyemiji - protectors of the village, who 'are the grade in power'.
3. Lamarwak - "would presumably be about 48 when they quit office" (old men)".

"These age-grades", adds Nalder, "may be taken as sixteen year periods."

g) As a final source of comparative evidence we may note that the Census of the Native Population of Kenya and Uganda, 1949, included such an entry as the "Age-Grades in Years", and the following are the periods established:

"Under 1.
1 to 5.
6 to 15.
16 to 45.
over to 45."

All the above series of "age-grades" show how many divergent interpretations are offered by all our authorities even when the series are limited to a single people. It is certainly a remarkable fact that no such variance exists when the series of the age-classes are reported.

Redcliffe-Brown in his proposed definition of "age-grades" speaks of "recognised divisions of life" as an effect showing the differentiating mark of the "age-grades". Apparently "recognised" is here taken as "institutionalised". It indicates, in other words, that the "age grades" are an established form of social divisions accepted and acknowledged as such. It is our contention that the "age grades" among the Nilo-Hamites are not "recognised divisions of life" in the sense above specified.

The variation in, and extension of, the "grades" series reported above is striking. Indeed, they range from a minimum of three broad categories (the boys, the warriors and the elders) to an indefinite maximum such as the Turkana series reported by Barton, or the Teso series by Wright. How far, then, are we justified in saying that they are "recognised" or institutionalised divisions, when it is possible to have their number altered to such an extent? And if it is not possible to fix a consistent series of grades, how can we accept as warranted the statement that "in East Africa, where the age-organisation is highly elaborated, each age-set (in our terminology: age class) normally passes from one grade to another as a whole?" Evans-Pritchard states that among the Kipsigis it is "the grade of warriorhood" that is entered by the class of the initiates as a whole. It seems to us that his statement is not supported by the evidence. It is true, as we shall discuss below, that among the Kipsigis, in the same way as the other Nandi-Suk, the age-class is instituted as a whole at the Saket ap Eito, the collective closing ceremony (see pp. 158-170). But at this time, the initiates have been

warriors for some time, namely since their individual initiation. Besides, the overlapping phenomenon, as explained later, shows clearly that a class, as a whole, never functions in military matters to the exclusion of the other classes. Finally, warriorhood is only one aspect of the activities of the initiates, and to describe it as an age grade makes things more formal and intensive than they are.

We may, therefore, say that while the age grades as recognised formal institutions do not hold among the Nilo-Hamitic peoples, there are informal qualifications which are primarily a projection of the physical development, and secondarily of the class-status of a person. Indeed it is quite evident that all the above series are derived from these two principles, the stress being alternatively on either.

For all these reasons we think it advisable to avoid the use of the term "age-grades". It may also be added that the term "grade" is the one that suffers more than all others from ambiguity and equivocation, being used indifferently to indicate the age-classes and the age-categories. In its stead we prefer to use "age-categories", which indicates handsomely the general, broad, and informal nature of the social divisions established by the above mentioned qualifications. (1)

(1) We wish to point out here that, as far as the Masai are concerned, the void nature of the "age grades" was perceived by Lowie, p. 960-961, in his comparative discussion of the Plains Indian and Masai Age-Societies. Summing up his analysis, Lowie states first that among the Masai "there was not a series of degrees, through which each age-class had to pass but only the well defined stage of bachelorhood and the subsequent nondescript married conditions"... Then he continues: "Socially the 'boys' are non-existent; under that convenient caption the Masai simply lump together all uninitiated males. But neither are the married men more than a complex of heterogenous age-classes, negatively defined in contrast to the warriors, from whom, incidentally, the youngest class of elders is not so sharply divided since they are subject to military service. In reality two conceptions underline the whole Masai scheme, one relates to status, the other to an approximate age-grouping. It is misleading to regard the warriors as an age-class or as one society except secondarily." Secondarily, i.e. "when the warrior grade is occupied by a single age-class". So says Lowie. But our analysis shows that even "secondarily" it is misleading to regard the warriors as an age-class.

The institution of the age system affects only the male members of society, and does not extend to women. Indeed, it may be accepted as a warranted fact that the age classes of women are foreign to the authentic type of age systems afforded by the Nilo-Hamites. There have been reported a few cases of the performance of special initiations for women and of women class divisions. It is however, indisputable that these classes have no significance for the structure of the age-system, and obviously reflect the fundamental organisation of the male members. For these reasons we shall not take notice in these pages of the age-classes for women.

CHAPTER I.

THE AGE SYSTEM OF THE MASAI.

I

The name MASAI covers a group of related tribes in British East Africa and the Sudan. The linguistic classification of Bryan (see Bibl.) distinguishes five Masai tribes:

1. THE SAMBURU, north east of Lake Baringo, in the Rift Valley and Northern Frontier Provinces of Kenya. They are sometimes called Burkeneji, a derivative from il-loo-iboorkeneji, the people of the white goats. They are pastoral. We know very little of their social organisation as they have never been studied on the field.

2. THE NJAMUSI or NJEMPS. They live close to Lake Baringo, and are mainly agricultural. Dundas (2), p.50, states that "they are survivors of a Samburu tribe called Il Digio". Of the Njamusi also we know almost nothing.

3. THE KAPITI or KAPUTIEI. They live mainly in Kenya around Narok, Ngong and Kajiado. Some are found in Tanganyika. All are pastoral. Hollis' standard work on the Masai refers mainly to this tribe.

4. THE KISONGO, found mainly in Tanganyika around Loliondo and Mondul. There are a few in Kenya. All are pastoral. The other standard work on the Masai by Merker describes, for the most part, the Kisongo.

5. THE LUMBWA. The name means "farmers", and is correctly applied only to the agricultural Masai. Persistently, but wrongly, it has been used to refer to the Kipsigis. The Lumbwa are found mainly in Tanganyika near Lake Natron, Lake Manyara, and around Arusha and Mt. Meru. They are called by the other

Masai Il-Oikop, a name of despisal.⁽¹⁾

According to Bryan and Tucker, all these Masai tribes are linguistically distinguished by "very slight dialectal differences." On the whole, those two authorities stress the linguistic unity of all the Masai.

The great majority of the Masai are pastoral, only very few tribes having taken to agriculture. The pastoral tribes follow a semi-nomadic way of life. "They move," writes Lord Hailey, p.283, "with their herds in order to avail themselves of the seasonal variations in water supplies, so that in effect practise a system of rotational grazing." The same writer, p.167, reports "a recent estimate" of Masai herds in Kenya which puts "the number of cattle at over 700,000, with 800,000 sheep and a large number of donkeys." For Tanganyika he gives no figure. The above estimates show clearly enough how the attitude of the Masai to cattle is a paramount feature of their life. To own cattle is a privilege obtained through initiation, and large herds are a sign of outstanding social status. Cattle are the main economic interest and investment for the Masai.⁽²⁾

The total population of all the Masai may be reckoned at about 122,792. The 1948 census of Kenya's population (see Bibl.) gives for the Samburu an estimate of 20,000, and the following figures: Njemps 3,423, and the other Masai 67,201. In 1931 the Tanganyika Masai were reckoned as 32,168.

Under the present political situation, the Masai are not administered as a single unit, for they are cut by the border of Tanganyika Territory and Kenya Colony into two sections.

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- (1) There are other names which do not indicate any special tribe, such as Il-Arusha, applied to the Masai living in or around Arusha. They are called Wa-Arusha by the neighbouring Bantu. Meru is the name for the Masai living on the slopes of Mt. Meru. They should be distinguished from the ba-Meru of Kenya Colony, Central Province. Kwafi is the Swahili term for the Masai, but it is especially applied to the Lumbwa of Kilosa District in Tanganyika.
- (2) In this connection see the article of L. James in "Africa", 12, pp.49-73.

In Tanganyika the Masai form one of the four districts of the Territory's Northern Province (the Masai District). In Kenya the main group inhabits the reserve adjoining Tanganyika Masai District, and constitutes the Extra Provincial District (Masai District) of the Colony. The other group (Samburu and Njamusi) is incorporated with the Rift Valley Province (Samburu and Baringo District), and partly with the Northern Frontier Province. The geographical separation of the Samburu from the other Masai is the reason why the Samburu were considered, and are still considered, as a non-Masai tribe. But, as Bryan remarks, they are true Masai. The splitting of Masailand and the separation of the Masai were made permanent by the present administrative arrangement, but were not established by it. The land which divides the Samburu in the north from the Kapiti in the south of Kenya, was once the home of the Laikipiak and the Uasin Gishu Masai. In those days, Masailand was ^a continuous strip of land stretching over the plains south of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru up to the shores of Lake Rudolph. At the end of the 19th century a great cattle plague and, more important, civil wars (the Kapiti versus the Laikipiak and Uasin Gishu) wrought havoc among the latter, who were almost destroyed. The few remnants have been absorbed by the other Masai tribes, especially the Kapiti and the Kisongo. The Laikipiak plains west of Nanyuki which in 1904 had first been set aside as a special reserve (the northern Masai reserve), were subsequently declared open to European settlement, and by the 1911 Agreement the Southern Masai Reserve was enlarged into what is now the Extra provincial District of the Masai in Kenya Colony. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Cfr. Sandford, Appendix; and K.L.C.E., p.188. One may note here that the Uasin Gishu and the Laikipiak, together with the Siria and the Lumbwa were regarded as inferior, because they were not thought of as "pure Masai" by the other tribes who regarded themselves as descendants of Maasinda. See Fosbrooke, p.7. This ill-feeling may explain some of the fury with which the fighting against the Laikipiak and the Uasin Gishu was conducted.

In December 1950, I visited the Ndigirri Dorobo at Dol Dol on the Mugododo Hills, some 50 miles north west of Nanyuki. They claim to have been dependent on the Laikipiak Masai, and they survived the slaughter thanks to their seclusion in the forests. Their present outlook seems to be entirely Masai. The names of their age-classes are consonant with those of the Masai.

A careful comparative analysis of the available literature shows the existence of three graded territorial units, the major and the minor territorial sections, and the village. A character common to the first two sections is the absence of any definite line-boundary. The sections are spoken of in terms of watering and grazing rights. The nomadic aspect of Masai life is chiefly responsible for this territorial vagueness. Nomadism cannot be contained within territorial limits, but the migrating trends it follows may be diverted by established social rights. The absence of any centralised authority with the right to check the movements of the people is another important cause of the vagueness of the Masai territorial organisation.

The major territorial section is made up by the area in which the movements of a full tribe usually take place. The existence of these sections is evidenced at a superficial level by the adoption of a common tribal name. But members of a major section are more closely knit by the bond of their social, ceremonial and military relationships based on their common age-system. Fosbrooke, p.9, who did not consider the major territorial section as a category of the Masai territorial organisation, tries to explain as follows the Kisongo major section: "the majority of the Masai in Tanganyika regard themselves as Kissongo, but Kissongo is a very difficult term to define, for it is neither a sub-tribe, nor yet, strictly speaking, a section. The nearest definition is probably "that group of sections which follows the Mondul laibon." (The underlining is mine). We shall discuss below the relationship of the laibon to Masai social organisation. The early field-researchers, Merker and Hollis, recorded the major territorial sections which they called 'Provinzen' and 'Districts', respectively. Merker, p.8, gave their number as three: Kisongo, Loita and Ol Bruggo. Hollis (a), p.260 and 290, counted five: Kaputiei (Kapite plains) En-aiposha (Naivasha), Kisongo (South and West Kilimanjaro), Uasin Gishu and 'L-Aikiapiak. He noted that the last two had practically ceased to exist. The point is

also confirmed by S.L. Hinde in "The Last of the Masai", p.91 and 97. The term en-gop, pl. in-gwapi, which Hollis translates as "the land, the country", seems to apply to these major sections. Their number corresponds, at present, to the linguistic groups we have reported above.

The minor territorial sections have been made the subject of special analysis by Fosbrooke. He defines it, p.7 and foll., as "a territorial unit of the Masai, the members of which regard themselves as owners of the waters and grazing grounds, to the exclusion of other sections. Such a unit is called ol osho, pl. il oishon. Alone or in groups the sections function as units in war, in allegiance to a particular laibon, and in performance of certain tribal ceremonies; in general they possess a sense of solidarity which expresses itself in regarding members of other sections to a certain extent as strangers."

The absence of definite geographical limits and the stress on water and grazing rights have been noted. The position of the laibon in connection with the nature of the major and minor territorial sections is questionable. Fosbrooke, and we shall have to quote him again on this point, has put into evidence the marginal significance of the laibon or prophet for the Masai social organisation. He has also shown how wrong it is to ascribe to the institution of the prophet a political function. The prophet can only obtain a personal political influence which is his, and does not belong to office. Now, to describe the institution as the centre of the allegiance of the members of territorial sections is tantamount to making the prophet a central political authority which he is certainly not. The important point in the nature of the territorial sections is the consciousness of the members of the sections of being sufficiently strong and numerous as to be entitled to keep tribal ceremonies of their own. The point is brought home by the analysis of Fosbrooke. In studying the Laitayok minor section

he writes: "in some areas they (the Laitayok) have been absorbed by the section amongst whom they resided, and thus eventually they came to be regarded as a clan; in other areas they were sufficiently numerous to enable them to retain their own grazing grounds, and to justify their holding tribal ceremonies of their own". (My underlining). Fosbrooke insists on the fortuitous origin of the territorial minor sections. The point becomes obvious if the nomadism of the Masai and the absence of any centralised authority are kept in mind. People remain in a definite place only for as long as they may find good grazing and water for their cattle, but they are apt to move as soon as these fail, thus breaking their territorial allegiance.

We offer here a tentative list of the minor territorial sections as we have abstracted it from the literature:

SAMBURU.	1. Pusigishu	4. L'Orogishu	8. Longeli
	2. Masola	5. Doiju	9. Nyabarei
	3. Lukumai	6. Mwesi	7. Loimusi
NJAMUSI.	According to Dundas (a), p.49, there are only two villages: Njemps Kubwa or Mjemps Liabori - down stream; and Njemps Ndogo or Njemps Lekepir - up stream.		
KAPITI.	1. Kaputiei	3. Ladokilarsi	6. Purko
	or Kapiti	4. Kakonyuke	7. Loita
	2. Damat	5. Dalalakotok	8. Matapatu
KISONGO.	1. Kisongo	2. Sigirari	5. Salei or Saleh
	a.Kiteto	3. Laitokitok	6. Laitayok
	b.Moiba	4. Siria	
LUMBWA.	1. Nguruman	2. Serenget	3. Engaruka

The villages, the minimal territorial units, are distributed within the minor sections. Johnston, p.810, had already noted that "they generally range within certain districts." In Masai, the village is called eng ang, pl. ing angite. The village is the residence of one or more elders with his or their wives and cattle. A man after his marriage does not live in the same village as his father, unless the latter has become senile and unable to cater for himself.

The internal structure of the village is based on the gate-system. This consists in a proper arrangement of the houses on

the sides of each gate of the village. The village is made up of a large piece of ground fenced all round by thorns, with gates opening at opposite sides. The houses are built on the right and left sides of each gate, every elder in the village having his own gate. The first house on the gate's right is the dwelling of the elder's first wife; the first house on the left side is that of the elder's second wife; the second house on the right side is that of the elder's third wife; and the same alternating order is followed when more wives are taken. The central space of the village is reserved for the cattle. Each elder's cattle are allotted to his wives according to their rank in the house. Cattle in possession of people on one side of the gate cannot be inherited by the other side. Special devices are observed so as to avoid such interchange of cattle in case of inheritance. (See especially Merker, p.27-28). The gate system, observes Fosbrooke, p.44, is an ideal, and "a symmetrically arranged gate is seldom found in practice." "When people migrate from one place to another in search of better grassland, the village is not destroyed, but simply evacuated. During the owner's absence the houses may be occupied by other temporary tenants. When the reverse migration takes place, the owner may come back to his old village if this is not irreparably decayed, and if a foreigner is found living there, it is agreed by custom that he must vacate the place to the original owner.

Another type of village of the Masai should be mentioned here. It is the temporary residence of the unmarried initiates, and is called ol manyatta, pl. i manyat. According to Merker, p.82, "in every section there is at least one warrior's village which gathers all the warriors of the section." This type of village must be considered as a special institution connected with the structure of the age-system. For this reason, it is not to be regarded as a further territorial unit, though it shows the inter-relationship between the age-system and the territorial organisation. We shall come back to it again below.

There are two moieties among the Masai, which seem to provide a basic division in clan organisation. All members of Masai society are found in either of the two moieties. These are called generically en daloshi, pl. in daloishin, and are individually distinguished as the orok kiteng - the black cattle, and oodo mongi - the red bulls. No exogamic restriction is attached to the moieties, but military organisation seems to be somewhat influenced by them. "Whenever," writes Hollis (a), p.260, "the representatives of the clans take part in a raid", they are divided according to their moiety, and after the raid, the loot is also divided "into two parts, one part for each of these main groups."⁽¹⁾ Merker, p.97, states that the expression orok kiteng and oodo mongi are used in songs by warriors of the two groups as a war-cry. According to Fosbrooke, p.48, the orok kiteng "are regarded as the right hand of the tribe," and the oodo mongi as the "left hand." He adds also that this dual division is typical of the "true Masai."

At present there is no relationship between the moiety and the territorial system, but a few indications suggest a stronger relationship in the past. Thus, in Laitokitok section, according to Fox (a), p.457, there is an equal number of "black cattle" and "red bulls". Hollis (a), p.261, recorded the two subdivisions of the Uasin Gishu, "the black striped cattle", and "the red striped cattle", which were, very probably, no other divisions than the moieties.

The Masai clans, ol gilata, pl. il gilata or en gishomi, pl. in gishomi, are patrilineal and exogamous. Generally, they seem to have no totemic character. However, Hobley (b), p.129, and the author of MS. No. 48 have recorded the names of a few totems connected with the clans. Fox (a), p.458, refers to the association of snakes with some clans.

(1) See also Merker, p.97; Fox (a), p.457; and also Hobley (b), p.121, who states that the moiety divisions were followed for cattle-breeding purposes. Compare the Turkana moieties; they too, were distinguished in time of war by different songs and cries and tactical movements.

The true exogamic unit in the clan system of the Masai seems to be any undivided clan or branch of the clan. Members of other clans, and even aliens (Kikuyu and Dorobo, etc.) may be adopted and coopted into a Masai clan. The adoptee, however, will never attain the same social status as a full member of the clan. The adoptee is free to leave the clan at any time, provided he leaves behind whatever he has obtained from his patrons, such as cattle or any other valuable.

The relationship between the clans and their territorial distribution is not very clear. Analysis would suggest that in the past, the clans were territorially separated. At present, there is still a tendency for members of the same clan to stand close and occupy neighbouring encampments. Some sections are made up by members of a single clan. Thus, the Molelian clan is predominant in Kapiti section; the Atayok clan is predominant in Dalalakotok section. Such facts, however, seem to be the exception. Usually clans are represented in many different sections at a time. "There is no rule," writes Hobley (a), p.122, "governing the distribution of the various gilat (clans); often members of as many as three gilat will be found in one moru engang (elders' village) or a moran manyat (warriors' village).

Water and cattle are generally in possession of clans. When new water sources are discovered, they are claimed on behalf of the clan. All members of the clan who live in the neighbourhood are entitled to make use of them. A foreigner may also be allowed to water his cattle there. If disputes arise, they are settled by the council of clan-members under the presidency of the most senior of them. As a matter of fact, these water sources are the centre of ordinary social life, as Fosbrooke writes, p.42. "The clansmen frequently meet on the water, and other matters - marriage, debts, etc. - come up for settlement before the tribunal." Cattle ownership by clan does not exclude individual ownership, but it integrates it as a sort of higher supervision. The point is that no clan property must be passed over to other clans without the approval of the

owning clan. Hobley (b), p.129, states that cattle used to be marked by a brand showing possession by the clan, and sometimes by the brand of the individual owner.

The corporate bond arising from clan relationship is confirmed by cases of murder compensation. Even if a murderer is a wealthy man, and might pay all the compensation out of his own stock, "the other branches of the clan would still contribute and they would pay their share." However, "if a Masai kills a member of his own branch of the gilat he pays compensation himself, and the other branches do not contribute."⁽¹⁾ Leakey, on the other hand, was told by his informants that no compensation is expected when a man kills a member of his own branch. They say: "what would be the use of taking a fine from one's own sub-clan?"⁽²⁾ Hobley (b) reports further that "each branch of the gilat to whom the murdered man belongs, receives a share of the compensation: 2/3rds to the murdered's father", and the rest is distributed among the other elders of the clan. This is also confirmed by the notes of Maguire on the penal code of the Masai.

The many efforts of the Administration to find out a native political institution in order to hand over the local government to its representatives, make a very interesting piece of ethnographical history. First in Kenya, and also, after 1918, in Tanganyika, the laibon was recognised as the Paramount Chief of the Masai. In Kenya the office was abolished in 1918, and a system of councils was introduced. There were a Central Masai Council, 14 Native Councils and local Headmen. All these authorities acted as tribunals, the Central Council being the Appeal Court. In the thirties, the system was again modified, and there are now two regularly constituted Tribunals in each of the two Kenya Districts, Narok and Kajiado, in the Masai

(1) See Hobley (b), p.123; Fosbrooke, p.42-43.

(2) Leakey, p.209.

reserve and an Appeal Tribunal in each district. In Tanganyika changes came later. In 1938 the post of Paramount Chief was also abolished and a new system introduced. There is now a Masai Council, acting as the Appeal Court from the six Local Courts established under the authority of a Headman. Lord Hailey, commenting on the Tanganyika system remarks that "the whole of the juridical organization seems on a tentative basis, and in practice it functions irregularly, owing to the nomadic habits of the people." This is more or less true also for Kenya. It is a fact that, in Kenya and in Tanganyika, the Masai never accepted the authority of the prophet in terms of Paramount Chief, and dislike the idea of a formally established court.⁽¹⁾

Nomadism, as Lord Lailey points out, has much to do with this attitude of the Masai, but it seems that the real problem derives from the fact that the social structure of the Masai has no place for such institutions as the political religious chief or any other form of centralized authority. As we shall point out in the course of our present study, whatever political authority is exercised among the Masai, it is carried out on the structural basis established by the age-system. This has a dynamic character which can hardly be reconciled with the stability of any administrative system imposed from above by the Government.

The institution of the Masai prophet is described as follows by Fosbrooke, p.13-14. He distinguishes three types of laibon: "First, there is the private practitioner, who, for suitable remunerations, will perform such services as curing sickness, removing barrenness and ensuring fidelity in wives. He is only consulted by individual patients. The next step is when a private practitioner has acquired such a reputation that

(1) Working of the Native Authority system in Kenya after 1918, Lord Hailey says, p.171: "these Tribunals were not generally recognized by the Masai who preferred that such issues as arose between them should be settled in the customary manner by the Headman or Elders." And with regard to the new development he notes, p.175, that "the preference for referring cases to the arbitration of local headmen or elders persists." He makes a similar comment for Tanganyika, p.294: "in the Masai District the majority of the issues arising between the tribesmen are settled by arbitration."

he is consulted by a deputation on behalf of a group of Masai, and provides charms and lays down a ceremonial to be utilized to the advantage of the whole group. Such practices are alleged to be efficacious for the above-mentioned complaints, and may also prove useful in procuring success in war, adequate rainfall, or immunity from disease, both human and bovine. Such a laibon of course retains his private practice. The final stage is when a laibon is invited to superintend and bless ceremonials affecting the whole tribe, such as circumcision, promotion of warriors, standing down, etc. Such a one retains the duties of the two previous stages, and is in fact the Chief Medicine Man of the section or tribe. This is the status which the term laibon popularly connotes." From this description we notice first that the prophet is essentially a private practitioner and secondly that his promotion to the higher stages of the practice derive primarily from his personal skill and good luck which give him reputation and, therefore, influence on common matters. It is significant, however, to stress the fact that the prophet, also when he has attained the highest stage of reputation, "retains the duties of the two previous stages" or, in other words, he does not cease to be a private practitioner. It seems, therefore, that to call him by the title of "Chief Medicine Man" makes his office much more formal than it really is. As a matter of fact, Fosbrooke is unable to decide whether he is the Chief Medicine Man "of the section or tribe." It is on account of this over-formalisation that our early authorities and the Administration were misled in the evaluation of the prophet institution. At p. 67 and 236-237 we discuss the relationship of the prophet with the structure of the age-system.

II

Preliminaries to the institution of the Age-Class.

The age-system of the Masai consists essentially in a structure of age-classes arranged and distinguished from one another in terms of seniority. The institution of the age-class is the final result of a long course of initiation ceremonies, performed during an official approved time.

The age-class must be distinguished from other minor groups such as the age-units. These are formed at different stages of the initiation course as intermediate steps to the establishment of the age-class. The age-class follows from the merging and unification of two age-units.

The Masai term for age-class is old aje, pl. il ajjik; for age-unit, ol poror, pl. il poror.⁽¹⁾ These two terms are frequently rendered into English as 'generation' and 'age', respectively. This terminology is too vague and of little assistance in shedding light on such a confused matter.

The two Masai terms are sometimes used alternatively;⁽²⁾ but usually ol aje stands for the broader and final association i.e., the age-class, and ol poror for the temporary association i.e., the age-unit.

Age-class membership is obtained through initiation, and is held for life. The initiation course is opened by some preliminary ceremonies. These must be performed before any individual member may be initiated singly or in a group. Analysis shows that the importance of these ceremonies in

(1) Merker, p.70-73; Hollis (a), p.122 and 261-63; Leakey, p.191-192; Fox (a), p.449; Fosbrooke, p.25.

(2) Cfr. Whitehouse, p.146; Fox (a), p.449.

connection with the institution of an age class varies greatly. These are the names of the ceremonies: 1) Epolos e-sita; 2) Embolosata; 3) Endungore; 4) Engibata.⁽¹⁾

Epolos E - Sita

"The passing of the fence." (Hollis (a), p.294-295).

"A Masai child," states Hollis, "cannot be circumcised until the father has observed a custom called "The passing of the fence." The ceremony consists in a period of four days segregation. The candidate's father lives in a special hut set apart from the village, where he also takes his food. During this time he wears the clothes, decorations and weapons of a warrior. On the last day he is taken back to the village by some elders. Before he enters the house where the ceremonial wine is kept, he is addressed five times by one of the elders thus: "Go, become an old man." He refuses saying: "Ho, I shall not." At the fifth time, he replies - "Ho, I have gone then." He then, enters the hut and puts aside the warrior's paraphernalia; the honey wine is drunk; and he is called by his son's name, thus: The father of so-and-so. When he replies to his name, he is told to go and make a profit. He answers: "Herds and flocks." This is repeated four times, and the ceremony is over."

(1) It is a widely held opinion that the institution of Masai age-class is based entirely on the circumcision ceremony. Actually it is not uncommon to find the term "circumcision" used as an alternative to age-system and its groups. This opinion is partly justified by the expressions "right-hand circumcision" (emurata tatene) and "left-hand circumcision" (emurata Kedyenye), applied by the Masai to the first and second age-units (il poror) that form a single age-class (ol aje).

It is a fact that circumcision is one of the outstanding ceremonies of the initiation course. However, it should be realised that circumcision is not identical with initiation, and above all that the institution of the age-units as well as the age-class does not arise immediately out of circumcision. Therefore the tendency to make everything connected with Masai age-system gravitate towards circumcision is misleading and a further obstacle to an understanding of the system.

The ceremony is performed only once in a man's life, namely when he "wishes to have his eldest child circumcised". This particular circumstance shows that by "the passing of the fence" a man obtains a special elderly status which gives him a right to have all his children initiated.

Thus, there is a relationship between the father's social status and the initiation into the age-class of his son's. None of these may be initiated unless the father has reached the proper status. The personal status of the father is reflected on his children. Therefore the "passing of the fence" is not part of the age-system initiation, but a condition which must have been observed before a man is allowed to have his sons initiated.

Other authorities (Fox) have stressed the fact that class membership of a Masai is somehow dictated by the class to which his father belongs. "The passing of the fence" gives a special emphasis to this fact and shows how a Masai's initiation into a class is conditioned by the social status of his father. It shows how the structure of Masai society stands on the balance of status of its members.(1)

"The tearing of the ox." (Embolosat ol Kiteng).

(Fox (b), p. 189-90; Leakey, p.448; NAD, 1926, p.9 n.11; 1927, p.15 n.61; Fosbrooke, p.27).

Though this ceremony is performed by a single section or a group of sections, its importance is far reaching and its value accepted throughout Masailand. The ceremony is performed by such sections as the Kakonyuke, the Dalalakotok and the Purko (all KAPITI). According to Fox the Kisongo also perform it. But this is denied by Fosbrooke, who qualifies Fox's statement by saying that the Kisongo acknowledge

(1) The social balance between the father and his own son is only an expression of a wider and basic principle, which, in our opinion, is an essential principle of Masai social organisation: the principle of the balance of power.

and respect the value of the ceremony performed by the Kakonyuke.

As a matter of fact special importance is attached to the ceremony performed by the Kakonyuke, who must be the first and give the lead in its performance. All the sections which do not hold their own ceremony come to, or acknowledge, the Kakonyuke ceremony.

The Embolosat is preliminary not only to the circumcision ceremony, but also to any other initiation ceremony.

Three different stages make up the whole of the ceremony, namely the election of the master of ceremonies, the contest, and the sacrifice of a bull followed by the naming of the age-unit.

a. The ceremony is organised by the elders. Their first task is to select a youth qualified to be a master of the ceremonies (ol opolos ol Kiteng). They also must obtain his father's consent on payment of some heifers.

The transaction is kept secret because the office is not popular with the youths. The elders' nominee is seized in order that he may not escape, and told what is in store for him.

Not every boy is eligible for the office, but only a member of the Lugumai clan. The ol opolos must wear the garments and the ear-ornaments (surutya) of the elders, with whose status he is being bestowed. This seems the reason for the reluctance to accept the office. The status of the ol opolos is ceremonial and, according to Fox, he has no function outside the Embolosat.

The ol opolos has to supply the ceremonial bull, "with out blemish, colour black with white breast,"⁽¹⁾ and the ceremony is completed at his village which is enlarged for the occasion.⁽²⁾

b. The day of the contest is fixed by the elders. In the morning the bull is taken back to the village, while the elders officially introduce the ol opolos to the other candidates. These are told to look up to him because he is their ol opolos. Then, the elders order the bull into the village and immediately the boys rush in to get hold of it.

Not all the boys enter the competition, only a few from each attending section.⁽³⁾

(1) In the Annual Report, NAD, 1926, p.9 n.11, we are told that the "black ox is fed for one day on milk and native beer, not being allowed to eat grass."

(2) According to Leakey a special new village is built.

(3) Leakey writes that "only those candidates for initiation whose fathers took part in a horn-seizing ceremony are allowed to take part; the rest of the candidates cannot do so, but stay at their houses while the ceremony takes place."

Members of the Kakonyuke section make a point of being victorious. The contest is stopped by the elders as soon as victory is in sight. This consists in getting a hold of the bullock by its right horn and maintaining the grip.

c. After the contest the bull is smothered, and skinned; rings are made out of the skin and distributed by the O1 apolos. (1) "The meat is eaten and the elders go to a place apart to pray to God for the boys. The age is then given a name which is kept until the E-Unoto ceremony, which takes place some years later." (Fox).

The bones of the ox are burnt and the fire is guarded until it goes out, lest some evil spell be cast on it.

Eventually the boys return to their homes and wait for their turn to be circumcised.

An essential point in an analysis of the significance of the Embolosat is the fact that "only the right hand circumcision", i.e. the first of the two age-units of an age class, performs the ceremony. (2) It means that the Embolosat is the first ceremony of the initiation which institutes the class, and not simply of the initiation which institutes the age-unit. Indeed the left hand circumcision, i.e. the junior age-unit of the class, does not perform it, and therefore the senior age-unit acting at the Embolosat does it on behalf of the whole class. The Embolosat should then be regarded as the starting point of a new class, opening the period during which the class will be instituted. This particular value of the Embolosat is confirmed by the acceptance on the part of all the Masai of the Kakonyuke ceremony.

We do not know the reason why the Kakonyuke performance should have such a paramount importance, but its general value seems to be thoroughly established. Leakey states that "only one ox-seizing ceremony (is held) in the whole Masai country, before a new age-group proceeds to initiation and

(1) According to Leakey, the ol opolos is given a thong made from the skin and he is supposed never to throw it away, an obligation which does not apply to the youths who are given the rings.

(2) In the chart of Masai "age-grades" arranged by Fosbrooke, p. 24, the Embolosat is shown as taking place before the two circumcision periods of the age-units. This does not agree with the evidence offered by Fox.

circumcision." This statement is qualified by Fox in the sense that the Embolosat is also performed by other sections, as we mentioned above, but the Kakonyuke must first perform it. Of the Kisongo Fosbrooke writes: "the elders are extremely vague as to its meaning, but that the new age is formally inaugurated by Embolosat in Kenya is fully confirmed by the elders round Monduli."

The value of the Kakonyuke Embolosat is further ascertained from the analogous value of the Ngeherr proper of the Kisongo. This is a ceremony perfecting the institution of a class. It is performed by the Kisongo and accepted by all the Masai of Tanganyika and Kenya. See below p. . . .

The fact that sections other than the Kakonyuke hold their own ceremony may probably be ascribed to the tendency of the sections to act independently. Their performance has at any rate a limited local value.

The Endungore - Engibata.

(Merker, p.61; Bagge, p.168; Hollis (a) p.196; Leakey, p. 187-197; Fox (a), p.448-450; Whitehouse, p.146-148; Dawson, p.1-9; 1932, p.22,n.63, NAD, 1937, p.32 n.54; Fosbrooke, p. 16-17, p.26-27.)

It appears that these two ceremonies, the Endungore and the Engibata are closely connected, if not actually one single ceremony.⁽¹⁾ The aim of the Endungore-Engibata is to define the period for the institution of the age-units and start the initiation course related to such institution. The ceremony is performed by "the right hand and the left hand" age units, i.e. before the institution of each of the two units (Whitehouse, Merker, Fosbrooke).

Some of our authorities stress the fact that the first step towards initiation must be taken by the boys. This is true, but the decision to hold the ceremony rests entirely with the elders, and the aim of the candidates is merely to

(1) According to Whitehouse Engibata is the name of a dance which starts the Endungore.

convince the elders that the time is ripe for the decision.

The elders contacted by the boys are members of the class next but one above the class which is to be formed by the candidates.⁽¹⁾

It is not the leading elders that the candidates contact first, but others, whose duty, apparently is to instruct them on the right way and method of approaching the leaders of the elders' class.

Those who have to see the elders are selected with care. They "must be pure bred Masai and must have some knowledge of ceremonial routine." (Dawson).

It is relevant to note these details. They show how the prospective unit-and class-leaders are carefully selected and practically trained. It is from the outstanding senior members of the class, i.e. from those who have come to the fore since the very beginning, that leaders emerge.

The messengers (ol amal = message) wear warriors' garments and decorations but no arms. "Their quest is a peaceful one" (Whitehouse).⁽²⁾

Only two of the deputation will be introduced to the class-leader (algwenan) by some of the elders. The message is delivered on behalf of all class candidates to the leader with some presents of honey. The matter is discussed by the leader and his council, and the messengers are advised of the date for the feast.

It is at this point that, according to Whitehouse, the Endungore is performed.

The ceremony is started by a dance (engibata) in full array⁽³⁾ followed by a prayer to God (Ngai Narok = the black

(1) In these and the following paragraphs whenever we refer to "the elders" we intend the members of this class, unless otherwise stated.

(2) It is not clear whether the number of boy messengers is fixed. Leakey states that the amal-boys number from 6 to 12; Dawson, 29; Fosbrooke, 9. Probably, as appears, no significance is attached to the actual figure.

(3) Three rows are formed, each distinguished by proper decoration, the first wears ostrich-feathers; the second wears lion-mane head-dresses, and all the members of the third have their bodies decorated with white stripes.

God) for the candidates. Then apart, the elders instruct the candidates on their duties towards the elders themselves. As soon as this is over, a fire-stick, a male circumcision knife, and a small dead bird (other than a dove) are produced. The elders break the stick, pierce the eyes of the bird and break its legs, and lay a curse on the knife. "In this way, the elders formally lay claim to the sponsorship of a new age-group. From that time the boys refer to their sponsors as Il Piron whilst the elders refer to the boys as Il-Piron" (Whitehouse). Indeed, it should be noted, as Fosbrooke points out, that though the term il piron is frequently used with reference only to the elders, it is a reciprocal term expressing a mutual relationship.

The symbolism of the Endungore ceremony is plain = the ceremony closes an initiation period.

When the Endungore is over, some of the elders (presumably the aigwenani) and three or four of the candidates go with presents to inform the prophet that the firesticks have been broken. They say = "Ol piron lang elle, kira nalo. This is our fire stick, we are one," which probably means that a new firestick is used to produce fire as a symbol of the new relationship between the Elders and the candidates.

The next stage of the Endungore - Engibata is the election of the unit leader (aigwenani). This office is not popular with the boys,⁽¹⁾ and the matter is kept as secret as possible from the person concerned. It is not very clear whether the election rests primarily with the boys or with the elders, both have a say in the matter since it is of common concern.⁽²⁾ The selected person is chosen

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- (1) For the same reason given for the ol opolos, see p.25.
 (2) Whitehouse states that "the names of possible candidates are submitted to the il-piron elders for consideration; the elders do not actually select a boy but prevent any unwise choice being made. The responsibility of making a choice rests with the boys themselves." On the other hand Fox (a), p. 450, states that in the first instance the nomination is made by the elders, and if the candidates are dissatisfied with him they may ask for a change. Merker, p. 61, states the boys elect one of their number.

from the so called ingopior, i.e. "those who have shown ability and strength of character during the many debates already held." (Whitehouse) This indicates that he must be a man of talent and personality. Some consideration is also given to the clan and family from which he comes.⁽¹⁾ The appointment is forced upon the boy, but only after the approval of his family has been obtained. The insignia of the aiwenani is a black club, which is presented to him by the leader of the elders. Prayers are also offered for the new elect.

The naming of the age-unit takes place now with great solemnity. Not all the candidates are present but only a few of them.⁽²⁾ These are called mejengema. They take part in the ceremony dressed up in full regalia and painted with red clay and chalk.⁽³⁾

On the following day a great sacrifice of two bullocks⁽⁴⁾ is also solemnly performed. The festival lasts three days,

- (1) Particularly, he must not be a member of the Engidongi clan, the clan of the laibon.
- (2) According to Dawson, the mejengema must be 49 if the ceremony is for the 'right-hand' unit; 48, if the ceremony is for the 'left-hand' unit. These boys must be pure Masai, and must never have killed a Masai.
- (3) "The mejengema", writes Dawson, "assemble in the middle of the village and the Aigwenani, having poured honey beer into a trumpet made out of a kudu horn, blows two blasts on it and shouts the name. There is no answer as this name must never be mentioned by anyone. He again blows the horn and shouts out another name and is answered by a shout of 'Ho' from the mejengema. He again shouts out the name and is again answered by a shout of 'Ho'." The name is later announced to the other candidates by the leader and the mejengema.
- (4) The sacrifice of the bullocks (one must be entirely white, the other entirely black!) is at ended by great ceremonial. The two beasts are smothered and their blood is drunk in turn by the mejengema and all candidates. Then two of the elders smear the face of the candidates with the bullocks' heart. The elders must be of the 'right-hand' unit, but they are assisted by two of the 'left-hand', who take their place when they are tired. The meat is distributed among the elders (if warriors, i.e. the last initiates, are at ending, they are not supposed to be seen eating meat in public), and the usual sacrificial hide rings are prepared for all those present. All the time the bones of the animals are watched to prevent stealing for the purpose of magic, and finally they are burnt out and all the remains buried underground.

during which none of the candidates are allowed to leave the place. It is only at the third day that they remove all decorations and are allowed "to cross the stream."

The fourth day after the sacrifice, all candidates are informed by their leader that they are free to return home, and on doing this he warns them that they must be honest and loyal. With this the Endungore-Engibata is over.

The relationship between the elders and the candidates, the il piron relationship, offers a special subject of analysis.

As stated above, the elders in question are members of the class next but one to the class to be formed by the initiation of the candidates. The gradation marking the two classes perhaps offers the clue to discovering why the sponsors of the candidates must be members of a definite class. We know from the rhythm of the Masai class-system that the class next but one above the class of the candidates is generally the class of the fathers of the candidates. The il piron elders, therefore, possess the same social status as the fathers of the candidates. Hence, being on the same social level, the piron-elders possess the social capacity to be sponsors for the candidates. Such sponsorship brings about a mutual relationship between the two classes, a relationship respected by members of the classes concerned throughout their life.

The piron relationship gives the elders a real authority over the candidates so that no ceremony connected with initiation may be started by the candidate without the approval and sponsorship of the elders. The piron-relationship is officially established at the Endungore ceremony.⁽¹⁾

(1) That the il piron elders take a strong view of their power is shown by a case reported by Fosbrooke, p.16-17. In February, 1939, after the Endungore had been performed, "a Dwati elder (i.e. senior elder, member of the class next but two above the candidate of the time) decided to circumcise his two sons, and brewed beer in preparation for the event. The local Dareto (the piron elders),
contd. on next page...

The Endungore-Engibata is performed both by the 'right-hand' and the left-hand' age units. This shows that the ceremony has a direct effect upon the institution of the age units as such and not as coefficients of the age-class. The formation of the age unit takes place during an official period in which all its prospective members must be properly initiated. This official period is primarily defined by the performance of the Endungore-Engibata.

The value of the Endungore is in emphasizing the negative aspect of the new initiation period, namely that a new il piron-relationship has been established and precisely because of this no other initiation may be celebrated except under the authority of the new il piron-elders, and no other member may be associated with the preceding age unit. ⁽¹⁾

The Engibata must, therefore, be considered as the opening ceremony for the institution of the age unit. After the Engibata candidates are legally initiated and automatically, i.e. precisely because they are initiated during a definite

Footnote 1 continued from previous page. hearing of this, determined to stop him, marched into his boma (village) and drank the beer themselves. It is confirmed by numerous reliable elders that, even if the laibon had given his sanction for the circumcision, the Dareto elders would have been justified in acting as they did." Note the limited authority of the prophet.

- (1) This is clearly shown by the case we reported from Forbrooke in the previous footnote. The Dwati man had failed to inform the Dareto elders (the il piron elders) of his intention, and very probably the initiation of his sons was intended to be performed by the previous piron elders. If this had happened, the new initiates would have been made members of the last age-unit, but illegally, and this, is the true reason why the Dareto objected to it so strongly. The above explanation is confirmed by what Merker, p.70-71, states, namely that the fourth minimal division of the age-unit called "el oirogua" was formed by those who were circumcised immediately before the official closing of the period for the individual initiation. cf. p. 59-61. In NAD, 1937, p.32 n. 54, we read as follows: "the Officer in charge reported that a number of 'layok' (uncircumcised boys) who would have been too old to await the next 'Ngebata' were circumcised and incorporated in the Kidoto age." Probably this is a similar case as the one referred to by Merker in the passage quoted. The case shows that every class has a definite closing time. Any candidates newly initiated after this time will be associated with the next class.

approved period, become members of that age unit.

From a territorial point of view the Endungore-Engibata is a purely sectional ceremony. It is performed by the minor territorial sections, but no single performance is acknowledged and accepted throughout the Masailand, as in the case of the Embolosat.

The difference in value of the Embolosat and of the Endungore-Engibata seems to be clear.

The Embolosat opens the period for the institution of the age-class, and therefore its value is accepted by all the Masai. It is performed by the first group of class members (right-hand unit), but, we can say, on behalf of the whole class.

The Endungore-Engibata opens the period for the institution of the age unit. It is performed by the first batch of unit-members, who can be described as acting on behalf of all their unit-mates. Each age-unit perform its own ceremony in the minor territorial.

The Endungore-Engibata divides the period opened by the Embolosat into two sub-periods during which the age-units are instituted.

To these two ceremonies, the Embolosat and the Endungore-Engibata, correspond two closing ceremonies having analogous effect and analogous limitations and extensions. Thus, every age-unit is officially closed by the performance of the Unoto ceremony, (see p.43,f.) and the class is officially closed by the performance of the ageherr proper. (See further below p. 62 f.)

The problem arising from the interval between the above ceremonies will be discussed below, p.47 and 64, in connection with the intervals between all other ceremonies of the age-system.

The individual initiation.

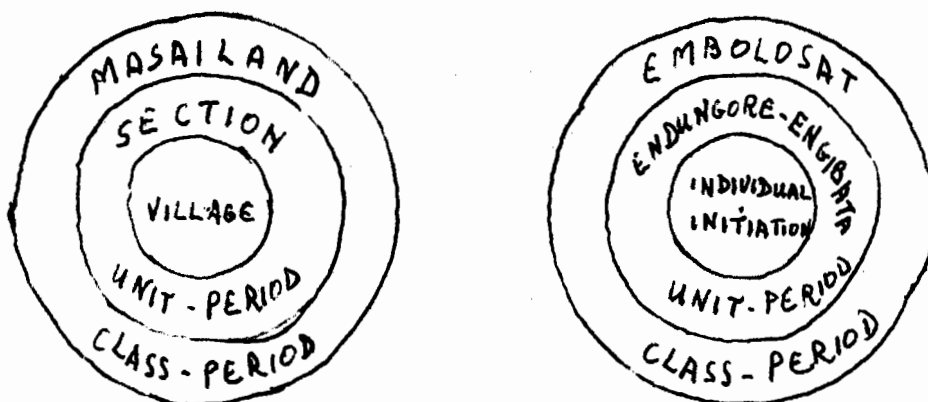
(Bagge, p.168-169; Merker, p.61-64; Hollis (a), p.296-299; Fox (a) p. 448-449; (b) p.190-192; Leakey, p. 190-191; Fosbrooke, p. 28.)

The initiation of the individual members, or individual initiation is effected through the circumcision ceremonial. The ceremonial makes the initiate a member of the age-unit, and by reason of this membership the initiate will finally become a member of the age-class.

The individual initiation is not a sectional ceremony, but is performed at any village where there are candidates. The ceremony is enacted by small groups of candidates, (2 or 3 (Fosbrooke, p.28), or perhaps more (Merker, p.62), or even singly (Fosbrooke, p.28, and Hollis, p.297), and this seems to be the general rule according to Fox (b), p.190.) The guiding principle seems to be that a candidate must be initiated at his father's village.⁽¹⁾

The expression "individual initiation" describes how each and every candidate is expected to pass through it, and how the ceremonies cannot be performed by some selected individuals on behalf of others, as in the case of the Embolosat and the Endungore-Engibata. From a territorial point of view all these ceremonies have different value. The Embolosat, which opens the class-period, is valid for all Masailand; the Endungore-Engibata, which opens the unit-period, is valid for each section; the individual initiation is celebrated at each village. The following diagram illustrates the correspondence.

(1) "Each boy...at his own village separately" states Fox (b), p. 190; and Fosbrooke, p. 28, writes "...in the father's boma (village)". The coming together of few candidates for initiation makes the performance easier and economic. Thus, for a purely economic reason the children of poor parents frequently wait longer than others for initiation. Cfr. Fosbrooke, p. 28.



The age of the candidate for initiation is indicated by Fosbrooke as 16-17 years. The principle for admission to initiation seems to be that the candidate must have passed his puberty age, and his father must have performed "the passing of the fence" as described above.⁽¹⁾

As is known, circumcision is the centre of Masai individual initiation. The ceremony is performed in three stages, a) a testing of the past moral behaviour of the candidate; b) the ordeal of circumcision; c) a period of special segregation.

a. On the eve of the circumcision day the candidate is completely shaved by his mother, and the girls prepare the branches for the procession on the morrow. The elders are entertained with meat and beer⁽²⁾ at the house of the candidate's mother.⁽³⁾ Then the elders "ask the boy (candidate) various questions as to his past behaviour, and he is put on oath to answer truly".⁽⁴⁾ Apparently no special ordeal such as we find among the Kipsigis is attached to this testing.

(1) Cases may occur of boys who have to be initiated at an earlier age for some special reason. Fosbrooke, p.28 records the instance of a boy, whose father had died, having to be initiated in order to inherit.

(2) Hollis, p. 297, states that a bullock is slaughtered and called "ol-oirupukiniek" - the (animal) that has caused him to be taken out of the boys' ranks. Fox says that a number (5, 6 or 9) of gourds of beer are offered to the elders.

(3) No special meaning is attached to the phrase "the house of the mother." The expression is occasioned by the arrangement of a Masai polygynic village. Every wife of a man has her independent house where she lives with her children and cattle. But the whole homestead belongs to the father, and it would be quite correct, though not as precise, to speak of "the house of the candidate's father."

(4) We may assume that these questions are connected with the candidate's moral and sexual behaviour. Fosbrooke, p.28 states that "prior to circumcision no youth may have intercourse with a circumcised woman. This is a rule most strictly adhered to." The same custom is observed among the Nandi-Suk.

b. The operation may be performed "in the morning or the evening according to the particular custom of the family concerned." (Fox) Generally it takes place early in the morning. The operator is said never to be a Masai. Generally he is a Dorobo, and sometimes a Kikuyu (Fox). This peculiarity is worth noting, especially if it is compared with the great care observed in selecting out of the pure Masai all the other leaders or officers. (1)

Before the operation is performed, the candidates, in order to make their body insensible, take a cold bath or remain "shivering in a state of nudity until the sun rises" (Bagge). (2) Candidates are then operated upon, outside the village near the right-hand post of the gate. The patient must not betray any sign of suffering. That would disgrace himself and all his family. A few elders assist and support him during the operation, and help him to his mother's house after the wound has been washed. Once inside he is given food (fresh blood) and a special beverage, called eng alipeta, after which he is allowed to speak.

The circumcised youth is presented by his mother's brother with new sandals, and henceforth he is not supposed to make use of any garment he has worn before the ceremony. A procession to the entrance of the boy's hut is now made by four girls (cfr. Fox), waving the branches prepared the day before. And the elders are again entertained with meat and beer, and the warriors with milk. Apparently, this is the feast that Merker refers to as "the feast of the circumcised boys - ol ogor lel aijok amerate". The newly circumcised remain in his mother's house until the wound is healed.

c. All those who have been circumcised at this time assemble from the various villages; they form small bands and go around shooting at small birds with special small bows and arrows. They wear women's clothes, old men's ear-decorations and a special headdress to which they append the birds they kill. They newly circumcised, called during this period "es sibolio, pl. i-sibolio - the recluse", are under strict regulations.

At evening they must return home and enter the village before the cattle. They must not drink blood or cut meat or touch it with their hands. They must not wash. They must avoid girls. They must not fight with, or be struck by, any other. If this happens, milk must be put on their heads. They must not go out in the daytime without their special headdress.

The period of this segregation may last for some months. By order of the elders they are finally shaved by their mothers (hence they are called the shaved ones - ol barnoti pl. el barnot) and presented by their fathers with the arms of the warriors, a spear, a sword and a shield. A peculiar distinction of the initiates is to let their hair grow and to twist it into a pig-tail, of which they are very proud. (3) At a later state, not specified by our authorities, the initiates are called "initiates" (ol morani, pl. el moran).

(1) Cfr. the election of the Ol opolos at the Embolosat (p. 26-27); of the ol amal boys, the aigwenani, and the mejengema at the Endungore-Engibata (p. 28-30); of the ol aunoni at the Eunoto (p. 44.)

(2) Leakey states that it is "absolutely essential that the cattle shall be in their enclosure during the whole of the ceremony." No further details are given nor are reasons offered for this fact which is not mentioned by any of our Masai authorities. However, it shows that the circumcision ceremony has no direct connection with the cattle aspect of Masai culture.

(3) On this particular custom, cfr. Merker, p. 143-145; contd...

It is generally stated, and apparently even by the Masai themselves, that as soon as a youth is circumcised he becomes a man. The evidence shows clearly that the expression 'becomes a man' does not describe the real social status of a newly circumcised. Even, if the statement is taken to mean that through circumcision a boy has attained the status of a man, and therefore is entitled to full participation in Masai social life, the statement is at variance with the evidence. As a matter of fact no Masai is allowed to marry soon after circumcision. In order to marry he must be at least a senior initiate, i.e. a member of the senior age-unit.⁽¹⁾ Besides being forbidden to form his own family, a newly circumcised (i.e. a junior, and to some extent also a senior initiate) may not possess cattle of his own (cattle are the property of his father); he may not eat meat in public; he may not drink milk on his own, but only with some of his age-unit members; he is expected to live in a special segregated village; and as a member of the age unit, he is, individually as well as corporately, under the social and political authority of the elders. Finally, from the military point of view, although he is allowed to take part in raids or other police actions, he is still considered a learner and is expected to accompany the senior initiated in order to be trained properly.

The expression, then, "becomes a man" is merely an anticipation of a status not yet attained but towards which the first approved step has been taken.

The immediate effect of the individual initiation is the right of being a full member of the age-unit, and thereby of entering the active and governing sections of the social structure. Indeed, circumcision, as the main ceremony of the

Footnote 3 continued from previous page. H.F.I. Elliot in T.N.&R. 1948, n. 26, pp. 80-82.

(1) The seniority of the age units is discussed in the next paragraph. With reference to the text above we note that even when a senior initiate marries, he is not allowed to beget children, as this is the privilege of the elders.

individual initiation, is the essential requirement for unit and class-membership. However, the initiate's membership of a definite unit or class derives primarily not from his individual initiation, but from the fact of the initiation being performed during the period for the institution of that unit or class.

III

The Age-Units and their mutual relationship.

(Merker, p.70-74 and p.76-82; Hollis (a), p.261-263; Leakey, p.197; Fox (a) p.447-50; MS 46, p.11-13; Fosbrooke, p.28-29)

We have already noted that there are two age-units, called respectively "the right-hand circumcision" (emurata etatene) and the "left-hand circumcision" (emurata ekedyenye). We noted also that the two units are instituted in turn, in succession of time, 'the right-hand' being instituted first, 'the left-hand' second. This distinction is expressed in terms of seniority, as we discuss below.

Each age-unit, however, contains some further subdivisions, which seem to be formed by all those who have been individually initiated during the same season. In point of fact, as Fosbrooke states, individual initiation (or circumcision) "is usually performed during or at the end of the rains, a time of plenty among the Masai,⁽¹⁾ and is suspended during the dry season."

It is important to note how the seasonal rhythm brings about a fractioning of the period for the institution of the age-class and consequently gives form to the minimal divisions of the age-class. Indeed, as Fosbrooke continues, "it is natural that those circumcised in one season possess a marked feeling of affinity towards one another. This shows itself in the possession of a group name for each batch, the same names being employed from generation to generation."⁽²⁾

(1) Note how economics ("a time of plenty") influence the holding of an initiation festival; cfr. what is stated in the footnote No. 1 at p.34

(2) This expression "from generation to generation" means "from class to class."

There is no need to illustrate the fact that "the possession of a group name" indicates that a special group has been instituted.

Within the period for the institution of an age-unit, i.e., between two successive Endungore-Engibata, individual initiations are performed according to Fosbrooke, p.28, during four rainy seasons, and therefore four minimal age-divisions are formed as follows:

(1) il Changen opirr or il Kiperen; (2) il Paringotwa-lang; (3) il Kirimbot; (4) il Tareto. Merker, p.70-71, and Hollis (a), p.262, state that the minimal divisions were three: according to Merker, (1) el jangen obir; (2) el baringo duallan; (3) el gerimbot, and this last is said to be the youngest "der jungste Jahrgang." But Merker states also that a fourth one is added, called el oiogua, which is formed by those who are initiated immediately before the official period for circumcision is closed with the Engibata feast.⁽¹⁾

According to Hollis, the following is the order of names:

(1) 'L-changen-opir = the big ostrich feathers; (2) 'L-tareto = the helpers; (3) 'L-paringotwalang = our fleet runners.

It is not very clear what function these minimal divisions perform in the internal structure of the age-units. Very probably, being distinguished in order of time, they define the status of seniority among the age-unit members and foster in them that corporate feeling described as a typical feature of the age-class members.

It seems certain that the left-hand unit does not have as many members as the right-hand unit. According to Fosbrooke, it contains only the three last-named minimal divisions; Fox states that it may not occur at all.

The following tables illustrate the situation.

The first table is reproduced from Fosbrooke (1939)⁽²⁾ p.32.

(1) cfr. the footnote n.4 at p.32.

(2) This date is taken from Schapera, p.6. Schapera refers to the paper of Fosbrooke as a manuscript. This was published in 1948. See bibl.

It refers to the number of age-unit members in four different places of the Kisongo section.

PLACES		KIBAYA	SAMATWA	ENGASUMET	LONGIDO	TOTAL
<u>RIGHT-HAND UNIT</u>	<u>KISALE</u>	82	123	55	200	460
<u>LEFT-HAND UNIT</u>	MERISHO	41	36	11	34	122

The total percentage of members of the left-hand unit as compared with the right-hand unit is therefore 26%.

The second table is taken from Fox (1930). It refers to the names of the age-units.

SECTIONS	PURKO	LOITA AND SIRIA	DAMAT
<u>RIGHT-HAND UNIT</u>	Il Meruturut	Il Kishangop	Il Meruturut
<u>LEFT-HAND UNIT</u>	Il Kitoip	none	Il Kitoip

SECTIONS	KAPUTIEI LODOKILANI MATAPATU	LAITOKITOK	KISONGO
<u>RIGHT-HAND UNIT</u>	IL AITETTI	IL KOBOSI	?
<u>LEFT-HAND UNIT</u>	none	none	IL KERIMBUT

There is no doubt, then, that the right-hand unit is far more important than the left-hand unit. In accordance with this fact, we find that candidates are far more anxious to join the right-hand unit than the left-hand unit. The main reason is that the status of seniority of the right-hand unit is superior.

It is of great relevance to our study to see how the seniority status of the units affects the structure of the age-class.

The right-hand unit, being the first of the two-units which form a class, is senior. A class, however, is not an absolute

institutionalised set of persons, but is related to other classes below or next above itself. Therefore, the two age-units must also be considered in relation to other classes.

A right-hand unit at the time of its institution has no actual relation to the left-hand unit as this does not exist yet, but it has relation to the class next above and particularly to the left-hand unit of this.⁽¹⁾ Such a relationship makes the right-hand unit junior with regard to the left-hand unit of the class next above. Only at a later stage, namely, when the corresponding left-hand unit of the same class is instituted, the right-hand unit in question obtains the status of senior unit. Therefore, if a class is regarded as an absolute body the right-hand unit is the senior and the left-hand unit the junior. From a relative point of view, both the right-hand and the left-hand units pass through a stage, first, of juniority, and then, of seniority.

It is, however, important to note that in the structure of a single-age-class the right-hand unit is always the senior unit and the left-hand unit is always the junior unit.

The status of seniority is not merely an abstraction, but finds expression in some special privileges which are recorded by Fosbrooke as follows: (1) "the marking on the shield known as oseret onyuki"⁽²⁾; (2) the spear handle of black wood called enjata narok; (3) the right to hold a dance without seeking permission from the senior moran." To these, according to Merker, p.82, should be added the formation of the initiates'

- (1) One should note that a class is finally instituted, i.e., the two age-units merge into a new single age-set, when the first unit of the next following class has been instituted. This is what we call the overlapping phenomenon, discussed further at p. 72 below.
- (2) According to Merker, p.78, there may be six marks in the coats-of-arms or Masai warriors painted on their shields: 1. the warrior red mark (os serat'onjugi), to which Fosbrooke refers; 2. the black mark (os serat'erok); 3. the ornamental band; 4. the coat of arm of the clan; 5. the mark of leadership (Korporalschaftzeichen); 6. the mark of bravery or distinction. Of all these marks the most important is the warriors' red mark (No. 1). The mark of the clan was rare in Merker's time. The mark of bravery is reserved for the warriors who distinguished themselves in military action. The shield of the junior initiates (il barnoti) is poor in colour and pattern. Only the black mark is allowed to them; the red one is reserved for the senior initiates.

segregated village (manyatta).⁽¹⁾

The behaviour dictated by the seniority relationship is open rivalry between the two adjacent units. Members of the senior unit look down with contempt on members of the junior unit and the latter retaliate as best as they can. The conflicts and clashes which ensue seem to be regarded as a regular social institution and in fact are looked upon with favour.

Fosbrooke, p.29, notes that no formal demand is made for the above mentioned privileges of the senior initiates. "The juniors," he writes, "will assume one of the privileges, and when met by a band of seniors will promptly be beaten up and retract. This process continues till wounds become frequent in these affrays. When the seniors feel that they are on the point of losing their ascendancy, they graciously hand over these privileges to the juniors, who may then proceed to the Unoto ceremony." A detailed description of the same process is given by Merker, p.80-82.

The claim for the privileges of seniority and the performance of the Unoto ceremony mark the final stage of the official period for the individual initiations and therefore for the institution of the age-unit. Below we discuss the various estimates of years indicated by our authorities in this connection. It seems, however, that the real deciding factors are the adjustment reached by the senior and junior initiates for the privileges of seniority and the agreement of the il piron - elders that the proper time for the closing of that period has arrived.

The final institution of the age-unit.

(Merker, p.71-72; Bagge, p.167; Hollis (a), p.299-301; Sandford, p.68-71; MS.48, p.3-8; NAD, 1928, p.21; Leakey, p.194-196; Fox (a), p.451-452; Whitehouse, p.150-153; NAD.1936, p.22-23; Fosbrooke, p.29-30.)

The final institution of the age-unit is brought about by

(1) Fosbrooke in his chart, p.24, puts this immediately following the period of the individual initiation (circumcision) of each unit.

the performance of the Eunoto ceremony. This is described by Fosbrooke, p.29, as "the ceremony of promotion from junior to senior warriorhood." He also states that the Eunoto "is probably the best known and most misconstrued ceremony in the Masai age-grade system."

The Eunoto is not performed at a single place for the whole Masailand, but is a sectional ceremony.⁽¹⁾ It consists of three main stages, (a) a testing of the candidates by the elders; (b) the election of the ceremonial leader of the unit; (c) a sacrifice of a bull.

(a) The first stage takes place in a special hut called singira.⁽²⁾ Not all the candidates, i.e., junior initiates, are allowed into the singira, but only those who have kept the sexual regulations which bind junior initiates. In order that no one may enter the singira under false pretences the entrance is bewitched by the elders. According to Leakey, p.195, another test is performed inside the hut aiming at detecting those who have entered surreptitiously.

In the annual report of the NAD, 1928, p.21, we read that every candidate is expected to give "an account" of his past life. "The importance of the E-Unoto" states the same report, lies in the fact that it imposes an obligation upon a warrior who has disgraced himself in any way to clear himself of the stigma before he can marry and settle down as a respected Elder of the tribe." "The O-Singira" says Fox, p.452, "gives the warriors permission to have sexual relations with initiated women."

(b) The nomination of the ceremonial leader (ol aunoni, pl. il aunok, or ol otuno) takes place inside the singira hut. The elders and the candidates have previously agreed on the person to be appointed, and the matter is also discussed with the prophet (laibon). As in previous cases, these transactions are kept secret because the office is not popular, and the selected man and his family would try to avoid the election. Only a popular man and a "pure Masai" distinguished for his physical strength, may be appointed aunoni. Generally the aigwehan is

(1) Leakey's statement, p.194, that at the Eunoto "all the members of a given group (i.e., age-unit) from the whole of the Masai country, north, south, east and west are required to be present" is emphatically denied by Fox, p.451, and Fosbrooke, p.29. According to Fox the following sections perform it: (a) Purko; (b) Loita and Siria; (c) Damat; (d) Kaputiei, Lodokilani and Matapatu; (e) Laitokitok; (f) Kisongo. And Fosbrooke confirms this by saying that the Eunoto is celebrated "by sections or groups of sections" and is attended by as many warriors as possible, "but by no means all." Sanford, on Hemsted's authority, recorded that the Eunoto was held by the Purko, Kakonyuke, Dalalekutuk and Damat on the Kinangop. The Sigirari, Matapatu, Kaputiei and other divisions where it suited them.

(2) There are contradictory descriptions of the singira. Merker states that it is a 'very big hut'; Bagge says "not so big"; Hollis "small". Leakey and Fox state respectively "an enormous", and a "very large" hut. Probably it all depends on the actual number of the initiates involved.

not elected, but in some cases he may be.⁽¹⁾

According to Merker, p.72, on the day of his official appointment, the selected man is seized and forced to sit on a stool in the centre of the singira. He is then clothed with garments and decorations proper to the elders. Fosbrooke, p.39, states that soon after his appointment he will be given a wife and cattle by his age-units.

The unpopularity of the office seems to be due entirely to the fact that the elected man must settle down and behave as an old man and to the peculiar nature of the office. This is described by Fosbrooke, p.39-40, and his description sums up the descriptions and statements of all other authorities.⁽²⁾ "The duties of the position (of the aunoni) are obscure, but as far as is known the launon appears to be a sort of scapegoat for the age (unit). If he flourishes and begets many children, and if his cattle prosper and increase, it is a bad omen for the rest of the age (unit). But his adversity will indicate the age (unit)'s prosperity. He must do everything in advance of his age-mates, marry, settle down, make the final payment that binds the marriage. It is as though the morán standing on the brink of elderhood, send forth the launon as an explorer into the unknown country, so that any bad luck which may be awaiting them shall be focussed on one individual and not on the whole age(unit). But the launon is held in great respect by his age-mates, and any demands that he makes must be fulfilled. It is stated that he is the only official whose order must be obeyed. In discussing this with an elder, I pointed out that this should give the office great political importance, in reply to which the elder indicated that such did not necessarily follow as 'we can always tell the launon what order to give.'"

(c) The sacrifice of a bull is then performed with great ceremonial. Hollis (a), p.300-301, describes the contest in which the candidates compete in getting hold of a horn which was previously thrown into a fire.

With reference to this sacrifice a special officer is appointed. He is called oboruengene; he has a ceremonial status and must prepare the hide-rings from the skin of the bull. He is also described by the author of MS.48 as "the official charm-maker of the morán." His function, however, seems to be limited to the unoto.

Great emphasis is laid by Whitehouse, p.153, on what he calls "the fire-drilling ceremony", which as Fosbrooke also says, "must in fact be the unoto." The ceremony is described by Whitehouse in connection with the first erection of the segregated village of the initiates.⁽³⁾

(1) MS. 48, p.4.

(2) From bibliography quoted under the headline of this paragraph. We must note here a rather careless statement of Fosbrooke in connection with the unoto. On p.36 he writes that "all sections and areas meet together for the unoto ceremony", while at p.29 he stated that the unoto "is performed by sections or groups of sections. The Kissongo traditionally perform the ceremony at Mugulat near Musa, i.e., on the eastern slopes of Mondul mountain, actually in the Arusha district. As many as possible of the age attend, but by no means all." Evidently the statement on p.36 must be qualified according to this latter.

(3) This circumstance supports Merker's statement that one of the privileges demanded by the junior initiates is the building of their own segregated village. See p.35-36(Merker's)

The fire is ceremonially lighted by the elders, and it must be carried into the new dwelling structures of the village. The next morning after this ceremony, the candidates who have become senior initiates are blessed, and prayers to the black God are offered for them.⁽¹⁾

At the unoto, the aunon first, and then the other initiates, shave their hair. Pig-tails, however, are again fitted after the ceremony.

Some (four or five) months after the ceremony, when the senior initiates have returned from a meat festival in the bush a raid is organised. According to Hollis this is called, "the (fulfilment) of the vow" or "the (selection) of the chief" (En-oo-'n-dorosi araki En-e-'unoto).⁽²⁾

The main reason for this raid, is the strong desire of the new senior initiates to show their ability and enjoy the satisfaction of the military capacity they have reached.

We are informed that at the unoto the age-unit assumes a new name.⁽³⁾

The unoto if seen with relation to the social status of the initiates is undoubtedly a promotion ceremony. The junior initiates become senior initiates. But if we consider the ceremony in connection with the institution of the age-unit, we find that the unoto brings together all those who have been individually initiated during previous years. In other words it merges into one body the three minimal divisions, it gives them a corporate status and finally institutes the age-unit. The performance of the individual initiation is not stopped by the Eunoto. Apparently it still takes place, but irregularly, and all those initiated at this time form the fourth minimal division, el oirogua, as reported by Merker.⁽⁴⁾ The ceremony

(1) It is of some interest to reproduce here from Whitehouse, the prayer recited by the elders on this occasion. It shows clearly how the senior initiates are about to enter the most important stage of their life as members of Masai society. This is the prayer: "Be trustworthy, Oh, return safely, O God.- Become ye ours and of God.- May the illness pass you by.- Wish those who hate us that they may find dry rivers on their journeys.- Lenana and Sufeit and Mbatian wish the safe return. Grow up. Become possessed of wise heads. Become as great as the Kilimanjaro.- Be the fathers of my children, and bring them up well. Have many wives.- May God love you. May the moon love you.- Be as sweet to us as milk and honey.- May the red bull of the night guard thee. May our age be the bravest." The expression of the first verse "return safely" probably refers to the raid which follows the Unoto. Lenana, Sufeit, Mbatian were prophets.

(2) "The (fulfilment) of the vow" is not a special term for the raid which follows the unoto, but is applied to any raid undertaken after a long peace. Cfr. Hollis, p.301, n.3.

(3) Fox, p.449, writes that "the present (1939) age (unit) of Purko warriors was called Il-Tiegi prior to the E-Unoto when they took the name of Il-Salaash."

(4) See next page.

closing the legal period for individual initiation of a definite age-unit is the Endungore, which, as we have seen, is performed by the piron elders of the next age-unit.

Thus the institution of a single age-unit is brought about by three different ceremonies, namely, the Engibata as the opening ceremony, the E-Uoto as the instituting ceremony, and the Endungore as the closing ceremony.

The fact that the Endungore is performed by the elders and candidates of the succeeding age-unit is due to the negative aspect of this ceremony as we noted on p. 32.

The point raised by the interval between all these various ceremonies is most confusing. The reason for this is that the interval is defined by all our authorities in terms which are foreign to the Masai age-system. Therefore, we must accept the number of years they suggest as a more or less broad approximation.

Merker, p. 70, states that each year for three successive years, candidates are individually initiated and formed into separate minimal age-divisions. A fourth one follows immediately before the closing ceremony is celebrated. He does not state the length of the interval between two successive closing ceremonies.

Hollis (a), p. 262⁽¹⁾, is very definite on this point. He writes that individual initiation is performed for four years in succession, and all those initiated during these years belong to the right-hand unit. "An interval of about three and half years then intervenes before another festival is held." All those

(1) His actual words may be misleading. He states that "one feast (circumcision feast) is held in each sub-district every year for four years in succession", but it is certain that circumcision is not performed at one single ceremony in each sub-district, but in any village where there are candidates.

(4) (From previous page.) See p. 40 above, and p. 32 fn. 1. Fosbrooke, p. 27, speaks of a "hiatus" between the age-units, and we think that such hiatus is that period which runs between the Uoto and the Endungore-Engibata.

initiated during the next four years belong to the left-hand unit. Therefore, according to Hollis, the period for the institution of each age-unit would be about seven and half years.

Leakey, p.194, states that the Eunoto is celebrated after "nine years of junior warriorhood". But Fox (a), p.451, disputes this and says that "nowadays it takes place from three to five years after initiation."

Whitehouse, p.146, writes "the (initiation) ceremonies which commence about every 7 years extend over a period of about 5 years."

Fosbrooke, p. 25, says that the right-hand unit performs the unoto 7 years after their initiation period has been opened; and the left-hand unit 5 years after it.

The whole evidence shows clearly that there is no hard and fast definition of the period for the institution of the age-units. The major factors for such definition are the presence of candidates, the authority of the elders stating that the right time for performing the various ceremonies has come, and also the regular occurrence of good rainy seasons.

We may conclude that the period of seven-eight years is a good approximation of what obtains in actual fact. If we take the Engibata as the first ceremony for the institution of an age-unit, we may put the E-Unoto at an interval of about three or four years; and then the Endungore some two or three years or more after that.(1)

(1) One of the few facts we possess concerning the Samburu tribe is that "the circumcision rite takes place at intervals of 7 years." See Webster, p.8. As far as the other tribes in Masai District are concerned, there are no indications in the various reports of the N.A.D. that confirm the above period. Cp. the references in N.A.D., 1926 and 1927 with 1932 and 1937. Unfortunately, it is not possible to draw any general conclusion from those indications because they are too vague for definition of the ceremony referred to or of the set instituted.

The Internal Structure of the Age-unit.

The generic reference made by our authorities either to "the elders" or "the candidates", and so on, may cause the false impression that those engaged in the initiation ceremonies always act as a whole and corporate body. In point of fact, general meetings are rare occasions, and they are also restricted to the sections or groups of sections.

Only a few representatives of the age-units take the most important decisions in connection with the institution of the units.

We have mentioned on p. 30 the ingopior or ingobir, sg. engobiro. These are the best of the age-units initiates. They first approach the elders and assist their own leaders, who usually are selected, as we said, from among their number. They are, generally, the most senior. According to the information of Fosbrooke, p.34-35, they form "an inner council for appointing or degrading the laigwanan, and for the conduct of important public business." However, "there is no definite office of engobiro"; they emerge according to their talents, skill and personality. Thus "they are not necessarily confined to the first batch of initiates", but any one else, even of the last batch, whose qualities excel may be considered an engobiro.

The elders are, as we have said, the piron-elders. Their office of sponsors is summarized thus by Fosbrooke, p.54, "the 11 piron-elders, i.e., the guardians of the youths, have to coach the senior boys in citizenship, taking them to the laibon, making them sit at their meetings, etc."

Among the age-unit leaders (aigwenani) Fosbrooke, p.34, distinguishes three kinds, 1. ol aigwenani loongishu pokin, lit., the aigwenani of all the cattle; the chief leader of the age-unit; 2. ol aigwenani lol kuma orok; a duly appointed

aigwenani to whom a black club is presented; 3. e murt ol aigwenani, lit. the 'neck of the aigwenani', who is the right-hand man of the aigwenani proper (No. 2), in whose absence no important decisions are taken.

The election of the aigwenan loongishu pokin is described by Fosbrooke, p.36, in connection with the unoto. We have noted, however, (see p.45(2)), that his statement in this passage is contradictory.⁽¹⁾ Unfortunately, we have no other authority to consult on this particular leader, but it is our impression that he is never elected as such, but emerges from among his fellow aigwenok as the best man for the office.

The aigwenan lol kuma orok is the ordinary leader elected at the Engibata by the elders and the ingobir. He is elected from a list of prospective candidates. Second to him will be his deputy and assistant, namely, "the neck of the aigwenani" (emurt ol aigwenani).

The aigwenani is the leader of the age-unit in his section.

Fosbrooke mentions the case of some subalterns being elected when the number of the age-unit members in one area is too big and the ingopir feel that another leader is needed.

The function of the aigwenan is political, military and to some extent judicial, and his authority with relation to his age-mates may be described as of a "primus inter pares."⁽²⁾

Every aigwenani, even the aigwenan loongishu pokin, is primarily responsible for the section or group of sections or area for which he has been appointed. He has to foster good relations among members of his age-unit and between this unit and other units either in his or in other sections. He is responsible for seeing the elders and the prophet in order to obtain their approval for the unoto and any other ceremony or matter connected with his age unit.

(1) In no account of the unoto is there mention of an aigwenani being elected. The only officers connected with the unoto are the aunoni or otuno, and the oboruengene.

(2) Cfr. Werker, p.86.

The military activity of the aigwenani was more important in former times than at present. When large actions were organised and different sections threw their lot together, the various aigwenok united according to their seniority. This might be the occasion for the aigwenani loongishu pokin being recognised as a general leader. (1)

The judicial activity of the aigwenani is not a real part of his office. It all depends on his personality and on how much he is favoured by his age-mates, who may ask him to stand between their disputes. (2)

The election and the status of the aunoni-otuno as the ceremonial leader of the age-unit has already been described. (See page 45). A peculiar duty of the aunoni's office is the responsibility "for the smart turn-out of the moran (initiates)." (3) Merker, p.73, and Hollis (a), p.299 n.1, state that the aunoni was responsible to the prophet (laibon) for the organisation of raids. The anonymous author of MS.48, p.4, describes him as the mascot of the unit when this is at war: "as long as he is alive they (the unit-members) cannot be beaten by the enemy.....For this reason they take him on their raids."

The relationship between the aigwenani and the aunoni is not clear. It seems certain that the latter has a more ceremonial and ritual character than the former.

- (1) The aigwenani was not expected to take part in the actual fighting; he had to be in the rear to govern the action or, as Fosbrooke, p.38, puts it, "probably because the laigwanan wore the charm which had been obtained from the laibon, and its loss could not be risked." At present, adds Fosbrooke, p.39, "the relations between senior laigwanak and their juniors are very lax. It is probable that this is due to the prohibition of raiding and consequent reduction of the occasions on which large-scale common efforts are required. In the old days when large groups of moran (initiates) came together for raids the senior laigwanak (sic.) must of necessity have asserted his position, and the others must have obeyed him, to ensure the success of the venture."
- (2) "It appears," writes Fosbrooke, p.38, "to be the privilege of of the aggrieved party to select his judges,... If a local laigwanan has a reputation for fairness and justice, he will be called even from a distance, but proceedings are not invalidated if no laigwanan is present."
- (3) Fosbrooke, p.40, So, no initiate was supposed to cut off his pig-tail coiffure without the permission of the aunoni.

Although the term of office for all these officers is limited to the existence of the age-unit as such, they will always be men of consequence and importance even when they have settled down as elders.

The analysis of the unit's leaders does not offer a complete picture of the internal structure of the age-unit. This structure rests on two other institutions, namely the manyatta, which is the proper residential place of the initiates, and the sirit which is a manifold grouping of comradeship.

The manyatta is the village where the initiates live in segregation from other members of the society. Externally it does not differ from any ordinary village. Some authorities state that there is only one manyatta for each section.⁽¹⁾ But Fox (a), p.451, qualifying Leakey, states that this is only true for some special occasions as when all the initiates of one section come together to perform some special ceremonies, as, e.g., the unoto.

In the manyatta the initiates are assisted by their mothers who do the housework, and by some uninitiated girls (na sandja (Merker p.83) or ditto) who are there mostly for the sexual satisfaction of the initiates.⁽²⁾ Uninitiated boys may also live in the manyatta for the menial works and tending the cattle.⁽³⁾

The groupings named sirit, pl. isirit, are formed, according to Whitehouse, p.150, at a meeting called by the ingobir when it is decided to build the manyatta. Membership of the sirit is a

- (1) Merker, p.82; Leakey, p.192. Hinde, p.91, writes that "every section has usually some three favourite districts, in each of which is a village, called 'manyatta'."
- (2) Although the sexual life of the initiates with these girls is promiscuous and free, full sexual intercourse is strongly condemned.
- (3) According to Merker, p.110, the initiates who belong to the smith trade usually do not share the village with the other initiates, but have their own villages and the girls who live with them are from families of the same trade. The smith initiates organise their own raids, but because they are few obtain only small booty of which they are easily deprived by other warriors.

matter of free choice. An initiate is free to join any sirit, and he is free to change it for another soon after his first election. But if he does so when the manyatta has been formed, he "incurs the bitter resentment" of his sirit-mates, and he may even be fined for that (Whitehouse).

As far as numbers go, Whitehouse states that "groups of 5 (initiates) will go together to join the same company" (sirit)⁽¹⁾ Merker, however, says that the inhabitants of a single manyatta may be from 50 to 100; and the anonymous MS.46, p.8, records that in a manyatta there may be from 20 to 30 huts. The extension of the term is not clear. It may be applied alternatively to the whole group forming a manyatta, and to a subdivision of this. Thus, we find in MS.48 that each sirit is said to have its own 'portion' of the manyatta. Similarly, Fox says that each sirit is commanded by a captain (il aigwenan loo sirit), and that the manyatta is ruled by a special leader (il aigwenan 'l ol poror = the leader of the age-unit), who is at the same time the captain of his own sirit.⁽²⁾

The fact that the members of the sirit "as a rule quarrel pretty regularly with other sirit of their manniata" is emphasised by MS.48, p.3. There is no indication that the internal organisation of the manyatta is based on the seniority status of its members. We may, however, assume quite safely that this is the main principle which regulates the relationship of the manyattas of the two age-units existing at the same period. No special information is available on this point, but it is obvious that members of the two age-units have their own manyattas.

(1) Whitehouse described the sirit as based on the clan. The MS.46, p.8, states that "a manyata is inhabited by the moran of one particular clan." It seems, however, that this is not a fixed principle, and certainly does not obtain with the Kisongo. Cfr. Fosbrooke, p.28.

(2) Very probably this leader of the manyatta is no other than the aigwenan lol kuma orok, as indicated at p.50. The two different expressions may be taken as describing two different functions exercised by the same person. Aigwenan lol kuma orok means lit. 'the speaker with the black club' and 'l aigwenani 'il ol poror, 'the speaker of the age-unit.'

and we also know that they unite in time of war, the juniors being trained by the seniors.

Seemingly the sirit division has a military function and serves to readily organise warriors for raids. Merker, p.93-94, however, applies the term to a special partnership which two age-mates contract on their way to the battle-field. They pledge themselves to assist each other while fighting. They refer to each other as 'my companion' (os sirit ai), and if one of them falls, the other has to rescue his arms.⁽¹⁾ Ten or twelve such companions form a company.

The term sirit is further applied to the grouping of initiates who come together for a meat festival (es sirit ol bul). This group consists according to Merker, p.84, of five or six age-mates who go to a segregated place where they revel on ox-meat.

The meat festivals (ol bul, pl. e buli) are held once or twice a month, last for three or four days and generally take place before a raid.⁽²⁾

At this point it is relevant to discuss the relationship between the military organisation as a whole and the internal structure of the age units. Merker, p.73, gives a description of Masai military organisation. He assumes the existence of a standing army (das stehend Heer), in which he distinguishes the recruits, the warriors and the reserve.

The recruits are "the shaved ones" (el barnot).⁽³⁾ These,

(1) Merker, p.93: "Die Aufgabe der Gefährten ist es, dem andern im Kampfe beizustehen und, wenn er fällt, seine Waffen in Sicherheit zu bringen." The sirit as a military company on which raids are organised is also mentioned by MS.48.

(2) Merker, p.84. See also Hollis (a), p.317. At p.292, n.1, he states that "il puli are special places erected in the woods, to which the warriors retire when the slaughter cattle."

(3) See p. 36. "The shaved ones" (ol barnoti, pl. el barnot) is the term applied to those who have just come out of their individual initiation and have been given the warriors' arms. They are the junior initiates.

together with "the warriors" (el moran = initiates)⁽¹⁾ constitute the peace-time force (die Friedenstärke), under conscription.⁽²⁾

The junior elders⁽³⁾ come into action in time of war but they may be reckoned as members of the standing army (... kann man als Reserve ansehen und mit zum stehenden Heer rechnen..) The senior elders take arms only in defence of their own territorial areas and sections (Distrikt).

The above description appears to be very formal. It shows, however, that military activity is not confined to the initiates but extends to the classes of elders. And this is a relevant point. We can say, therefore, that the initiates become warriors not to the exclusion of the other classes above them. A further point brought out by Merker's description is the distinction between an offensive army constituted by the so called recruits, the warriors and the reserve, and a defensive army in which the senior elders are also incorporated.

It would be of great interest to know how the organisation of a raid or any other military action is formed, and whether there is any relationship between such an organisation and the manyatta system. Unfortunately, no such information is available. Merker, p.93-97, describes the actual action in detail but from a purely tactical or strategical point of view.

Special distinctions may be attained by the initiates either in military actions or in social life. Thus, if a warrior is outstanding in war for his courage and he "kills many savages" (Hollis)(a) he is called "the bull" (ol oingok); if he is liberal and through the assistance of his father "frequently slaughters bullocks" for his comrades, he is called "the benefactor" (N-gaminini). These distinctions as described by

(1) We may assume that the general term "warriors" as used by Merker (see also Merker, p.56) refers to the senior initiates

(2) Merker, p.73, regards circumcision as a kind of compulsory conscription (...seiner - der allgemeinen - Wehrpflicht ins Heer...)

(3) For the expression "junior and senior elders" see p.64, n.

Merker, p.86, would suggest the existence of special offices with structural significance. He states that "the bulls" play a leading role (eine fuhrende Rolle), and are the leaders in the fight (Sie sind die Anfuhrer im Kampf); "the benefactors" retain a special position (eine besondere Stellung). It seems, however, that there are no such institutionalised offices as "the Bulls" and "the Benefactors", but two different distinctions which may be attained by any of the initiated. This seems to be the opinion also of Hollis (a), p.298, when he states that "the warriors are fond of the titles 'L-oingok (the bulls) and 'N-gaminini (the generous people), for they may then wear bells or a bracelet called il-torongen."

The internal structure of the age-unit, we may now conclude, is based on various principles, which give shape to different groupings.

The essential principle is the contemporaneity of initiation either during the same season in which the minimal age divisions are instituted, or during the same initiation period in which all the minimal divisions are formed into a single age-unit.

A second principle is the residential principle, on which the manyatta and the sirit are organised. The sirit ol bul, or the grouping for the meat festival in special segregated structures, also seems to be due to this principle.

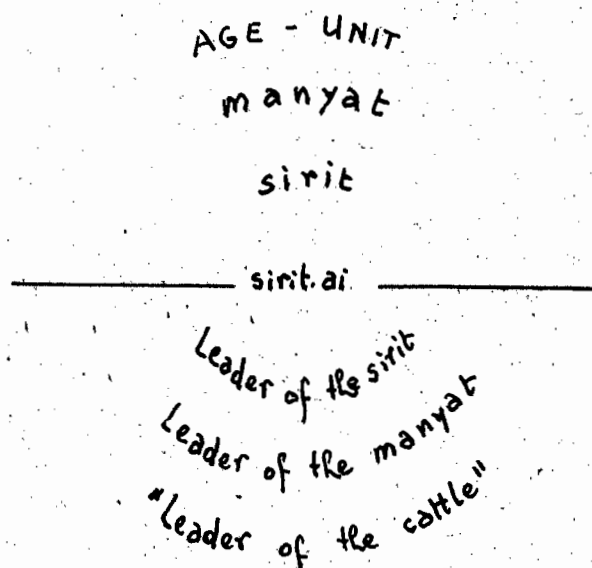
The military principle seems to give the sirit proper, as found in the manyatta, a special military aspect, and, apparently, to it is due the temporary capillary formation of special partnership between two fighting warriors.

Corresponding to these various groupings there are leaders, as mentioned above, who organise their age mates in the performance of the various ceremonies and functions of the age-unit.

However complex the organisation of the age-unit may appear we should like to emphasise its democratic character. The importance of the ingobir as a council to the aigwenan has

never been stressed sufficiently. Although their office is not very well defined, it is a fact that they may exercise a real control over the leaders of the age-unit whom they have power to degrade.⁽¹⁾

The following diagram illustrates the internal structure of the age-unit.



The Function of the Age-unit.

The most apparent function of the age-unit is military. This is also the aspect stressed by all our authorities, so much so that it is commonly stated that the function of the age system is military.⁽²⁾ The evidence we have just analysed would suggest a somewhat different description.

We have already noted that the initiates do not become warriors to the exclusion of other classes above them. Their status is that of trainees in the case of the junior initiates, and of full warriors in the case of senior initiates. Although

(1) The relationship of the prophet (laibon) to the structure of the age-unit and age-class is illustrated in connection with the latter, on p.

(2) Cfr. Fosbrooke, p.32: "The basic function of the age grade system is doubtless military."

it is not incorrect to state that they are in a condition of conscripts it is wrong to say that military activity is solely their privilege.

Residential segregation is generally connected with the military activity of the initiates. Merker states that the manyat were ordinarily situated in the strategic positions of the country.⁽¹⁾

But there are other points to show that this segregation was not intended only for military purposes. Thus the initiates are not allowed to form their own family until they are elders. They are also forbidden to eat meat 'seen by women', and because their mothers and girls reside in their village, the initiates hold their meat festivals on their own in a secluded place. Similarly, they are not allowed to have milk unless they are in groups of two or three at least.⁽²⁾

It is difficult to see any relationship between these restrictions and the military activity of the initiates. It seems evident that the initiates of the age-units are still considered not sufficiently qualified to deal with cattle, and matters connected with them such as meat and milk, with complete freedom. Apparently, they do not have the full possession of any cattle; the share of their mother's cattle which they will get remains the property of their fathers until they get married. And to the father goes the best part of the booty which they take from a raid.⁽³⁾ Since cattle are the primary source of wealth and food, we must conclude that the initiates are still in a state of dependence on their fathers socially and economically.

(1) The statement is confirmed by Hinde's description, p.91. He says that the manyatta were always built free from any kind of cover, "if possible on a plateau overlooking a good water supply," and "commanding many miles of plain."

(2) The initiates have a right to ask everybody for milk which cannot be refused. Generally they address themselves to their piron elders.

(3) Cfr. Merker, p.30: "Das Verdienst der zu Kriegern herangewachsenen Söhne besteht in erbeuteten Vieh und fließt in der Hauptsache zur Herde des Vaters." See all the following p.30-31 in the same work of Merker

This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that an analogous dependence holds true of their political activity. On this they depend entirely on their piron -elders. ⁽¹⁾

Thereupon we infer that the function of the age-unit is primarily social. Its scope is to organise the initiates into a corporate body, separate and distinct from other similar bodies, and to lead them both as individuals and as a corporate whole towards a full social and economic independence and towards taking a full share in political life. The military activity is the most obvious of the age-units activities. ⁽²⁾

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- (1) Other restrictions such as the prohibition against snuffing and drinking beer, both a privilege of the elders, confirm the general status of inferiority of the initiates with relation to the elders.
- (2) It is of comparative interest to note that each unit seems to be distinguished from the other by its peculiar songs. Fox (a), p.454, states that almost all of these songs are in a "rather cryptic language."

IV

The Ceremonies for the institution of the age class.

The institution of the age class is brought about by the performance of some special ceremonies, of which the most important is the ngeherr proper. Before this takes place, other ceremonies, such as "the slaughtering of the ox with jousting" (ol gotten l ol baa), "the ngeherr of milk" and "the ngeherr of meat," must be performed by every initiate.

Through these performances the initiate obtains the status of an elder. The aunoni is the forerunner of all his age-mates. As was seen, at the unoto, he is given the elderly status and soon after that he settles down as a married man.

Leakey, p.200, states that a warrior (i.e. an initiate) who marries cannot have sexual intercourse with his initiated wife.⁽¹⁾ Fox (a) p. 455, qualifies Leakey's statement and says that such a case "is hypothetical, and does not occur in practice," because usually the senior initiates marry after the ngeherr of milk.

Merker, p.102-103, is our only authority for "the slaughtering of the ox with jousting." The ceremony consists in a meat festival offered by the candidate to the elders of the neighbourhood of his father's village. Other initiates share the meat, but eat apart being still under the restrictions of junior initiates. A mock fight follows in which the initiates and women take part. Finally before the sun sets, "a married man with his chief wife comes near to their host and addresses him with the following words:

"I say, thou art no longer ol moran (an initiate), but ol morou (an elder). Take care of thy cattle, goats and sheep, and have regard for them. Give up the occupations of the initiates, thou art now an elder."

(1) Leakey was somehow misled in his information, he also states, p.196 that "the actual transfer from the senior warrior stage to the Elders' stage takes place without any ceremonial," which, we know, is not correct.

"After this feast," remarks Merker, "it all depends on the warrior whether he chooses to take a greater or lesser part in raids. Usually he gets married at once and lives with his wife either in his father's kraal or in the warriors kraal, until all his age-mates have married. Only then are they recognised as el moruo; each one builds his own kraal and lays aside the clothes, decorations and the pigtail of the warriors."

It is evident that the effect of the ceremony is rather limited. It allows an initiate to take a wife, but even after that the initiate is not yet "recognised" as an elder. It is as if he were given the elder's status in anticipation of the time when all his age-mates are married. Only then does the status of elder become, at any rate, official.

A very detailed description of "the ngeherr of milk" is given by J.V.Dawson, but it is mentioned also by other authorities. Fox (a), p.453, states that "this ceremony is performed by each warrior individually" ⁽¹⁾ and we know from Dawson that it occurs at the village of the initiate's father and that four piron-elders take a special part in it.

The ceremony is preceded by a dance. The candidate is clothed in women's clothes and the first two of the elders place the elders' ear-rings (surutya) on him.

A test follows, in which the candidate is expected to confess how many times he has "stolen milk," i.e. taken milk by himself or with people other than his age mates. Two heads of cattle are usually paid as a fine by a guilty candidate. He is then solemnly instructed by one of the elders, apparently the most senior, about "what he must and must not do after he has drunk and become an elder." He now drinks the milk, "very little however" at this time. Then the dance is resumed until night. At this stage the initiate is allowed to know his wife.

The next morning the initiate, as soon as he rises, again drinks some milk. Then he is smeared all over with a special mixture by two of the elders, who also present him with an olive and a bamboo stick. A procession is then formed from inside the hut, where these ceremonials have been accomplished, to the cattle kraal. Here the elders choose four or eight "(it must be four or eight)" head of the initiate's cattle, and he hits each one of them with his olive stick.

(1) He says also that "the ceremony usually takes place nowadays a year or two after the E-Unoto owing to the Government policy of reducing the period of warriorhood as much as possible."

The initiate must now remain inside for five days. On the fourth day his mother pours liquid, half milk and half water, on his head, and then she shaves him. (1) The ceremony is now complete.

Fosbrooke, p.30, makes reference to a similar ceremony "by which a morán is permitted to drink the milk from his wife's cattle." (2) He then remarks that "this does not, however, permit him (the initiate) to drink milk by himself; this must always be done with his age-mates until such time as all go through the ngeherr ceremony." This indicates that "that ngeherr of milk" must also be considered as an individual anticipation of the status officially recognised only at the corporate ceremony.

We do not possess any detailed description of "the ngeherr of meat." We are informed by Fox, p.453-454, that the ceremony takes place and he records it as "the second ol-ngesher ceremony, called the Ol-ngesher of meat." After such ceremony the initiate may eat meat freely, and, if he chooses, eat meat which has been touched by a woman.

The ngeherr proper is the closing ceremony which finally institutes the age class. It is celebrated by the Kisongo, (3) but acknowledged and accepted throughout Masailand.

(1) These formalities may be performed either by the candidate's mother or his first wife, provided the latter had not conceived while she was still uninitiated, or by the two women together.

(2) The expression "his wife's cattle" sounds inaccurate and indefinite. Probably it refers to the initiate's cattle tended by his wife.

(3) Fosbrooke, p.30, states that the ceremony "is traditionally held at Oldonyo loo 'l moruak (the hill of the Elders) Upper Sanya, Moshi District.

The ceremony is briefly described by Merker, p.73, as follows:

"when all the members of these associations (the age-units) have long been married, the ol oiboni (the prophet) binds them more closely by giving a common name to both age-classes(1) each of which, as we have seen, had its own name. This takes place at ol neher feast. All the members of the associations come together at the ol oiboni's place and build a great kraal near his village. Everybody brings honey for making beer or an ox for meat. This last is then killed by suffocation at the en gebata feast. The feast consists in consuming all these things, and its climax is the proclamation by the ol oiboni that from now on all the assembled people shall belong to a single ol adjl (age-class), and have a common class name."

Fosbrooke, p.30, states that "a single official, ol-loo9 surutya, is chosen as the head of the whole generation (age-class), thus symbolising the union of the two ages (age-units) which have up to now been independent, each with its own launon or ceremonial leader."

It is after this feast that "those who are not yet married do so at the earliest opportunity. Those who are married, if their fathers are still alive, move off from the paternal boma (village); for they are now in complete control of their cattle, and if they stayed with their fathers there would be constant bickering on animal husbandry matters." (2) In other words through this ceremony the initiates reach a complete social and economic independence and become full men or elders; they may beget children, own their own stock and build their own village or 'gate'.

There is no doubt that the value of the ngeherr proper for the institution of the age-class is equal to that of the embolosat. This is stated by Fosbrooke, p.30. He writes: "Just as the Kakonyuke ceremony of embolosat starts off the age (class-period) for the whole tribe (read = the whole Masailand), it appears that the Kissongo ngeherr closes it throughout Masailand." This value of the ngeherr is also confirmed by the fact that, as Fox (a) p.449 states, "the generation names

(1) Read = age-units.

(2) Fosbrooke, p.30. He continues by saying that at this ceremony "pigtales are cut off and are not allowed to grow again the new elders may drink milk alone, eat meat that married women have seen, carry about short bladed spears (embere sero) in place of the long polished warriors' spears in fact all the customs of warriorhoods are abandoned."

(i.e. class names) emanate from the Kissongo in Tanganyika Territory and are common to all the Masai. They are given soon after the warriors (initiated) of the two combined ages (age-units) have become elders. Therefore the age-names (i.e. age-unit names) tend to fall into disuse and be replaced by the generation names (i.e. class names)." (Words in brackets are mine.)

One should note here that the acknowledgement of the Kakonyuke embolosat and of the Kissongo ngeherr by all the Masai is the more remarkable when one considers the tendency of each section to hold ceremonies of its own for the institution of the age-units.

The Interrelations of the Age Classes

In the discussion of the interval between the various ceremonies which help to institute the age-units we accepted the period of seven years as a good approximation. On that basis we may now assume that the period of fifteen years is a good approximation for the age-class.

Whatever the exact computation, if any (we shall again discuss the point later below,) the rhythm of Masai age-system seems to allow for five contemporary classes. All these classes differ in status and power according to their seniority as well as the efficiency of their individual members. We may thus distinguish between the junior elders who are members of the last instituted class; the senior elders who are members of the next above one; the old men who might further be distinguished for they are the few surviving members of the other three classes above.

The junior elders "are mostly concerned with family matters establishing their own gates, marrying and performing ceremonies to ensure the fertility of their wives." ⁽¹⁾ In other words, their immediate interest are in the main of a private nature,

(1) Fosbrooke, p.31.

and their participation in the government of tribal affairs is a minor one. They try to enhance their social status by increasing cattle, marrying other wives, and having their sons initiated.

The senior elders have a full share in political life. It would even be correct to say that this is their privilege, and theirs is the class in power. Their sons are ready for initiation. Therefore it is upon their class that the duty falls of undertaking the institution of the new class by controlling and performing all the proper ceremonies. Hence derives the so called il-piron relationship. This, as we know, is a mutual relationship by which, on the one hand, the elders pledge themselves to be sponsors of the candidates, and, on the other hand, the latter acknowledge their authority. Thus the piron elders control the main branch of the social and political activity, namely the institution of a new class. And, because the initiates, both junior and senior, constitute the strongest portion of the military force of the country, even this other branch of the political structure, namely the military activity, falls to some extent under their authority. The piron elders are, therefore, the true political leaders of the Masai. (1)

The three classes of the old men are the classes which have retired. In practice they take no further active part in political life, but they are concerned with religious ceremonies in which their presence is greatly considered. Their number is naturally decreasing and the few survivors of the last classes are generally dotards. Possibly members of these last classes particularly the former leaders, are consulted in special cases when tradition is to be ascertained.

Analysis shows that the prerogatives of the age-classes are

(1) See p. 67 for the discussion of the laibon's relationship with the age-system.

common and proper to all their members, and it shows also that the number of class-members, after the class is constituted, is closed as no more members are associated with the class.

Junior elders succeed seniors in the political leadership when the institution of a new class is officially opened. The phenomenon takes place through the rhythm of the age-system.

In this connection Fosbrooke, p.32, speaks of a handing over ceremony performed by the senior and junior elders. "The matter," he writes, "is by no means clear, but there exist vestiges of a ceremony now practised in conjunction with fertility rites, etc., whereby the senior elders retire and hand over the government to the junior elders." Unfortunately, no details of such "vestiges" are indicated, nor is a similar ceremony mentioned by any other authority.

In 1939 Fosbrooke compiled a census of the class- and unit-members among some of the Kisongo. Above we reproduced the membership figures of the age units (see p. 41); it is now of interest to give the figures of the same census for the age-classes.

Places	KIBAYA	SAMATWA	ENGASUMET	LONGIDO	TOTAL	
NYANGUSI	1	-	-	-	1	} OLD MEN
LAIMER	2	1	-	1	4	
DALALA	14	12	8	23	57	
DWATI	58	52	23	26	159	} SENIOR ELDERS
DARETO	49	69	38	62	218	
TOTALS	124	134	69	112	439	

The above totals should be compared with the total of the age-units members, which are as follows:

TOTALS	123	159	66	234	582	) INITIATES
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A special leader is elected at the ngeheri. He is called ol-loo-surutya.⁽¹⁾ His functions are not very clear

(1) The name refers evidently to the elder's decorations. The surutya are the ear-rings proper of the elders.

He is described by Fosbrooke, p.40, as having "no duty" but as being held in great respect by all his age-mates. It appears that there is only one such leader for the whole class as there is a single performance of the ngeherr proper.

The Office of the Prophet (Laibon) and the
Institution of the Age-class.

"There can be little doubt," writes Fosbrooke, p.15, "that at this time (i.e., in pre-European times) a laibon's chief functions were i. dispensing charms for raids; ii. supervising and blessing the age grade ceremonies; iii. propounding the ritual and giving charms for local ceremonies, concerned with fertility and disease (both human and bovine) and with rainfall."

He also remarks, p.17, that "although the supervision of the age grade ceremonies has been recorded as an important function of the laibon, this activity is subject to curious restrictions, the principle of which I have been unable to ascertain."

It seems to us, on the basis of the foregoing analysis, that the function of the prophet in connection with the institution of the age-units and the age-class is secondary to the authority of the piron - elders, and that it possesses a wholly ritual value.

Whenever one of the initiation ceremonies is held, a delegation of the piron, both elders and candidates, approaches one of the prophets for his blessing. According to Fosbrooke's information it does not matter whether the prophet sought is a prophet of the section where the ceremony is performed or of another section or even an "unofficial" laibon.⁽¹⁾ The same

(1) Fosbrooke, p.17. The passage continues as follows: "for instance the Ngeherr or passing out ceremony of the Dareto age-set (class) of the Kissongo section was nominally held under Parrit, and the Unoto or promotion ceremony of the Kisale age (age-unit) under Mbeiya, who were respectively the ruling Laibon at the material times. But in fact an old Kikuyu adoptee of the Engidong clan, one Lolkokwa ole Kashungu (now deceased) was called to assist in both these ceremonies. By agreement the Mondul laibon received the fees in respect of these ceremonies from the Banerera and Kibaya (continued on next page)

contact with a prophet is established before undertaking a raid. All these delegations are expected to pay the prophet consulted a number of cattle contributed by the members of the age-set they represent. The responsibility for collections of this kind is one of the main duties of the leaders.⁽¹⁾

The authority and the influence of the prophet do not extend beyond these contacts. The elders alone are responsible for the organisation of the initiating ceremonies and hence for the institution of the age-class.

In his assumptions Fosbrooke probably goes too far and tries to draw too broad a conclusion. He writes, p.13,: "On evidence which need not be recorded here, it seems certain that the Masai, whose age grade custom so closely approaches that of the Galla, were possessed of their present military organisation prior to leaving their original home."⁽²⁾ Thus it appears that the laibon is a later adaptation imposed on a self-sufficient organisation of government through age-grades. Probably much of the confusion of function which exists today, the indefinite division of governmental authority between the laibon and the age-set leaders, is due to the adoption of an institution (namely, the laibonhood, E.B.) incompatible with the original culture. It would be wrong to regard the institution as being foreign to Masai nature, but it is probably true that it is a feature which had not found its true level in the tribal structure when European influence intervened."

We regard such conclusions as unwarranted. The assumption that the Masai age-system is related to the Galla age-system is frequently taken for granted but up to the present, nothing

(1) It frequently happens, remarks Fosbrooke, p.18, that the contributor does not know exactly the reason for his contribution. Of course he relies entirely on his leader.

(2) "lying between Lake Rudolf and Kenya Highlands." Fosbrooke, p.3.

(1)(continued from previous page). areas, whilst those contributed by the Mondul and Longido Masai went to Lolkokwa at Bisil, Kenya Colony. In another case, Sangoyan, laibon of the Loita section, performed the Enoto or promotion of the Kisale age for the Matapatu and Lodokilani sections, which are nominally under Kimurui.

definite has been ascertained on this point.⁽¹⁾ On the basis of our present analysis we agree with Fosbrooke's conclusion on the function of the prophet in the institution of the age-class as secondary to that of the piron elders.⁽²⁾ But we find it difficult to agree with him when he states, as above, that "the age grades" have been the channel through which the laibon institution came to be established as an institution of Masai culture. We are much inclined to think on different lines. The office of the prophet is essentially a ritual office.. His true power derives from his ritual value. It seems evident from the preceding analysis that Masai political and social structure is primarily based on its age-system. We think that it is solely on account of this system that the laibok never succeeded completely in invading the political field and usurping the authority of the elders.

That the function of the prophet is essentially foreign to the age system is a fact which the present analysis may also have helped to make evident. The conclusion arrived at by Fosbrooke concerning "the incompatibility" of the laibon institution "with the original culture" of the Masai is one that could only be properly reached after an historical and critical study of Masai ritual and religious institutions and not merely from a survey of their political and social institutions.

The Relationship of Class-members.

(Merker, p.47; Hollis (a), p.480; Fox (a), p.183).

A strong bond of solidarity is felt by all the members of a single class. Such feeling is primarily due, as is natural, to the mere fact of belonging to the same social body. Other

(1) On this point, see preface p. i

(2) Cfr. Fosbrooke, p.16: "But he (the prophet) is not responsible for the organisation of such matters (i.e., Embolosat, Unoto and Ngeherr ceremonies) nor is it on his initiative that new ages commence or old ones stand down."

factors, such as a more or less equal age and the contemporaneous performance of essential initiation ceremonies give substantial cause for a feeling and bond of that kind.

It is possible to consider such a solidarity as a kind of class identity. This identity does not exclude the possible variations and differentiations among members of the same class that arise from leadership, seniority and the social prestige attributed to the owner of a large number of cattle. The main expressions of that identity are the use of a single name for the whole class and some special marriage regulations which apply to class members and, to some extent, to their children.

Thus, a man may not marry the daughter of a member of his own class. If he fornicates with her he is punished by his own age-mates. "His kraal is destroyed, he is severely beaten, and a number of his oxen are slaughtered." (Hollis).

Similarly, "if a warrior or boy commits adultery with a wife of a man belonging to his father's age-grade (read: age-class), he is solemnly cursed by the members of that age-grade." (Hollis).

Furthermore, all class members have marital rights regarding their co-members' wives. We are informed by Merker, that a widow "must not re-marry but she must live with the members of her deceased husband's class."

This "sexual communism", as Hollis calls it, takes place only among members of the same class. It is limited, in any case, by clan and kinship exogamy, which, even for class members, is strictly enforced.

At the various initiation ceremonies Embolosat, Engibata, Eunoto, Ngeherr different names are bestowed on the group instituted. Apparently the name given at the Embolosat and at the Engibata is a temporary one. At the Eunoto that name is again changed by the age-units, and at the Ngeherr-proper, all names are discarded in favour of a final name taken by the age-class as a whole.

This name remains unaltered and is handed down to Masai

generations as a milestone which helps to put their past life into a certain historical prospective. All class names are recalled in recounting history.⁽¹⁾

Some authorities have recorded lists of class-names. We reproduce below the lists collected by Merker, p.289, Fox (a), p.462 and cfr. p.450, and Fosbrooke, p.11-12. The latter reports also the approximate date of the institution of the class and notes the major historical events accordingly.⁽²⁾ Dates are reproduced as broad approximations, and even the most recent are to be regarded as such.⁽³⁾

MERKER (1904)	FOX (1930)	FOSBROOKE (1939)	
1. -	IL MESHOPO	-	
2. -	IL SALAASH	-	
3. EL DIEGI	IL TIEGI	DIYOGI	1766 - Members of this
4. EL KISARONI	-	KISARUNI	1791 class can be re-
5. EL MERISCHARI	I MERISHARE	MERISHARI	1806 membered by living
6. EL KIDOTU	IL KIDOTU	KIDOTU	elders.
7. EL DUATI	IL TWATI	DWATI	1821
8. EL NIANGUI	IL NYANGUSI	NYANGUSI	1836
9. 'L AIMERR	IL AIMER	LAIMER	1851 - One or two members
10. -	IL TALALA	DALALA	1866 still alive.
11. -	IL TWATI	DWATI	1881 - Famine, hinderpest
12. -	IL TARETO	DARETO	1896 and smallpox.
			1911 - First contact with
			Eur. Adm.
			1926 - The great war.
		Kisale	1926 - Right-hand unit.
		Merisho	1935 - Left-hand unit.

(1) Fosbrooke defines this entry as "approximate date of circumcision." As noted in the introductory chapter this expression is very vague. It does not define any period at all, because circumcision is performed at different intervals and years during the class period. The expression shows how inaccurate the present age-system terminology is.

(2) For the structural significance of this type of time-reckoning see p. 229 and following.

(3) A fourth list recorded by Hollis (a), p.263, is not reproduced here because it is evident from a comparison with the other lists that it contains "an indiscriminate mixture of age(unit) and class-names" as Fox stated.

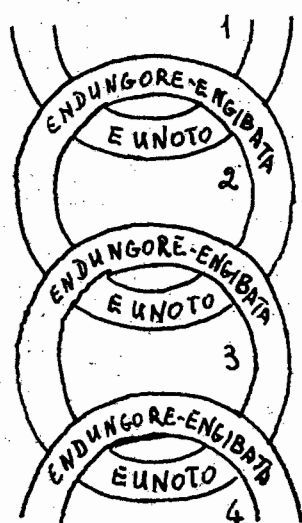
The overlapping Phenomenon.

In the discussion of the institution of the age-class we have considered a class absolutely, i.e. disconnected from the preceding or succeeding classes. But the actual institution of a class is related to the other classes, and especially to the classes immediately preceding and succeeding, in the same way as a unit is related to the units next above and next below. Let us consider the phenomenon by focussing attention on the left-hand unit. This is the second of the two units of a class, and the junior of the two. As soon as the left-hand unit is about to perform the Unoto, and thus obtain the privileges of seniority, the candidates of the next class below hold the Embolosat ceremony and a new period of initiation is started. The rhythm of the age system moves on, and the right-hand unit of the new class enters the process of institution. When the left-hand unit in question becomes senior, the preceding right-hand unit has been senior for a long time, namely since the first initiation ceremonies (endungore-engibata) of the left-hand unit. Members of both, however, officially become elders at the same time by the performance of the ngeherr. At this same time the right-hand unit of the next class below is about to hold the Unoto and become the senior unit. And so on. (1)

The phenomenon is made clear by the following series of diagrams:

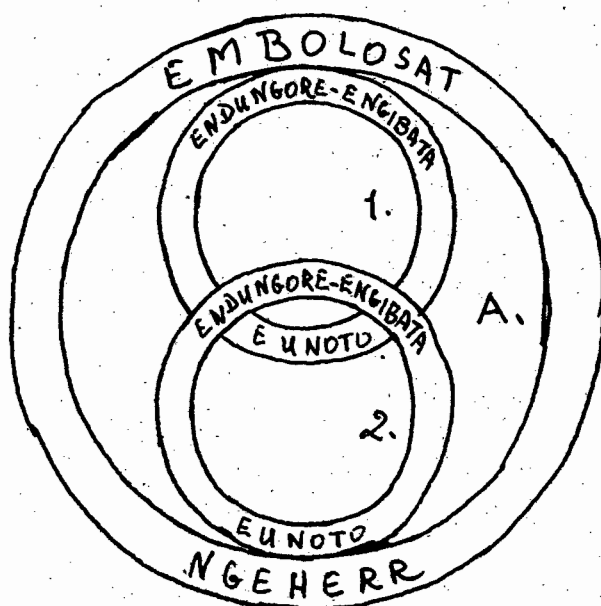
(1) Leakey p. 196 sees the reason for this phenomenon of overlapping in the military aspect of the age-system. He writes: "no two warrior groups (units) may move out into the Elders stage until there is a new age-group in the novice stage, as otherwise it would mean leaving a single age-group alone in the warrior stage for too long, and this would be a serious thing when only the warrior groups are the fighting forces of the tribe."

DIAGRAM 1. The overlapping of the age-units.



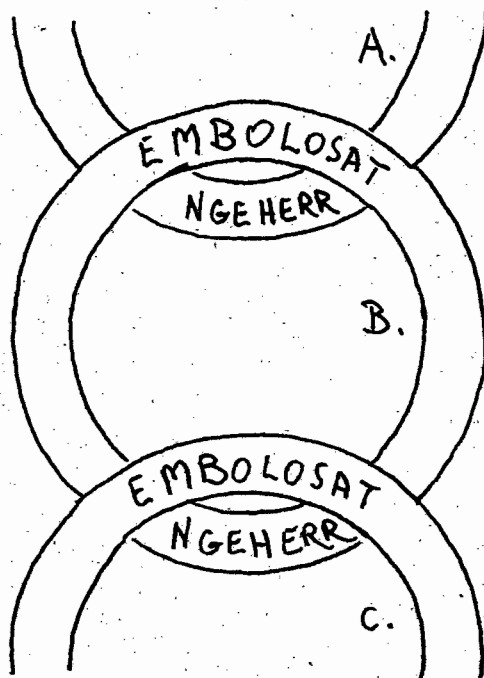
- 1 - Left-hand age unit
of the preceding class.
- 2 - Right-hand age-unit
3 - Left-hand age-unit
4 - Right-hand age-unit
of the succeeding class.
- } of a
single
class

DIAGRAM 11. A single age-class in itself.



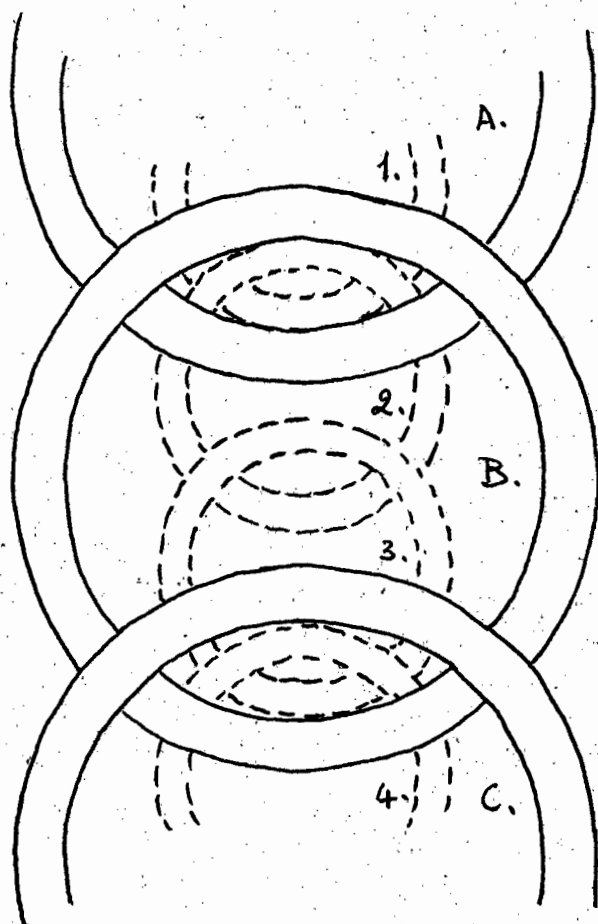
- A - age-class
- 1 - Right-hand unit
- 2 - Left-hand unit.

DIAGRAM 111. The overlapping of the age-classes.



- A - the preceding class.
- B - a full single class
- C - the succeeding class.

DIAGRAM IV. The overlapping phenomenon
in its entire complexity.



A - the preceding class

1 - left-hand unit of class A

B - a full single class

2 - right-hand unit of class B

3 - left-hand unit of class B

C - the succeeding class

4 - right-hand unit of class C

The General Pattern of the Initiation Ceremonies.

It is of interest to note that the ritual patterns of all the initiation ceremonies, whether their value is sectional or extended over all Masailand, are essentially similar. All those ceremonies are made up of four main elements: a) testing and instruction of candidates; b) election of a leader; c) sacrifice of a bull; d) ceremonial fire.

a) The testing and instruction of the candidates is a broad expression which covers various rites performed at different times. It refers to all the ordeals (except circumcision) and confessions which candidates are expected to pass through, and to the instructions, blessings and prayers which the elders impart to, or offer for, their piron candidates.

b) Contrary to expectation, the office of leader holds no attraction for the candidates. Very probably the reason

is that such leaders as the aigwenani and aunoni are expected to act in a fashion which is not the fashion of their own age-mates at that moment. Indeed they are forced to act as elders when their companions are being recognised as junior or senior initiates. Unfortunately we have no detailed account of the election of the class-leader (el-loo-surutya), but it would be, we think, of great importance to know how he reacts to his appointment. (1)

c) That the killing of the bull is a religious sacrifice is shown by the fact that the bull is killed in a ceremonial way, i.e. by suffocation. (2) Prayers are also offered to God, and ceremonial hide-rings from the bull's skin are distributed to all those present.

d) At first sight the ceremonial fire gives the impression of being inconsistent with this ritual pattern. It serves to destroy the bones of the sacrificed bull, and it is also produced at the foundation of the village of the initiates (manyatta). The importance of this ritual element, however, becomes evident if we compare it with the so called piron relationship. Il-piron is the firestick used for producing new fire. The breaking of a similar stick by the piron elders is the main rite of the endungore, and the elders and candidates when they visit the prophet say: "This is our fire-stick, we are one" (3)

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- (1) Does this opposition of the candidates to the leader's office, and the motives that seems to justify it, suggest that such an office is foreign to the authentic structure of the age system? Indeed, the balance between different classes and between members of a single class is sufficiently defined by the principle of their seniority status. The appointment of special leaders seems to be an imposed secondary superstructure.
- (2) The ordinary way of killing a beast is by stabbing it in the nape of the neck. Cfr. Hollis (a), p.157, and p.300.

Against the background of the above patterns, the individual initiation, in the way it is now performed, i.e. by circumcision, seems to stand apart and follow a pattern of its own. This discord is somewhat striking, and one may be permitted to hazard the opinion that circumcision as such is foreign to the age-system of the Masai.

CHAPTER II.

THE AGE SYSTEM OF THE NANDI-SUK.

I.

By reason of their cultural and linguistic affinities the Nandi-Suk should be considered and dealt with as a single people. Bryan and Tucker classify all the dialects spoken by this people under the single Nandi Language Group. This includes two main languages, the Nandi and the Suk. The Marakwet, the Endo and the Kadam are described as dialects of the Suk Language; all other dialects, the Kipsigis, the Elgon, and the Kamasia cluster round the Nandi.

The cultural relationship of all the Nandi-Suk is soon brought home by a reading of their literature. This relationship is also a fact recognised and honoured by the tribes themselves. All the Nandi-Suk regard one another as "brothers", a qualification which is refused to other peoples such as the Masai and the Turkana. These are considered strangers and enemies ("punik" say the Kipsigis), and not brothers. If a Masai or a Turkana is killed by one of the Nandi-Suk, the culprit is not prosecuted by his own people because he has killed an enemy. If, on the other hand, he kills a "brother", he must pay compensation.⁽¹⁾

For most of the Nandi-Suk the available literature is poor. On the Nandi the work of Hollis is still the standard source. So is the work of Beech for the Suk. Only for the Kipsigis do we possess a scientific account of their social institutions published by Peristiany. It is on the basis of this study that all other Nandi-Suk literature possesses a comparative value.

(1) See Peristiany, p.2; Huntingford (b), p.2034.

The Nandi-Suk people is made up of the following tribes:

1. THE NANDI proper.⁽¹⁾ They live in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya Colony, mainly in the Nandi District. But not a few are in Trans-Nzoia District, Uasin Gishu District and West Suk District. They are essentially a pastoral people, though they have taken to agriculture to a certain extent. They number 116,681.
2. THE KIPSIGIS are the most southerly of the Nandi-Suk. They live mainly in the Kericho District of Nyanza Province, Kenya Colony, and partly in the Nakuru District, Rift Valley Province. The Kipsigis have also been called Lumbwa, and are now known also by this name though this is correctly applied only to the agricultural Masai of Tanganyika. Like the Nandi proper, the Kipsigis are shepherds and agriculturalists. Their total population is 159,692.
3. THE SUK or POKWUT. They live in the Baringo and West-Suk Districts of the Rift Valley Province, Kenya Colony. It is said that "the Suk were originally an entirely agricultural people", and that in recent times one section turned to pastoral life after successful raids on the Samburu Masai. At present the agricultural Suk live on the southern hills of Suk-land, and are also known as Hill-Suk; the pastoral Suk live in the semi-desert plains adjoining the land of the Turkana and Karamojong on the north and on the east. They seem to have been influenced rather by their contacts with these peoples. The West Suk are given in the 1948 census as 38,248; the East Suk as 6,500. The total population of the Suk may be reckoned as coming near to 50,000.⁽²⁾

(1) This name was originally a Swahili nickname from mnandi, cormorant, which made allusion to the rapaciousness of the Nandi. Their old name was Chemwal. Huntingford spells it chemngal, camels, "in allusion", he states, "to the introduction of circumcision from camel riding Mohammedans". This explanation of the name was first proposed by C. Eliot in the Introduction of Hollis' monograph on The Nandi, p.xv. It is worth noting that the Nandi, like all other Nilo-Hamites except the Turkana, do not possess camels. See also K.L.C.E., p.2036-37; Bryan and Tucker, p.34.

(2) This figure is also given by R.O. Hennings in "African Morning", 1951, p.234.

4. THE ELGEYO, THE MARAKWET, THE ENDO. These tribes live in the Rift Valley Province, mostly in the Elgeyo-Marakwet District. Only some of the Elgeyo are found in the Uasin Gishu District. The Elgeyo speak a Nandi dialect; the Marakwet and the Endo a Suk dialect. These three tribes are predominantly agricultural, and they are skilled in methods of irrigation. According to a tradition reported by Hamilton-Ross⁽¹⁾ there was a time when the Endo were not cultivators. All of them own cattle and stock, and practise pastoral life (to some extent). The Elgeyo number 33,588 in the Elgeyo-Marakwet District, and 6,826 in the Uasin Gishu District: a total of 40,414. The Marakwet are given as numbering 29,685; and the Endo as 7,276.

5. THE ELGONY. These live on the slopes of Mt. Elgon in North Nyanza District, Nyanza Province. They are very little known. Total population 7,853.

6. THE KALASIA or TUGIN. They live mostly in the Baringo District (Kerio Valley), and a few in the Nakuru District, Rift Valley Province. Of this tribe also we know little, but there is sufficient evidence to show that they are closely connected with the Nandi. Total population: 66,850.

7. THE NYANGORI or TERIK, and THE IAGO or POK. The former live in the North Nyanza District, Nyanza Province. They number 47,912. The latter are settled on the southern slopes of Mt. Elgon. Neither population figures nor literature are available.

Evans-Pritchard, speaking of the territorial organisation of the Kipsigis, Nandi, Suk and Elgeyo, writes: "the country of each was divided into a number of territorial segments, which we may call provinces, and these segments were not only geographical divisions of the country but also political units".⁽²⁾ This statement is not entirely correct. What is here termed "province" has a different implication for the Kipsigis and for the Nandi.⁽³⁾ Among the Kipsigis the primary territorial

(1) See Hamilton-Ross, p.1956.

(2) Evans-Pritchard (a), p.251.

(3) This difference is also stressed by Evans-Pritchard, on p.262,

segments, i.e. the provinces, have a political function and are called emet, pl. emotinuek. Among the Nandi these primary territorial segments are also called emet, pl. emotinuek, but they are purely "geographical areas" without any political function⁽¹⁾. The province as understood by Evans-Pritchard is, among the Nandi, a secondary territorial segment called pororiet pl. pororosiek. This will be discussed below when we speak of the military organisation. Hollis (b) and Huntingford count 15-16 pororosiek (2).

The Suk country was also divided into territorial sections. The information however is not very clear and consistent. "As far as one can judge they were much the same kind of territorial divisions as the Nandi and Kipsigis provinces"⁽³⁾.

Territorial sections are also described in connection with the Elgony⁽⁴⁾ the Elgeyo⁽⁵⁾ the Marakwet⁽⁶⁾ and the Kamasia,⁽⁷⁾ and although it is difficult to give a precise statement of their social and political extent, the information may be taken as sufficient evidence that the same system of primary territorial divisions very probably obtained with them as with the Nandi, the Kipsigis and the Suk.

Other territorial divisions of the Kipsigis are:

- a) a secondary territorial segment, called by Evans-Pritchard "the shire". It consists of three or more villages. Apparently there is no Kipsigis term for this division.
- b) the village (kokwet pl. kokwotinwek), which is an aggregate of some homesteads "not spatially, ... but socially" defined.

(1) There were six of such geographical areas among the Nandi, as follows: North: Wareng; East: Masop; South: Solin or Pelkut; West: Aldai and Chesume; Centre: Engwen. Cfr. Hollis, p.4. At present only five emotinuek are found in Nandiland, Solin having been "taken from the tribe". Cfr. Huntingford K.L.C.E, p.2046. The Kipsigis provinces were as follows: Peelkut, Waldai, Pureti and Sot. Cfr. Peristiany, p.2.

(2) Hollis (b), p.4; Huntingford (b), p.2049.

(3) Evans-Pritchard (a) p.251-52. Cfr. for the Suk, Dundas, Beech and Barton as from bibliography.

(4) Huntingford (a) p.442 "The Kony have no village, but live in small groups of huts (kaita, kat or koit, pl. korik).

(5) Massam, p.33.

(6) Dundas (a), p.61.

(7) Dundas (a-), p.65.

- c) the hamlet (temet, pl. temenik), formed by a group of adjacent homesteads.
- d) the homestead, the minimal territorial segment.

"It is highly probable that the Nandi had a similar organisation, but the literature on them is so poor that we cannot say definitely that this was so".⁽¹⁾ Huntingford describes the Nandi koret as "the smallest land-unit, which may be compared, in point of size only, to our 'parish'. The Nandi have no village, and their homesteads are scattered singly here and there, much in the manner of the scattered Keltic settlement in Britain".⁽²⁾

The Kipsigis village as described by Peristiany is a straggling unit, marked by no special boundaries except for a tree, or a stream, or a field, but its members are well known to everyone.⁽³⁾ It seems highly probable that the same system obtained with the other Nandi-peoples. An untrained observer's difficulty in discovering such a unit is certainly one of the reasons for the vagueness of the information of almost all our sources on this topic.

Clan Organisation.

A totemic clan system obtained throughout the whole Nandi-Suk people. Clans are generally subdivided into minor branches. There is no evidence to show that the lineage unit in the clan has ever been stressed as a basis for corporate activity.

It is stated that "the Nandi clans (oret, pl. ortinwek) and the Kipsigis clans (oret, pl. ortinwek) were generally not exogamous", but "the Suk clans (or, pl. orten) were exogamous"⁽⁴⁾ For the Nandi, however, Huntingford speaks of "the 17 exogamous

(1) Evans-Pritchard (a), p.252.

(2) Huntingford (b), p.2046-47. Very probably the system of the Nandi is like that of the Kipsigis, a system in which the village has a social and not a spatial definition.

(3) Peristiany, p.126-127.

(4) Evans-Pritchard (a), p.258-59.

clans".⁽¹⁾ Exogamy is strictly enforced only for every undivided clan-branch. Certainly this was the case with the Kipsigis and the Nandi and probably also with the Suk and Elgeyo.⁽²⁾

"In none of these four peoples does there seem to have been an association between clans or clan segments and territorial divisions"⁽³⁾ Also political activity and leadership are not based on the clan system but on the territorial, and the age systems. The minimal branches of the clan had, however, a corporate function, especially for murder compensation. This is the only political relevance of the clan-system.

Military Organisation.

The analysis by Evans-Pritchard tends to show the Kipsigis military organisation as different from that of the Nandi.

The Kipsigis had two systems of military organisation, the defensive and the offensive systems.

The defensive system was based on territorial organisation. "Each village had its band of warriors under its own war leader, and these village war-leaders were under a shire war-leader who commanded all village bands. The offensive organisation for raiding was both on a wider basis and a different principle. There were four regiments (puriet, pl. puriosiek), the members of which were found in every part of the country, a man being born into his father's regiment"⁽⁴⁾. These regiments did not act

(1) Huntingford (b), p.2060. For purposes of comparison it is worth noting the information that the Talai class of the Nandi proper "may only fight on the right flank in a battle" (Hollis (b), p. 9.)

(2) Cfr. Evans-Pritchard, l.c.

(3) Evans-Pritchard, l.c. Among the Nandi it seems clear that residence and grazing or cultivation rights were not based on clan, but on pororiet - membership. Cfr. Huntingford (b), p.20"-30. Lundaa (a), p.61, states that "the Maragwetta and Ndo are divided into clans each corresponding to a geographical section". But his information is not complete: of the five clans he recorded, one is present in two sections.

(4) This principle is not invariable. Peristieny, p.183, mentions the possibility of a man's changing his children's membership from his regiment to another one. To this effect a special ceremony is held when a man marries a second wife, but only the second and the other sons of

corporately, but only those members who lived in the same province came together in war. These provincial sections of regiments united in pairs, each pair carrying out raids independently of the other pair. A severe defeat imposed a new system. The raiding forces of a province were then united into four companies, and in each company was placed an equal number of warriors from all four regiments. The older organisation into exclusive regimental companies was maintained only for ceremonial purposes".⁽¹⁾ The new organisation made the links between the military and territorial organisation much closer. Such links, however, were not at all foreign to the old system, as appears from the independent way regiments used to act within the provincial sections, and the freedom they had of allying themselves with others. Members of one pororiet could settle in the territory of another pororiet only under definite provisions.⁽²⁾ For the first three years the new resident still retained the membership of his original pororiet, but after that period he was considered "automatically" a member of the pororiet of his new residence.⁽³⁾

"One cannot say definitely whether the territorial organisation and the regimental organisation (of the Nandi proper) were one and the same or whether there was a regimental organisation, though spatially coextensive with it. Thus, whereas Hollis describes the siritiet as a parish, a territorial division of a province (pororiet), Huntingford disputes this and says that it was a section of a regiment"⁽⁴⁾ Huntingford states

(note continued from previous page.)

(5) the second wife will be members of the regiment other than their father's. Cfr. also Barton (b), p.46.

(1) Evans-Pritchard (a), p.260.

(2) Huntingford (b) reports these provisions: 1. a man with no children was ordinarily not allowed to settle in a new pororiet; 2. he could if he had a female child or children, because these were considered as prospective brides for the men of that pororiet; 3. he could also, if he was sufficiently friendly with a member of that pororiet; 4. he could, finally, if his wife came from that pororiet, or if his sister was married there.

(3) Huntingford (b0, p. 2047-2048.

(4) Evans-Pritchard (a), p.264. The opinion of Huntingford on the Nandi siritiet finds a correspondence in the Masai sirit - a regimental company.

further that a parish, koret, might contain one or more such companies (siritiet, pl. siritaiik) in other words the siritiet was a subdivision of the koret.⁽¹⁾ He noted also that the pororosiek were "not all contained in single tracts of land, with one piece of land to one pororiet".⁽²⁾ Hence, the pororiet as a military unit did not square with the territorial distribution of its members.⁽³⁾ All this evidence justifies the conclusion that, among the Nandi, regimental organisation was not different from, and more clearly defined than, territorial organisation.

It would appear that military organisation and the age system were based on different principles. Regimental membership, among the Kipsigis, is described as a matter of inheritance, but class membership is obtained by initiation and association with an age group. The two organisations, however, are so tied up that the right of bearing arms is obtained only by passing initiation and being a member of an age group. Evans-Pritchard (b), p.xxx, states that the Kipsigis operational army consisted only of the "age set in the grade of warriorhood", that is to say it consisted of a single age-class. It seems to us that this statement is too formal and it does not agree with the evidence. According to Peristiany, p.168, the offensive army was made up of the inexperienced and experienced warriors. It was the latter's duty to instruct and train their juniors. We must assume, therefore, that the fighting force was not limited to a single class. It is obvious at any rate, that during the first years of a new class-period when a fresh class was being formed (and it would be the so called "class in power"!), its first members who had not long emerged from initiation, could neither have had the experience nor the strength to face the

(1) Huntingford (c), p.138, and (b), p.2045.

(2) Huntingford (c), p.133-134.

(3) This is quite evident from the list of the distribution of the porosiek either "before 1906" or "after 1906" inserted by Huntingford in his memorandum on the Nandi Military Divisions to the KLCE, p.2050. Cfr. also Huntingford's latest summary "The Nandi", 1944, Nairobi, Ndia Kuu Press.

pressure of a full scale offensive action. Clearly, the initiates could not have become warriors to the exclusion of the class above them.⁽¹⁾ The defensive organisation of the Kipsigis had a local character. The junior initiates, ordinarily called "the warriors", had to keep watch for possible attackers, but all men able to carry arms took part in the actual fight. "We have no knowledge", writes Evans-Pritchard (a), p.264, "of an organisation similar to that of the Kipsigis regiments among the Keyu and the Suk. Their military organisation was probably similar to that of the Nandi". The information is indeed scarce, but it seems to us that Massam's evidence on the Elgeyo would rather put the Elgeyo military organisation on the Kipsigis line. Massam describes the defensive system as based on local outposts, very much in the manner of the Kipsigis watchers. He says also that offensive actions were decided at a full meeting of those "interested". Those attending the meeting had to appoint four men to consult "the witch-doctor" (moyet), after which "the actual fighting men were chosen, and herdsmen were detailed. Youths were not allowed to go to war".⁽²⁾

The whole subject of military organisation has never been properly investigated. The description of the Kipsigis system by Peristiany seems too formal to be valid. From what we know at present it would seem that the differences of the Nandi-Suk types of military organisation are not as profound as sometimes is stated.

The basic administrative unit, among the Kipsigis, is the village (kokwet). This is presided over by "the elder of the village" (poyot ab kokwet). The elder of the village is not formally elected but he takes the place because he has dis-

(1) The point is discussed again on p.124.

(2) Massam, p.33 and p.36. Massam's description does not suggest that the fighting was limited to a single class. In the list of age-classes reported by Massam, p.55, there is mention of the Nyongi as "the fighting men", and of the Maina who "instead of training for war as would have been the case formerly, now work on farms or herds stock in the reserve".

tinguished himself as assistant to the former "poyot ab kokwet" and because his personality has found favour in the community. He is assisted by the council of the other elders and he acts more as a mediator than a judge in trying the ordinary cases of village life. All members of the village are expected to assist one another in the work of the fields, and therefore the village may be considered also as an economic unit. It is the duty of "the captain of the village" (kiptayat ab kokwet) to supervise the organisation of this work. He is the economic leader of the village. The military leader of the village is "the captain of the initiates" (kiptayat ab murenek).

The Kipsigis "shire" is a juridical, military, and ritual unit, but not an economic unit. The kiruongidet neo is the great judge of the shire. He comes to office in an informal way having been the assistant of the previous great judge. He is assisted by a council of elders, who represent the villages of the shire. The great judge "is only the mouthpiece of the council". He can give no order independent of it. It is not he who makes judicial decisions but the elders meeting in council. The leader of the warriors in the shire is "the captain of all the warriors", (kiptayat neo nelbo murenek). He is responsible to the great judge and his council. This dependence of the military leader on the council of the elders is worth noting. It shows that power in military matters was not a privilege of the warriors considered as a class, which, therefore, cannot be described as "the class in power". The military leaders are elected at the "handing over ceremony" (saget ap eito) by the judge of the shire, the council and the retiring military leaders. The ceremonial leader of the shire is called "the elder of the ceremony" (poyot ap Tumda). He is independent of other leaders, and has a purely ritual function. His particular role is to offer prayers to God for candidates and the country at initiation and other ceremonies.

The affairs of the province are settled by the council of the province, constituted by the judges of the shires, and

their assistants. The above description of the Kipsigis administrative system, based on Peristiany's evidence and Evans-Pritchard's analysis, seems to be over-systematized. The contrast between this systematization and the informality with which all types of leaders take office is rather significant. Perhaps the real picture is not so formal.

The political system of the Nandi worked in a way very similar to that of the Kipsigis.

"The elder of the council" (po-yot ap kokwet) is the head of the council of elders governing the affairs of a Nandi village (koret). He is informally appointed for his outstanding personality by the general consensus of the people. The warriors (the so called "class in power") may attend the council but "are supposed not to intervene until their advice is asked for".⁽¹⁾ The province (pororiet) was headed by two "advisers",⁽²⁾ (kiruogindet, pl. kirogik), who presided over the council of the province. We are not told how these leaders were elected, but very probably they were appointed by general consensus, the typical, informal way of the Nandi-Suk. The council of the pororiet "was to deliberate primarily on military matters".⁽³⁾ This is the reason why the military captains (kiptayat, pl. kiptalenik) were members of the council.⁽⁴⁾ We are not told, but we may guess that the office was taken in succession by every new captain of every newly instituted class. The Nandi company (siritiet) was commanded by a special leader.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Huntingford (d) p.6.

(2) We are not told whether the second "adviser" was an assistant to kirogik in the same way as among the Kipsigis, where such an assistant usually succeeded the kiruogindet neo after his death.

(3) Huntingford (d) p.6.

(4) l.c.

(5) It is not clear what was the real term for this office. Hollis (b), p.49, calls him olaitoriet, and says that he is responsible to the Kiruogindet. Huntingford (c), p.138 and (d), p.7, mentions the same term but simply to state that it is not in disuse. Instead he calls the head of the siritiet, kirkiet, pl. kirukik - the bull.

We are not told how and why this officer did obtain his post, whether it was by formal or informal appointment, whether he obtained it because of his seniority or of outstanding personality or for any other reason.

Beech and Barton (a) say that among the Suk there were such leaders as "the advisers" (kirowokin), and that the elders formed the council. Beech, p.7. also refers to the fact that "the elders have, comparatively recently, elected two warriors... to act as commanders of the fighting-men."

The Elgeyo have the adviser (kiruwek-in). "This person", states Massam, p.54, "is chosen by general consensus of opinion (including that of women) on account of his ability, or wealth, or both. His influence depends on his personality". We mentioned above "the full meeting" held for deciding on a prospective raid. Massam, p.55, refers also to "the local councils" of the elders called kiruok.

The Elgony have a leader for each of their three porosiek. The leader is called mgoriondet, pl. mgorenik. (Huntingford (a) p.441).

All this evidence is sufficient to indicate that the essential structure of the political life of the Nandi-Suk tribes was very similar. Hollis (b), p.48-51, describing the Nandi-government, refers to the prophet (orkoiyot, pl. orkoiik) as the "supreme chief of the whole race". His function, however, as illustrated by Hollis himself, leaves no doubt about the purely ritual character of the institution. He was certainly not in any way "the supreme chief" of the tribe. All his authority in political matters came from the influence of his religious powers and of his personality. Hollis (b), p.49, describes as follows his activities: "they (the Nandi) look to him for instruction when to commence planting their crops; he obtains rain for them, either direct or through the rain-makers, in times of drought⁽¹⁾; he makes women and cattle

(1) Note the distinction between the office of orkoiyot and that of rain-maker.

fruitful; and no war-party can expect to meet with success unless he has approved of the expedition". The office of the prophet is hereditary in the sense that all belong to the same clan. Hollis points out that the prophet institution among the Nandi is derived from the Masai. It seems certain that it was introduced by the Uasin Gishu Masai who, after 1860, took refuge among the Nandi. They were absorbed into a special section of the Talai clan, of which all the prophets (orkoiit) were members. Before that date, the medicine men (orkoiit) were all members of the Kamwaike clan.⁽¹⁾ The orkoiyot was assisted by two elders "chosen by the people of each pororiet" who represented him before the "advisers" (kirugik).

Among the Kipsigis the situation is no different. The Masai intruder, who held the office of prophet, was called alternatively laibon and orgoyot. The office was peculiar to two special branches of the Talai clan. For political reasons, the Government took action against the Kipsigis prophets and their families and expelled them from Kipsigisland.⁽²⁾

No similar office is ever mentioned in connection with the other Nandi-Suk tribes.

The social position of a man is enhanced by his wealth in cattle. Among the Kipsigis it is customary for a man to distribute about half his cattle among different friends living as far away from each other as possible, so as to minimise the risks from raids and local diseases, and to spread the fame of his wealth. The custom is called kimanagan. The cattle of the kimanagan cannot be taken back by their owner without an exceptional reason. Only the skin of a dead kimanagan beast must be

(1) Cfr. Hollis (b), p.49; Huntingford, (b), p.2047 and p.2060 Huntingford (d), p.7-8, states that the office of the chief medicine-man was abolished by the Government in 1923.

(2) Peristiany, p.224-226, and p.213.

sent to the owner. The kimanagan transaction is a source of great prestige and "the more wealthy a man is, the easier it is for him to obtain it".⁽¹⁾

Another source of social prestige arising from cattle ownership is found among the Nandi and the Suk. It comes from the possession of a beast with twisted horns, one pointing forward, the other backwards. The beast is called Kamari in Nandi, Kamar in Suk. Every man should possess such an animal, and the man who does not is taunted and regarded as a poor man. Much ceremonial is observed in dealing with these animals.⁽²⁾

We have no information of such a custom among the other peoples of the group, though it is not unknown among other Nilo-Hamites.

(1) Peristiany, p.73, and pp.150-152.

(2) Cfr. Beech, p.8-9; Huntingford (d), p.3-4.

II

The Cyclical System.

The most typical feature of the Nandi-Suk age system is the recurrence of a fixed number of class-names which are cyclically revived and applied to the succeeding classes. This phenomenon is known as the cyclical system of age-associations as opposed to the linear system in which names for the classes are always found anew. By the cyclical system every class is onomatopoeically defined even at a time when the class exists only potentially because members have not yet been initiated. The fixity of the system, based as it is on a limited and fixed series of names, makes it possible to guess beforehand the name of the class any new born child will be a member of. (1)

The Kipsigis have seven classes (ipinda, pl. ipinwek); the Nandi also have seven (ipinda, pl. ipinuagik); the Suk have eight (pen, pl. ?); the Elgeyo-Marakwet have also eight (ibindo, pl. ibinwek). The list for the Kamasia given by Ward is certainly incomplete: only six classes are mentioned.

Usually we speak of "classes", but it would be more correct to speak of "class-names". It is the names which are re-applied to new classes according to the rhythm of the cycle; the class, as a group of people, is unique: it dissolves as class-members die out.

(1) Analysis shows that it is not correct to speak, as Huntingford (d), p.9-10, does in connection with class membership of "predetermination", or even to say that a man "is born" into a definite class. See below p.117-118.

Table of class-names:

	KIPSIGIS	NANDI	ELGEYO - KARAKWET	SUK	KAMASIA
1.	MAINA	MAINA	MAINA	MAINA	MAINA
2.	NYONGE	NYONGE	NYONGI	NYONGU	?
3.	KIMNYIKE	KIMNYIKE	KIMNYEGLN	<u>MERKUTWA</u>	KIMNYEIGU
4.	KABLELACH	KAPLELOCH	KABLELACH	KABLEIACH	KABLELACH
5.	KIPKOYMET	KIPKOIMET	KIPKOIMET	KIPKOIMET	KIPKOIMET
6.	SAWE	SOWE	SOWE	SOWA	SOWE
7.	CHUMA	JUMA	CHUMA	JUMO	CHUMO
8.	-	-	KORONGORO	KARONGORO	(?)

According to some of Peristiany's informants, the Kipsigis Kipkoymet were traditionally called Kerongoro. The change was caused by an unlucky event which suggested the chance of better luck in another name.⁽¹⁾ Totty, p.7, says that the Suk Karongoro is probably an alternative for Kipkoimet. Note Merkutwa as the Suk alternative for Kimnyike.

Opening an Initiation Period.

Though children and all candidates for initiation may be described with the name of their prospective class, no class is ever instituted before the initiation of all its members has taken place. The class-period is the proper time for initiation and no initiation for a definite class may be performed before the class-period is officially opened. The opening of a new class-period gives rise to rivalry between the two succeeding classes. On one side, candidates for initiation bring pressure to be allowed the privilege, on the other side, the initiates who are approaching the closing point of their class-period

(1) Peristiany, p.42-3.

try to have this extended as long as possible.

a. This is what happens among the Kipsigis. (See Peristiany, p.32-34.) When candidates, or better those among them who care to take the initiative, decide that the class-period for a new class should be opened, they send secret messengers (alamalyet) to the other candidates to arise interest. A number of candidates, after that, meet one night at the house of an elder of their fathers' class. This elder is supposed to instruct them on the correct way of approaching "an old sage", and is also supposed to provide them with beer for the old man. The old sage will be asked to speak authoritatively to the initiates of the class which is to be closed, and convince them that the time for them to retire, i.e. to marry and build their own families, has arrived. The beer for the old man is called Ipinda beer and Peristiany states that it is "an essential part of the ceremony". The initiates, who are aware of the steps taken by the candidates, try to stop the latter, and when members of the two groups meet at this turn of the class-period a clash follows. As a matter of fact, antagonism can rage fiercely. In the old days, candidates usually retired into a forest to organise themselves, and when they felt confident would sally forth against the initiates or "the class in power". "This is known to this day as the war of the Ipinwek". The elders act as mediators. The old sage tries to convince the initiates to give way. If his efforts fail, new hostility would break out, and everything would have to be started again. If, on the other hand, he is successful, and this very much depends on his skill, the initiates would discuss the old man's proposals among themselves and decide the final answer to give him. At the news of the initiates' consent there is, according to Peristiany, great rejoicing.⁽¹⁾ Peristiany who calls this

(1) The Great News is celebrated by the families of the candidates, and their fathers rejoice in a special way because, as Peristiany writes, p.33, "now they will be the fathers of warriors, their sons will bring them cattle from their raids, they (the sons) will marry and give them grandchildren".

festival as the "Great News", does not report the native term for it. The ceremony seems to possess a structural significance. All the above-mentioned events, the initiative of the candidates, the beer to the old sage, his approach to the initiates, the Ipinwek-war, the consent of the initiates and the Great News, are described by Peristiany as the first part of the "handing over" ceremony (Saget ap Eito). It seems, however, that he has missed the real value of all those events. As a matter of fact, their performance obtains the right for the candidates to start a new class period and to be initiated into a new class. It is this which bears the structural significance of all those events. The climax is reached at the "Great News" festival which, therefore, should be considered as "the opening ceremony" of a new class period, and not simply as a part of the handing over ceremony. Actually between the opening ceremony we have just described, and the handing over, the initiation of the first members of a new class takes place. It should be noticed that the two succeeding class-periods overlap. At the time when the opening ceremony and the initiation of the first candidates of the new class are performed, the handing over which is the closing ceremony of a class period, is not yet performed. For this reason, namely because their own class period is not yet terminated, the consent of the initiates is asked for through the mediation of the old sage. By giving him their consent, the initiates agree to the commencement of a new class period and to the formation of a new class. The agreement will have an official expression at the closing ceremony which takes the form of a handing over (Saget ap eito). When the handing over is performed, the members of the new class must be met upon an essentially equal social status, and this is the reason why the first members of the new class who are to take over on behalf of all their class, are initiated before the old class period is finally closed. All this we call the overlapping phenomenon.

b. We are informed that the Nandi have some preliminary

ceremonies, but it is not clear whether these should be considered as the opening ceremony. Huntingford, (a), p.425-426, describes a ceremony (kikule-kwet - we bleed the goat) which must be performed before "each circumcision". "This ceremony is held in each pororiet (province), and it is a representative gathering of the people of the pororiet".⁽¹⁾

Though we cannot say whether this ceremony should be taken as the opening ceremony for a new class-period, we know that the performance of the Nandi saket ap eito or handing over is preceded by the initiation of the first members of the new class as among the Kipsigis. Huntingford insists in saying that the Nandi "circumcision" was performed every fifteen years. He says also that the kikule-kwet was to precede "each circumcision". Therefore, we can legitimately consider the kikule-kwet as the opening ceremony of the new class-period.

c. Barton (a), p.91, describes as follows the preliminaries of a new class-period among the Suk: "the practice is for youths desiring to undergo the rite (circumcision) to approach those who have been circumcised within recent years and who form the previous age grade. These intermediaries go to the elders of the tribe, and the elders give their decision whether the time is ripe, and seem to base their decision on the state of the harvest and the well-being of the stock. On permission being granted, the youths make a feast to the elders". After this, the initiation is performed. It is obvious that there is no great difference between what Barton describes and the Kipsigis opening ceremony. See also Beech, p.21. It is however stated that the Suk do not hold the handing over ceremony, a statement which we shall discuss at a further stage.

d. Among the Elgeyo the course of events preceding initiation does not seem to vary from that mentioned above,

(1) The Moi clan does not perform the kikule-kwet, but holds a special ceremony called "kiireku-leget - we take off the belt".

though there is some confusion about this in the literature. Massam, p.57, writes that "at the instigation of the young men anxious to marry" the elders discuss with the warriors the holding of the Sakobei ceremony. "The youths who are waiting to be circumcised, tactfully provide beer to be drunk by the older people at the conference. If the warriors agree that the young men are of any age to marry there is no further difficulty, and preparations are made for the Sakobei".

Hosking, p.4 and 5, writes as follows: "(The circumcision ceremony) takes place when the generation next to be circumcised are numerous and powerful enough to make the age in power allow them to be done...The decision rests with the age in power, in the case of the Elgeyo at present, the Nyongi. A baraza (meeting) was held and the petition of the young Maina was heard and granted. The old men assist at these barazas and have some say in the matter, though not the last word. I gather that they may record their veto if the year is un auspicious".

According to Massam, initiation is not performed after this ceremony but after the handing over. And this is the point which makes for confusion. It seems that Massam applies equivocally the term "circumcision" to the initiation of the individual and to the class as a group.

e. There is no information regarding the Elgony. For the Kamasia we are told by Ward, p.1, of the overlapping phenomenon. He states that "some of the Chumo had already been circumcised" when the Maina were still "in charge".

The Individual Initiation.

a. Initiation is known among the Kipsigis as Tumdo, a term used for any ceremony but with special reference to initiation.

The usual age of candidates is 14-18 years, but in the old days it seems to have been 20-25 years. (1)

(1) Peristiany, p.8, p.30. Barton (b)'s information, p.51, that "the novices (candidates) vary in age from 5-15 years" may be dismissed as inaccurate.

According to Peristiany there are six ceremonies to be performed for the initiation.⁽¹⁾

Candidates are entrusted by their fathers to a reliable old man, known afterwards as pamongo (father) to the candidates. He is to look after them during the whole period of initiation, and will be compensated for the food he supplies.

Barton (b), p.51, points out that "circumcision is not of large batches at one time..., but of a convenient number generally of the same koret (village)". Peristiany speaks of "a sufficient number".⁽²⁾

Before the initiation starts, the candidates assisted by their sponsor (pamongo) build a special hut (menjit) where they live in seclusion throughout the initiation period.^(2")

The first of the six ceremonies is "a secret ritual followed by circumcision" and called Rotyinotet. Its salient points are the anointment of the candidates by their maternal uncle; a night, preceding the day of circumcision, of promiscuous orgy; a physical ordeal and a test by the elders of the candidates' past sexual life; and then, circumcision. Candidates are lined up for circumcision "in order of seniority, which is dictated by the priority of their fathers' ipinda, or age grade".

During this and the following ceremonies candidates are led by two "masters of ceremonies" (moterenik)⁽³⁾ "of senior and junior rank" ⁽⁴⁾.

After circumcision the candidates are secluded inside the menjit, and for the first days they are not allowed to touch anything, not even food, to which they help themselves with some kind of bark.

After a month, the Labet ap Eun (dipping of the hands) ceremony takes place. According to Barton, it is performed "singly in the precedence of their fathers' age grade". The ceremony consists in a painful ordeal, candidates being first beaten on the face with nettles, then asked to dip their hands into water, and touch seven objects within the water: a sacred knife, a sword, a bloody arrow, a needle, some dung,

(1) Peristiany, p.7. He adds, however, that they "must not be separated in our mind from many other ceremonies which a Kipsigis will have to undergo during the course of his life. At every stage of his existence the Kipsigis must perform a certain ceremony or be initiated into some special duties related to his age".

(2) Peristiany, l.c. (2") Barton (b), p.53, cfr. also Peristiany l.c.

(3) Peristiany, l.c.

(4) Barton (b) p.51.

some solid salt, and an axe. From now on, they are free to touch all these things without soiling them.

After the Labet ap Eun, candidates go out shooting small animals and birds, but they must still avoid women, and at night they must return to their menjit. In order to be sure that they keep all these rules, they are frightened by the initiates at night with bull-roarers, which are described to them as the voices of wild animals.

During this seclusion candidates are taught to sing every day to the rising and the setting sun.

For the following two months or so, they are instructed by the elders in the tribal customs and traditions, and the instruction is solemnised by what Peristiany defines 'tienjjinet' - 'singing to them'.

The next ceremony is the kayaet (casting off of uncleanness). The candidates have to stand a new ordeal, passing through a low corridor of stinging nettles erected in a river. They are then given two wands, one in the right hand, the other in the left hand. The latter is used against a woman "so as to foist all uncleanness onto her" (Peristiany).

Then, the candidates form into army files, each file comprising members of one regiment (puriet). In front of them are placed tug'ap labot, the little round fruit of the labotuet, to represent cattle, and while the praises of their puriet army group are sung, they have to rush and seize as many tug'ap labot as possible. The greater the number they are found holding at the end, the greater their luck will be when they grow up and raid the cattle of their neighbours". (1)

Candidates may now wander far and spend their nights at their fathers' place, but they must still wear their special head-dress (marangochot). This is a kind of mask which conceals them from women and evil spirits, and decorated with the unstuffed birds they have killed.

"The opening of the way" (Yatet ap oret) is the next ceremony. It is centred on the ormarich, 'the narrow way', a special arch erected by the elders. Each one of the candidates is ceremonially led through this gate by one of the masters (moterenik) and two girls, his sisters or friends. The latter, after the ceremony, stand to the candidate in the relationship of sisters.

The 'leader of the ceremony' (pyot ap Tumda) blesses each one of the candidates at the performance, and then he prays for them all "asking Asis (God) to give them many wives, many children, and a great number of cattle. He also repeats to them a final warning that they must not beat their wives, and never kill a Kipsigis under any circumstances". (2)

Every candidate is now anointed with butter by a woman, and this is the first time they expose their face to a woman;

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- (1) Peristiany p.20. Probably this race for cattle is another form of those competitive ceremonies performed in connection with the initiation and the institution of an age class among the other Nilo-Hamitic peoples.
- (2) Peristiany, p.22-23.

she also anoints the 'leader of the ceremony'. Then the sponsors (moterenik) and the candidates repeat the anointing between themselves.

Candidates are now presented by their mothers with an untrimmed branch, and with a new skin or cotton cloth by their paternal uncles. A dance (tiendo) of the initiates concludes this ceremony.

The ceremony of cutting branches for walking sticks (Tilet ap kirokwet), followed by the shaving of the candidates concludes the initiation.

Candidates are again blessed by the leader of the ceremony (poyot). To him they hand the untrimmed wand, but only after they have been promised a calf by their fathers. The wand is trimmed as a walking stick. Candidates are finally anointed by the assistant (pamongo) and his wife.

Next day each candidate has his head shaved.

This marks the end of the candidates' segregation.

"He is now a murren (initiate), writes Barton (b), p.57," and is known as ar-ap-- the son of so-and-so.

b. The Nandi initiation (Tum) is also a series of ceremonies of much the same kind as the Kipsigis initiation.

The age of the candidates, according to Hollis (b), is approximately 15-19 years.

Candidates are entrusted by their fathers to two sponsors (moteriot, pl. moterenik), and they live in seclusion in the initiation hut (menjit) at their place. The same kind of ordeals as among the Kipsigis precede circumcision. The operation is said to be performed by the leader of the ceremony (Poyot ap Tum). (1) The "Lapat ap Eun - dipping of the hands" is also observed. The seclusion following circumcision is regulated in the same way as among the Kipsigis. Songs are sung three times a day. The ordeal through the nettles-tunnel in the river is also kept, the ceremony being called kapkiyai.

This is followed by the rikset ceremony, which takes place inside a special large house, where candidates are shown, and instructed on, "the friction drums and the bull roarers" which no uninitiated is allowed to see. (2) They are also instructed in their duties and in tribal customs by the elders.

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- (1) Peristiany says that among the Kipsigis the leader of the ceremony (Poyot ap Tumda) does not perform the ceremony because generally he is too old and shaky.
 - (2) The fiction drum is "a small wooden barrel, covered with a goat's skin. A deep noise, said to resemble a lion's roar, or a leopard's growl, is produced by drawing both hands, which have been previously wetted, along a stick resting against the centre of the drum head.. The stick is known as the male and the drum as the female". It is called ngetundo or lion. It is only used at the rikset ceremony for initiation. Hollis (b), p.40. The Talai clan of the Nandi do not perform this ceremony and are not allowed to see the bull-roarer or the friction-drums. The fact is relevant if it is considered that a section of the Talai clan consists of the Masai refugees to whom the chief medicine man (orkoiyot) belongs. Cfr. Hollis (b) p.9.

No "opening of the way" is mentioned for the Nandi, but when candidates return to their homes, they are not allowed to enter, but must be shown in ceremonially by one of their sisters. The ceremony is called ngetunot.

After this, candidates are made to live in seclusion in the initiates' house (sigiroinet) for one month. When they emerge, they may live where they like, and join the senior warriors in raids: they are initiates.

A special final ceremony (Kirie Korokon) is mentioned by Hollis (b), p.57. It consists in a festival of meat offered by every fresh initiate to his friends. When the meat is finished the latter strike their host on the face with stinging nettles "to make him look fierce". After this ceremony the initiate "is regarded as an adult and is fit to have a voice in the government of the country".

c. Of the Suk initiation (Tum) Beech, p.21, says that "most of the ceremonies are identical with those of the Nandi, but there are some slight differences".

Totty, p.6., writes that circumcision is performed inside the initiation house (menjo), and that candidates are at the age of puberty.

According to Barton (a) p.93, the operation is preceded by a bath in the river in the early morning. Then the candidates rush into the house. When the first has been operated on, "the assembled men sing: "Now he has been made a man in truth". Seclusion follows the operation. Barton mentions a cleansing ceremony (Laban), after which "hands may be used in eating".(1) The usual ordeals, activities (going out shooting birds etc.), and restrictions are observed during the next months after circumcision.

Totty, p.6, states that "two or three years after circumcision a further ceremony takes place among the males known as Sabana". This ceremony has been described lately by Peristiany, and seems to be peculiar to the pastoral Suk who appear to have borrowed it from the Karamojong. Unfortunately it is not possible to discuss all the points arising from Peristiany's description for his material has not yet been published entirely.

d. Of the other Nandi-Suk tribes there is no detailed description of the initiation ceremonies. It is generically stated that they practise "circumcision".

e. We may note now the apparent similarity of the general initiation pattern among all the Nandi-Suk. The exception of

(1) Cp. the Kipsigis and Nandi "dipping of the hands".

pastoral Suk who perform sabana does not detract from that similarity, but creates a new and different problem of acculturation.⁽¹⁾

We note also, how the sponsors who take charge of the candidates are friends of their fathers, and though it is not explicitly stated we may legitimately assume that as among the Masai they belong to the same class as the candidates' fathers.

The initiation is not performed at a single place, but every group of homesteads socially defined (the village) holds the initiation whenever there is a sufficient number of candidates.⁽²⁾ Initiation as a whole consists of a series of ceremonies, tests, ordeals, instructions and social as well as residential segregation. Circumcision is one of the ordeals. Generally a great deal of emphasis is laid on it, but there is nothing to signify that circumcision should be identified with the initiation,⁽³⁾ nor with the ceremony performed for the institution of the age-class. Initiation must be performed by, and on, every individual candidate, for it gives him the status required for being a member of his age-class. The age-class, however, does not result directly from initiation, but it is brought about in its commencing and final stages by the collective ceremonies which open and close the class-period.

The Closing or Handing-over Ceremony.

The logical course at this point would be to describe the internal structure of the age-class i.e. without any relation to

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- (1) Peristiany (a), p.190, states: "the custom (sabana) is of relatively recent introduction and it is less well integrated with the other institutions of Pokot (Suk) than circumcision and its age-cycle".
 - (2) It seems that the sufficient number depends on convenience and the possibility of arranging a solemn festival for the occasion.
 - (3) Cfr. the typical case of Perist' nay's boy who although he had been circumcised at a hospital was expected to pass through all the other initiating ceremonies in order to be accepted by the Kipsigis as one of them.

other classes. We have done this with the Masai. With the Nandi-Suk, however, the absence of the age-unit as an intermediate step to the institution of the age-class suggests a different approach and the immediate discussion of the closing ceremonies.

a. The Kipsigis closing ceremony (saget ap Eito)⁽¹⁾ is called by Peristiany, p.32 n.1, indifferently "the handing over of power", or "the cutting ceremony", or "killing of the bull".

"When (the initiates of the new class) are about to come out of seclusion", the initiates of the class to be closed build a hut (igor) near the old man who first persuaded them to give way to the new candidates. They select "a spotless white bull", and a special arch (ormarich - 'narrow way') is erected; this structure is described by Peristiany as "an essential part of all initiation ceremonies".

"The first night of freedom", after initiation, the new initiates "sleep by the river, fully armed. When the morning breaks, the (retiring) warriors take off their head-dress of ostrich feathers (sombet), which is symbolic of their rank of warriors, and send them to the initiates. The arrival of these sombet is greeted with a high pitched, shrill shout, called wagat, to call the initiates to the ranks". These are ordered in four rows according to regimental organisation (see p.10). In formation, thus, the initiates move towards the place where the outgoing warriors are waiting.

In the meanwhile the white bull is sacrificed by the elders, more precisely by some nine elders. (Four of them are the leaders of their regiments and of their classes).

The entrails of the bull are examined,⁽²⁾ and if they are not suspicious the ceremony must be repeated; but if they are, "the four regiments advance to the sacrificial place and parade triumphantly before the critical eyes of the retiring Ipinda" (class). The proceedings are accompanied by the songs of the women of the retiring class, who praise the past glories of their men, and lament the loss of such brave warriors.

The elders, on their turn, sing to Asis (God), in thanksgiving and in good wishes for the new class: "Thank you. It

(1) Both for comparative use and field-work methodology we quote here the following statement by Barton (b), p.61: "There is no trace amongst the Kipsigis of the ceremonial handing-over of the country from one age to another, as with the Nandi at the Saket-ap-Eito". There is no need to say that this was rather a rash statement.

(2) "This examination", writes Peristiany, p.35, "is of such great moment in the saget ap eito that the old man is said to be contaminated by the spiritual examination and to die a short time after having touched the entrails. For this reason the eldest possible man was chosen, and it was an honour sought by many".

has been cut the class this very moment as it was good the stomach of the bull". At this time the initiates of the new class "led by their Kiptaynek (leaders), step over the bull and pour milk on its head". They are given arm-rings from the bull's hide, and the other members receive finger-rings.

The leaders of the four regiments of the new class are appointed by the elders "immediately after the strangling of the white bull".

At the end, the four leaders first and then the other warriors "go four times round the mabwai and through the ormarich", and "the elders shower blessings upon them, the most important of which is to be brave in battle and to have a great number of children".

We have given the reasons why we propose to consider this handing over ceremony as separate from the opening ceremony (see p.94. —). While this latter opens the class period which allows members of a new class to be initiated, the handing over ceremony officially concludes the class period of the preceding class. This is the evident meaning of the elders' song to Asis: "Thank you. It has been cut the class this very moment as it was good the stomach of the bull".

b. The Nandi handing over (saket-ap-eito) is described by Hollis (b), p.12-13, as follows: "All the adult male population that can conveniently do so collect together at a certain spot, but no married warrior may attend, nor may he or his wife leave their houses whilst the ceremony is taking place. The Orkoilyot, or chief medicine man, must be present, and the ceremony is started by slaughtering a white bullock, which is purchased by the young warriors for the occasion. After the meat has been eaten by the old men, each of the young men makes a small ring out of the hide, and puts it on one of the fingers of his right hand. A circle is then formed round the chief medicine man, who stands near a stool, about which is heaped cow dung studded with the fruit of the lapotuet shrub (solanum campylanthum). All the old men and the members of the age immediately preceding the one in power stand up, whilst the warriors who are going to receive the control of the country sit down. On a sign from the chief medicine man the members of the preceding age divest themselves of their warriors' skins and put on old men's fur garments. The warriors of the age in power, i.e. those who were circumcised some four years previously, are then solemnly informed that the safety of the country and the welfare of the inhabitants are placed in their hands, and they are instructed to guard the land of their fathers".

There is no doubt that all this description is highly coloured, but essentially the Nandi handing over does not differ from the Kipsigis saget ap eito.

c. Of the Suk, Beech, p.6, says: "the care of the country is not entrusted to any particular age; consequently there is

no elaborate handing-over-ceremony as with the Masai and the Nandi". The same statement is made by Barton (a), p.90, almost in the same words.⁽¹⁾

There are grounds, however, for doubting these statements. Barton made a very similar statement in connection with the Kipsigis (see p.102, fn.1.) which proved to be wholly inaccurate after Peristiany's research. One should also consider that all the basic points of the Suk age-system are essentially similar to what is found in the age-systems of the other Nandi-Suk.

d. The Elgeyo handing over (Sakobei) is described in some detail by Massam, p.56-74. Unfortunately his account is not clear. There are three classes concerned in this ceremony, according to Massam. The first is the class of the elders, "who are anxious to hand over the control of the country to the present warriors". They take the first step for the ceremonial performance, "probably at the instigation of the young men anxious to marry". After the handing over, they will be "free to take over the duties of the very old men". The second class is that of "the present warriors" who, having gone "through the ceremony as warriors, became elders". The third class is that of "the youths who become warriors", and will be free "to grow and plait their hair", and "to associate with young girls". It is difficult to grasp the value of the above description for the structural relationship of the classes involved; the elders, "the present warriors" and "the youth who become warriors", are not clearly defined. So, the youth are said to be uncircumcised, and "about a year later" (after the Sakobey) they (who are now described as warriors) "mix beer" for the elders ("until recently the warriors") in order to obtain the elders' consent to their own circumcision. In other words, "the youths" become "warriors" before they are circumcised or initiated. This sounds very strange if compared with the course of events among the other

(1) Massam, p. 57-58.

Nandi-Suk. The more so, because the Elgeyo Sakobey as described by Massam sounds very similar to the Kipsigis Saket ap eito.

A white ox is slowly smothered, writes Massam, and the warriors in full array and in formation pass over the smothered beast in order of seniority. This order is decided beforehand by the elders who select also the leaders of the warriors. The attendant women sing the praises of their sons. A watch is kept on the remains of the animal, and hide-strips are distributed among the warriors. At this point Massam, p.64, describes the internal classification of the class, but it is not clear if he refers to the class of "the warriors who become elders" or the fresh warriors. "They are then classified", he writes, "the elder ones becoming Chongin Obir, i.e. people in front, and the younger Aibiri, will be present at the deliberations in order that he may explain to his colleagues the reasons for decisions made. Each party appoints as its president a member noted as much for his even temper as for his skill in council".(1)

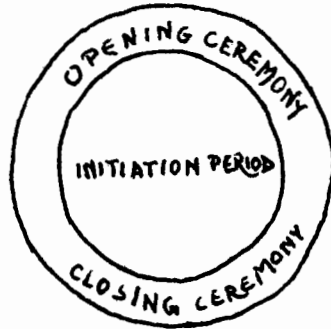
e. The handing over of the Kamasia (for which no term is reported) is described as follows by Ward, p.1-2. "The taking-over takes place soon after the boys, who have been circumcised, emerge from seclusion.⁽²⁾ They then meet the outgoing age and sitting in a circle discuss the handing over. The outgoing age then retires but the incoming age remains at the spot drinking - behind there are seated the senior ages".

We may now briefly summarize the main points and the value of the handing over ceremony. There seems to be no doubt that all the above quotations refer to one single ceremony. This ceremony is performed after the initiation of the first members of a new class. To these first members the privileges of the so-called class "in power" is handed over by the immediately preceding class. The handing over should, thus, be considered

(1) Hosking, p. 2-3, in listing the classes of the Elgeyo states that the Kablelach are "the old men who have resigned the work of elders and handed over at the last Sakobei to the next age". The next are the Kimnyegeu "the present age of Elders. Most headmen belong to this age, they are the councillors of the tribe". The Nyongi follow as "the elder moran, the age in power at present". The Maina, who come next, are in the process of being circumcised.

(2) Cp. the Kipsigis description: "When (the initiates of the new class) are about to come out (of seclusion)". See p.27.

as a closing ceremony of the initiation period of the class "in power". As such, the handing over is directly opposed to the opening ceremony. Therefore, if we consider a single class in itself, the span of its initiation period is defined by an opening - and a closing - ceremony, as in the diagram.

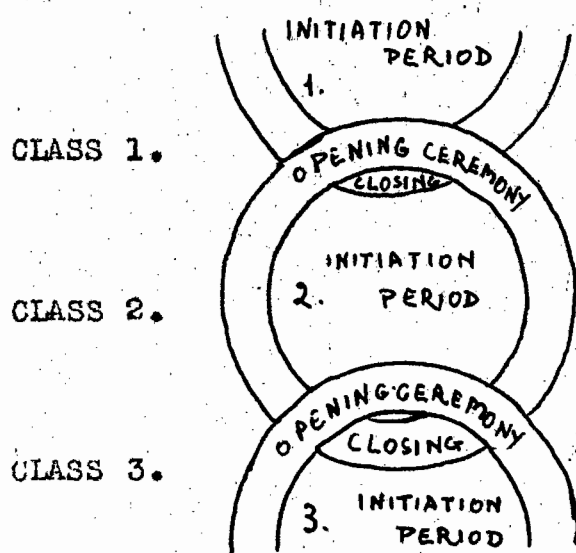


The closing ceremony takes the form of a handing-over. At the time of its performance the new class (the succeeding class) must be represented by some of its members and they must be qualified to do that by initiation. Failing this, they would not possess the proper social status for facing the initiates of the previous class. This is the reason why the handing over is performed only after a new class-period has been started by the opening ceremony and the initiation of the new class's first members has been performed.

We may define "the power of the classes" to which reference is made in this discussion as the right of grouping together all the initiates of a definite period, and the right of forming them into a single class. It is clear that, while the opening ceremony primarily affects the new succeeding class, whose members will be initiated only after the opening ceremony has been performed, the handing-over operates primarily on the outgoing class by officially closing it. As a matter of fact it crystallizes it, its number and structure. True, the opening ceremony stops the initiation power of the outgoing class, but this is a necessary anticipation to allow the succeeding class to have its members initiated and be in a position to take over. The consent of the class "in power" for the opening ceremony

is looked for to justify that anticipation.

The consequence of the system is that the periods for the institution of two succeeding classes overlap, and the cycle described by the institution of an age class is linked to the previous and the following one by that overlapping. The phenomenon is illustrated in the diagram.



The overlapping phenomenon makes the institution of the class rather complicated. And very probably this is another reason why most of the field workers did not discern the different values of the ceremonies and their reports were so often incomplete or confusing.

III.

The Minimal Age Divisions.

The Analysis of the internal structure of the Nandi-Suk age-class must first proceed from the discussion of the class-subdivisions.

a. The table below reproduces three lists of the Kipsigis class-subdivisions as recorded by three different authorities. All names are grouped under a single class name, and every group is marked by a dotted line. In this way we put into evidence the comparative value of the three lists.

It is evident that both Dobbs and Barton were not aware of the distinction between the age-class and its subdivisions. Their lists, therefore, acquire significance only if compared to a better defined list such as the one offered by Peristiany. The accuracy of the seven class-names of the Kipsigis age-system is certain. It stands not only on Peristiany's authority but also on the comparative evidence of all other Nandi-Suk age-systems. Following the order of Peristiany's list it has not been difficult to allocate correctly the names recorded by Dobbs and Barton.

One should notice the increasing number of class-subdivisions in the last groups of Peristiany's list. It contrasts with the number of the first two groups in the same list, and all the groups in the other lists. It seems to be the modern tendency of the Kipsigis to multiply the minimal divisions of the class. The old custom was to have only three such divisions, a number which is the constant rule among the other Nandi-Suk. The same tendency is also to be observed in the use of names for the minimal divisions. Peristiany, p. 43, states that now the names for these divisions "are related to an important or remarkable event which has taken

PERISTIANY, 1939 (p.42-43)

DOBBS, 1921(p.55) BARTON, 1923(p.60)

<u>Ipinda</u>	<u>Katchaet</u> sub div- isions names	Date of the complete <u>Ipinda</u>	"Age Grades" and date	"Age Grades" and date
-----MAINA 1856-----				
-----CHUMA 1861-----				
1. SAWE.....		SOWEE	1866.....	SOWE 1866
2. KIPKOYMET	(Kerongoro).....	KIPTAIMET	1871.....	KORONGORO 1871
	(1. Kiptormesendet.....	KIPTURMESENDET	1876	KIPTILMESENDET 1876
	(2. Kibelkot			
	(3. Kimarere			
			KOBOLOIN 1881	KIMORORIK 1881

3. KABLELACH	(1. Kipalayeng			
	(2. Kimutawet.....			KIMUTAIYUET 1886
	(3. Masiba.....	KIMASIBA	1886	

4. KIMNYIGE	(1. Kipebucha.....	KABABOCHA	1891.....	KAPAPUCHA 1891
	(2. Kipsiljjaget.....	KIPSILJOCET	1896	KIPSIMJOCET 1896
	(3. Tabarit.....	TABARET	1901.....	KAPARIIT 1901
	(4. Kiptilosiek			
	(5. Keptechorek			

5. NYONGE	(1. Kiptilargit			
	(2. Kosigo.....	KOSIGO	1906.....	KOSIGO 1906
	(3. Kipterangeret 1901			
	(4. Martartebit 1921			
	(5. Kipsirgot	KIPSIRGOT	1911.....	KIPSIRGOT 1911
	(6. Kipsombosiek			
	(7. Boulou.....	BULOO	1916.....	BULOO 1916

6. MAINA	(1. Mesiewa.....			MESIAWA 1925
	(2. Kassie 1921			
	(3. Shilling 1930.			
	(4. Silobai			
	(5. Kipkulmengit			
	(6. Kiptindinie			

7. CHUMA	(1. Kimingiet 1930			

place during the initiation year". He says also that "nowadays, in spite of the yearly Tumdo ceremonies, same sub-division nickname (katchaet) appears to be given to the initiates of two ore more consecutive initiations". And this, probably, is due to the prevalence of the old custom by which a number of individuals initiated at different times and places were grouped together into a single minimal age-division with a fixed name. This custom is still prevalent among the other Nandi-Suk.

b. The minimal age-divisions of the Nandi are called by a common term mat, pl. mostinuek - fire, which is derived "probably from the fact that members of each subdivision associate round their own fire, and do not allow the members of the other subdivisions to join them". (1)

The following are the lists of the class minimal divisions we possess.

According to Hollis the minimal age divisions of the Nandi are three and they are named according to a fixed series of three names. These are also reported by Hemsted, but with some variation.

HOLLIS	HEMSTED
1. <u>Changen-opir</u>	<u>Chonginie</u>
2. <u>Kipal-kong</u>	<u>Kibolgong</u>
	or: <u>Oldarangu</u> <u>Kiptaru</u> <u>Taparit</u>
3. <u>Kiptoito</u>	<u>Kiptoitu</u> or: <u>Tetagat</u>

Hollis (b), p. 12 n.1, remarks that changen-opir and kipal-kong make no sense in Nandi, but in Masai they mean "big ostrich feathers" and "we tear out the eyes", respectively. Kiptoito means "the young bulls". This reference to the Masai

(1) Hollis (b), p.12. The same term mat is used by the Kipsigis as follows: "When the Kipsigis were still a warrior tribe, the warrior age-set, after coming out of initiation, built their own singroina hut in all the villages, and the warriors slept there together with their sweethearts. That is why both a man's army group (puriet) and his ipinda are referred to as 'my fire' mat."

HOLLIS, 1909, (p.12)

HEMSTEAD, 1923, (p.7)

CLASS	MEMBERS AGE	DATE OF "CIRCUM- CISION"	SUBDIVISIONS	MEMBERS AGE
JUMA	50 - 60	1870	-	-
SOWE	42 - 52	1877	1. Chonginiek 2. Oldarangu 3. Kiptiotu	77 - 81 73 - 77 69 - 73
KIPKOIIMET	34 - 44	1885	1. Chonginiek 2. Oldarangu 3. Kiptoitu	64 - 68 60 - 64 56 - 60
KAPLELACH	26 - 36	1892	1. Chonginiek 2. Kibolgon 3. Kiptoitu	51 - 55 47 - 51 43 - 47
KIMNYIKE	18 - 28	1900	1. Chonginiek 2. Kiptaru 3. Tetagat	38 - 42 34 - 38 31 - 34
NYONGE	10 - 20	commenced 1907	1. Chonginiek 2. Taparit 3. Kiptoitu	26 - 30 22 - 26 18 - 22
MAINA	child- ren	to be held about 1915	---	13 - 17 9 - 13 4 - 9

HUNTINGFORD, 1927 (p.428)

CLASS	MEMBERS AGE	DATE OF INITIATION
JUMA	7	1942
SOWE	82 - 97	-
KIPKOIIMET	67 - 82	-
KAPLELACH	52 - 67	-
KIMNYIKE	37 - 52	1896
NYONGE	22 - 37	1911
MAINA	7 - 22	1926

would suggest a relationship also between the two age systems in the nature of the minimal age divisions. We may thus assume that, not differently from what obtains among the Masai, the Nandi minimal age divisions are made up of all those who have been initiated during the same time of the class-period.

c. Of the Suk, Beech, p. 6, writes that "the seniors of each age are called Nerkau or Changeopero, those in the middle Ngiru, and the junior Nimur". (1) Notice the similarity of the first alternative name, changeopero, with the same term of the Nandi and the Masai. Beech lays the stress on the seniority which distinguishes the minimal divisions, and which seems to depend on the chronological succession of their formation. (2)

d. Of the Elgeyo minimal age-divisions we know only the little referred to by Massam, p. 64, in his description of the Sakobei. He mentions two class sub-divisions: "the elder ones . . . Chongin Obir, i.e. people in front, and younger Aibiri". The similarity of the term Chongin Obir with the Nandi Changen opir, the Suk Changenopero makes it certain that the same thing is described by all these terms. In spite of all the small variations in the descriptions of the Nandi-Suk age systems, we may confidently assume that the minimal age-divisions among all the Nandi-Suk are based on the same structural lines.

(1) "Nerkau", writes Beech, "is a reedbuck; ngiru, a kind of fruit; and nimur, boulders of rock - apparently symbolic of the respective value of warriors."

(2) Barton (a), p.93, describes with details the formation of the Suk minimal age divisions, but his description is not too clear: "While the youths have been in the menjo hut (seclusion hut), they have been divided into three sections according to their years; the first are known as the Chenokopir, the meaning of which is not ascertained; the second the Kamasiap (the covered ones); the third the Kapsekar (the sleepers in ashes). Each of these divisions has a leader called Kirowokin. The sections sleep head to foot in rows in the menjo hut, and are divided by lengths of wood laid on the floor." And at p.87, he adds: "the seniors of each age are called Chenokopir, the next senior Kamasiap; the juniors Kapsekir during the initiation ceremonies." According to this description the minimal age-divisions would be formed at one time during the initiation? This is certainly inaccurate. Initiation is an individual ceremony which is performed singly or in group at different places and at different times during the proper class-period.

The Interval between the Ceremonies for the Institution of the Age-Groups.

At this point we should analyse the influence of the intervals between the several ceremonies performed for the institution of the age-groups upon the structure of the age-class. The difficulty of the task is increased not only by the sketchy nature of the information, but also by the obstacles arising from the want of proper means of expressing the succeeding rhythms of the age-classes and the other age-divisions. Our system of time reckoning is entirely foreign to the Nilo-Hamitic culture. While, therefore, the informants could not have been expected to express themselves in terms of a system that did not correspond to the nature of the facts described, the use made by all our authorities of our method of time reckoning in connection with the age-systems has been rather misleading and the cause of further confusion. Any indication of years, and all the discussions of time intervals with regard to the age-system of the Nilo-Hamites, are legitimate only if the figures are accepted as broad and approximate indications of the real intervals.

These intervals may be considered as two types: 1) the class interval, which covers the whole period required for the institution of a single class; 2) the minimal age-division interval, which covers the period required for the formation of such a division.

a. It seems fairly certain that the period for the institution of a Kipsigis class could last from 15 to 20 years.⁽¹⁾ The period is limited by the performance of the opening, and closing ceremonies. Generally these two ceremonies are not performed by every individual class member, though the whole class is affected by their performances. It is also certain that members of a Kipsigis class are not initiated as a whole

(1) Peristiany, p. 30 - 31, and p. 37.

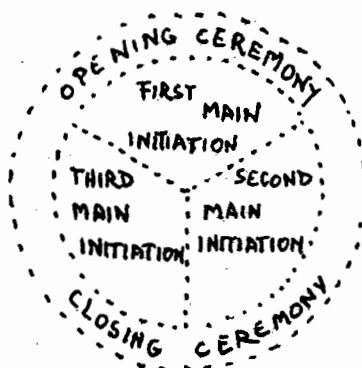
but individually, or in small groups, and at different times though during the same class period.

The exact interval between one initiation ceremony and another is not known. The two lists of the Kipsigis "age grades" reported by Dobbs and Barton (which may only be taken as lists of class subdivisions) would suggest a period of five years. This agrees with the period of seven and a half years indicated by Peristiany (of course taking into account the relative value of such figures.) (1) It must, however, be noticed that this interval deduced from the lists of age-group names may only refer to the period between the formation of the subdivisions and not to the period between the performances of individual initiations. The name-giving coincides with the formation of the subdivision. If we take the five-seven years interval, we can successfully fit the traditional three minimal age divisions of the Nandi-Suk into the 15-20 years class interval. The first batch of class members could have been initiated during the first year of the class period; the second batch in the fifth year; the third one in the tenth year; each batch would constitute a minimal division of the class. The "main circumcision festivals" referred to by Dobbs, should, therefore, be regarded as the minimal divisions of a class. Apparently, the terminology used by Dobbs "main circumcision festivals" implies that a great gathering (festival) used to take place at some more important (main) individual initiation (circumcision), and that all those who had been initiated in that span of time were formed into a single group, and as such were given a name. Between such main ceremonies, other individual ceremonies were performed at different places and times in order to initiate all the individuals who were to enter a class. This explains the modern tendency to hold initiation not only, and not simply, every year, but whenever "there are

(1) Peristiany, p.44. The "uncertainty" and "contradiction" of the informants on this point is quite understandable and to be expected. Time recording by African is made on other systems than our own.

a sufficient number of boys ready to go to initiation." (1)

In a diagram the Kipsigis institution of a class could be illustrated as follows:



"The striking inequalities" of the members of a class, referred to by Peristiany, are a consequence of that system. "The young men", writes Peristiany, "who became warriors on the day of the saget ap eito had before them about fifteen to twenty years in which to enjoy life. But as the time was passing and more boys came out of initiation, they had to enjoy a much shorter period of activity. The last set to come out of initiation for a bare year or two." (p. 37-38).

b. For the Nandi, Hollis, (b), p.12-13, states that the initiation ceremony was held every seven and a half years, and the handing over (saket-ap-eito) "some four years after the circumcision festival." Huntingford, (a), p. 426, disputes that statement, and says that "from recent inquiries and from records (which?) Sir A.C. Hollis was misinformed about the length of the ages . . . It is fairly certain that the interval between each circumcision (tum) and between each 'handing over ceremony (saket ap eito) is fifteen years."

Let us take the list of subdivision names made by Hersted, (see p. 144) which compares favourably with the lists of Hollis and Huntingford. In that list the difference between the age of every subdivision members is given as four years. This would suggest that the subdivisions were formed at an interval of that length. If we take into account the relative value of

(1) Peristiany, p.7. Peristiany also states that "an initiation ceremony can be held in any month of any year, with the exception of August, the "black rain" month, during which nothing new is undertaken."

figures in this connection, and compare the four years interval of the Nandi with what seems to have been the system of the Kipsigis, the information by Hemsted is confirmed.

It is possible therefore, to say with some degree of certainty that the Nandi class-interval lasts about fifteen years, and the minimal division interval from four to seven years.

Also among the Nandi it is the recent tendency to initiate their boys "every year or so" (Hollis (b), p. 12-n.1.). However, the number of the subdivisions, as well as of their names, have always been recorded as three. The variations in the names reported above, p.110, appear to be alternative to the fixed series of three names.

c. On the Suk intervals Beech, p.6, writes: "circumcision takes place whenever there are sufficient candidates, generally about once in three years, but any one circumcised during the generation of fifteen years is said to belong to the same age. Nor can a man be said to belong to an age at all until he has been circumcised."

Barton, (a), p.91. states that "circumcision rites among the Suk do not recur at stated intervals", and that "the previous age grade" is formed by "those who have been circumcised within recent years."

From these two authorities we gather that a Suk age-class was instituted during a period of years, indicated by Beech as fifteen. The interval between the initiation ceremonies seems to have been more or less of the same length as that of the Nandi-Kipsigis.

The analogy between the Kipsigis, the Nandi and the Suk, as suggested by the information provided by Beech, is strong and therefore we are inclined to distrust the information on the class subdivisions given by Barton (see p.112, fn.2).

d. Hosking, p.4, writes as follows concerning the intervals of the Elgeyo: "I do not think, that there is any fixed year for the circumcision ceremony. It is held about every 16 years,

but the date is not fixed." He also says that the Kablelach class "was circumcised three times, probably at intervals of about three years"; the Maina class was first circumcised in 1926, and "their circumcision is still going on in different locations."

e. Of the Kamasia we know only that "the period between the circumcision ages varies for the reason that, formerly when there were frequent tribal wars, it was desirable to have as many young and vigorous warriors as possible." (Ward, p.1.).

All the evidence we have been analysing shows quite clearly that a class is formed by stages during the class-period. Classmembers before their individual initiation have no status, and the class as an age-set of initiates grows out of the initiation ceremonies and the formation of the minimal age-divisions. It is therefore to be concluded that, though the cyclical system makes it possible to guess the class-name of a man, class-membership is not obtained by birth, but by initiation and by association into a minimal age division. Classmembers, in other words, are not born into a class.

Some authorities stress the relationship between a man's class-membership and that of his father. For the Kipsigis, Peristiany, p. 30, is quite emphatic. "A son of a man", he writes, "must necessarily belong to the ipinda following that of his father but one, or the one after, and . . . he cannot possibly belong to the ipinda which follows that of his father." And he states, further, that the initiates are grouped into an age-class (Ipinda) "from the moment they have come out of initiation." (1)

When Huntingford, (d), p.9, describes the system of the Nandi and states that "every Nandi male is born into an age set, in which he remains for his life," he is misled by the apparent

(1) Peristiany, p.29 Cf. p.34, n.2.

determination of the cyclical system. The statement of Hollis that "all boys who are circumcised at the same time are said to belong to the same ipinda", ⁽¹⁾ describes a system which is similar to the one obtaining among the other Nandi-Suk, and is to be regarded as correct.

The age-class of a Nandi, writes Huntingford, (d), p.9, "is normally the one next below that of his father; though in cases where there is a long interval between the births of sons, the younger go into a set next but two below the father's".

The same rule obtains among the Elgeyo-Marakwet. "The children of one Ibindo", writes Hosking, p. 1, "enter not the next age, but the next age but one". "The system of the Ibinwik (age-classes)", he adds, "is so stereotyped that a boy may be known by the age into which he will be circumcised even before that ceremony takes place." "If, however, for some rare and unforeseen cause a boy cannot be circumcised with his own contemporaries he will take the name of the age which he is actually circumcised rather than that into which he was destined by birth."

The relationship of father's and sons' class-membership among the Suk is not explicitly stated. But it seems very probable that the same system obtained with them as with the other Nandi-Suk. Beech states that "anyone circumcised during the generation of fifteen years is said to belong to the same age (class). Nor can a man be said to belong to an age (class) at all until he has been circumcised." ⁽²⁾

Of the Kamasia we infer from Ward that a man's sons

(1) Hollis, (b), p.12. The expression "at the same time" must be interpreted in the light of our analysis as meaning "during the same class period".

(2) Beech, p. 6. The underlining is mine. Although in a footnote to this passage, Beech notes some difference between the Suk and the Nandi proper, his statement describes a system which tallies with the system of the other tribes of the group.

will belong to the age-class next but one or two to his own. ⁽¹⁾

The relationship between father's and sons' class-membership may possibly be explained by the amount of time that is needed for a child to reach the proper age of initiation. That amount is generally, always the same, and it covers, more or less, one or two class periods, which puts the class of every man one class (or more, rarely two classes) below his father's class.

Some special Relations of the Initiates.

a. Among the Kipsigis, it seems that no distinction of status exists between members of a single class. The only distinction of that kind is of a temporary nature limited to the initiation ceremony. "The boy whose father belongs to the eldest age-set of all the fathers ⁽²⁾ of those present is circumcised first. He is also honoured by being given at the menjit the leadership over his fellow initiates, and he is called Kiboretiet. On coming out of initiation he has no status of particular honour, but his rank during initiation may help him to be chosen kiptayat of the warriors of his village." ⁽³⁾ In other words, he has a better chance of demonstrating his abilities, of gaining experience, and of being accepted as the warriors' leader at the Saket ap eito. ⁽⁴⁾

The leaders of the regiments, and of the companies, are also the leaders of the class when this functions as a military

(1) Ward, p.2. Thus the children of a Kimnyeigu "will be of the Chumo age-grade by the first wife and of the Sowe age-grade by the second wife." Between the Kimnyeigu and the Chumo, the Maina age-class is found.

(2) This expression presupposes that the candidates' fathers may belong to different classes and not to a single one. It confirms that class-membership was fixed by the actual initiation of the individual members and not by birth.

(3) Peristiany, p. 40 - 41.

(4) See above p. 32. "Now that no raids are organised by or against the Kipsigis, the elders are no longer interested in these elections, and the warriors of every kokwet (village) appoint their own leaders." p. 165.

unit. When members of a class settle down as married men, those who have emerged as leaders generally maintain their influence on their age-mates.

We do not know of any rivalry between the subdivisions of a single class. Among the Kipsigis, the rivalry is limited to class and class (Ipinwek war). The relations between subdivisions are on a basis of respect for the most senior.

b. The same situation seems to prevail among all other Nandi-Suk. Of the Suk proper we are told that "comparatively recently" two warriors of the senior subdivision were elected by the elders to act as commanders of the fighting-men. (See Beech, p. 7).

One of the duties of the initiates during the period of their class-institution is to live in a special house, segregated from people of other classes.

a. This special house is called singroina by the Kipsigis. "When the Kipsigis were still on the war path" there was only one singroina in every village. The singroina could contain "up to twenty warriors". "Its original purpose was to have all the warriors grouped together near the cattle ready, in case of emergency, to repulse the enemy raids." (1) At present every large household, says Peristiany, p. 50-51, has its own singroina for the junior initiates. The main function of this house, at present, seems to be limited to the sexual indulgence to which the initiates give themselves up with uninitiated girls. No married woman is allowed in. Conception following relations of this kind is strongly condemned. In some cases the initiates' father may stay in the singroina, but, while he is there, no daughter of his age-mates may be present.

"Each singroina has at its head a Kiptayat, whose function is to maintain order within its limits. The boys keep it spotlessly clean and sweep it every morning." They have their food

(1) Peristiany, p. 49. Cp. Barton (b) p. 68.

there, brought by their mother, and they are given grain to store by their father. "In all respects the singroina looks like an independent little household." (1)

Those who share the same singroina are bound together by a special relationship, which becomes evident specially in time of battle, when they "will rather die than not to stand and protect each other to the last." (2)

b. Of the Nandi proper Hollis writes: "At the conclusion of the feast (the ngatunot of the initiation ceremony) the newly-fledged warriors must live by themselves in a siciroinet or warrior kraal for one month, after which they may live where they like. (3) We are also informed by Hollis that the Nandi warriors "have small huts in the woods where they go and slaughter oxen from time to time. These places are called ekoruak." (4) The analogy with the Masai customs is evident, but there is no reference to other restrictions on junior initiates as we found among the Masai, where the warriors are not supposed to eat meat in public, or drink milk if they are not in a group of at least two.

c. No segregation house is mentioned in connection with the Suk, (5) nor is there any definite information of this kind for the other Nandi-Suk tribes.

(1) Peristiany, p. 50 -51.

(2) Peristiany, p. 41. Cp. the "siritai" of the Masai. And also the attacking system of the Elgeyo as described by Leakey, p. 38: "Attacks were never made in mass formation. A favourite plan in fighting at close quarters was for friends to fight side by side in pairs."

(3) Hollis (b) p. 57.

(4) Hollis (b) p. 16.

(5) Cfr. Beech, p. 7: "Only married men possess houses at all at Unmarried men sleep outside."

Some Conclusions.

We may now draw some conclusions from the above analysis.

a. An age-class, if considered as a whole body of members, is instituted during an officially limited period. The opening and the closing ceremony are the two milestones of every age-class. This is clearly the system of the Kipsigis, and very probably it obtains with all the Nandi-Suk peoples.

b. A class is not initiated as a whole body, but its members are initiated individually or in groups and at different times during the class period. Probably this period is sub-divided into three main sub-periods determined by three main initiation ceremonies. Other minor initiation ceremonies are held during these sub-periods either for groups or for individuals.

c. Although candidates are initiated not only individually but also in group, the initiation is eminently an individual ceremony, in the sense that it is to be performed on, and by, every single individual who is to become a member of a class.

d. The residential segregation for the class during the whole class-period obtains only with the Kipsigis. Among the Nandi it has a limited ceremonial value.

e. The time for a man's initiation is primarily determined by the maturity of his physical age, i.e. by his fitness to stand the strain of all the initiation ceremonies. His position in the internal structure of the class is also determined by the position of his father's class, and by the actual position of his father in his own class. So, the son of a man may not be initiated during the class period immediately following his father's class period, but during any other period after that. When initiation takes place in group, the first to be initiated, and therefore the one who will be

most senior of the group, is the one whose father is the most senior among all the candidates' fathers. In this way the seniority status of the father influences the status of his son.

f. The seniority principle is at the base of the internal structure of the Nandi-Suk age-classes. The seniority status of class members is first established by the time of their individual initiation in the way mentioned above, and is then formalised when the minimal age divisions are formed into distinct groups. The most senior of all class members has a better chance of having a greater influence on his mates and hence on matters of common concern.

g. The leaders of the military formations are also the leaders of the age class. Though military organisation seems to be independent of age-organisation, this organisation is so intimately connected with the former that it provides its structural basis and the actual fighting force by associating all male members of society into the age-groups.

The Function of the Age Class.

It has been noted that the military organisation of the Nandi-Suk is a distinctive feature of their social system in so far as it is differentiated from the age organisation. But military organisation becomes effective only through age organisation.

Thus, for instance, membership of the Kipsigis regiments is inherited from one's father's, (and in this case it seems correct to state that a man is born into his father's regiment), but that membership is actually achieved only through initiation into an age class when a Kipsigis obtains the right of bearing arms.

The information on the military organisation of the other Nandi-Suk tribes is not as large as that of the Kipsigis, but we know that initiation and the subsequent incorporation into

an age-group bring about the same effect on the individual members, and make them active members of their military organisations.

A point which should be carefully noted in this connection is that the new warriors do not attain the right of bearing arms to the exclusion of other classes. In fact, we have seen how obvious it is that the new warriors should not be allowed to bear the major burden of the fighting effort after initiation before they are effectively instructed in military art.

The offensive organisation of the Kipsigis is so made up that "the inexperienced warriors" do not take part in the fighting, but after the attack they are instructed by the other warriors "in the art of fighting", and in "the strategy of battle" and also the "beaux coups."⁽¹⁾

The same distinction between experienced and inexperienced warriors certainly obtained with the Nandi. We are in fact told by Hollis (b), p. 57, that, the initiation being over, the new warriors "may accompany their elders on raiding expeditions."

The statement made by Beech, p.6, that a Suk warrior remained "a warrior until the day of his death or incapacity to fight further", confirms the above conclusion also for the Suk, namely that members of a new age-class did not become warriors to the exclusion of others.

We may, therefore, say that one function of the age-groups during the class period is to initiate class-members in military art. Unfortunately our information is rather poor, and we cannot say whether there was, as seems very probable, any relationship between that military training and the formation of the three minimal divisions of the age-class. It would seem obvious that the senior divisions were experienced warriors at the time as the junior division came out of initiation.

(1) Peristiany, p. 168. The passage is slipshod, but the above interpretation seems the only obvious one.

Similarly the first division of any new class was junior, and therefore 'inexperienced', with regard to the last division of the preceding class.

The above facts show that from the military point of view it is not correct to describe the age-class at the stage of its institution, i.e. when its members are being initiated, as the class "in power". In point of fact, such a class is not "in power", but under instruction, at least for those of its members who have just been initiated and are, therefore, inexperienced.

As far as the cattle interest is concerned we are not informed of any special ceremony which would indicate that the new initiates are trained on cattle husbandry, or are made to appreciate the immense value of cattle, as it is the case with the Masai. We have, however, general statements and patterns of behaviour.

Thus, through, and by, initiation a boy is no longer expected to do the menial work of milking cows. This, among all Nandi-Suk tribes, is the proper work of women and "uncircumcised" boys.⁽¹⁾ After initiation a warrior has to protect the cattle from raiding attacks, and increase their number by his own raiding activity. He is also allowed the privilege of starting his own herd. Cattle are first acquired by military (raiding) activity, which "in olden days was the recognised way of starting a herd,"⁽²⁾ or by inheritance, or by marriage, (possibly by marriage of a man's sister).

As soon as a boy is out of initiation, he is free, at least theoretically, to get married.⁽³⁾

Marriage is not a mere social affair but also an economic transaction. Economically a fresh initiate cannot become

(1) Cfr. Peristiany, p. 153; Hollis (b) p. 21; Beech, p.9; Massam, p. 89.

(2) Peristiany, p. 204. Cfr. also Hollis (b) p. 20.

(3) Hosking, p. 4; Huntingford (a) p. 434.

immediately independent, therefore his marriage will be practically determined by the amount of cattle he possesses and by the assistance in terms of cattle that his father and other relatives can afford to give him.

For the Kipsigis Peristiany stresses the point that marriage is looked upon as an achievement enhancing a man's social distinction and not for sexual satisfaction. The singroina meets his requirements on that score, and the right to the singroina is not barred by marriage.⁽¹⁾

There are marriage regulations, other than clan exogamy, based on the age-system. Among the Kipsigis, members of same class, we are told, are not allowed to marry or to have relations with each other's daughters as this will be considered an incestuous union.⁽²⁾ We have no similar information for the other Nandi-Suk, but it is probable that the same kind of age-class exogamy was observed by them.

All social life is regulated in terms of seniority. This is the reason why Nandi warriors, as we are told by Huntingford, are not supposed to speak in the councils of the country unless they are requested to intervene. The Nandi custom is typical of what holds good for all other Nandi-Suk tribes. It shows also that from the political point of view, far from being "in power", the class of the new initiates has a status of dependence upon, and respect for, the elders. It is important to note this fundamental effect of the principle of seniority. With due respect to this principle all initiates have their social life in common.

(1) Peristiany, p. 50 and p. 56-57. It is significant from this point of view that "the elders of each 'hut' are able to marry much sooner than their brothers, who are dependent on their father for a longer period." Peristiany, p. 74.

(2) Peristiany, p. 39.

IV

The Age-Classes as Constituted Groups.

The main effect of the closing ceremonies is to fix and crystallise the internal structure and the number of members of the age-class. Once the closing ceremonies have been performed, the class is a constituted body, and no other members may be added or co-opted to it.

By virtue of the same closing ceremonies members of the class achieve the status of elderhood. The term elders has become equivocal, for it is frequently applied without distinction to all the classes which have performed the closing ceremony. The elders must be distinguished from the old men, and these are also to be distinguished from the very old men, who are sometimes called by our authorities "the dotards". These distinctions have a correspondence both with the age of members, and with the status of their class. They are based on the differentiations caused by seniority.

The ages of the members of the different classes are compared in the following table. This comparison has been limited to only three tribes of the group because only for them is the information available, and having been collected in roughly the same years the comparison is more effective.

CLASSES	NANDI Hemsted 1923	NANDI Hunting- ford1927	ELGEYO Massam 1927	ELGEYO Hosking 1927	KAMASIA Ward 1927
KIKPKOIMET	56-68	67-82	"very old"	83 "very old"	83
KABLELACH	43-55	52-67	"old men"	67	63
KIMNYEIGU	31-42	37-52	50	51	43
NYONGE	18-30	22-37	"warriors"	35	24
MAINA	4-17	7-22	"young men"	19	-
CHUMO	-	7	-	boys	-
KORONGORO	-	-	-	-	-

If we bear in mind the relativity of these figures, we may say that their coincidence is great. It is, in fact, an indication that the rhythms of the age-cycle have been closely related in these three tribes. The table makes clear the value of the term "elders". Generally the term is used without any qualification, and therefore it has a vague implication for it refers at one time to at least the three classes of the senior initiates, those who in the list of Massam are indicated as "50", "old men" and "very old". These three classes are distinguished from each other in terms of age, of status and of functions.

In this connection we find it very helpful to read the description of the Elgeyo classes recorded by Hosking, p. 2-3. At the time of his research, he says, there were very few survivors of the Kipkoimet, and almost all of them were unable to leave their huts. The Kablelach were the old men, and "looked on as past work mental or physical. They have divided up their property, and are callously expected to fend for themselves till they die." The Kimnyegeu were the elders, and

"most headmen belong to this age. They are the councillors of the tribe." The Kimnyegan are also described by Massam, p. 55 and p. 73, as the class "important at the present time, as they carry out the minor work of the local councils, the Kiruok (presided by the Kiruok-in)".

Huntingford writes that among the Nandi "the maintenance of law and order and the regulation of public life is in the hands of the old men, who deliberate and discuss affairs in a series of councils and who are obeyed because they are old men and so nearer to the spirits of the dead than other people."⁽¹⁾

Similarly with regard to the Kipsigis, we know only in a general way that they are consulted before any important ceremony takes place, and that as members of the councils they administer justice and make decisions on matters of war. Their authority, however, is best shown by the action taken against the Maina class: Peristiany, p. 43-44, was informed that because of the misdeeds of the initiates of this class,⁽²⁾ the elders curtailed its initiating period, "and, when the next batch of boys came out of initiation, the elders declared that they belonged to the Chuma ipinda" (age-class).

The above quotations are sufficient to show that the power of the elders is paramount to and above, the initiates who are so frequently referred to as the "class in power."

It seems evident that the common use of the expression "class in power" must be qualified if not completely discarded. The expression is generally referred (with very vague implication) to the class whose prospective members are being initiated before the final institution of the class is performed. Analysis does

- (1) Huntingford (d) p. 5 - Obviously, Huntingford is using the term "old men" in a generic fashion.
- (2) The following are the reasons for such an action on the part of elders: 1) "They had no proper respect for their kot-ap-chi (people of the house, i.e. the family term applied to persons belonging to the same subdivision of a clan) and did not use correctly the complicated kinship terminology, with the result that, if it was not for the vigilance of

not support such vague terminology. From the military point of view that same class cannot be said to be "in power", either because military affairs are decided by a military council of the elders in which the warriors are represented by their deputies, or because as military men some, at least, of the members of that class are trainees. From the social point of view they are under the authority of the elders in general matters, and of their fathers in the matter of their marriage.

The only and true power of the class, whose institution period has been opened, is the right of enrolling all new initiates into its own ranks. External decorations and regalia are a mark of distinction which goes together with that right. And it is this right which is taken and handed over respectively at the beginning and conclusion of every class-period.

At this stage we wish to define the significance of the cyclical system for the structure of the Nandi-Suk age-classes. Analysis has disclosed no part of that structure as influenced by that system. Thus it would seem evident that the cyclical system, though it is such a conspicuous mark of distinction for the Nandi-Suk age-systems, possesses no structural value. As a matter of fact, we have also noted how the fixity of the name-series is not so strict and consistent. Other alternative names may be used for the traditional ones, and the Kipsigis have turned to a typical linear system for naming their minimal age-divisions.

Note 2 continued from previous page.

- (2) the elders, most Maina would have disgraced themselves by committing incest. 2) They did not confine themselves to stealing cattle from punik (strangers, enemies), but also stole from their fellow Kipsigis, 3) They showed ignorance and disrespect towards the customs of their fathers." See Peristiany, p. 44.

The fixity of the name-series may possibly be ascribed to the conservative tendency of the Nandi-Suk, which ordinarily finds no good reason for changing the names of its classes. One may note in this connection that a set of seven (or eight) names covers the full possible range of classes into which the living people, initiates and non-initiates, may be distributed.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE SYSTEM OF THE TURKANA.

I

The Turkana live in the Turkana District of the Northern Frontier Province, Kenya Colony. Only a few are found in the Isiolo District of the same Province, and in the Samburu District of the Rift Valley Province, Kenya Colony. All together they number about 77,000. Turkanaland lies west and south of Lake Rudolph. It is crossed by two major water courses, the upper Turkwel and the Kerio rivers, and by a number of secondary water courses. Nearly all the country, especially the central portion, is semi-desert, though it is possible to dig for and find water in the beds of the rivers even during the dry season.

Within one year there are generally a wet and a dry season. However, a good wet season is said to occur regularly once every three or five years. These oecological and climatic conditions have a crucial influence on the mode of life and the social structure of the Turkana.

The Turkana are essentially a pastoral people and their agricultural activity is negligible. Of the Nilo-Hamites, the Turkana are the only ones, who possess camels among their stock. The Turkana mode of life is seminomadic. During the dry season when the stock has to be divided into small units, and taken to the few grazing or browsing areas, the family also split into small units in order to follow and guard the stock. At this time the whole society is fragmented. It is only during the wet season, and more exactly, the good wet season, i.e. once in 3 or 5 years or more, that the family is reassembled, and social functions of relevance, such as initiation and

marriage, are ordinarily performed. (1)

The territorial organisation of the Turkana is insistently described by Gulliver as "a neutral feature of Turkana social structure," and the territorial sections are defined as "of no current sociological significance," or as "a functionless form." These statements seem to misconstrue the real situation.

Emley describes three major "territorial sections" (adakari pl. adakaritha) (2) each divided into four "sub-divisions" (egitiella, pl. nyitiella).

Gulliver ignores the major sections of Emley, and states that Turkanaland is divided into "two major parts," Ngimonia and Ngichuro, each subdivided into a number of "territorial sections." The Turkana refer to both these divisions, according to Gulliver, by the term ekitela, pl. ngitela. Apparently, the territorial sections are not further subdivided. No geographical boundaries seem to give them a definite limit. But if we look at the map, we see that all the Ngichuro sections occupy the western portion of Turkaland, and the Ngimonia sections are scattered from the North to the South throughout Turkanaland on its eastern side. (3)

The evidence put forward by Gulliver, if we read it right,

(1) (See Gulliver, ch. 14, p. 288). These are the other tribes akin to the Turkana: the Nyangatom or Donyiro, the Topotha, the Dodoth, the Ngije, and the Karamajong. The historical evidence we possess seems to indicate that they once formed a single people who later split and followed different migratory courses. In Bryan and Tucker's classification the Turkana is a language of the Teso Language Group. The other languages of this Group, besides the Teso and the Turkana are the Toposa language, and the Karamjong dialect cluster, and other "various dialects". Cfr. Bryan and Tucker, p. 30-32.

(2) Originally, states Emley, there were only two major territorial sections, Nithir, and Ngamatak, and from the latter a third one Nibelai originated. Mr. Keath, KLCE, p. 1778 gives the following divisions:

Ngisjir - Nyepanga -	Ngikamatak, Nioviyakwara, Bellai, Ngiulukumong.
Ngissir - Ngimonia -	Ngissiger Ngimonia
	Kwatela Ngissir
	Imbostheros Ngekdjik
	Yapukumo Ngammong
	Ngeje Ngimurak.

(3) See Gulliver, ch. 6, map No. 3 facing p. 98.

seems to indicate that the territorial sections are not purely and simply geographical divisions. There are aspects of Turkana social life in which these geographical categories are reflected. Thus in military organisation "there may have been a working division between Ngimonia and Ngichuro" (1) i.e. the two major parts. The initiation ceremonies and the other social activities are performed at special centres, and although these have no reference to any geographical division, they seem to work on a regional basis. (2) This is particularly true of the secondary territorial units.

Gulliver calls the minor territorial sections: primary, secondary and tertiary neighbourhoods. He does so "heuristically", short of more precise terms. These units, according to Gulliver, constitute the actual basis of Turkana social and political life. The Turkana themselves do not specifically recognise those divisions, although they refer to "any territorially distinct group of homesteads, or common area of "grazing" by the term adakar. (3)

Geographically, the primary neighbourhood is "a small group of homesteads (seldom more than five), distinct from other groups". The secondary neighbourhood "is the collection of two or three such groups" ordinarily centring on the same water point, and using the same pastures to the exclusion (de facto) of others. The tertiary neighbourhood is "a wider and much vaguer geographical area within which from time to time, now more intense now less, social intercourse is maintained according to the personal inclination of the people concerned

(1) Gulliver, ch. 14, p. 270. Gulliver's evidence in this case is based on the Administration files, in which some war leaders are recorded as having the command probably of one "major territorial division."

(2) Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 249.

(3) Gulliver, ch. 11, p. 196. The same term we have seen applied by Emley to his "major territorial sections." See above p.133.

and the attractiveness of the activities." (1)

Socially, the primary neighbourhood is the scene of everyday life, while such major social activities as marriage, birth, death, inheritance, initiation, etc., take place within the secondary neighbourhood. The secondary neighbourhood may, therefore, be regarded also as a ceremonial unit. It also possesses an economic character which is particularly evident in those customary meat festivals which every head of homestead within the secondary neighbourhood takes in turn to provide for his male co-members. The "co-operative community" suggested by Gulliver is also more or less coincident with the primary and secondary neighbourhoods. (2)

The tertiary neighbourhood marks the limit of the range of a man's political activity.(3)

These three units represent the geographical areas wherein a man or a family have their actual residence, and display their social activity. The vagueness of the terminology applied by Gulliver reflects the vagueness of their nature. The phenomenon has its main cause in the semi-nomadism of the Turkana. We have noted the same things among the Masai. The centres of social action within the neighbourhoods may change with the migration to another water point, or with the movement here or there of an influential elder.

Above all neighbourhoods and other territorial divisions, there is Turkanaland. It is "the country", and it is, at least theoretically, the political unit within which all the Turkana operate. (4) The concept is frequently insisted upon by

(1) Gulliver, ch. 11, p. 196-197.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 11. p. 222-234. The concept of "co-operative community" suggested by Gulliver needs more evidence especially in its relationship to other territorial and social units.

(3) Gulliver, ch. 16, p. 355.

(4) Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 16, p. 355.

the Turkana when they say: "we are all one; we may move wherever we like." (1)

The homestead (avi, pl. ngavie) is a more definite territorial unit, being the residential dwelling place of a family, generally of two families. (2) It is a compound of structures encircled by a common fence, which shelters the stock-kraal, the houses of the head of the family and of each of his wives with her children. We noted that seasonal migrations split the family into small units and thus affect its social activity.

The Turkana further fall under a system of patrilineal clans (ataker). Gulliver records 28 clans. All are exogamous, and exogamy seems to be strictly enforced. (3) Apparently clans are not further subdivided. Their territorial distribution is not rigidly defined. It is of some interest to notice that of the 28 clans, 14 are found only or mainly in Ngichuro. (4) The number of their members represents $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total population. Six clans are found only or mainly in Nrimonia. Eight are more or less dispersed over the entire area. No differentiation of status or wealth is based on the clan. (5)

The ownership of stock and its distribution gives rise to other relationships in Turkana society. Cattle and stock are primarily owned by the head of the family. He distributes them among his wives paying special attention to their seniority as wives. Every child in the family is given a

(1) Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 16, p. 354. It is possible now to grasp the meaning of Gulliver's statement that "sections cover only wet season areas, and a man belongs to that section in which he lives and herds his stocks in a good wet season."

(2) Cfr. Emley, p. 167.

(3) Cfr. Emley, p. 190; Gulliver, ch. 18, p. 401. Hulley p. 4-5, writes that it is considered incestuous to have marriage within one's own ataker. It does not matter whether the relationship is traceable or not.

(4) Gulliver, ch. 8, p. 115.

(5) l.c., ch. 8, p. 117.

number of heads of stock which is kept with his mother's.

Every member of the family has a special milch animal allotted to him.

In case of inheritance, cattle and stock are distributed within the range of the extended family. The general heir is the head of the extended family. He may be a man's eldest married son or a man's elder brother if that man has no son. In case of marriage members of the extended family contribute towards the payment of compensation.

Other relationships are created in transactions based on stock between a man and his in laws, best friend or institutionalised friend,⁽¹⁾ his god-father at birth, and the sponsor of his initiation.

A man's age-mates have a claim to the meat of his "dance-ox". Every man from the time he is about sixteen (i.e. just before initiation) until his death owns such an ox. It is the special object of much affection and great care, and has its horns fancily twisted. The name of the dance-ox is the name by which a man is called by his age-mates. He changes his name every time he takes a new dance-ox which happens not infrequently since the dance-ox must not die old. The owner's age-mates have a right to kill it, and to celebrate the occasion with a special meat feast, and they may ask for it, when the ox is grown old and has not yet been offered to them.⁽²⁾

Although it is not untrue to state generally that political power rests with the elders, it is more correct to say that political authority is a matter of personality and of influence. In the case of dispute or of crime, action is left to the

(1) This is a friend, not necessarily of the same age-class nor of the same clan or territorial section, on whom a man has a right to rely in case of special need. This right is based on previous favours extended to this friend. Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 10, p. 179-194.

(2) Cp. the same custom among the Nandi-Suk, the Lotuho, and the Topotha.

interested parties themselves. They, however, will find support either in their own extended families, other related people, such as friends, age-mates etc., or in public opinion generally. In any case, the most influential man, especially if he is the most Senior of the age-classes may exercise his power to prevent fighting and ask for a peaceful settlement. There are many reasons for which a man may be given respect and influence Gulliver lists them as follows: Wealth in stock; war leadership; personality and ability; seniority in age-system; government headman. (1) War leadership and seniority in age-system, shall be discussed below, p. 151-156, and especially p. 157-161.

(1) Gulliver, ch. 16, p. 358-363. "Ritual leadership" should also be added. On p. 361-62 Gulliver mentions the "diviner" as another of the possible leaders or influential men.

II

The institution of the age class.

A basic feature of the Turkana age-system is the division of all the Turkana into two moiety-categories. A man is a member either of the "stones" (imuru, pl. ngimur), or of the "leopards" (erigait, pl. ngirigai).

The moieties are described in connection with the initiation because they provide the basis for the groupings of the candidates. All moiety-members are initiated together, i.e. they form a distinct group of candidates. At initiation, therefore, there are always two different groups performing their own ceremonies independently.

Membership of the moiety is obtained, we are told, by birth. A man child enters the moiety opposite to that of his father. Thus, if a man is a member of the "stones", all his children will be "leopards". (1) At present they are not territorially separated, but they cut across all other social categories to which a Turkana belongs, and have much in common with the moiety system of the Masai.

Emley calls the two moieties "decoration divisions" (Athapanatitha - athapanu - decoration). According to his knowledge, such division "determines what ornaments and forms of decoration may be worn by each, and the songs which each may sing." In fact he gives a list of decorations and songs for each of the two divisions. This information as far as

(1) This is the reason why Gulliver calls them "alternations". We prefer the accepted terminology. Basically the Turkana "moieties", notwithstanding their different titles of membership, do not differ from the dichotomy - categories we find among other peoples, e.g. the Masai.

the special decoration is concerned is also supported by Hulley's manuscript. Hulley states that "the Ngimurr (stones are a higher class than the Ngirrithai (leopards)" (1)

Gulliver disputes Emley's information and states that he "can find no evidence to support Emley's remarks that different coloured beads are worn according to alternation (moiety), nor that songs are peculiar to each one." It seems, however, that the evidence he puts forward shows that the custom is no longer as rigid as it may have been and is perhaps actually changing, but it does not altogether contradict the statement of Emley. (2)

The moiety system, as we shall see, comes to the fore

- (1) Emley, p. 165-166, Hulley, p. 6.
This is Emley's list of decorations and song-subjects.
1. Ornaments and Decorations.

IMIRU (stones)

Baboon skins
Black ostrich feathers
Dark metal ornament
Dark colour beads
Giraffe's tail

IRITHA (Leopards)

Leopard skins
Light ostrich feathers
Brass and copper ornaments
Light colour beads.
-

While ostrich feathers may be worn by either class, so may feathers stained with red ink or earth.

2. SUBJECT of Songs.

Black ostrich	- <u>Akeleth</u>	Light ostrich	- <u>Akeleth</u>
Giraffe	- <u>Eokuri</u>	Leopard	- <u>Erith</u>
Stone	- <u>Amuru</u>	Elephant	- <u>Etom</u>
Ostrich eggs	- <u>Abeive</u>	Rhino	- <u>Amuthing</u>
Lion	- <u>Ang'atum</u>	Guinea-fowl	- <u>Atapin</u>
Eland	- <u>Ewapet</u>	Partridge	- <u>Etokora</u>
Buffalo	- <u>Akothuwan</u>	Wart-hog	- <u>Eputir</u>
Honey	- <u>Aou</u>	Porcupine	- <u>Abulu</u>
Deika	- <u>Ithiru</u>	Servalcat	- <u>Echwet</u>
Keiro river	- <u>Ang'olol</u>	Snake	- <u>Imum</u>
	<u>Kerio</u>		
Acacia	- <u>Eowel</u>	Turkwell river-	<u>Ang'olol</u>
			<u>Tirkwel</u>

- (2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 236-237. I can find no Turkana name for the moiety system in Gulliver's MS. The term athapanathitha given by Emley, seems to be the same as "asavanissia" recorded by Dundas, p. 67, for "the generation of warriors."

during initiation, in military organisation and at some social meetings. It is quite logical to assume that the separation between the two moiety-groups being so manifest and particularly efficient during ceremonial gatherings, should be accompanied by special decorations and songs, as Emley and Hulley describes.

Initiation

Initiation is celebrated in every good wet season, which, as we know, occurs regularly only once in three or five years. (1) The ceremony is repeated on several days, with an interval of a few days between ceremonies. It is not held at every homestead, but at those special centres of Turkana social life within the secondary neighbourhood. The selection of such centres for the initiation ceremonies is conditioned by the presence of the few elders of the most senior age-classes in those places. Their attendance at the ceremony is an essential requirement. As a consequence, if there is no surviving elder of the most senior class at a given centre ~~the~~ people must travel to a different initiation centre. (2)

It is said that the candidate's father decides when the time for his son's initiation has come. Gulliver however, points out that "the eagerness of the boys may have something to do" with the decision. (3) The following is the course reported by Barton: "when youths consider that their age (unit) should be named, they collect bullocks, call on elders, make feast, and request for a name to be given." (4)

-
- (1) This shows the accuracy of the information recorded by Dundas in 1910. He states, p. 67: "judging from my list of asavanissia a new age is created every four or five years."
- (2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 247.
- (3) Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 390.
- (4) Barton (c), p. 209.

The date of the ceremony is fixed "by general consent at the initiative of influential men", to whom the father of the candidate refers. Emley states that the candidate's father addresses his request to "some elders of his own age." (1)

Gulliver says that "no elder set (age-class) is responsible for their (the candidates') initiation or instruction into duties and privileges." (2) This statement must be accepted in the sense that the elder age-classes do not act corporately as distinct units. It is a fact that members of senior sets decide upon the initiation to be performed and take an essential part in the actual ceremonies. (3)

The first initiation ceremony consists in the spearing of an animal by the Candidate. Each candidate has his own animal, provided by his father. The kind of the animal, (it may be either an ox or a camel, a goat, or a ram) does not have any bearing on the social status of the candidate, nor is it selected according to the status of his father.

Candidates are primarily grouped according to their moiety. The two groups act independently. They are formed into a single file. Each boy is followed by his own animal. The order of candidates in the file is dictated by their fathers' seniority in the age system. The son of the most senior man of the most senior age-class will be the head of the file and the first to spear the animal. This gives him a seniority status with regard to his age-mates.

Following this order, every candidate in succession proceeds to spear his own animal. The boy is supposed never to have speared an animal before. Now "he should kill the beast with one thrust of the spear, or else it is an adverse reflection on the youth, and supposed to presage vague bad fortune, or worse." (4)

When all the animals have been killed, the elders come forward and slit open the carcasses. They smear the contents of the stomach's cell over the bodies of the candidates. Then, according to Gulliver, they say "a few words to youths of general exhortation and encouragement, such as 'You are a man. You must leave behind the things of a child. You must fight enemies.' And so on; there is no set phraseology, nor any great importance attached to this. Next, the old men perform the three types of ritual spitting on the boys, with water,

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 247; Emley, p. 164.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 239.

(3) Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 293.

(4) Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 392.

milk, and the pulp of a certain kind of wood." (1)

The third part of the initiation is a meat festival, at which the meat of the initiation-animals is eaten "by all the men, boys and initiates of all the neighbourhood assembled." (2)

As is always the case when meat festivals are held, people are arranged according to their moiety. Thus fathers are always, at least generally in the group opposite to that of their sons.

Extreme importance is attached to some portions of the meat (apol, a part of the loins, and emacher, the testicles). These must be cut by the most senior members of the oldest age-class present. It seems that a special way of cutting is followed by each moiety. These portions of meat are generally reserved for the most senior elders present, and Gulliver does not know if at initiation the newly initiated have a share of them. (3) Dancing closes the day.

The days following initiation (from 4 to 10) are spent by the initiates in a kind of segregation, each at his sponsor's house. (4) This man is selected by the candidate's father, and generally is one of his friends. He takes care of the initiate, feeding and instructing him as if he were his own son. The initiate surrenders all his decorations, his spear and stool, his cloth and sandals to his sponsor who presents him with a full new set. The initiate has no other special duty to perform "but sits about in or near the homestead."

After this period the initiate goes back to his father. "He is formally told that he is now a man (ekile), more exactly, "ekile netherokit", i.e. a young man of such-and-such an age-set." (5) For the first time he is decorated with a mudded hair-dress (aicheria), a sign of manhood attained.

The sponsor is compensated by the initiates father.

On the first day of initiation, i.e. when the first group of candidates has been initiated, "at some time, as the men are assembled to watch initiation and join in the feast (I do not know exactly when) the question of names is brought up for public discussion." Two age-names must be found, one for each moiety group. It is not stated whether the discussion is held separately or commonly by the members of the two moieties. Probably the first course is followed.

(1) Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 393. Gulliver is not sure whether the elders here referred to are of the same moiety as the candidates' or of the opposite one. The members of this last, who are called by the Turkana "the fathers of the candidates" in a classificatory way, are said to be present at the ceremony.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 239.

(3) Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 393-394, ch. 12, p. 244.

(4) Hulley, p. 6. refers to this segregation as follows: "He (the candidate) must not be seen by his parents for ten days. If, by accident, they see him they must throw water over him to purify him and to avert bad luck."

(5) Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 394-95.

The meeting and discussion are informal as happens in all other Turkana meetings. The agreement on a single name is reached through the consensus of opinions. No previous age-name may be reassumed. When the name has been fixed, it is officially communicated to the new initiates, and similar communication takes place every other day when the initiation ceremony is being performed.

Consensus of opinions about the proper class name is reached through a process of adjustment which obtains throughout Turkanaland.

As a matter of fact age-names are selected at each initiation centre independently of other centres. On the other hand, according to the established custom, a single name for a single age-unit should exist throughout the country. Hence of all the names chosen at different places one will prevail above the others by the adjustment of opinions on the matter. Such a process, remarks Gulliver, takes many years to be completed, but the Turkana "assure that completed it will be," although apparently the lists of age-names we possess do not always completely agree even for the oldest age-units.⁽¹⁾

Although the actual names of the age-units are not of great structural importance, (as Gulliver notes), the assertion that there must be a single name for a full age-unit throughout Turkanaland suggests further consideration. While there are many initiation ceremonies which take place on different days at the different centres, the resulting group of initiates (of course, we treat the two moiety-groupings separately) throughout Turkanaland are regarded as forming a single group with single age-name. This shows clearly that the Turkana conceive of the groups of initiates who have gone through the initiation ceremonies during the same season, as integrating cells of a single

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 249-50. See below, p. 149-149a.

and corporate body. Indeed they say: "All Turkana have the same-age-sets. Names are the same. They have all one." (1) This leads us to the next section of the present analysis.

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 250.

III

The Turkana Age Class

It is already evident that the primary and basic feature of the internal structure of Turkana age-associations is the division based on the moiety-system. This necessitates an early definition of the Turkana age-class.

At every initiation ceremony two groups of candidates are initiated and each is given a different name. The groupings are based on the moieties. They are separately initiated and perform distinct functions, as we shall see. Further they never merge into a new age-association, but maintain their distinction throughout the years. At the same time members of these two groupings are not merely contemporary in age and actually initiated during the same initiation-season, but their seniority status, as will be evident later, is reckoned according to the time, when their group as a whole has been initiated.

It is possible therefore to consider the groupings as forming a single body of contemporary members. This is the Turkana age-class.

The two moiety-groupings we shall call age-units. The age-class as a concrete and apparent body does not exist. It is the two age-units which assemble the members of one age-class into external associations. The age-class as such does not even have a name. It is, therefore, merely a theoretical category, which provides a comparative basis for the accurate defining of the seniority status of members of the age-units. This status of seniority is the key to the internal structure of the Turkana age-class. See p. 11, 12.

We are told that little relationship exists between the two age-units initiated on the same day, or in the same season.

"The tendency, if anything, is for them to fall apart and become more and more associated with other sets (age-units) in their respective alternations (moieties)." (1)

The concordance of age-units-names.

Here below we reproduce, in a comparative form, the various lists of age-unit names we possess. The criterion followed for the arrangement of the names is the assumption that the same names stand for one contemporaneous and single age-unit, because, as we have seen, no previously used age-unit name may be reassumed. Different names do not necessarily indicate different age-units. The difference may be due to the adjustment process for the selection of a single age-unit name for all Turkanaland, which might have either failed to occur, at least in a complete form, or not reached its final stage. The enumeration of names follows the order in the original list.(2)

We wish to note that the Hulley lists have been shifted from one moiety to the other because it was apparent that what he gave as "stones" corresponded almost entirely to the list of "leopards" given by others.

We notice in these tables that only two names, Ngitome (Hulley No. 3) and Ngiporokine (F Gulliver, No. 8) are found in both moieties; and that these two names have been reassumed and applied to new age-units. This is also valid for Nkorio of "Stones" table: it is in fact found as no. 2. of Hulley's list and reassumed under no. lv. If we allow for these very few anomalies, which, on the other hand, may be due to possible errors either of transcription or information, we must say that the similarity between the six lists is rather strong. In point

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 239.

(2) The small Roman numerals refers to names which appear also in other lists.

Section: WESTERN TURKANALAND ?

Autho- rity	(A) Hulley 1920-21	(B) Masterman 1926	(C) Gulliver 1950	(D) Gulliver 1950	(E) Gulliver 1950	(F) Gulliver 1950
	1. Ngkorian	1. Ngikime 2. Ngikorichen		1. Ngitome		
i			1. <u>Ngiputiro</u>			1. <u>Ngiputiro</u>
ii	2. <u>Ngalingka</u>	3. <u>Elingakwa</u>				
iii			2. <u>Ngkwalitom</u>	2. <u>Ngkwalitom</u>	1. <u>Ngkwelitom</u>	
iv	3. <u>Ngitapeno</u>	4. <u>Ngetapino</u>	3. <u>Ngetapino</u>			2. <u>Ngimosingo</u> 3. <u>Ngwakork</u>
v		5. <u>Ngwakork</u>				
vi	4. <u>Ngimerichu</u>	6. <u>Imerichada</u>	4. <u>Ngimerichada</u>		2. <u>Ngimerichada</u>	
vii	5. <u>Ngwelimongin</u>					
vii	6. <u>Ngiririthai</u>	7. <u>Imerisia</u>	5. <u>Ngimerithia</u>	3. <u>Ngimerithia</u>		
viii	7. <u>Ngvamgagi</u>	8. <u>Niyagipor</u>	6. <u>Nginyagipor</u>	4. <u>Nginyagipor</u>	3. <u>Ngivoyerim</u> 4. <u>Nginyagiporu</u>	
ix	8. <u>Ngwarra</u>	9. <u>Ngwaria</u>	7. <u>Ngwaria</u>	5. <u>Ngwaria</u>		
			8. <u>Ngilingaker</u>		5. <u>Ngiolesoguru</u> 6. <u>Ngilingakeri</u>	4. <u>Ngilemguruak</u> 5. <u>Ngkwabwang</u> 6. <u>Ngwolitom</u> 7. <u>Ngwange</u>
				6. <u>Ngkange</u> 7. <u>Ngvolepethe</u>	7. <u>Ngkwamethe</u> kin	
			9. <u>Ngukwakora</u>		8. <u>Ngkwakora</u>	8. <u>Ngiporokine</u>
				8. <u>Ngiburuhi</u> 9. <u>Ngwaperit</u>		9. <u>Ngiropie</u>

STONES (NGIMUR)

Moiety:

Territor:

Major
Part

Section:

Authority

?

NGIMONIA

NGICHURO

WESTERN TURKANALAND?

NGISSIR

(Ngisamule)

NGISSIGER

NGAMATAK

NGILUKUMONG

Hulley

(B)Masterman

(C)Gulliver

(D)Gulliver

(E)Gulliver

(F)Gulliver

(A)1920-21

1926

1950

1950

1950

1950

1.Ngitukoi

2.Nkorio

3.Ngitome

4.Ngkwaghala

5.Ngkalel

6.Ngitingemong

7.Ngkapelikw-
are

i.

8.Ngimazes

1.Imases

1.Ngimatheth

1.Ngiputiro

2.Ngimatheth

ii.

9.Nggerruhoi

2.Netira

3.Gerrawoi

2.Nggerowe

1.Ngerowe

3.Nggerowe

iii.

10.Ngichodome-
thekin4.Ngichodethe-
kin3.Ngichodeme-
thekin

4.Nguwortha

5.Ngichodeme-1.Ngichode-
thekin thekin

iv.

5.Nkorio

2.Ngkorio

3.Ngkorio

2.Ngilibaro

v.

11.Ngiporrogine

6.Ngiporogine

3.Ngiruru

4.Ngipalik-
wara

vi.

12.Nyangadu

7.Nyangardung

5.Nginyag-
ardung4.Ngibelek-
wara6.Ngibelek-
wara4.Nginyag-
ardung

vii.

13.Ngbelakwara

8.Nibeledwara

6.Ngibelek-
wara

5.Ngiyagardung

7.Ngiyagar-
dung5.Ngibelek-
wara

9.Nguwortha

7.Ngirokumu

8.Ngisale

6.Ngisali

8.Ngisale

viii.

6.Ngikapel-
ime thekin

7.Ngithenyok

8.Ngibelekal

of fact we find that in "Leopards" table no. vi, vii, viii and ix offer an almost complete similarity; and in "Stones" table, under no. i, ii, iii, this similarity is also almost full while under no. vi and vii it is in fact full and complete. Note that such completeness is found in the last numbers of the first two lists. These two lists are the oldest of the six, which, perhaps, is an indication that the adjustment process for the final prevailing of a name has had sufficient time to be accomplished. Although the evidence is far from absolute, it offers much support to the statement of the Turkana that their age-units are the same throughout the country.

The age-units period.

The institution of the age-units takes place at every good wet season, ordinarily once in 3 or 5 years.⁽¹⁾ We do not know whether more than one initiation is performed when two good wet seasons occur in two successive years. Probably initiation is conditioned by the presence of candidates.

Further, good wet seasons are not always general for all Turkanaland. So it may happen that initiation is celebrated in some sections while in other it is in abeyance.

All these possibilities show how unlikely it is that in all sections we should find exactly the same number of age units. One would expect to find the same number of age units for the two moieties. But we do not. May we assume that sometimes there are no candidates in one moiety? Evidently, more information is needed on this point.

Gulliver indicates an approximation of 8-10 classes actually existing and this is also the number of names contained in the tables at p. 149-9a. Let us assume the interval of 4 years

(1) This interval is confirmed by Hulley's MS. On p. 6. he states that "classes are classified in age groups according to the year in which they killed their bullock. There is only one group for about every 5 years." Cp. also Dundas as quoted on p. 10. n. 3.

between each class; the result is a "total period of 32-40 years". Initiation is generally entered at the age of 16-20. The age of a man who has passed through the whole series of 8-10 classes would be, according to Gulliver, an approximate figure of 48-60 years: "a period not inconsistent with the probable life span of a man." (1)

The interrelations of the Age-Units.

Gulliver states that "neither they (the initiates or class-members) nor the set (class as a unit) is specially related to any other set". (2) This seems to be too general a statement, and not in keeping with the evidence produced. Through all the discussion on this point, Gulliver himself shows that, a relationship in terms of seniority exists between all the classes and between the individual members of a single class.

A class is senior or junior to another on account of its earlier or later institution. The very same principle applies to the individual members.

Seniority is a qualification strictly of the class and of the individual member. It cannot be inherited. The seniority of an initiate may, however, influence the status of his children in as much as it affects the latter's order of precedence during the initiation ceremonies. As we know, the precedence in the line of candidates who are to spear their animals is assigned in accordance with the seniority of the candidates' father. The status of the father is, as it were, projected upon his children. It may thus happen that the youngest son of a man will be most senior in his own unit, while his elder brother is one of the juniors in his particular

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 238-239. Gulliver states that a Turkana rarely lives longer than 60 years, ch. 19, p. 473.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 238-239.

unit, because of the changed seniority of the father at the time of his youngest son's initiation. Gulliver rightly points out that, in any case the elder brother will always be senior to his younger brother because his initiation took place during a period of initiation prior to that of the latter, whose unit is therefore junior to his elder brother's unit.

This shows clearly that seniority is primarily reckoned by the time of the institution of the class-unit, as a whole, and secondarily by the precedence of the individual initiation. Of course, in speaking of the age-class, it is essential to bear in mind that for the Turkana the class as an actual association of the two units does not take place, but works as a mental category for grading the seniority status of the units and their members.

Seniority is not only not hereditary; it is also inalienable. "Only by the death of a more senior age-mate can a man move up in seniority, and he can never become senior to any living man already senior to him." (1) It is worth noting that this upward movement is solely the outcome of a negative natural phenomenon such as death, which has no corresponding institutionalised ceremony of promotion.

Although we speak here of the age-units as whole bodies, it is not to be forgotten that their apparent and concrete structure is loose and inconsistent. The influence of the strong seminomadic mode of life of the Turkana is evident. The actual units "with any sort of permanence", i.e. with somewhat permanent members, consist of age-mates initiated together, and meeting at the same centre. They commonly associate in activities related to their co-membership, and are brought together by common habitation and exploitation of the same

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 240.

countryside. Their permanence is in some degree always unstable. Such units "break up and reform according to the movements of men involved, based as they are on contiguity and compatibility of members." (1) The fact that all the age units are similar throughout Turkana land is an indication that it will be an easy matter for a man who leaves his original age-unit to fit into a corresponding age-unit at a new initiation centre.

The Internal structure of Turkana age-class.

Seniority is also one of the basic principals of leadership among the Turkana.

In military affairs leadership rests very much on military virtues and "success and initiative in war," states Gulliver. But "other things being equal, seniority gives an advantage." (2)

In social matters, seniority seems to be the most relevant qualification. Gulliver distinguishes the "Senior-Man", who is "the most senior set," and the "senior-man" (with small initials) who is "the most senior at any one time," i.e. at any one place, ceremony, gathering etc. Both are called "erkapulan", i.e. "the big one." (3)

"On such occasion (i.e. in social activities)," writes Gulliver, "the 'senior man' will be the most senior present. It will not always be the same man for the composition of the collection changes according to migratory movements and the interest aroused in the event for which men gather....It can hardly be said that he becomes a leader or even that he presides over the meeting. Notions of leadership are too weak and of egalitarianism too strong to allow for them. But he is given a degree of influence and authority. It may be left to him to initiate successive stages of the business in hand." (4)

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 252.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 244.

(3) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 243. Cfr. also ch. 14, p. 267, where he states: "although there was no formal institution of war-leader, from time to time, and place to place, certain men through their ability, personality and success would come to be recognised as leaders." The Turkana term for such a leader is "erkartabon, pl. ngikartobok."

(4) Gulliver, l.c.

Gulliver further illustrates this point by the description of a meat feast. Here it is the senior-man, assisted by other senior-men next to him, who cuts the meat and makes the distribution. The order followed is that of seniority, and the senior-men receive special portions.

"When prayers are offered communally or by a set alone to the High God the prayer leaders are the senior-men of the sets participating." (1)

"My enquiries," Gulliver also states, "show that certainly the Senior-Man of each oldest set - i.e. one Stone and one Leopard - has certain mystic powers by reason of some special relationship with the High God." (2) By virtue of this power he may exert his influence, and demand that fights and quarrels be stopped, and he may insist on reconciliations.

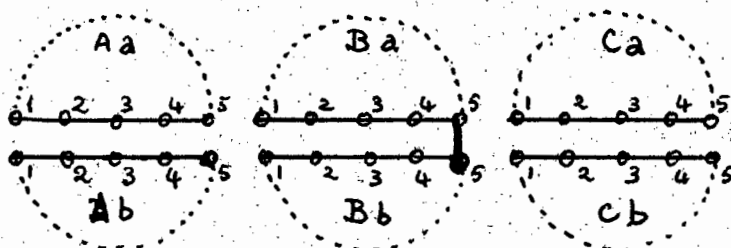
Seniority of class, in a corporate form, may be recognised in the formations used in actual fighting. As a principle, when an attack was conducted against an enemy "the most senior (were to be) in the van, the most junior in the rear." (3)

We believe that all the evidence discussed is sufficient to show that the internal structure of Turkana age-class rests entirely on the principle of seniority, and this is brought about by the order of precedence of institution of every single class, and by the order of precedence of initiation of every single unit and of every individual member.

We may illustrate the principle by the following

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- (1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 245. Cfr. also ch. 20, p. 485-486. On this matter of prayers Gulliver states that his evidence is poor. The strength of the principle of seniority may also be shown by the fact that within the family "brothers get married in order of seniority." Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 10, p. 182.
 - (2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 245, Cfr. also ch. 16, 361-29.
 - (3) Gulliver, ch. 14, p. 274, Cfr. also p. 28-29.

diagram.



Aa, Ab, Ba, Bb, Ca, Cb = age units

AaAb, BaBb, CaCb = age classes

Arabic figures: initiation days as well as order of initiation.

In the diagram the Senior-Man, i.e. the most senior of the three age classes is indicated by Aa1 for the age unit Aa, and Ab1 for the age unit Ab. Ba 1 is the senior man of his age unit Ba, but he is junior to Aa5 as well as to Ab5, because these two latter are members of a senior class. And so on.

As is clearly shown in the diagram, every age class is instituted during a period of some days. All the groups of initiates who come out of the initiation ceremonies together belong to the same age class, which is the total of all such groups. Hence, the instituting principle of the Turkana age class is the contemporaneousness of initiation performed during the same initiation season.

It may be remarked that however vague and indefinite the Turkana age-structure may appear, it is certainly a fact that to the Turkana it provides a sufficiently defined basis for their own position in social life. "It is noteworthy", writes Gulliver, "that men can always tell me the name of the most senior two or three of their set (usually of other sets as well) without difficulty, whereas they cannot tell me all the members of their set in order of seniority, only in relation to themselves."⁽¹⁾

(1) I think that one could not expect more. To believe that a man should be able to tell "all the members of his own set in order of seniority", would be indeed too much. Even among the members of Christian religious orders, where seniority is based on precedence of profession, it is not uncommon to find a man who is unable to tell the seniority of his co-members (unless they are very few) in order of seniority.

In a society where men usually have difficulty in explaining and telling me things, are inarticulate, this ready knowledge and willingness is outstanding." (1) The Turkana are indeed so aware of their own seniority, that Gulliver expressed surprise at the absence of dispute over the distribution of meat, (2) which, as we have seen, is made according to the order of seniority of those present.

(1) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 243.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 242-43, p. 244.

IV

The functions of Turkana Age Class and Units.

From the analysis which has gone before, it is evident that the primary function of the age system of the Turkana is to define the order of seniority of the individual members of the society. Seniority is the most relevant principle in the structure of Turkana society. The social relationships of a Turkana are generally based on, and defined by, his seniority status.

The individual who comes out of initiation is soon regarded as a man. He is entitled to take part in "feasts, dances, war, flirtation, sexual satisfaction and marriage."⁽¹⁾ However, it is really only after he has attained a complete independence, not simply through his marriage, but through economic independence of his father, that he is recognised as a complete adult man - ekile.

In other words, a man after his initiation, although he is said to have attained the majority age, does not automatically become fully master of himself, a full man. This status is only obtained through social and economic independence.

In military matters also, a newly initiated man has the status of a mere apprentice. Soon after initiation it is customary for the new initiates to engage themselves in some sort of military action. This in past time was not a concerted raid, and no large attack was made. A few animals of the enemy's flock might be stolen, or even an enemy killed. But before the age-class, as such, could take the initiative in a raid, it had to undergo training by taking part in full-scale operations

(1) Gulliver, ch. 17, p.398.

organised by the senior age-classes. (1)

We may, therefore, say that the status of a newly instituted class is one of juniority with relation to the other classes. Each individual member of that new class is still considered a junior apprentice in relation to the members of the other classes.

The relationship between all the age-classes is "a general recognition of seniority of those sets above one's own, and of juniority of those below." (2) The relationship between age-mates, i.e. members of the same class and unit, is, according to Gulliver, one of egalitarianism. The statement, however, should be qualified, if it is to agree with the evidence. As a matter of fact we are told that candidates for initiation are ordered according to their father's seniority, and the first is the most senior of them. If then, we consider the case of a meeting of some age-mates, we must assume that the acting senior man is the one who of all those present was the first to spear his initiation animal. Therefore, the egalitarianism, referred to by Gulliver, must be understood, I believe, as an order of seniority which gives the senior man the authority of the first among equals: "primus inter pares". The relationship between the classes is conceived and expressed in terms of classificatory kinship, at least in some cases. Thus every member of one's fathers class may be addressed as "father" (apa); and every age-mate may be addressed as "brother" (lokwater).

The privilege of calling one another by the name of the dance-ox is restricted to age-mates. In the same way, the right

(1) Cfr. Gulliver, ch. 17, p. 396.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 12, p. 252.

of killing the dance-ox and eating its meat is reserved to them.(1)
It is relevant to note that apparently, no marriage restrictions limit the rights of class members in regard to their age-mates' daughters.

In practical life, the relationship between age-mates is one of "comradeship and friendliness" (Gulliver). Mutual assistance and support are given to one another on such occasions as, gathering the bridewealth, arranging a regular marriage or one by abduction, and others.

Of course, the age-system relationships are just one mesh in the net of the social structure of the Turkana. They extend over other boundaries and behaviour.

"In peaceful activities," writes Gulliver, "age-sets function as esoteric groups with few external functions. They do, it is true, play a part in furthering and protecting rights of members, but such an action is mainly relevant to each individual, and not organised activity under specific leadership. There are no police or other political functions attached to any set as such." (2)

In military matters the cohesion of the age-classes seems to have been much more compact and relevant.

"Raiding was initiated in three sorts of ways: firstly by an age-set (or part of a set), secondly by a recognised war leader, and thirdly by a diviner." (3) An individual, having a special cause could also take the initiative but he would always have passed through his own age-class. Even when a war leader (erkartabon, pl. ngibartobok) (3) or a diviner was

(1) This is one of the corporate activities of the age-classes during the wet season. Members of different classes would not be refused a share of the meat if they joined the party. Cfr, Gulliver, ch. 2. p. 29-31.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 16, p. 360.

(3) Gulliver, ch. 14, p. 265.

(4) A war leader is a person who had distinguished himself for brilliant military success, and thus has the full confidence and loyalty of his age-mates.

responsible for a raid, the organisation was invariably based on the age-system.

When a raid was organised "the men would assemble by age-set and by region, more or less under the supervision each of their senior-Men." (1) The age-system was followed not only in the organisation but in the actual fighting. At least, in its first stage.

"The almost invariable tactics were that the total force divided up into Stones and Leopards. All the force kept together until the selected enemy settlement was near. Then the Stones went on one side and the Leopards on the other, thus delivering a pincer-like attack on the objective. Strictly speaking, the men went into the attack in order of seniority of their age-sets - the most senior in the van, the most junior in the rear." (2) In the actual fighting no one was kept back by his seniority status. It all depended on his will and bravery. (3)

It seems that for the organisation of raids the regional principle was generally observed. The Turkana from the North, remarks Gulliver, did not take part in raids on the Suk, any more than those from the South took part in raids on the Toposa. It seems also that the territorial division of the two 'major parts', Ngichuro and Ngimonia, was followed. The interrelation of the age-system with the territorial divisions seems to be an established fact.

Summing up our analysis of the Turkana age-system, we may first remark that the statement that the age-system serves

(1) Gulliver, ch. 14, p. 274.

(2) Gulliver, ch. 14, p. 273-274.

(3) Cfr. l.c. p. 279. "There was no specified age at which to cease fighting. It was mainly a matter of the individual strength and wishes. Certainly men up to at least the age of forty would normally take part."

a military function mainly and primarily, does not give a correct and complete picture of it. Military organisation is indeed based on the age-system, and more precisely on the seniority principle established by the age-system. The principle of seniority is also operative with regard to other social activities, such as initiation, meat feasts, prayers, etc.

It is true that Turkana society is characterised by the indefinite vagueness of its organisation. But certainly the Turkana age-system provides a clear method for defining the position of every Turkana man in social activity (cfr. meat feast and meat distribution).

The Turkana age-system functions, then, as the organising principle for military as well as for social activity. And indeed, it would be rather difficult to state where its influence is more effective: whether in military or in social organisation.

The stress laid on "seniority" is another feature of the Turkana age-system. It is the key to the understanding of its structure and function.

The principle for the institution of the age-class or age-units is the initiation being performed during the same initiation season. Apparently there is no specific opening and closing ceremony for the definition of this initiation season. It is simply the good wet season which occurs at a more or less definite interval of years. Essentially the principal is not different from the principle of the Masai and the Nandi-Suk age-systems, namely initiation performed during the same class-period.

A P P E N D I X

The Age-System of the Toposa.

The only available source on the social organisation of the Toposa is the information collected by Capt. G.R. King and published by Nalder in his Survey of Mongalla Province (See Bibl.) As Nalder, p. 69, points out "the whole subject of (Toposa) age classes is extremely complicated and confusing." This complication and confusion is due almost entirely to the lack of information. In fact there are so many gaps that our repeated efforts to analyse the matter and relate the essential points of the Toposa age-system to each other have proved ineffective. Yet, Capt. King describes some elements of the Toposa age-system, which may have a broad comparative value for the analysis of the age-systems of the Nilo-Hamitic peoples, although their own fitness in that system as a whole is not yet apparent to us. For this reason, we think it useful to deal briefly with some aspects of the Toposa age system.

The Toposa inhabit the most easterly section of the Equatorial Province (Sudan) north of the borderline of the Sudan and Kenya. They number about 30,448 (Bryan).⁽¹⁾ They are essentially pastoral, and, although they live in villages "strung out along the Thingeita and Lokolyan" rivers, their mode of life is seminomadic "owing to scarcity of water." Agricultural work "is essentially women's work."⁽²⁾

Territorially the Toposa are divided into two major sections,

(1) Nalder, p. 62, reported a number of 5,783 taxpayers, which gives a total figure of 23,132.

(2) Nalder, p. 79.

the Akaloto and the Akalokidei, spread along these two rivers.⁽¹⁾ The two major sections are further divided into minor sections. Each minor section contains a number of villages.

The Toposa are also divided into a number of patrilineal and exogamous clans.

It does not seem that, at present, there is any definite relationship between the territorial and clan organisation. King noted that "there are probably section boundaries and possibly clan boundaries, inside which the land is free to any one who chooses to clear it." ⁽²⁾

It may be noted here that the members of the Nyikuran clan are the custodian of the ceremonial fire-stick (nyidomey) inherited and preserved within their own families. Fire-making is an important ritual connected with the initiation ceremonies.⁽³⁾

Political authority resides in "the elders of the ruling class," according to Nalder, p. 74, and they act in council. ⁽⁴⁾

The Toposa, like the Turkana and the Nandi-Suk, express their interest in cattle through the institution of the personal ceremonial bull. Nalder, p. 71, describes it as follows: "It is probably at the time of his admission to this class that a

(1) It seems that these two territorial sections are not to be considered in terms of dual organisation because of the fact that a third one, the Nyangatom also called Dongiro, is said to have been originally of the Toposa, and to have migrated further north and settled on its own near the Abyssinian frontier. Cfr. Nalder, p. 66. Bryan, p. 31, says that "the Nyangatom, also known as Donyiro and as Bume, appear to be a section of the Turkana living in Ethiopia, mainly on or near the River Kibish." The controversial point is connected with the history of the migration of the Teso-(or Turkana-) speaking peoples from Karamoja, which appears to be their common place of origin.

(2) Nalder, p. 79.

(3) Nalder, p. 69 and 73.

(4) Driberg, quoted by Nalder, p. 74, states that the Abyssinian appointed a chief, "but respected the tribal council to the extent of nominating the leading elder to the Chieftainship. This was logical and he was respected by the people not in his capacity as "chief" but as elder."

man is presented with his personal bull. This is the centre and focus of his being, almost identified with him. He will tend and groom it, train its horns in some particular shape and compose a song in its honour, sung with his arms extended in the shape of the bull's horns. Although when a man dies no dance is held, if a man's personal bull dies a dance is held: the bull is eaten by the women only, another being provided for the men." (1)

Nalder, on the basis of King's information, distinguishes the following elements in the age-system of the Toposa: 1) the age-grades; 2) the age-classes proper (anaget); 3) the bull classes (nyithapana). (2) We propose to discuss the age-grades in a concluding comparative paragraph. It is obvious, even from the poor evidence that we possess on the Toposa, that age-grades have no structural meaning in the age-class system. See p.

As far as the other two classes are concerned there are too many gaps in the information, and the whole matter is made more uncertain by the equivocal terminology used.

The Age-Class (Anaget).

Nalder, p. 70, states that "the age classes are divided into (probably) three sub-classes, filled when there are sufficient candidates for admission." We do not know when and how the individual members are initiated, and when and how the sub-classes are instituted. "The point," writes Nalder, p. 70, "at which a lad enters an age-class and the manner of his admission is still uncertain." It would appear, according to Nalder, that candidates to initiation, however this may be

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- (1) Note the difference from the Turkana. Among them it is the privilege of the owner's age-mates to eat the meat of his personal "dance-ox".
- (2) Cp. The Turkana athapanitha - athapanu, and the Teso esapan.

performed, are 16-17 years old.⁽¹⁾

The age class is instituted "on the demand of the young men 'to be given a name' or on the decision of the elders after the matter has been discussed." Very probably the two possibilities do not exclude each other and the final decision is always taken by the elders. "What ritual is observed," writes Nalder, p. 71, "has not yet been recorded, nor do we know at what intervals the classes are formed." "On the analogy of other tribes," he surmises that the sub-classes are instituted every four to five years. The institution of a new class "is sponsored not by the class immediately above it but by the next but one." The interest of this statement would be far greater if we knew the interval between each class. In any case it shows the same close interrelationship of all the classes, as is found among the other Nilo-Hamitic peoples, especially among the Masai in the il-piron relationship. This close interrelationship is further indicated by the fact that "from time to time," as Nalder, p. 71, writes "the warrior class is expected to give a dance for the senior class."

There is a slight indication of a Toposa moiety organisation. "It is recorded," writes Nalder, p. 71, "that the Idongo were the left wing in war and hunting, the Nyikaletho the right, but the point requires further elucidation." The analogy with the Turkana is obvious. The above mentioned Idongo and Nyikaletho are two separate age classes (anaget). This shows that, among the Toposa, the functioning of a class as a military unit was not to the exclusion of the other classes, at least of the other class immediately above.

(1) These are the words of Nalder, p. 70; "There is a hint that age-class candidates are potential poll-tax payers, perhaps 16-17 years old, so we may guess that it is on passage from the Nyikapanak to the Nyath grade (see p. 6.) that the age-class is entered." Note the irrelevance of the grade to the institution of the class.

"The Bull Classes" (Nyithapana)

The military aspect of the age-classes (anaget) introduces the subject of the relationship of these age-classes to the bull classes (nyithapana). Nalder, p. 72, states that "the exact relation between the age and bull classes is not accurately established." At the same time, he tells us that entry into a bull class "gives the members warrior status." If we compare this with the above mentioned fact of the classes functioning as military units, there should be no doubt that the so-called "bull classes" have the aspect of age units, that is to say they are subservient to the institution of the age-classes (anaget). This conclusion agrees with the findings of Nalder. On p. 72 he writes: "though verification is required, there are grounds for saying that the bull classes correspond exactly to the age sub-classes." The following table, reproduced from Nalder, p. 72. indicates the "grounds" for the above statement.

AGE CLASSES	SUB-CLASSES		BULL CLASSES	
UWURNA	1.	?	Nyichuma (1)	nyang (a)
	2.	?	"	bong (b)
	3.	?	"	baling (c)
IDONGO	1.	?	"	bok (d)
	2.	?	"	ngor (e)
	3.	?	"	puth (f)
NYIKALETHO	1.	Merikopiri	"	meru (g)
	2.	Nyikurunya	Nyiwelanger	(h)
	3.	Ngoroko (not yet bulls)	-	
NYIMOR	1.	Nyitapatulai	"	
	2.	Nyikwakeleng	"	
	3.	Not yet formed.	-	

"It is specifically stated," writes Nalder, "that (b) is an Uwurua class; that (f) is Idongo; that (g) and (h) are

(1) "Nyichuma means 'the people who stab' the white bull the dappled bull, etc.

Nyikaletso."

Now, at p. 70, we are told by Nalder that "age classes are of two kinds, the age class proper and the "bull class" which in due course absorb them." (1) The above table seems to show that this statement is not correct. Indeed, in the table the bull classes are directly related to the sub-classes and not to the age-classes, so that it would appear that the bull classes 'absorb' the sub classes and not the age classes. As a matter of fact the class-names are used by Nalder in connection with the military activity of the age-classes, an activity which, as appears, is proper of the class members when they have been initiated as a bull class.

At the same time it is observed that the class name, such as, for instance, Nyimor, is used before the bull classes are initiated.

It would be possible, on the analogy with other peoples, to explain this fact by stating that the name is used in anticipation of the final institution of the age-class proper. The solution of the problem, however, is conditional upon more information. Only when the interval between the institution of each age-class, and the effect of the institution of a bull class upon the age-class proper, are known will it be possible to draw such a conclusion.

Capt. King, reported by Nalder, p. 72-73, has collected some evidence on the institution of the bull classes. The matter is decided by the elders of the class next but one (above) in seniority, who act as sponsors of the candidates.(2)

At first, a collective ceremony is performed at Kwoto in the Akalokidie section, where a sacred stone, believed to have

(1) The underlining is mine.

(2) Nalder, p. 72.

been carried from Karamoja by the first migrating Toposa, is preserved as "a centre of Topotha ritual." (1) Every section is represented by several elders and by "deputies" of the very senior who are unable to make the journey. A bull is sacrificed, and the name of the new class, "corresponding to the bull sacrificed, is thus conferred, e.g. Nyichumangole, the bull with the white blaze." "It is possible," states Capt. King, "that the bull is burned in a fire kindled by the senior fire-maker." (2)

Then "the elders disperse and the class to be initiated is called up, in all sections, on the same day. They are lined up by the elders according to the physique and character, those of poor physique and bad character being placed at the end. A bull conforming in character to the clan-name is brought and a spear - known ever after as the spear of the clan name - is given to the candidate at the head of the line, who steps forward and stabs the bull lightly without looking at it. Withdrawing the spear he passes it, looking over his right shoulder, to the candidate next behind him who does likewise, and so on. The bull usually dies on the tenth and fifteenth stab, and those who have been lucky enough to stab it while it was still alive are recognised as the elders of the class. The remaining neophytes stab the carcass in turn. The candidates then have to 'run the gauntlet' down a lane of the elder class, e.g. in 1930 the Uwurna, who beat them with switches. The sacrificed bull is then cut up and the new class have to throw the limbs into a fire, probably kindled by a sacred fire maker."

Although minor discrepancies are evident, this second part of the initiation ceremony is obviously analogous to the same ceremony of the Turkana.

(1) Nalder, p. 66.

(2) Cp. the same custom at the end of similar sacrifices among the Masai and the Nandi-Suk.

It would be of great interest to know the exact relationship between the first collective ceremony performed at Kwoto and all the other ceremonies in the sections. It is my opinion that these last ceremonies should be considered as individual initiation, and the first collective ceremony as an opening ceremony. But, of course, this is just an opinion and more evidence is badly needed on this point also.

From the above account we can deduce with certainty that, the principle of the internal structure of the bull-class (age unit?), and very probably of the age-class, is the seniority status. The first ones to stab the initiation bull are the senior members and also the leaders of their own class. This is the reason why the elders select them from among the candidates and put them first in the line.

It is also of importance to note that it is the task of the elders to appoint the leaders of a new class.

However poor and incomplete our information on the Toposa, it provides sufficient evidence to show that the age-classes served a social and military purpose, and that their internal structure was primarily based on the seniority principle.

It may be of some interest to reproduce here the full list of age-classes (anaget) as reported by Nalder, p. 70-71.

1. Nithiokop. Led migration from Karamoja.
2. Nyikiror. All died at Liyoro.
3. Nyirin.
4. Nyipuwat.
5. Nyikorinyang.
6. Nyibero.
7. Nyipei.
8. Nyigio.
9. Nyibukoi. Started the movement from Liyoro.
10. Nyimor (a stone). Only three alive in 1934.
11. Uwurna (horns of a bull growing naturally). Now old men.
12. Idongo (bull's penis). Elderly men.
13. Nyikaletho (ostrich). Subdivided into -

(a) Merikopiri. Existing in 1922 (Mr. Driberg's reports).

(b) Nyikurunya.

(c) Ngoroko. Not yet admitted to bull class.

14. Nyimor - (a) Nyitapatulia. Not yet admitted to bull class.

(b) Nikwakeleng. " " " " "

(c) Not yet formed.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE SYSTEM OF THE TESO

I

Most of the Teso live in the Teso District, Eastern Province, Uganda. A section, known as the Itesyo or Wamia, lives in the North Nyanza and Trans Nzola Districts, Nyanza Province, Kenya Colony. The total Teso population in Uganda is of 396,784; in Kenya it numbers 44,894, (1948 census).

There is a surprising dearth of literature on the Teso. A few odd pages of Roscoe's "The Northern Bantu" deal, very summarily with their social organisation. This has been studied recently by A.C.A. Wright in a paper in the Uganda Journal, 1942, p. 57-80.

The Teso have been greatly influenced by the neighbouring Ganda who invaded Tesoland at the end of the 19th century. Since that time the Teso, who were predominantly a pastoral people, have turned more and more to agriculture, but cattle interest is still a paramount feature of their economy as is shown by the fact that the Teso District of the Eastern Province "supplies a considerable proportion of the cattle available in the Protectorate markets." (1)

The country is administratively divided into provinces or saza, districts or gombolola and sub-districts or muluka, pl. miruka. These terms are Ganda, and they, as well as the type of territorial divisions they stand for, have been introduced by the Ganda invaders. The Ganda under their leader and general Kakunguru (2) imposed their own officers as chiefs of the Teso

(1) Hailey, p. 25.

(2) On Kakunguru see Thomas, p. 132-134.

administrative divisions, and when the British took over from the Ganda they accepted the established change. In 1927, however the Ganda officers were replaced by local tribesmen, and in 1935 other modifications were introduced allowing for the election of the miruka's headmen by the taxpayers: this system conforms better with the old political system and outlook of the Teso.

In his recent paper Wright has tried to reconstruct the old Teso political system. A most difficult task, for the impact of the Ganda has been very great and studiously imposed. The initiation ceremonies, for instance, "which were at one time the chief bond in local life" were directly suppressed by the Ganda. (Wright, p. 62).

In the old system, states Wright, p. 68, "no tribal unity existed." The country was divided into a number of territorial sections, imutanganio, which may still be recognised, though they are in abeyance under the present administrative system. F. Schut, quoted by Wright, p. 59, has made a list of six old territorial sections: 1. Ingoratok, people inhabiting Kumi and Ngore. 2. Ikokolemu or Isolato, people of Sorok. 3. Isera, people of Kasilo, Serere and north of Soroti. 4. Ikidea, people of Bukidea and Pallisa. 5. Ivatekei, people of Tororo. 6. Iteso, people of Usuku.

Dundas, p. 62, writing of the Wamia, states that they were divided into four sections: 1. Etanya, living in Agnveta. 2. Ikarubuko, living in Kollain. 3. Kawgawei, living in Mwalie. 4. Ikarubuko, living in Kabell.

These sections were generally distinguished by differences of dialect, and for this reason they were also called inerisinei from ainar - to speak. (Wright, p. 66).

A number of "initiating groups" called etem, pl. itemuan made up the territorial sections. The etem unit is very important for the Teso social organisation. Etem means (domestic) "hearth," and it refers to the (fire)-centre where members of

the same age-group assembled for ceremonial performances and other social activities. The etem reflected the structure of the age-groups which, as we shall see, (p.) were based on a moiety system. Every new age-group could establish its own etem. The actual way in which this was done is rather significant for our analysis of the age-system. "A whole group of young men" already married, writes Wright, p. 66, would become restless and suffer no longer the authority of the elders (and the presence of their mothers-in-law, whose avoidance the Teso observe to a marked degree), and, therefore, they "would move off en bloc and found a new village." There is nothing, however, to suggest that the etem, though started by an age-group as such, can be compared to the Nyakyusa type of age-villages.

Like all other Nilo-Hamites, the Teso are organised also in a clan system.⁽¹⁾ Wright states, p. 63, that the clan unit, ateker, "is not, nor ever has been, a social group of any political importance among the Teso." He says also that the "small lineage", ekek, pl. ikekia, or extended family is the only unit of the clan system having a political function.⁽²⁾

Roscoe, p. 260, describes as follows the jural system of the Teso: "there are six principal chiefs who claim to be the owners of the land, and each of whom has a large tract of country which he governs through sub-chiefs. The people of a sub-district appeal to the principal chief for justice when they are dissatisfied with the ruling of a sub-chief, or when they desire to have a case tried and the person accused belongs to another sub-chief over whom their own sub-chief exercises no

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- (1) Dundas listed 25 exogamous and patrilineal clans, agetegirri, for the Teso of Kenya. Roscoe numbered 11 for those of Uganda.
- (2) The "small lineage", adds Wright, "is situated in one area and amounting but rarely to more than a score of tax paying males." The editor of the U.J. states in a footnote to the passage quoted that Wright's statement is based "on information now out of date." Perhaps this refers to the modification introduced recently in the administrative system of the Teso to put more stress on the local elements. The information of Wright, however, is consonant with that for the other Nilo-Hamites where the clan system has a very limited political significance.

control." It is evident that the system described here is based entirely on the administrative organisation imposed on the Teso by the Ganda. Wright's study reveals that in the old system the authority was distributed among members of the age-classes. Wright speaks generically of the "elders", but the way a new etem can be started shows how the junior initiates may become dissatisfied with the elders' authority, in which case they have sufficient power to cut themselves off from the "elders" and start a new etem of their own.

II

Wright, p 66-67, describes two types of initiation: the eigworone which he calls initiation into manhood, and the espan, which he calls the initiation into elderhood. At present the eigworone is remembered only in the western part of Tesoland "among the Isera folk," the Ingoratok and the Inkokolemu; the esapan is still recollected among the Iteso of Usuku, the Ikidea and Tororo.

Wright correlates the two initiations which, in his opinion, represent two successive stages - manhood and elderhood - of the same system. He also suggests that the two initiations were linked together in the same way as the Topotha "age-class" - amaget - is linked to the "bull-class" - nyithapan. Unfortunately our knowledge of the Topotha age system is very vague, and there is no possibility of testing the suggestion made by Wright. We have tried to follow the line he indicates, but the evidence produced by our authority has not proved sufficient to support his opinion, nor to give any satisfactory answer to the problem.

The Eigworone - Initiation into Manhood.

Wright's description of the eigworone is based on the age-categories of the Teso as he recorded them. It is, therefore, necessary to reproduce here the list of these categories, while, however, stressing our opinion on the generic value of such groupings, as expressed in the introduction to this work.

The age-categories of the Teso (called by Wright "age-grades" - atyakatyaka) are as follows:

					AGE
"IMOKERU	-	babe for a period of roughly 2 years i.e. up to			2
Ikoku	-	child	"	4	" 6
Elepat	-	boy	"	8	" 14.

At about this period puberty (alokonam) occurs.

Etumunan	-	youth for a period of roughly 4 years i.e. up to			18
Esapat	-	young man	"	8	" 26
Ekilokit	-	full grown man	"	16	" 42
Apolon	-	elder	"	24	" 66
Emojong	-	old man up until death."			

(See Wright, p. 70-71).

The time for the new initiation was fixed by the elders of the etem or initiation centre. Each centre acted more or less independently of the others. The candidates "ready and wanting to be recognised as men," (1) took the first step towards initiation. "Some of them would bring beer to a "full-grown man of the age-set next above that most recently initiated and he would become their sponsor, to the elders of the etem that it was time a new initiation was held," (2) All those interested in initiation were informed, and finally the time and the place would be chosen.

Initiation took four days.

On the first day "the groups from all different atekerin came in and split up into their various age-sets, the boys then being chosen," (3)

The arrangement of "various age-sets" was very probably made in order of seniority. It is important to note the implication of such an arrangement, which shows quite clearly that one of the main functions on the Teso age system was the co-ordination and organisation of social life.

The most noticeable feature of the arrangement of various age-sets was their disposition according to the moiety system of the Teso. All Teso initiates (at least according to the eigworone initiation) were divided into two moieties (ewai, pl. iwoye) (4) the left (kediany) and the right moiety (teken). As will be seen below, the two moieties were so formed as to be opposite to one another in terms of seniority. The moiety denomination (left and right) "indicates their relative position

(1) Wright, p. 68.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Wright, p. 71. The presence of "all different atekerin" (clans) at initiation very probably has no other value than showing that the clans were not territorially defined, but scattered all over the country.

(4) Wright, p. 68, calls the Moieties "sides". Cp. the terminology used for the Masai age units.

at the time of initiation in the great cattle kraal (aujo." (1)
 The choosing of the boys for initiation, as referred to above, implied a ritual rivalry between the last two age-units. Such rivalry was expressed in a sprightly fight. "On the second day various fertility rites were carried out connected with the removal of parasites (ekurut) and fungi (acii) from the crops by sympathetic magic."

"On the third day, a ceremonial feast of slaughtered cattle, goats and chickens was provided by the boys for their elders. The boys were anointed with the chyme to bring them good luck. During the whole course of the ceremony the boys were not allowed to feed themselves, but were fed by their female relatives."

"After this last day they were given a fortnight's holiday, in which they feasted and ran riot." (2)

To complete the description above the following general statement made by Wright must be added. "The initiation," he writes at p. 68, "primarily consisted in social recognition of an observed fact, i.e. that certain youths had passed puberty and required adult status. It involved instruction of the youths in tribal duties by the old men; the learning of songs and some prolonged singing and dancing; the payment of a fee in the form of an animal slaughtered to provide food to the elders at the initiation feast, a mock fight in which the retiring set were driven out by the incoming age-set, and a ceremonial washing of the initiate to recognise their re-birth as men." Another effect of the éigworone initiation is military. Indeed Wright, refers to this initiation as "the warriors grade."

The first man contacted by the candidates is "a full-

(1) Wright, p. 68.

(2) Wright, p. 71.

grown man of the age-set next above that most recently initiated." A full grown man would be, according to the table of the age-categories, a man of at least 42 years. We may, therefore, assume that he is an age mate of the fathers of the candidates. Candidates are instructed by "the old men". Wright probably means by this term "the elders" who chose the time and place of initiation.

Two age sets, a retiring and an incoming set, are described as taking a special part in the eiworone initiation. They are also referred to by Wright as the senior and the junior initiating sets. So, the senior set is the retiring set, and the junior set the incoming set. A progression is, therefore, taking place in which the senior set becomes what Wright calls "full men," and the juniors become seniors while their place as juniors is taken by the fresh initiates.

The ritual fight used to take place between the retiring senior and the incoming junior set. The prize in this fight was a number of candidates "of rather indefinite age" whom the seniors wanted initiated at the first available initiation and whom the juniors wished to hold back for a subsequent ceremony. The point is that if those candidates of indefinite age were initiated at once they would be members of the same moiety as the seniors, but should the juniors prevail the disputed candidates would become members of their (the junior) moiety.

It is of interest to note the importance attached to moiety-membership. Indeed, "in neither case (those disputed candidates) will be the same age-set as the seniors or juniors. It (i.e. the rivalry) depends merely upon left and right." (1) "The fight," says Wright, p. 71, "between the seniors and juniors was of definitely ritual form. Each age-set (aturi) represented

(1) Wright, p. 71.

sing their songs (hence the name eigworone, the singers) to which those on the opposite side reply. Then the argument (ipegeta) as to the initiation of the various boys takes place, in which each side (or moiety) is represented by spokesmen (ikeraban). More songs follow with dancing and leaping and cracking of whip (edarit). This was the only weapon allowed in the contest, and though severe pain could be inflicted, dangerous wounds were rare. It may be noted that the boys initiated (the ikalomak) were not beaten at all. Their time of trial came when they had, four years later, to fight their own seniors."

From this last passage, it appears that "the candidates of rather indefinite age" were not merely the subject of dispute. Rather, they were a pretext for the juniors to show their own strength and maturity, and hence their fitness to become seniors. Their seniority status, and therefore their social reputation, were at stake.

There is no special evidence to show on what principle moiety-membership is based. But it is established alternatively at initiation, so that if at one initiation the moiety is "left", at the next one it will be "right."

Apparently, there is no relationship between the moiety membership of a man and that of his father. The order and chronological succession of the moiety arrangement show clearly that the members of the moieties stand to each other in terms of seniority.

The arrangement of the "initiating sets" at two successive initiations was as shown in the diagram below:

	LEFT	RIGHT
1st. initiation.	SENIORS	JUNIORS
	CANDIDATES	-
2nd. initiation.	JUNIORS	SENIORS
		CANDIDATES

Those who were Juniors at No 1 initiation, are seniors at No 2 initiation. Candidates are always on the side of the seniors.

Wright, at p. 68, states that "special circumstances sometimes upset this logical order." But he does not indicate any such circumstance.

"Each set," says Wright, p. 69, "had 8 years in the warrior grade (eigworone) during which for 4 years they were juniors (lukatupak or Luatupeke) and for 4 years Seniors (Lusoditi)". This suggests an interval of 4 years between every initiation. Wright, p. 68, tells us that this interval "seems to have varied in different sections of the tribe. Among the Ingoratok (people of Ngera and now mostly living in Ngora county) initiations are said to have been held every year, among the Iteso in Soroty county every four years, in Amuria every three, and so on. These differences were not significant," he continues "as no tribal unity existed, and provided each etem" kept to a consistent succession, no confusion resulted and it was of no importance what other neighbours might do." In practice, there seems to have been considerable uniformity within each big section (imutanganio) of the tribe. "Probably the difference of the interval at each initiating centre was dictated by the presence or absence of candidates for initiation, and other circumstances such as, e.g. food supply and season. Perhaps, in some centres, candidates were not available every year.

At every eigworone a new age-set was instituted, and it consisted of all the local initiates of that year. This age-set was complete in itself as well as independent and distinguished from other age-sets, at least according to Wright's information. Thus the seniors and the juniors at any eigworone initiation represent two complete age-sets.

Each age-set instituted was given a name. This was taken from a series of 8 names which was cyclically repeated. Wright calls this naming system "of retrogressive type," but it is

in fact a cyclical system similar to that of the Nandi-Suk peoples.

We reproduce below three such series from three different territorial sections. Only the first one is ordered according to the moiety system. The cross at the side of names indicates that they are found only in one section.

SECTIONS:	ISURETA (1)		ISUGORO (2)	INGORATOK (3)
MOIETY:	RIGHT	LEFT		
AGE-NAMES	1. Igolei		1. Ikosogwa	1. Ikaalen
		2. Iderini+	2. Irisai	2. Ikosolwa
	3. Irisai		3. Iputiro	3. Itomei
		4. Ikosogwa	4. Isiru+	4. Imoru
	5. Itomei		5. Igwapeto+	5. Iputiro
		6. Imoru	6. Itomei	6. Igolei
	7. Iputiro		7. Igatuni+	7. Imusingo+
		8. Ikaalen	8. Itukor+	

The age-names are called iwoye ⁽⁴⁾ But Wright states that "in practice these (the age-names) were not often alluded to as "Iwoye", but as the "names of the Generations" (aturu). ⁽⁵⁾ Unfortunately, he does not define the precise meaning of "generations" nor of "age-set", and much confusion is added to this already difficult matter by the equivocation of terminology.

(1) Wright, p. 69.

(2) Wright, p. 72. Note that Isunguro is situated in Usuku where, as we are told, only the esapan initiation is still remembered.

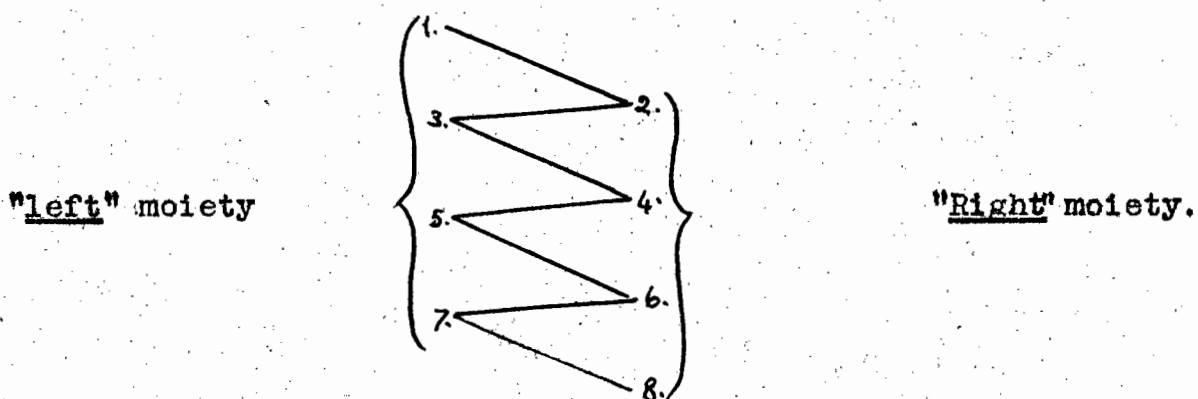
(3) l.c.

(4) Wright, p. 68, Is iwoye the plural of ewai (moieties)?

(5) Wright, p. 69.

If we take, for instance, the 'generations' (aturi) as being the same thing as the "age-sets", we must assume that they were formed at an interval of about four years. So that the whole series of names was completed in a cycle of 32 years. Therefore the whole series was repeated twice in a man's life time (about 66 years). This is gathered from the evidence we have been analysing, but the matter is far from certain.

On the basis of the above analysis we may draw the following diagram of the structure of the age-system as brought about by the eigworone initiation.



The fundamental distinction is that of seniority. But this has its external correspondence in the moiety system. So much so, that every age-unit (represented in the diagram by the corners of the zig-zag line) of one moiety stands in the same seniority (or juniority) relationship to its immediately proximate unit of the opposite moiety. Thus, if No. 1 of the "left" moiety is senior to No. 2 of the "right" moiety, No. 3, 5 and 7 are senior to No. 4, 6 and 8 respectively.

In connection with the name system Wright, p. 68, states that it was of the same "retrogressive," or cyclical type, throughout Teso District." If this is correct, we can assume that the structure corresponding to these names was also of the same type "throughout Teso District." But such a statement can hardly be reconciled with the other that the eigworone is not remembered in some sections of Tesoland.

The Espan Initiation.

We are informed by Wright, p. 69, that the initiates of the eigworone remained junior warriors for four years and then become senior warriors for another four years. They are also described as the incoming and the retiring sets who used to quarrel on the initiation of fresh candidates. We know nothing of the status and functions of the new seniors. Probably they were supposed to settle down and get married.

Now, the esapan initiation, is described by Wright as the initiation into elderhood. After what we have been told of the eigworone initiation, namely that it is the initiation to manhood, it would be a simple deduction and a logical conclusion to state that the esapan was the next institution stage of the Teso age-system, and that although to-day it is remembered only by the eastern sections of the people, it was no doubt supplementary to the eigworone initiation.

The evidence, however, which Wright offers in his description of the esapan initiations does not altogether confirm this deduction.

Under the headline "The esapan Initiation" Wright describes two types of ceremonies: one he calls "individual initiation" or "entering" in (alomar) performed whenever a boy wishes to be admitted to an age-set"; the other he calls "the ceremony of handing over the power" (aijar iwore), and this is "a great communal feast (epuchit)". (1)

Now, on the basis of Wright's own description as summarised above, his generic interpretation of the esapan initiation as "the initiation into elderhood" (2) does not seem to be entirely correct. Indeed "the individual initiation" (alomar) has all the characters of an initiation into manhood as our analysis will

(1) Wright, p. 72-73.

(2) Wright, p. 66.

presently show."

The esapan individual initiation. (Wright, p. 72-73)

This initiation called 'entering in' (alomar), is performed by the boy "who wishes to be admitted to an age-set."

The age of the candidate is not indicated.

The candidate "has to find a sponsor, with whom he goes to live, calling him "father" and his wife "mother". Here he works for a month or more doing the tiresome work of grinding millet, collecting firewood and water, and receiving instruction from the old man. This period was called "aitemio" - "the testing". At the end of it, the boy's people prepare a feast for his return which is called invamat lu bwataret asapanan. The boy enters his home through a new gap made in the hedge surrounding the homestead. As he enters the hut where beer has been prepared, his sponsor addresses him: "Go and kill elephant and lion and rhinoceros and leopard and buffalo," and he continues with other hopeful and congratulatory remarks. Then he takes a mouthful of beer and spits on him and the boy's mother gives the shrill cry of triumph. After this the boy takes a new name from the bull that has been killed and his sponsor may give him a goat.

This feast is said to be "one of the important feasts in a man's life," the other being "the handing over."

It is obvious that the alomar is a typical individual initiation. The candidate spends a period of training and segregation, after which he is made a warrior and becomes a member of an age-group. Unfortunately, we possess no information on the structure of this age-group.

This individual initiation (alomar) is said to be still performed in Usuk and Tororo. (See Wright, p. 74).

The esapan handing over (aijar iwore). (Wright, pp. 73-74)

This is the second of the "two important feasts in a man's life." "The individual initiation was a function of but secondary importance compared with the ceremony of handing over the

power (iwore)." This was "a great communal feast (epuchit)", and it was performed "once in 15-20 years."

Wright describes the ceremony as follows: "The position of dominant age-set was much coveted and it was only by the provision of much beer, a great deal of persuasion, and the payment of a bull and a goat (ibaren lu lomaret) by each of the incoming set, that the age-set of elders could eventually be induced to retire and hand over their authority to their successors...The occasion of formal handing over was a great communal feast (epuchit) which took long to prepare and lasted for several weeks as all the payment cattle were gradually slaughtered and eaten. At intervals speeches were made by the leaders of the various sets who described the achievements and wealth of his (sic) set. This was interspersed by much dancing and drinking, and probably not a few fights among the young warriors. The ceremony culminated in the handing over by the retiring age-set of their feather headdresses (achuria) to the incoming set as a sign of their new dominance." (1)

The use of such vague terminology as "dominant age-set", "incoming set", "the age-set of the elders", without better specification makes the above account difficult to interpret. The only point which seemed clear is that "the age-set of the elders" was the retiring set. But, the power from which they were induced to withdraw is no better described, and therefore the importance of the ceremony remains vague and approximate.

It would also be of great interest to know whether the interval of the handing over was structurally related to the interval of the age-units institution. In other words, was the handing over the concluding stage of an age-class, whose

(1) At this point Wright describes a meeting of the Topotha age-group which he attended. It was, however, not a handing over ceremony. In any case, as we remarked before, our knowledge of the Topotha age-system is so vague and poor that the comparison is of no practical use.

structure and nature at present escape us? The fact that, as we are told, the age-units were instituted at different initiation centres and the handing over was "a great communal feast" (which suggests a gathering from different initiation centres) seems to indicate that it was a concluding stage. No age-name is mentioned in relation to the esapan handing over.

III

The function of the Teso age system.

There is no doubt that Teso age-organisation played an important role in social life. This is evident from the organisation of feasts, such as initiation (particularly the eigworone) and from the way in which new initiation centres were established (etem pl. itemuan).

"When the area it (i.e. the etem) occupied grew overcrowded, fission took place not by clan or lineage, but by division of the generations (autir, pl. ituria). A whole group of young men, jealous of the control which their elders held over them, and often inconvenienced by the close proximity of their mothers-in-law, would move off en bloc and found a new village or group of hamlets at a distance. This would in time grow to form a new "etem", out of what had once been merely an age set." (1)

In conclusion we may say that Teso-age-system had both a social and a military function.

A rather interesting subject is introduced by Wright at the end of his paper on Teso Social Organisation. This is the magic or ritual power proper of the age-units. "Under the age-set system," states Wright, p. 74, "the whole sphere of natural existence was divided up into "categories", which were equivalent to the 'powers' of the age-sets. (2) Thus, for instance, some

(1) Wright, p. 66.

(2) It appears that "the powers of the age-sets" referred to by Wright in the above passage have no connection with the power of the so-called "class in power."

matter had any concern with fishing, or rainmaking, it was the duty of the floods (Ikaalen) age-set to carry out the necessary ritual actions to right the balance of nature. Similarly if it was to do with fire or forests it was the Elephants (Itomei), or if cattle then the Hawks (Igolei) took control."

We reproduce here a list of age-unit names with the underlying principle of their "ritual power." The list is the same as the one reported on p. 180 as list (1).

1. Igolei - Hawks; underlying principle - wealth stockowning.
2. Iderim - Bush bucks. The principle is not clear; perhaps foretelling the future and a certain maleficent influence.
3. Irisai - Leopards - 'plunder'.
4. Ikosogwa - Buffaloes: division of times, seasons and apportioning the land.
5. Itomi - Elephants - strength and wisdom; power over fire, iron and wood.
6. Imoru - Rocks - control of the supply of food.
7. Iputiro - Warthogs - fertility and multiplication medicine
8. Ikaalen - Floods - rain and water on the earth.

The above list was obtained by Wright from Mr. Eriapulo Engul, the chief of Soroti province. A second list was supplied by Mr. Isaya Otai ex provincial Chief (the same as list (3) at p. 180), but it differs considerably from the other list. (1)

It is not possible to enter into an analysis of this very interesting subject, because the evidence is still very vague and generic. The only conclusion we may possibly draw, is that the Teso age-system, besides performing a social and military function, extended into the ritual or magic sphere of activities.

Wright indicates in the song subjects of the Turkana moieties as reported by Emley a parallel with the ritual powers of Teso age-units. Certainly, the external and superficial similarity of the subjects is apparent. But Wright goes farther and states: "Naturally enough the song subjects (of the Turkana) of each class are within the powers of magical control of the members of that class; much of that magical control being wielded through

(1) See Wright, pp. 74-78.

appropriate ritual song." (1) Emley and Gulliver did not notice anything of this kind, but were satisfied by the more ornamental and decorative importance of the song subjects and other special decorations. (2)

On this point of the Teso and Turkana relationship Wright, p. 72 (II), further states: "Emley distinguishes two types of initiation among the Turkana - 1) The entry of a youth into "Ngaban" with spearing of the bull under the direction of a friendly elder who acts as a ritual father. 2) The entry into a "decoration class" Athapanitha (plur. of Athapanu decoration)."

As clearly established now by Gulliver's recent survey, the interpretation of the Turkana age-system offered by Emley and accepted by Wright is not accurate. The Turkana age-classes are not of two different types. The two age units which make up the Turkana age class are instituted through the ceremonial spearing of the bull, by which the candidates obtain admission to what Emley calls, as Wright correctly reports, 'decoration classes'. The 'Ngabana', although styled by Emley as 'class', is actually one of the four age categories into which he divides all the Turkana. As we explained at the beginning of this study, it seems to us that the age categories are to be regarded as broad, general divisions which have no relation to the structure of the age system.

As far as the age system of the Teso and of the Turkana is concerned, the only possible relationship that may be seen at the present state of our knowledge, is the relationship between the Teso esapan and the Turkana athapanu. Both terms refer to those special decorations and songs which form the

(1) Wright, p. 78.

(2) Cf. the chapter on the Turkana, p. 139-140.

regalia of the classes, and also indicate the whole age-system as instituted by the corresponding initiation ceremonies.

As we said, in the case of the Turkana there is no evidence for the connection of the class decorations and songs with the special ritual powers described by Wright, and the similarity of the Turkana and the Teso on this point remains at present a matter of conjecture.

On the other hand, it seems to us that the age-system of the Nilotic Lango ⁽¹⁾ described by J.H.Driberg, and recently analysed in the light of some aspects of their culture by T.T.S. Hayley, offers some analogies with the Teso age-system. We shall not engage here upon an analysis of the Lango system; that lies beyond our present scope. We mention only a few points which help to illustrate our subject. ⁽²⁾

The institution of the Lango age-sets was brought about by the performance of the ewor ceremony. ⁽³⁾ The term ewor, which according to Driberg, p. 243, n.1., derives from woro - to honour to reverence, seems to be related to the Teso eigworone.

Each age set was given a name taken from a cyclical series of four names. With these other names were "associated," that is to say reserved as proper to the corresponding set. The following are the names in question:

-
- (1) The Nilotic Lango are to be distinguished from the Nilo-Hamatic Lango, for whom see p. 317. The Nilotic Lango speak a language of the Lwo Language group. Bryan, p. 16, writes as follows of the Nilotic Lango: "The tribal name LANGO is of Nilo-Hamitic origin, and these peoples seem to have been formerly known as LANGODYANG (Driberg, the Lango). When they moved to their present habitat they adopted a dialect of ACOLI which they call LANGO, and which is now considered as a separate language, but still retains many Nilo-Hamitic words (especially the names of plants, which are almost identical with TESO).
 - (2) For the whole subject Cfr. Driberg, p. 243-248, and Hayley pp. 66-73.
 - (3) Among the Lango the initiation ceremonies were discouraged in the same way as among the Teso, namely by the Ganda agents of the Administration. Cfr. Hayley, p. 71.

1. AMORUNG - rhinoceres. Associated name: alop-Harte-beest.
2. LYECH - elephant. Associated names - ekori - giraffe aputiro-kul-wart-hog ektu - zebra
3. KWAICH - Leopard. Associated names - ekwaro - serval ogwang - merekat.
4. JOBI - buffalo. Associated names - engate - lion apoli - waterbuck.

The age-sets are alternately related, the Amorung to the Kwaich, the Lyech to the Jobi. The two related sets had special subject songs in common, and their relationship was also expressed in terms of classificatory kinship. Thus, "the jobi call the lyech their fathers (papogi) and the kwaich call the amorung theirs." (1)

The interval between each ewor performance is said to have been five years. But Driberg adds that the cyclical series of the age names was completed every 21 years in such a way that, between the institution of the Amorung Lyech, Lyech-Kwaich, Kwaich-Jobi, the interval observed was four years, while between Jobi-Amorung the interval was nine years.

The age-set newly initiated is said by Driberg to hold the power of performing the rain festivals for the next four years, that is, for the interval preceding the institution of the next age-set. The rain festivals, in fact, "are said to belong to that group." "The jobi" continues Driberg, "are said to ripen the grain, and accordingly their influence persists longer," namely for nine years.

This kind of power seems to have much in common with the ritual powers of the Teso age-classes as described by Wright. Although the whole subject needs a more thorough investigation in the field, we may safely assume that the Lango ewor and the Teso eigworone were somewhat related. Driberg and Hayley expressed the opinion that the age-system and the rain dance

(1) Driberg, p. 244. It is therefore possible to see a basic moiety system in this special relationship of the Lango age-sets. Jeffreys, p. 160-161, has indeed considered the Lango age-classes as another form of dual organisation.

of the Lango "were importations from the Hamites. They came from the Hamiticised Tribes, such as the Teso and Kumam,⁽¹⁾ and "when the (ewor) ceremonies were due to be performed news reached the Lango from that direction."

The above opinion at the present stage of our knowledge is still to be regarded as a mere assumption.

As a result of the above analysis we may sum up the following facts.

- a) Among the Teso two different initiation ceremonies, the eigworone and the esapan, were performed for the institution of the age groups. The relationship between these two ceremonies is not clear, and this uncertainty constitutes the major problem in connection with the Teso age-system.
- b) The eigworone initiation seems to be related to the Lango ewor, and this possibility is supported by the fact that the eigworone is remembered only by the western sections of the Teso, that is to say by the sections bordering the Lango.
- c) The esapan, on the other hand, seems to be akin to the Turkana athapanu, and, here again, the possibility is strengthened by the geographical position of those sections which remember the esapan.
- d) The eigworone is not recorded among any of the other Nilo-Hamitic peoples that we have examined.
- e) It seems, therefore, very probable that the eigworone and the esapan come from two different patterns of initiation ceremonies. The assumed borrowing of the ewor by the Lango from "the Teso or other Hamiticised Tribes" seems very debatable

(1) The Kumam, who call themselves Ikololemm or Alemu, in Kaberamaido County, between the Lango and the Teso, are of Teso origin, and speak a language which is akin both to Lango and to Teso. Tucker, p. 32.

Indeed it seems more likely that the Teso have borrowed their eigworone from the ewor of the Lango, then vice versa. As we have said time and again, this and the whole problem of the Teso age-system needs more evidence for a final solution.

CHAPTER V

THE LOTUHO AGE - SYSTEM

I

The Lotuho live in the Torit District Equatorio Province southern Sudan, on the eastern bank of the White Nile. The population numbers about 14,000. ⁽¹⁾

The Lotuho are "in an eminent way shepherds and cultivators." The western part of Lotuholand is said to be almost without stock, owing to the tze-tze fly. ⁽²⁾

The land is divided into a number of territorial sections. These are also rain-areas which owe allegiance to a single rain maker (xobu, pl. xobok). Generally a section is a continuous portion of land, but there are cases in which some parts of a section, recognising the authority of a single rain maker are cut off from the main portion of the section. ~~Gfr. map. Lokila and Loceloli (p. 294).~~ The territorial section is also a ceremonial (rain) and political unit.

Every section includes a number of highly organized villages. Somerset, quoted by Seligman, describes the internal organization of Lotuho villages as follows:

(1) This figure is obtained from Bryan-Tucker, p. 29

(2) Molinaro quoted by W. Schmidt, p. 494.

They "are divided into quarters (nanganit) consisting of some 50-100 houses. Each quarter has a special name, and it contains a men's meeting-place (namangat)⁽¹⁾ a drum house (nadupa) and a dancing ground (napwera). In addition there is a central dancing ground for the whole village, and the quarter in which it is situated is called in most villages pwera. The general dancing ground and drum house are also the dancing ground and drum house of the pwera quarter, which is usually the most important. The name of the quarter is also applied to the meeting-place, drum house, and dancing ground.

"In the middle of each dancing ground are the ebony drum poles, to which great sanctity is attached. When they are set up there is a ceremony."⁽²⁾

In every village quarter there is generally a high platform tower (nolobele) of six or eight stages. The building of this structure is closely connected with the initiation ceremonies.⁽³⁾

The drum house (nadupa) is the centre of the village social life.⁽⁴⁾ It is "comparable" states Seligman, "to the club or man house of other savage peoples."⁽⁵⁾ The big drums (edong) are kept in this house, and are sounded for the main social events.⁽⁶⁾ Admission to the drum-house requires a special initiation.

(1) This term is applied by Mr. Arber to the quarters or "sections" of the village.

(2) Seligman (b) p.313. The word "pwera" is by others spelled "pwara".

(3) Seligman (b) p.323-24; cf. also p.306-7; Malder p.97.

(4) Malder p.88

(5) Seligman p.313.

(6) Malder, p.95-96. Somerset p. 158, states "unmarried men and strangers sleep in these houses."

New villages may be formed by migrating colonies from other villages. Generally these are allegiance to their ancestral place and acknowledge the ritual authority of the head of the mother-village. We do not know how and when new villages may reach a status of complete independence. Neither do we have information about the nature and structure of the first migrating colonies nor can we say whether or not the formation of new villages takes place on the same pattern as the Toto otan.

(1) There are only five or six clans (zang) among the Lotuho. These are also totemic, and the Lotuho believe that the soul of a deceased man is transferred into an animal totem.

At the present no definite relationship between clan and territory organization seems to exist, although there are areas where members of a single clan prevail, e.g. the Lotuho clan in the Isarra maia section.

It is a mark of distinction among its members. From this point of view the most important clan is the Iga o clan, whose mythical ancestor Isang is said to have been the first rain maker. The Iga o clan is also the most numerous, and it is divided into three branches, which are not considered as separate clans, and are bound by the same regulation of exogamy.

The rain-maker is generally described as holding the position of a chief. The evidence shows clearly that he is rarely a ritual leader, by reason of his (or her) personality, who may possess and exert political influence. (Women as well as men may be rain-makers.)
(8)

(1) See report, p. 156; Lotuho, (b) p. 520; Elder p. 36 and 38

(8) See report, p. 156, Lotuho (b) p. 520; Elder p. 38. In Lotuho initiation the rain maker took no part.

The same applies to the other Lotuho 'functionaries' such as 'the father of the village' (Lamonyemiji) and 'the father of the land' (Lamonye-fau). The former is also referred to as the big man (Laboloni) or 'father of the people' (monye wati). He or his descendants were the first to settle in the place, and consequently he is considered to be the head of the village. When a new village has been founded by another village, the authority of the father of the founder village (Lamonyemiji) is still accepted and in the new village the custodian or protector of the drums (Monye-dupa) acts as chief official.

The Lamonyemiji "magics the village and the crops for prosperity" (Seligman). Indeed, he is the local representative and the assistant of the rain-maker.⁽¹⁾ The 'father of the land' (Lamonyefau) is the descendant, usually direct, of the cultivator. He is paid dues by those who cultivate his land, and he acts as an arbiter in disputes over the land. The ceremonies connected with the cultivation are performed by him. Both the Lamonyemiji and the Lamonyefau may be male or female.

Political authority rests in the hands of the elders. "Ordinary matters" writes Seligman, "of the tribal lore and custom are discussed and settled by the elders, extraordinary affairs are brought before a general assembly of male adults."⁽²⁾ It is not certain whether Seligman here refers to the political organisation of the village or of the territorial section. Probably in either, the village and the section, there is such a council of elders.

We are not well informed about any Lotuho social institutions having connection with their cattle. It is, therefore, of interest to quote the following information from Seligman:

"Formerly when cattle was plentiful most men also had a bullock-name, i.e. were known by the name, usually descriptive, of a favourite beast."⁽³⁾ This reminds us of the custom of the Turkana and Nandi-Suk.

(1) Naldeman p.89-90 p.323

(2) Seligman (b) p.309-10

(3) .. (b) p.322

II

The Lotuho age system is very closely related to their territorial organisation. The age-sets have indeed become so localised and parochial that no apparent class unity is to be found throughout Lotuholand. This does not mean that the age system differs from one section to another but that it works independently in each section,

A coincidence of the age-sets throughout Lotuholand is indicated by Halder on the basis of the age-categories. According to Halder there are three categories: (a) the "old man" (Lamauwak) who are not younger than 43 years of age when they "retire"; (b) the "protectors of the village" (Monyemiji) the initiates "in power"; (c) "the boys behind" (Laduri Khorwong) i.e. the supporting rank in war", who are the candidates for initiation.⁽¹⁾

Now Halder, p.92, writes, "the initiation ceremonies (in the territorial sections) coincide so closely, that the monyemiji are of approximately the same age throughout Latuka (Lotuholand) and would constitution a single grade and class if they could be brought to unite." (my underlining.).

The following "preliminary simplification" of Lotuho age-system is offered by Halder, p. 91-92 and it may usefully be

(1) Halder, p.92 In connection with this list of age-categories we wish to stress the fact that while the list is an over simplification as may be seen by Driberg's list quoted below, we accept it only as a working basis for further discussion. Driberg's list is quoted by Seligman (b) p.322 as follows:
Leidoli (pl. leidoe) suckling;
Leto (pl. longiyaiyai) child;
Leto Khorwong (pl. aduri khorwong) youth; khorwong, literally "back" i.e. the group which is behind the monyemiji. We found that aduri khorwong were commonly spoken of as laduri Olo Monyemiji (pl. monyemiji) young man;
Leita (pl. leitale) middle-aged;
Lamarwani (pl. lamarwakh) - old man."

used as an introduction to our analysis. "Each individual," states Haldor, "is initiated three times. First, on attaining manhood, he is initiated as a member of his village; initiation is yearly and each yearly class has its own name. After four years approximately the following, four classes are initiated as one class by the Lamonyenlji and are given a collective name by himself - they are also given drum house names corresponding to different namangat (quarters) into which the village is divided, each namangat having its own drum-house (madupa). Meanwhile the Lamonyenlji of other communities are doing the same, and when four of these village classes are complete, i.e. after about sixteen years, all those in the same area (territorial section) are initiated as a grade, generally by the same namangat, and take over the country from the predecessor."

Following our own terminology we shall call the first yearly cot, "the age sub-unit"; the second four yearly cot, "the age-unit"; and the final sixteen-yearly cot "the age-class."

The Age Sub-Unit

The first kind of initiation a Kotoko boy is expected to undergo is the admission "to a share in the namangat." The namangat is the men's meeting place in every village-quarter. The term may also refer to the village quarter as a whole. To have a share in the namangat means to have a share in the social life of the place. "Each namangat", writes Haldor, p. 65, "is a focus of considerable team-spirit and each one has its own especial dance step, drum beat, trumpet rhythm, and dance decor."

Initiation is performed "simply" (Haldor) and it takes the form of initiation into the drum-house (madupa) of the namangat.

The ceremony takes place after the candidate has married. Generally a young man marries when he is about 25-30 years of age. (1) The performance is started by the Lamonyenlji who

(1) Haldor, p. 204.

sprinkles the candidate and the roof of the drum-house four times with the blood of a sacrificed goat, the goat having been supplied by the candidate. The candidate is then introduced into the drum-house and his body is covered by the Lamonyemiji with ashes from ceremonial fire. Hide-rings, made from the skin of the animal, are bound around the candidate's wrists and knees.

"The initiate is thus a full Monyemiji (protector of the village) as far as the namangat (village quarter) is concerned, but no more." (1)

Those who have been initiated during the same year are grouped together in a special age division or sub-unit. This is given a particular name. Our authorities do not mention any ceremony for the occasion. The same course of action is repeated, for four years successively, so that four age-divisions are formed. These are related to each other in terms of seniority according to the year of their initiation. Very probably, members of the same age-unit are further distinguished in terms of seniority on the basis of the time of their individual admission to the social activity of the village, but we are not informed of this.

The following names are the names of four sub-units in Muragatika village:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Seniormost: | 1. <u>Apotir</u> - Hart-hog |
| | 2. <u>Amoka</u> - Overdrinking |
| | 3. <u>Ikarak</u> - (a woman's name) |
| Jun. Ormost: | 4. <u>Logobe</u> - Grinding stone (2) |

(1) Halder, p. 95-96. "The above account," adds Halder, "applies to the Lamonyemiji's own village. In a colony village, e.g. Labalawa or Torit, this primary initiation is presumably done by the Monyedupa" (custodian of the drums)

(2) Halder, p.93.

The Age Unit

When the four years have elapsed all the members of the sub-units under the jurisdiction of a Lamonyemiji are initiated together and grouped into a single age-unit.

The ceremony is performed by the "father of the village." (Lamonyemiji) Nalder has reproduced the account of such a ceremony as related by Mr. Arber ⁽¹⁾ For this ceremony candidates from three villages, Torit, Labalwa and Muragatika, assembled at the Muragatika general dancing-place (pwara). Muragatika was chosen because it is the mother-village; there ⁽²⁾ the ancestral place of the three villages, called Latara Lonyu is to be found. Candidates spent the night in vigil and fast. "At the first sign of dawn, the Lamonyemiji Nyong made fire with his firesticks. The chosen representatives ran to their namangat (about seventeen miles from Muragatika to Torit). The remainder sat down and were addressed by different people on their duties." A bull was sacrificed, and with his blood the Lamonyemiji sprinkled the drum-house, where the candidates had gathered four times. These then, emerged and sprinkled themselves and the ceremony was concluded by dancing. Dancing continued while the candidates returned home.

The unit is given a name, not by the Lamonyemiji but by the "Old men" who agree on it in advance.

The age-unit is not called, as a whole, by a single name, but in each village all representatives of the unit are called by a distinct name.

In the case of the ceremony described by Mr. Arber the following are the names of the unit in the three villages:

<u>KHIMA</u>	- grain, in Torit.
<u>NYONG</u>	- the <u>Lamonyemiji</u> 's own name, in Labalwa
<u>IBWAY</u>	- lazy, in Muragatika.

(1) Nalder, p. 99.

(2) Cfr. also Nalder. p. 93.

This plurality of names should not be taken as evidence of a possible plurality of the age-unit. The age-unit is a single and complete body. Indeed, it is instituted as a whole body by a single initiation ceremony, and its members, though distributed in their places of residence, are marked by the same status of seniority and are contemporaries from the structural point of view. This structural wholeness of the various groups of the age-units is also shown at the performance of the ceremony for the institution of the age-class.⁽¹⁾

Four age-units are instituted at an interval of four years.

The age-unit also takes different names at the various drum-houses.

This relationship of the drum-house groups to the age-class system is not very clear. The Ibwoy unit of Muragatika is said "to call itself" by three different names according to the three different drum-houses in the village, as follows:

in the Torok quarter the Ibwoy are called Ikhola - Heron

in the Pwara they are called Lemye - Lion, and

in the Tomugu they are known as Ibirokwan - Overthrowing.⁽²⁾

It seems that the drum-house groupings are purely parochial divisions, limited to, and reflecting, the local internal organisation of the village. They do not seem to add any distinction to the status of their members. Their social status is defined by their membership in the age-unit, and, as far as the village life and the rain-section are concerned, their status will be determined by their initiation into the age-class.

If the age-system as a whole holds good in actual practice, as seems to be the case,⁽³⁾ we may readily understand the difficulties and the amount of confusion, which confront a field

(1) Cfr. Nalder, p.101. We refer to the arrangement of the four units at the dance during the nongopira ceremony. The four units which are initiated into the age-class are distinguished as age-units, but no internal distinction between each of them is apparent.

(2) Nalder, p.93.

(3) Cfr. Nalder, p.92.

worker who, unaware of the territorial and local complications of the Lotuho age-system, tries to collect the age-names and interpret their value.⁽¹⁾

The Institution of a Lotuho Age-class.

The Lotuho age-class is a sectional division. It is the aggregation of all the age-units and sub-units, i.e., of all the initiates, into a rain-section. Every such section performs its own class-initiation ceremony (nongopira) as a whole, and works independently of other sections. The evidence shows that the ceremonies performed do not differ substantially from one section to another. In these ceremonies an important role is played by the rain-maker, and very probably it is due to his influence that the Lotuho age-system is so divided.

Nalder has reproduced a description of the class-initiation ceremony of two different sections, the Ikang and the Issara (Lowudo) rain-sections. The Lowudo ceremony took place in 1932 during the month of Lolong (late October-November); the Ikang ceremony was held at Logurn in 1933 during the same month.

For the Lowudo ceremony the following villages are mentioned "Wutarran, Bur, Bari and so on".⁽²⁾ For the Ikang ceremony four villages are named, Tirangole, Kapurire, Logurn, Lofi. Practically the whole rain section is represented.-

A preliminary event is mentioned in connection with the Ikang ceremony. At Tirangole during the month of March, i.e., some eight months before the actual ceremony (nongopira) took place, the candidates⁽³⁾ built a platform tower (notobele) in

(1) Seligman (b), p.324.

(2) Nalder, p.100.

(3) On p.97, these candidates are termed by Nalder "laduri" i.e., uninitiated boys; and on p.98 the very same candidates are called "nonyemiji", i.e., initiated. Very probably the double terminology is justified because while the candidates for the age-class are still uninitiated as far as the age-class is concerned, they are initiated as far as the age-unit is concerned. The explanation, however, requires fuller investigation.

all five quarters of the village, and celebrated the event with a dance. The erection of such towers is a privilege of the initiates, which is controlled by the rain-maker. He may give or refuse permission for their construction, but for what reasons he refuses permission, we are unable to say.

We are told of this preliminary event only for Tirangole. Probably the same thing takes place in the other villages. ⁽¹⁾

The towers constructed at Tirangole by the candidates "are not for the new class (the class of the candidates which was to be instituted during November). They may use them on sufferance, but at the conclusion of their initiation at Logurn (see below) they will hand them over to the Lamaurwak (the elders) and build themselves new ones at a different place in the namangat (village-quarter)." ⁽²⁾

The main ceremony (nongopira) consists in producing new fire by ceremonial fire-sticks and carrying it to every village and to every quarter of the village (namangat). The firesticks are twirled ceremonially, i.e., four times, in turn by the rain-maker, the Lamonyemiji of the village where the ceremony is performed and by those candidates who have been appointed (we are not told the number of candidates thus appointed, nor when they are appointed, nor by whom) to carry the new fire to the villages. Among the Lowudo the rain-maker was not present, and the ceremony was started by the Lamonyemiji. ⁽³⁾

The fire is lighted early in the morning at the first glimmer of dawn. The night before is spent in vigil and fasting. Candidates assemble from the various villages. At Logurn they gathered in the general dancing ground (pwara). At Lowudo they had collected around the house of the Lamonyemiji: "A leader called to ask if they were all present, and they sat down in a great ring round the house"; the members of the class immediately senior were also present and "sat at a distance away from the circle." During the night "the older men would come forward one by one and instruct the initiates in their duties to the village; in the protection of flocks and crops; in the art of hunting; or some would tell stories glorifying their class." ⁽⁴⁾

At Logurn this kind of instruction took place while the new fire was being carried to the villages. Those who had remained were "addressed by Ikang (the rain-maker) and other

(1) Cfr. p.97.

(2) Nalder, p.97 and p.98.

(3) On p.102 from the fact that "the lamonyemiji was a woman" and had to start the fire-making Nalder seems to imply that the central ceremony is not as important as the ceremonies held at every single village. However he should have remembered that the rain-maker may either be a man or a woman. In Lorung the rain-maker, Ikang was a woman.

(4) Nalder, p.100.

venerable people in turn on their duties as a class."⁽¹⁾

When the carriers of the fire have returned from the village a dance is held.

At Logurn it was a dance "to a four-beat on the drums and trumpets", and they "danced four times round the base of Logurn Hill. Each man had a cornstalk (nabaklala) and no spears were allowed. When the dance was completed they all left for their various villages."⁽²⁾

The Lowudo dance was more complicated and perhaps more significant.⁽³⁾ When the fire-carriers returned, all those present left the house of the Lamonyemiji and went to the dancing ground (pware) of Losito Hill. Here the candidates arranged themselves according to the four age-units, apparently in order of seniority. "The parade were sprinkled by the old men with the entrails of a sacrificed goat, whose meat was subsequently given to the old men. The new class now began a circular dance keeping their rank, while the outgoing class gathered and danced opposite them. They continued for some time, until at a signal both classes mingled and danced. Then the various namangat of both classes (i.e., the members of the two opposite classes from the same village-quarter) separated out and started off to run to their several villages." The candidates easily overtook the senior class and "arrived first in their namangat and so took possession of it."⁽⁴⁾ Seligman recorded that "in preparation for the nongopira there is a ceremonial fight between the laduri and monyoniji, in which the laduri have to show that they are the stronger - presumably the monyoniji offer no very determined resistance - both sides wearing helmets and bearing shields with sticks as their weapons."

At this stage the ceremony is continued in every quarter of the village.

At Logurn the festivity lasted for eight days. Goats were sacrificed in the drum-house (nadupa) and the initiates sprinkled with the blood. The fittings for the namangat were renewed; the building of the platform tower (polobele) and the re-thatching of the drum-house (nadupa) were, however, left for the dry weather. A general dance of all the namangat people was held.

The same proceedings took place among the Lowudo, but everything was performed during the day after the main nongopira.

As a conclusion the initiates go on a hunt. At Logurn the spoils were offered to the rain-maker Ikang; at Lowudo they were presented to the Lamonyemiji Nassara.

The age-class is given a name, apparently during the

(1) Nalder, p.98.

(2) Nalder, p.98.

(3) Probably we are better informed about the Lowudo than the Logurn ceremony, as appears from the remark with which Nalder, p.100, introduces the description of Lowudo nongopira namely, that "the account was obtained from a more reliable participant than in the case of the other ceremonies."

(4) This race is said to have taken the place of the sham fight which used to take place between the two classes and which some of the Lotuho said was discouraged by the government. Nalder, p.101.

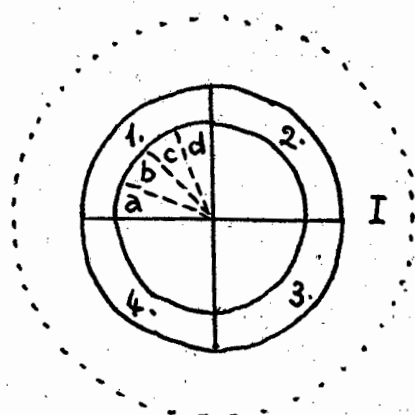
ceremony. Seemingly, the name for the class is chosen by the rain-maker, which is an exception to the general custom.⁽¹⁾ Halder gives various series of names,⁽²⁾ but only one list in which the local value of the names is indicated and this we reproduce below:

- I. AGE-CLASS NAME for territorial rain-section (Loceleli)
NABORO - sand
- II. AGE-UNIT NAMES a - for three villages under 1 Lamonyemiji
KHIMA - grain at Torrit
NYONG - Lamonyemiji name at Labalwa
IBWOY - lazy at Muragatika.
 b - Muragatika quarter Ikwoy was called
IKHULO - Heron in Torok
LEMYE - Lion in Pwara
IBIROK'AN - overthrowing in Tomugu.
- III. AGE SUB-UNIT NAMES of Ibwoy unit in Muragatika:
 SENIORMOST : APOTIR - art-hog
AMOKA - Overdrinking
IKARAK - (a woman's name)
 JUNIORMOST : LOGOBE - Grinding stone.

The above list is not complete. The names are only those of three villages, Torit, Labalwa, and Muragatika, and of the quarters of a single village, Muragatika. However, it is sufficient to show how the phenomenon takes place. The name under - I - is the age-class name valid for the whole section. The names under - II - represent only one of the four age-units which enter an age-class. This age-unit is found in the area of a single Lamonyemiji in the section. No reference is made to other Lamonyemijis' areas in the same section. Similarly, under - III - the names given are of the sub-units of the age-unit Ibwoy. The following diagram may illustrate the system. Only one set of 4 units and one set of 4 sub-units are included as in the above list of names.

(1) Cfr. Halder, p.96-97.

(2) Cfr. Halder, p.93, p.99, p.101.



I - Age-class.

1, 2, 3, 4 - age-units.

a, b, c, d - age-sub-units.

The nongopira ceremony makes the members of the age-class full initiates (monyemiji - fathers of the village). Their social status as full initiates is now accepted by the whole section to which they belong. They are often spoken of by our authorities as "the class in power", an expression which will be better understood when we analyse the function of the various classes.

In the Lowudo nongopira there is mention of "a leader" having relation to the candidates assembled for the ceremony. Unfortunately, as his functions are no better specified, it is not possible to decide what bearing he has on the internal structure of the age-class. Certainly the influence of the rain maker and of the other similar "functionaries" described by our authorities work against the emerging of any internal class leader.

All the same, the principle of seniority seems to have a more effective influence on the organisation of the age system than is brought home by our authorities. Though we are not informed to what extent this principle is valued within the sub-unit, it is clear that a sub-unit is separate and

distinguished from the next one in terms of seniority. We may assume the same kind of distinction among the four age-units which merge for the institution of the age-class. Actually, Mr. Arber's evidence confirms the assumption. He states that "it was interesting to note in the dancing at Tarangole in one section about three youths dancing rather sheepishly in the rear and not wearing any of the general finery except little round hats of parchment like wood. They were evidently final initiates to the class (age-unit) and had not yet been accepted; but they will probably be developed sufficiently for full admission by the time the class is closed in October."⁽¹⁾

Finally, let us consider the value of the nongopira for the age-class as a whole.

There is no doubt that the ceremony has the nature of a concluding ceremony. It institutes the age-class by grouping together in a single body all those members of the section who have been properly initiated and associated into the age-units and sub-units. Class-members are affected by it in that it crystallizes their number.

Unfortunately, the information on the internal structure of Lotuho class goes no farther and one cannot add much more to this.

(1) Nalder, p.98. The dance here spoken of is, apparently, the dance held at Tirangole for the inauguration of the polobele (the platform tower) in March, 1933. The Nongopira followed in October-November, 1933.

III

The Interrelation of the age classes.

It is unfortunate that Halder made use of the age-category terminology in describing the activity of Lotuho age-classes. The over-simplification of Lotuho age-categories offered by him is very probably not correct, and by attempting to make things more simple it misleads and confuses the situation. This is particularly so when we analyse the relationship between the initiates (monyemiji) and the elders (lamaurwak).

The intervals between Lotuho age-sets are respectively 1 year for the sub-units, 4 years for the units and 16 or 20 years for the age-class. These figures must not be taken as absolute. They are not. Whatever the actual position from this point of view, a relationship in terms of seniority is certainly established between all age-groups.

The elders, all called on ploc by Halder Lamaurwak, are distinguished by Briberg into Leito (pl. leitak), middleaged, and Lamarwani (pl. lamarwakh) old men. These terms refer to the age categories. It would have been of far greater interest to know how many age-classes are represented among the elderly people and what are their respective fields of activity. Indeed we are under the impression that the authority of the elders has not been well investigated. Seligman (b), p.309-310, states that "ordinary matters of tribal lore and custom are discussed and settled by the elders, extraordinary affairs are brought before a general assembly of male adults". Unfortunately he does not give a fuller description of this "general assembly of male adults". We are told by Halder, p.96, that the age-names are generally settled in advance by the elders, and also that after they have become elders they "naturally continue to exercise their rights as members of the namangat"⁽¹⁾

(1) Halder, p.97.

These statements may be taken as hints of a more effective power of the elders than appears from the first reading of the evidence. Too much emphasis is ordinarily laid on the office of the rain maker and other functionaries. Such offices are of an essentially ritual nature.

The elders are also described as taking part in military activities but in the rear. They "guard the women, children, and livestock".⁽¹⁾

The monyemiji ("protectors of the village") are so called because they form the main body of the fighting force. It is also their duty to work for the rain maker: to cultivate his field (in every village there is such a field), to build his house and to tend his flocks. This labour is done corporately by the whole class⁽²⁾ and "if one of the number fails to do so, the rest will go in a body and raid his house, taking a goat or two, ground-nuts, or beer for their own consumption". The monyemiji must also escort the rain-maker, and act as a police force, and perform the annual New Year ceremonial hunt (nalam) at which the omens for the new year are made by the rain maker.⁽³⁾ The monyemiji share the nadupa (drum-house) "with the class before them"⁽⁴⁾ i.e. with the elders. "The nadupa", writes Seligman, "appear to have been the centres of such organisation for war as formerly existed; they are still the centres at which the larger hunting parties (each nadupa usually making up its own) are arranged, and their masters are responsible for the distribution of the meat killed by their members".⁽⁵⁾ The fact of the monyemiji sharing the nadupa with the elders

(1) Seligman, p.97.

(2) Seligman (b), p.326, said that the monyemiji "do not cultivate as classes", which may probably refer to the ordinary field cultivation of each one of them.

(3) Seligman (b), p.323.

(4) Halder, p.86 and p.102-103.

(5) Halder, p.95.

demands some comment. The nadupa is the centre of the village social life. The statement, therefore, is the same as to say that the monyemi take an active part in social matters together with the elders, but, of course, they will be expected to do so with that respect and subordination which are due by juniors to their seniors. Good evidence of the extension of the seniority principle.

The office of Lamonyemi (father of the village) also seems to be hereditary, but Halder, p.90, reports a case where the monyemi chose a successor who was not the son of the deceased Lamonyemi.⁽¹⁾ It is also stated that the monyemi, who are expected to work for the rain-maker, have no such obligation towards the Lamonyemi, who is served by the Laduri.⁽²⁾ The Lamonyemi is described by Halder as the leader of the monyemi. These "can be said to be under his command in all communal activities of the village, death dances, village hunts, leopard tracking, and similar matter. He is responsible to the rain-maker to collect them fro his function and lead them to their rain duties".⁽³⁾ which all shows how the ritual authority of the Lamonyemi is extended to the leadership of the unit.

It has been indicated that the relationship of the monyemi to the class above them, i.e. the elders, is one of respect and subordination. It is the elders, let us remember, who settle ordinary matters of tribal lore and custom. The relationship of the monyemi to their class-mates is very probably one of egalitarianism not dissociated from a certain distinction of seniority about which, however, we do not know

(1) Seligman (b), p.313.

(2) Halder, p.90-91, and p.94. The monyemi may assist the laduri in their work for the Lamonyemi. But this is a matter of choice, and much depends on the Lamonyemi's popularity.

(3) Halder p.94.

more. The monyemiji of the same village vie with each other according to their quarter (namangat) in matters of decoration and prestige. "The rivalry between them (namely, the village quarters) in big villages", writes Halder, p.95, "is tremendous in these days when the Latuka finds no outlet for his spirit in war, and many recent village fights are traceable to ancient enmities inflamed by some trivial cause: as for instance recently by the misappropriation by a namangat of Torit of a particular method of wearing an ostrich feather pom-pom: and in Tarangole of a particular quick beat on the long bamboo trumpet which is normally the property of one namangat in a big village".

"The Laduri Khorwong have the hardest time; the Monyemiji remembering their own apprenticeship, train the boys by laying a variety of tasks and demands on them. They are also entitled to knock them about at dances; they eat any game that the Laduri kill; about once a month the Laduri have to produce beer for all the monyemiji of their namangat, either from grain of their own or of their fathers. The Laduri will be sent to work in the Lamonyemiji's fields and are usually loaned in a small gang to the Lamonyefau and other village notables for their own cultivation. They can expect, of course, a reward of beer for the work. Generally they have to fag for the class above them: in war they would carry provisions and look after the animals. Among themselves they ape the monyemiji and raid one another in the same way for absence from duty, but must avoid giving offence to the monyemiji who are quick to exact penalties".(1)

The function of the age system.

Contrary to the statement made by Seligman (1925 and 1932) that "at present the age-classes seem to have little social

(1) Halder, p.94-95.

significance", (1) Halder wrote that "it has become increasingly clear that they continue to play a large part in social organisation". (2) Halder refers to war as the "original stimulus" of the age system. We dispute this assumption, because, as we read the evidence, it appears that the Lotuho age system did not merely serve a military purpose, but performed a genuine social as well as political function. Dancing, and distribution of meat are purely social activities and are based on the age-system, and there is nothing to tell us that the same organisation did not obtain in the past. Discussion of political matters was the prerogative of the councils of elders and of the "general assembly of male adults", and the social life of the village was displayed within the nadupa by the elders and juniors. We may regard cultivation and all the observances of the rain-maker as a particular function of the Lotuho age-class system. The feature is foreign to all the other Nil-Hamitic peoples here analysed, as is foreign to them the strong emphasis laid upon the role of the rain-maker as a chief.

Typical, also, and peculiar to the Lotuho is the territorial division of the age-classes. The rain-sections, tied up as they are with their own class-system, developed a strong sense of individuality and corporate feeling to the exclusion and opposition of other sections. And this is the reason that such sections were, as Seligman reported, "until recent times often at enmity". (3)

(1) Seligman (a), p.17; (b), p.325.

(2) Halder, p.92 (1937).

(3) Seligman (b), p.306.

APPENDIX.

There are a small number of peoples linguistically and culturally related to the Lotuho, of whom we know very little. Only a few notes on the age system of the Lango and the Lokoya are available, and we think it useful to add them here as an appendix to the Lotuho age system. Linguistically, according to the Bryan and Tucker classification, p.30, Lango and Lokoya are dialects of the Lotuho language. Ethnographically they may be considered as tribes of the Lotuho people. The Lango live south-east of Torit on the Imatong and southern Dongotono hills. They number about 8,000. The Lokoya live north-west of Torit, and number about 2,000.

LANGO.

Nalder, p.113, refers to the Logiri section of the Lango, and states that "they have an age-class system which is, however, tribal and not local. It seems to follow the sixteen-year pattern. Entry into the warrior class is signalled by "a running the gauntlet" ceremony. The class names show definite correspondence with those of the Lidinga. They do not use the characteristic Latuka (Lotuho) helmet".

Beligman (a) offers more detailed information. He states that "the Lango have age-classes corresponding with those of the Lotuho, but there is no new fire ceremony". The initiation ceremony is performed, apparently, under the supervision of a "master" (no better defined) whose relationship to the initiate in terms of moral and material assistance lasts for life. Candidates for initiation are driven into the bush by withies. Here they spend five days of segregation living on wild honey, jungle produce and whatever animals they can kill. The time selected is the last quarter of the moon. When the moon can

no longer be seen they return to the village bringing with them wild honey and goats, the latter purloined from or lent by their relatives. A feast takes place and the members of the antecedent class eat the meat of the goats. Candidates are anointed with the stomach contents of the animals. Although it can not be ascertained from Seligman whether any instruction of candidates took place, it seems very probable that it does. He records "cases of initiation being hastened on account of bad behaviour on the part of the Newurapeth class towards the elders, or because of too much attention to girls".⁽¹⁾

The following list of class-names is reported by Seligman; unfortunately it offers no clue to the internal structure of the Lango age system.

1. Nichumamunyan - a bull is speared.
2. Lodengideng - rhinoceros.
3. Nimarayang or Natoma - elephant
4. Nibitiro or Logothobwan - buffalo
5. Nilolonga - sun.
6. Nichomin - baboon.
7. Ningatunyo - lion.
8. Newurapeth - smelly hands (the reference being to flirtation)
9. Ranyak - food. Initiated in 1916 or 1917.

there is no doubt that the Lango age system had a social as well as military importance.

Classes were distinguished in terms of seniority. We do not know any details of this distinction. But we are told that the candidates for initiation act "as the servants of the class above them, fetching their stools from their houses and setting out the feast".

In military actions "the two youngest classes would not be expected to do much actual fighting, their chief duty being to

(1) Seligman (b), p.351-352.

endeavour to drive off the cattle". "Feasts by class" are mentioned in connection with raiding activity, but cultivation is not done by the age-classes.

The Lango have the club-house (revito or naball), which "probably plays much the same part as it does among the Lokulo" (naqura - drum-house). The initiation into the club-house seems to have no connection with the age-system. It is actually performed "a month after the birth of a child, when the mother brings the child to the club-house and rubs oil on the legs on which the men sit and on the child's foot and chest, the father then brings the child there daily for some time, so that when he grows up he may be recognized as a member".

HONGA

Sollman offers no information on the Lokoya age-system, but he was given to understand "that there is a ceremony in which new fire is made, and that only initiated men may sit in the men's squatting place". (1)

Holder, p.166, tells us that "the age-class organization is highly developed. Classes seem to be formed every four or five years and the sixteen-year cycle of the Latuk has not been traced. Initiation by tooth extraction is ceremonial, each village doing its own. The extraction is done by an expert - boys and girls are done together, generally alternately, and for boys at any rate it is a definite test of courage. Class brotherhood is an exceptionally strong tie; it is on his age fellows that a man relies in the major affairs of life".

The attributes of the classes are described in terms of the grades (read: age categories). So it is said that "the grade will hunt as a unit. Each age grade has its own dancing kit, the higher grades wearing leopard skins and onerous head-dresses of black and white ostrich plumes. Strings of bells worn in a circle from ankle to thigh are a frequent feature

(1) Sollman (b) p.563.

and one class wears a cow bell strung on the breast". It is clear that the terms 'grade' and 'class' have been used indifferently, and are, therefore, equivocal.

Malder distinguishes four Lokoya age-grades, as follows:

1. boys (okelipinok), who tend the goats,
2. warriors (monyemiji), who hoe, build and fight,
3. elders (oxobolo), who talk,
4. dotards (onarwok), who merely sit.

The distinction between elders and dotards is of interest. cp. this with Lotuho age-categories, p.349.

Apparently the distribution of meat is made according to the class-system, for Maldera says that "each grade has its appropriate portion of beast". The relationship of different classes is in terms of seniority, and lower classes owe respect to senior classes. The statement that, "as the elder grade is thinned, new members are co-opted to it, the new entrant providing a beer party or killing a goat", requires further investigation, as do all the age system and other social institutions of the Lokoya.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GENERAL ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE NILO-HAMITIC AGE SYSTEMS.

I.

It has been the aim of the previous chapters to study in detail the age systems of the Nilo-Hamitic peoples. We have tried to shed light on their elements, to define their nature, and to study how they interact in framing the structure of the system they produce, by comparing the available literary sources. We shall now sum up the conclusions of the foregoing analysis, and by stressing the similarities and dissimilarities that mark all the various systems present a general synthetic description of the age systems. We shall then endeavour to discuss the fundamental principles which bring about their structure, and by which their functions are determined and maintained.

Analysis shows that the age class is the basic element of all the age-systems of the Nilo-Hamites. The formation of the age class generally takes place during a long span of time. This period is also divided into stages by the establishment of minor age groups which prepare the way for the institution of the age class. Indeed, these minor age groups are so absorbed by the class that they completely cease to exist as independent groups.

A peculiar feature of the Masai system is the clear definition of the period for the institution of the age class. The opening point is marked by the performance of the Embolosat, and the closing termination is signed by the performance of the Hgeherr proper. The class period is subdivided into two sub-periods for the formation of the minor sets. Each of the two

sub-periods is opened and closed by the performance of the Engibata and the Endungore, respectively. During the sub-periods two age units are instituted. Each unit is formed by the integration of three (sometimes four) minimal age divisions. These are not defined by any special ceremony, but their composition is limited by the seasonal period during which individual initiation is generally performed. In the same way as the minimal age divisions are subservient to the institution of the age units, these age units are subordinate to the institution of the age class. All minor sets are thus absorbed by the age class, and the age class is the only lasting group. Before the final merging of the age units occurs, the age class does not yet exist as a whole body. During this time class members are undergoing the long process of their training, and can only potentially be considered as a class. (1)

What is generally called 'the cyclical system' constitutes a conspicuous feature of the age-system of the Nandi-Suk. It is based, as known, on a fixed series of names (seven), by which the classes, owing to the fixity of the names, are nominally defined even before they are instituted. Analysis makes it certain that such a feature is structurally of no significance. It is possible for the Nandi-Suk to say that such-and-such a boy will be a member of a definite class, but obviously this is due to the fixity of the class-names. The class is viewed in its potential being, but really, till it remains nominally defined, it has no position and performs no function in the structure of the age system. (2) The insertion

(1) With regard to the Masai age system a third ceremony, the Eunoto, possesses some structural significance. It is performed during each of the two sub-periods, and at its performance a name is bestowed upon the age unit which is being formed at the time. It is now considered a 'promotion ceremony'. Probably it used to be a closing ceremony with effect on the formation of the age units. At present it does not possess such a limiting value. As a matter of fact, individual initiation may still be performed after the Eunoto. The sub-period is closed by the Endungore, the negative character of which we have noted. The Eunoto seems to be peculiar to the Masai system.

(2) The cyclical system is opposed to the linear system. According to the first, age groups are named in cycle from a

of a class into the age system takes place only through the institution process, and when this process is completed the class is structurally defined with regard to its members and functions. This potential character of the Nandi-Suk class is also a mark of the Masai class at the same stage, the only difference being that the Masai class is not nominally defined until it is actually instituted as a structural body. The class period of the Nandi-Suk age system seems to be defined at the beginning by an opening ceremony, and at the conclusion by a closing ceremony. The nature of these two ceremonies has been clearly established by analysis. Only for the Kipsigis, the best known of the Nandi-Suk, do we have details. For the other tribes we are informed that the closing ceremony, as among the Kipsigis, takes the form of a handing-over ceremony. Such a ceremony presupposes a number of the succeeding class members (those who take over) invested with structural status, and therefore it presupposes also the official opening of the period for the institution of that class.

In the Nandi-Suk system there is no age-unit, and the minimal age divisions are the only minor groups. For this reason the class period is not divided into sub-periods, as the formation of the minimal age divisions is not officially determined by the performance of any ceremony. The same absence of ceremonies for the minimal age divisions is found among the Masai. The names used for the minimal age divisions in the two

(2) (continued from previous page)

fixed series of names; according to the last, names for the age groups are derived from occasional events which occurred during the class period, or from peculiar traits of the group concerned. None of the Nilo-Hamites follows entirely either of the systems. Thus the Masai keep a fixed series of names for the minimal age divisions, and follow a linear system for the age-classes. The Nandi-Suk admit alternative names to their cyclical series, while, among them, the Kipsigis keep to a typical linear system for the minimal age divisions. The Turkana observe the linear system, but call generically the two units according to their moiety division by two fixed names. It seems to us that the difference is only of method. Where the linear system is followed, the stress is laid on the progressive character of the age system; where the cyclical system is observed, the consideration of the permanent structure of the age system, as will be explained below, prevails.

age-systems are also strikingly similar.⁽¹⁾ Generally the minimal age divisions are three but there is a tendency to disregard this number. (The Masai may have four minimal divisions). This tendency prevails among the Kipsigis. But all other tribes tend to initiate the candidates as soon as they are ready for initiation, and by disregarding the close periods multiply the minimal divisions. The Kipsigis, at present, have generally five such divisions, and they have taken to the custom of using fresh names for each of these groups and thus forgetting the old Nandi-Suk custom. The minimal age divisions are directly incorporated in the class, and this, as among the Masai, constitutes the last stage of the institution process.

The Turkana age class appears to differ greatly from the two types we have just mentioned. It remains a mental category, and it is never instituted as a whole body of associates. The initiates are grouped into two age units, and these are primarily formed on the basis of the two moieties. It is not very clear whether there is a distinction of status between the two age units as such. Kulley states that the Stones (Ngimur) are a higher unit than the Leopards (Ngirritai), but Gulliver reports that the two units are instituted at the same time. As this should not cause a differentiation in terms of seniority, if there is any distinction of status between the two units it should derive from a different principle than seniority, a principle very probably connected with the moiety system. But the two units instituted at the same season are fundamentally co-eval, and as such they are distinguished in terms of seniority from any other co-eval group of age units. This grouping together of the two contemporary age units discloses the classificatory value of the Turkana age class, and

(1) The similarity of number and names between the Masai and the Nandi-Suk minimal age divisions stresses the relationship between the two systems. The age units are not found among the Nandi-Suk. We could, then, ask whether age-units are to be considered as a special accretion of the Masai system. It has been noted that the terminology 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' suggests a relationship of the Masai age units with the moiety system. Perhaps, the influence of the moieties is responsible for the formation of the units among the Masai.

it shows how the class results from the absorption of the two units into a single classificatory group. The adjusting process by which the various local names of the age units are discarded for a single one (a process on which the Turkana are so insistent in their statements) shows how the Turkana age units are considered as the integration of all the sets of initiates formed locally during the same season or institution period.

Though the available sources are too sketchy to allow one to say anything definite of the Teso and Toposa, they provide sufficient evidence to state that the age class is the only lasting group which absorbs the minor sets.

A typical feature of the Lotuho age system is the close relationship it appears to have with the territorial organisation. The plural age divisions correspond entirely with the territorial divisions. For each of these groups there is also a distinct name. It does not appear, (though our present sources on the Lotuho are far from satisfactory), that the minor groups lose their identity to give rise to the age class. However, analysis shows that, apart from the character mentioned above, the institution process of the age-system-elements takes place among the Lotuho in a way fundamentally similar to the one followed by the other Nilo-Hamites. Minor sets are first formed in territorial sections according to a precise chronological rhythm, and then all members of a single section are grouped together into a class. This class represents the final stage of the institution process, and though it does not nullify them, results from the integration of the minor sets. The period for the institution of the class is limited by a special closing ceremony (nongopira).

It is obvious that the dissimilarities among the various Nilo-Hamitic age systems are brought about by the nature of the minor age groups and the way these interact in producing the class. The main lines of the systems, however, seem to offer

a basic similarity.

A first point of similarity is the method followed for the institution of the age class. A class is formed during a definite period by the association of minor groups set up at different stages of that period, the last stage being the class instituted as a corporate body. The class period is not arbitrarily established, but its limits are officially determined by the performance of special ceremonies.

Another point of similarity is that the minor groups are instituted as intermediate sets preparatory to the formation of the class to which they convey their own members. Generally, all minor groups have a temporary function (except in the case of the Turkana), but they tend to assume all the features and functions of the age class before this is instituted. Their members, therefore, tend to stand together and act as a corporate body. Analysis of these activities has revealed that the status of the members of the minor groups is that of trainees, and that the full significance for the structure of the age system and its functions with relation to society as a whole is only obtained by the institution of the age class. The Basai age units offer a typical instance of the phenomenon, and their tendency to act as full formed age class is the reason that their true nature of temporary groups has been so consistently missed by the field workers.

II.

The effects produced by the institution of the age class on its members disclose another aspect of the circularity of all Lilo-Laville age systems. To understand the point clearly it is essential to keep in mind the difference between the age class and the minor age groups, and the difference between all these groups and their individual members. That the members of a single age class are simultaneously initiated and formed into a class has been and is still a commonplace of the anthropological literature. Analysis shows that such a method does not obtain among the Lilo-Lavites. The initiation of class-members takes place at different times of a class period, and is performed either individually or in groups of individuals, but never occurs simultaneously for the whole class as a single body.

The distribution of the individual initiation during a class period causes distinctions among members of a class even before the class itself is finally instituted. Such a distinction is based on the difference of time at which the initiation takes place, and therefore finds expression in terms of seniority. Those who have been initiated before others are regarded as seniors, and for that reason they tend to stand together and form a distinct group marked by a sense of solidarity. The tendency has been institutionalised by the formation of the minor age groups. When the class is instituted, the minor age groups cease to exist. The class is then the sole corporate body of initiates, and for this reason no stress is laid on the differences between members based on the time of their initiation. The class period is thus no longer considered in its sub-periods but simply as a single span of time. For this

reason all class members are spoken of as, and are in fact, co-evals. No matter what their biological age is, their social age, obtained and determined by class membership, is one and equal. Their relationship and their behavior to other classes is regulated according to their status as class-members.

But though the minor age groups cease to exist, and the differences resulting from their chronological institution are not so stressed, the factual influence of those differentiations does not entirely cease. It still affects the internal relationship of class members. The basis for this relationship is always in terms of seniority. As a matter of fact, a class may be considered from two points of view. If it is considered as a whole group in relation to other classes, all its members are marked by the same degree of seniority; if, on the other hand, it is considered from the view point of the reciprocal relationship of its members, these all are marked by different degrees of seniority.

We have noted (see p. 143) how our time reckoning is foreign to the Nilo-Hamitic culture, and how carefully every generalisation on this point is to be handled. Though we fully realize all this, we find it possible to recognize a similarity in the length of class period observed by the different age systems. Thus, we may say that, broadly, a class period lasts from about 15 to 20 years; the age unit sub-period lasts from about 7 to 8 years; the minimal age division covers some 3 to 5 consecutive seasons. The importance of the class period does not really consist in its length, but in the structural value it gives to time. The rhythmical definition of class periods during which the age groups are formed influences deeply the social status of the individuals and of the society as a whole. When the institution period has been closed, the class remains somehow crystallized: no other member may be co-opted to, or initiated into, it. Its size has been limited by the structural value of time. Every class period, therefore, forms a more or less definite time-unit known by the name of the class constit-

uted during the same period. It is for this reason, and specifically for the influence of time on the organisation of social life, that class periods are used among all the Nilo-hamites as time-units for recording and recollecting past tribal events. This custom is to be regarded as typical of the Nilo-hamitic culture. It takes the place of our historical records, and apparently it answers well to the limited needs of the Nilo-hamites in this field. The concept of structural time is, in our opinion, the true theoretical foundation of the Nilo-hamitic age systems, indeed of any age-system. Structural time defines the periods for the institution of the age-groups; it defines the social age of class members it orders the interrelations of members within the class, and of the classes within the frame of the age system and the social structure as a whole. It is the differentia which distinguishes the age associations from any other social association, and provides the reason for their being called age-associations.

III.

Before we develop further the points raised by the structural value of time, let us consider the ceremonies performed in connection with the institution of the age class. Though a few dissimilarities are visible in the ceremonial patterns, what strikes the observer most is the essential similarity of the ceremonies whose performance causes the age groups to be instituted.

It has been noted how the ceremonies performed during a class period do not all produce the same effect with regard to the institution of the age class. Some establish the minor age groups, others institute the age class, while the individual initiation affects only the individual members. We may, therefore, speak of different "instituting value" with reference to the different effects brought about by the ceremonies for the institution of the age class. Among the Masai and the Nandi-Suk neither the age class nor the age units, nor even the minimal age divisions, are directly instituted by the individual initiation. The effect of this ceremony is entirely limited to the individual performer. This holds true also when the candidates are initiated in groups. The Turkana seem to differ on this point. Among them the institution of the age unit is brought about by the performance of a collective ceremony which both initiates the individual candidates and establishes the age unit as an institutionalized group. These two aspects of the ceremony are well marked off. The period of segregation that each candidate is expected to spend at his sponsor's house can be regarded as a purely individual initiation. The segregation follows that part of the ceremony which has the nature of a collective ceremony and is to be considered as the true institution ceremony of the age unit. The course of the

ceremony is analogous to the course followed by the other Nilo-Hamites who perform the individual initiation after the celebration of the opening ceremony which is always a collective ceremony. The relevant point to our present concern is the institution of the Turkana age unit resulting, not from the individual part of the ceremony, but from the collective part. Also, among the Teso no age group is established by the individual initiation. (1) Similarly the effect of the Lotuho individual initiation, by which every candidate is initiated into a village quarter (nadupa), is restricted to the candidate himself.

We may, therefore, assume that the individual initiation as such has no instituting value. Very probably this is one of the reasons why among the Nilo-Hamites the pattern of the individual initiation differs so greatly, and why such a great variation does not alter the essential similarity of their age systems. Of them all only the Masai and the Nandi-Suk practise circumcision as the individual initiation. Great stress has always been laid on this ceremony, and also it has been regarded as the true ceremony instituting the age class. Analysis puts things in a quite different perspective. Circumcision is simply an individual initiation, and has as such no instituting value. In other words, circumcision falls out of the structure of the age system. The absence of this ceremony among the other Nilo-Hamites supports this opinion. (2)

The institution of the age groups derives only and always from the performance of collective ceremonies. These are so called here because their performance institutes the age groups by aggregating all individual initiates into definite corporate bodies, and because they are performed only once by all members

(1) Among the Teso the asapan nakalomar, which forms the individual part of the asapan, is essentially a period of segregation spent at the house of the candidate's sponsor. The analogy between the Teso and Turkana is again obvious.

(2) The Nandi-Suk recall a tradition that circumcision was introduced among them by the Arabs from the north-east. The tradition obtains confirmation if tested by the so limited value of the ceremony with regard to the structure of the age system. Perhaps, also, among the Masai, circumcision is due to acculturation.

of the group instituted, or by some deputies of the group; and because they are not performed by, or upon, every single candidate. A class is the total aggregation of the candidates initiated during a class period; a unit is the total aggregation of the candidates initiated during a sub-period; a minimal age division is the total aggregation of the candidates initiated during a seasonal period. It is this collecting together all the candidates, this instituting them as a whole group, this giving them a corporate capacity, that confers upon the collective ceremonies their instituting value. (1)

(1) It may be of interest to compare what we have been discussing with the conclusions reached by R. Lowie in his comparative study of the age societies of the Plains Indians and of the Masai. He writes: "For what after all constitutes an age-group, what calls it into being as an organisation among the Plains tribes, if not the possibility of jointly buying the first dance? This is, indeed, the only way of forming a group here, just as circumcision within a definite period is the only means of integrating the Masai classes. In both cases, the method of forming a class is . . . a union of a particular group, regardless of any other, because they have societies which can be jointly entered". R. Lowie (a), p. 976; (my underlining). We must note, however, how Lowie also fell a victim to the commonplace interpretation of Masai circumcision as "the ceremony" for the institution of the age class.

IV.

We have noted how the age groups are not instituted at a sudden moment, but are formed, and grow, during a definite period. The expression 'during a definite period' may be rendered technically by the phrase 'structural time'. Time, as has been noted, obtains structural significance through the age system. We are now able to state more precisely that it is the collective ceremonies by their instituting value which determine the rhythms of structural time, and by so doing cause the age group to be instituted. The sequence of time rhythms establishes the form of the structure of the age system as stratification of classes. Every age class takes and changes its place in that stratification according to those rhythms. The seniority status of class members also follows those rhythms, for the seniority relationship between class and class, and among members of a class, depends on the position they held in the structural stratification.

We have also noted how structural time is the differentia of the age system. When we speak of the age system, and age class, etc., the term age has no other reference than to structural time in the sense defined. It has no concern with either 'generations' or the physical development of the individual person. Generation is a vague term which refers to co-evals without further specification (1) The differentiation of individuals in terms of physical development is common to all human societies. But the projection of such differentiation upon the social structure is not a common phenomenon. When-

(1) Evans-Pritchard in *The Nuer*, p. 256, defines the age system "an institution based on the succession of generations."

ever it occurs, it is not so much age as physical development which provides its *raison-d'être*. And naturally so, because physical development is primarily a differentiation between individuals considered biologically, not as members of society. Only by properly qualifying the biological concept of age, it is possible to apply it socially to groups of individuals who find their place in the structural stratification of society as groups, and to individuals as members of those groups. It is through the concept of structural time that the term 'age' takes on a full social significance, and can aptly be applied to the age system and its groups.

V.

Two typical features are constantly observed in the structure of the age systems: one is the rhythmical progression of the groups, the other is the permanence of the structural shape.⁽¹⁾ These two features are the result of two structural principles which may be called the structural progression and the structural permanence. It is interesting to note how those two principles seem to stand in direct opposition to each other, but how their joint operation does not produce conflict: on the contrary, it brings about the structure of the age system. We shall now analyse how this happens.

Structural progression is but an aspect of structural time. Class periods open and close rhythmically; candidates are initiated and incorporated into the age classes; and thus the age system runs its continuous course. Every member within the class, and every group within the class, and every class within the system has his, or its, own position. Such a position gives them a status: it is in fact their structural status. Owing to that status, individual members obtain prestige, respect and influence which give them the right (or authority) to act as members of the age system.⁽²⁾ From structural progression the age system derives a typical motion upwards. Classes move

(1) These two characters are stressed by Evans-Pritchard in his study of the Nuer age system. See Evans-Pritchard (c), p.256. His remarks on the constancy of the structural form of the other social systems connected with the age system, for instance the political system, are not all valid for the Nilo-Hamitic society. Thus, as we shall note below (p.254, f), that "people pass through the political system without their structural position in it changing to any extent during their passage" is something that is not true of the Nilo-Hamites.

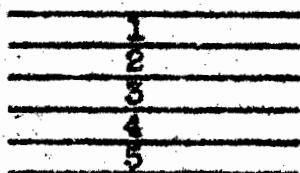
(2) To realize that the effect of structural time on class members is to give them their position, or status, is not sheer abstraction, it is sufficient to refer to the Turkana and note how easily they arrange themselves in order of seniority for meat or tobacco distribution. Gulliver refers to having been surprised by it. See p. 166.

up in the stratification. This gives to the status of individual members a progressive and dynamic character. Status is continually improved according to the rhythms of the structural progression. It is difficult to find proper terms for the different stages of that progression,⁽¹⁾ but it is certainly not correct to refer without specification to general categories (for instance, the elders) as institutionalised groups. For the Kilo-Hamites the use of class names is sufficient to express the differentiation existing between classes, and to convey the idea of the proper social age of individual class members. As a matter of fact, within the age structure differentiation of status is identical with differentiation of classes. A class is at the lowest stage of structural progression at the time of its institution; it reaches the top when it approaches dissolution through the death of its own members. Structural progression is continued automatically, but rhythmically, by the performance of the institution ceremonies. All people are aware of the occurrence of the ceremonies, for they are a community matter, and therefore everybody is aware of the structural status of the classes at any time.

The principle of structural permanence may be studied by analysing the structural form of the age system. This is essentially a stratification of all society members into a number of classes. Classes are instituted in a chronological order (structural time), and their position with relation to one another is that of layers or strata. The stratification may be considered as separate from the groups progressing through it. It may be regarded as the permanent form of the structure of the age system. To push further our analysis we may restrict the term 'strata' to the layers of that structural form, independent of the temporary tenant, and the term 'class' to the

(1) Evans-Pritchard discussing the point with relation to the Nuer, speaks of "points of relative juniority and seniority".

group covering a definite stratum at a definite moment of the structural progression. The following diagram may help to illustrate the subject:



The permanent form of the age system structure.

The stratified form is represented by the strata 1,2,3,4,5. This form remains unaltered by the progression of the classes. Classes move upward within the structural form, but the fundamental position of the strata remains unaltered and unaffected by that change. So, the relationship between strata will always be the relationship of 1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, and 4 to 5, etc.

It should further be noted that the position of the strata constitutes in itself a permanent status opened to, but unaffected by, and independent of, all its temporary holders. From this point of view, the status could properly be defined as 'the office' which is entered in succession by class members, and remains unaltered by the progressing changing of the classes.

The structure of the age system is the outcome of the two principles: the structural permanence works to keep intact the structural form of the system; the structural progression works for the rhythmical alteration of the structural status of the age classes. It is important to note that the aims and the functions of the age classes tend to preserve the working power of those two principles. By exercising the authority which is attached to its stratum, every class tries to preserve the position of its own status and the proper relationship of its own stratum to other strata. Similarly, and at the same time, every class tries to reach the stratum and to achieve the status next above, and thus it favours and keeps moving the rhythmical progression of the age system. The result is a permanent dialectic of interests, which marks the relations of the age classes and gives a dynamic character to the structure of the age system. (1)

(1) Contradiction of interests becomes more evident in special circumstances, as, for instance, at the institution of new age classes. Cfr. 'the war of the Ipinwek' of the Apsigis.

VI.

The dynamic aspect of the age system disclosed by the analysis of its structural principles, suggests a similar character also for its functions. Logically these are primarily determined by the nature of the system itself.

It is evident from what we have been saying that the primary function of the age system in the Kilo-Maritic societies is the division of these into a number of classes, and the distribution of a differentiated status to all their members on the basis of a permanent structural order. Structural order has the form of a stratification: classes are layers. The relationship between classes is determined by their position in the stratification. The position is held temporarily, and it is the function of the age system to determine by structural progression when a class should move upwards and be put in a higher position. Thus, another function of the age system is the definition of behaviour patterns which mark all class relations. Every class with relation to other classes may be considered from above, and from below; class members may be considered also from above, below, and on the same level. Those above are seniors. They are looked up to by all others, and the general behaviour towards them is one of respect and deference. Those below are juniors. The behaviour towards them is one of haughtiness. It may take the form of open and bitter rivalry, especially between immediately proximate minor groups. When the juniors are still uninitiated, and have no status in the structure of the age system, the usual haughtiness of the others towards them becomes nonchalant and contemptuous. Members of the same class consider themselves on the same level as equals. Their reciprocal relationship is of relative egalitarianism.

Co-evals, as noted, are still differentiated between themselves under the influence of the minor groups of which they were members. But such a differentiation is not stressed in relation with the members of other classes, and tends to fade away with time.

Structural status may also be considered as a source of authority. Every class has its structural status projected on all class members. Authority is thus fundamentally distributed on all members of the age system. We do not consider yet how far such authority is exercised in practice, we simply note that every class member, because of his structural status, obtains a fundamental qualification which commands the acknowledgement and the respect of all other members of the age classes. Every class member is conscious of his structural status, and, occasion demanding, that consciousness gives him a sense of fitness for acting as a responsible member of society. Similarly, the differentiations between classes are known to class members, and therefore, all class members are aware of the limitations deriving from those differentiations. (1)

Differentiation of structural position means differentiation of authority; differentiation of authority means differentiation of competence, and hence differentiation of functions between all classes in the field of the age system's activity. The importance of these conclusions, which show the age system as the channel for the distribution of authority and the instrument for its balance, is very great if the age system, as seems to be the case among the Nilo-Hamites, is connected with the political organisation of society. It is the aim of the next chapter to describe the age system in the wider setting of the social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites, and to disclose the large scope that the functions of the age system cover in the frame of that organisation.

(1) See the action of the pareto class against the Dvati class among the Masai: p. 34, n.1.

CHAPTER VII

The Political Function of the Age System in the Social Organisation of the Nilo-Hamites.

I

Political decentralisation is the general characteristic of all the Nilo-Hamitic societies. The Nilo-Hamites are conspicuous among all African people for the absence of any form of chiefship with centralized authority, and also for the apparent absence of any other form of state machinery for the administrative and political control of social life.

At present, of all the Nilo-Hamites only the Teso are politically organised on a chiefship system. There are six chiefs who rule their local sections through a number of sub-chiefs. However, there is no doubt that such a system is entirely foreign to the original organisation of the Teso, for it has been imposed on them by military conquest from the neighbouring Ganda. When the British took over the administration of Tesoland from the Ganda, they did not alter a system which suited their purposes well. Not until recently has an attempt been made to re-establish in part the old system by distributing political responsibility over "the family group leaders."⁽¹⁾ All the information we have on the past Teso organisation, though scanty, confirms that their society conformed to the decentralized type of all the other Nilo-Hamites.

In the early years of anthropological research in East Africa an excessive importance was attached to the spiritual leaders of the Masai, of the Nandi, and Kipsigis. Hollis and Merker described the laibon or prophet of the Masai as

(1) Hailey, p. 27.

the principal medicine man and the supreme chief of all the Masai race.⁽¹⁾ The Administration followed suit, and bestowed on Lenana, the Masai chief medicine man at the time of the first land dispute (1904), the title of "Paramount Chief of all the Masai." This title was extended to Lenana's son, Segi, (1912) for the office was then regarded as hereditary. In 1918 it was withdrawn, when Segi's incapacity and unpopularity made it clear that the status of Paramount Chief was not acknowledged by the Masai, nor had it any place in their social structure.⁽²⁾ The recent analysis of the prophet institution made by Fosbrooke shows that among the Masai one is hardly justified in speaking of such an institution as chief medicine man. There is a number of practitioners of different grades, who try so to succeed in their practice as to secure the loyalty of as many clients as possible. The shrewdness in art and force of personality may spread the fame of any one of them all over a territorial section and make him a centre of attraction. Definitely, he who succeeds in reaching this top position has no political authority, but if it suits his ambitions, he may certainly succeed in swaying the feeling and the actions of all his devotees.

It is historically an established fact that prophets of the Nandi (orkoiyot) and of the Kipsigis (orxoyot) were Masai practitioners who found shelter among those peoples and succeeded in gaining the same influence they had had among their own people. Hollis (b), p. 49, wrote of the Nandi that "the Orkoiyot, or principal medicine man holds precisely

(1) Herker,

Hollis,

(2) Lord Hailey, p. 171, remarks quite correctly that "Lenana himself never seems to have claimed a position of sovereignty, nor was it ever accorded to him by the tribe. Segi proved to be lacking in the qualities of the father, and such influence as he possessed was confined to the small section of which he was a member, while the more important sections, such as the Purko, either refused to recognize him or treated him with contempt".

the same position as the Maori or Wilson, that is to say, he is the supreme chief of the whole race." We shall not insist on this point, for, as among the Maori, the Hundi and Kipsigis prophets have never formed a political institution. Any one of them by the influence of his ritual prestige could have a chance of exerting some kind of political power. Finally, among both the Hundi and Kipsigis, the influence of the prophets has been curbed by the Government because they made themselves a cause of disturbance. (1)

A position very similar to that of the Maori prophet is held by the rain maker (robu) among the Lotuko. Holliman describes him (p. 526) as "the spiritual and temporal head of every community or tribe". As a matter of fact every section of the Lotuko is headed by a rain maker. However, as we noted in the analysis of the Lotuko age system, many of the rain maker's attributes show that his position is to be regarded as a singular phenomenon. That the rain maker may indifferently be a man or a woman is something unique among all the Nile-Hamites. The rain maker (and also the Maori prophet) is closely connected with his own clan which recognizes the place of his abode as the clan's headquarters. About his position Holliman (ib), p. 526, writes as follows: "It was difficult to form a fair opinion of the authority

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- (1) Woodbrooke takes the allegiance to the same Amibon as a distinctive feature of the Maori territorial section. Evans-Pritchard in his analysis of the Hundi-Tur political system regards the prophet as "an indication of the cohesion between the political units into which they were divided." In both cases it seems that the prophet institution is given a political significance that it does not possess. The allegiance due to this practitioner has essentially no political colour, it has a definite magico-religious nature. This is confirmed by the way the Maori regarded Lonana, and especially Macon Logi, and also by the conditions with which new territorial sections (and hence allegiance to a different Amibon) are established. The "perilous" treatment of the Hundi opoiyot, Kimayolo, killed because he was held responsible for a severe defeat where he had prophesied a success, is also significant of the religious character of the institution. Cfr. Hastingsford (d), p. 2.

violated by the rain maker. Probably his personal character was always the most important factor." This remark reveals the true political nature of the institution, namely that the rain maker's position is one of personal influence. In much, his does not substantially differ from the position of the local practitioner. As a matter of fact, as we are told also by Solignac, the ordinary channels of political activity among the Lotuko are "the elders" and the councils formed by them. And this, as we shall see below, is the typical characteristic of the decentralised political administration of all the Nile-Hamites.

When our authorities describe the social organisation, they also mention some other "leaders". By this we do not mean the headmen now appointed by the Government. The use of the local authorities by the Administration among the Nile-Hamites is still tentative and the system involved still unsettled. We refer to such leaders as seem to have existed before the appointments made by the Government. Among the Lotuko at the time when the minor groups are formed, the al-nunani, the al-nunani or al-nunani, the al-nunani, are elected at different stages. While there is no longer any doubt about the ceremonial character of the al-nunani and the al-nunani whose functions are restricted to the nunani ceremony, the al-nunani may be taken as having a political character. His office, however, is limited to the time preceding the institution of the age class; which shows that if he has any political power this is restricted to the members of his own group, who, as we know, are for all purposes still trainees. After this time he falls back to the same position as all other class members, though the prestige obtained during his period in office marks him out among all other class members as a man of special influence. We have discussed the position of the in-nunani, the outstanding members of the minor groups. The al-nunani is somehow

controlled by the senior who forms his council and among whom he has the rank of the first among equals. Though it has no formal institution, it is the council as such that will last and operate when the class has been instituted and when the functions which befall the class demand a corporate activity.

The leaders mentioned in connection with the social organization of the Handi-luk are described in connection with the general social activity of the people and not with the formation of the new class. The peculiar way by which they are inducted, so to speak, into office show this.

For the Kipsigis Foristiany describes the Kiruvindat or payot ab lokwat who is the headman of the village, and the Kiruvindat-roo who is the captain of the choir. Both officers are not elected but emerge among their class-mates as the best man for the office; when common matters are discussed they hold the position of arbiters, not of chiefs. Similarly the Handi payot who is the head of the village, and the Kiruvindat who is the leader of the province, are not elected but "slip into the position" (Huntingford) as the right man. They are assisted by "the council of the elders." The luk "advisor" described by Bech and Harson is never elected either, but is supported by "general consensus of opinion" and by "the majority of the elders and warriors" for he is regarded as the best man for the position. The same holds true of the Elgoyo Kiruvakin - advisor, described by Harson. The Turkana, as Culliver says, distinguish is a typical way between the most senior man of them all and the most senior man of any given group of Turkana meeting at any time. It is the senior man that acts as president of the meeting, but he is never elected to the office and anyone may have the chance of being either the most senior man of all the Turkana or the most senior man of any given group.

It is, therefore, evident that all the above leaders represent something quite different from the usual concept

of the chief. But their existence and the kind of authority that they exert in connection with the "councils of the elders" make clear a fundamental point of the social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites, namely that the Nilo-Hamites have such an administrative and political system as suits their social structure. It is true that the societies of the Nilo-Hamites belong to the decentralized type of societies, and they are chiefless and stateless, but this does not mean that they are devoid of any administrative or political system.

The description of the political form of some of the Nilo-Hamitic societies by our early authorities in terms of "republic of young warriors," though it discloses a grave misunderstanding of the institution involved, does ~~put the stress~~ on the age system. So do the other common expressions generally used in this connection such as "the elders" or "the council of the elders." Indeed, as we shall see below, it is the age system that provides among the Nilo-Hamites the machinery for their political organisation, and creates the structural means for the decentralisation and for the balance and control of political power.

II

In order to show how the age system performs the political functions in the organisation of the Nilo-Hamitic societies, we must first examine the relationship of such other elements as the clan system and the territorial system to that same organisation.

All the Nilo Hamites are organised into a system of patrilineal and exogamous clans. It is an established fact that the Nilo-Hamites trace their descent to the father's line, though it seems that not all of them stress the agnatic aspect of the clans to the same extent.⁽¹⁾ Clans are generally, but not always, subdivided into minor branches. Exogamic regulations are usually enforced within the undivided clan-unit, so that marriage can take place within the clan but not within the sub-clan, if this exists.⁽²⁾

We do not know how far lineage is stressed, if at all, as a distinct unit of the clan system and of the whole social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites. The extended family has been on rare occasions described in terms of lineage, but the social significance of the extended family is limited to the range of the corporate activities of the kinship system, usually for the distribution of inheritance or of bride-wealth. But there is no evidence to suggest that other corporate activities embracing the whole tribe are related to the lineage structure. As a matter of fact, it may be

(1) On this point see "African Systems of Kinship and Marriage" by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, Oxford, 1950, p. 18-20.

(2) The Igago clan of the Lotuko is divided into three branches which cannot intermarry: they form a single exogamic unit.

accepted as an established fact that among the Nilo-Hamites lineage does not provide the basis for the political system.

Also the political significance of the clans, considered as wider units than lineage units, is very limited. We may here record some few cases in which the clan structure gives rise to a corporate activity of clan-members. Among the Masai (and to a certain extent among all the Nilo-Hamites), cattle is a subject of clan ownership. This does not exclude private ownership, but on the basis of clan-ownership a kind of control is held by all clan members on private cattle so as to prevent the dispersion of cattle to other clans, or the dispossession of a minor whose father has died, and who has to await maturity in order to take possession of the inheritance. Also among the Masai, as Fosbrooke says, water sources, when first discovered, are claimed on behalf of the discoverer's clan. All clan-members have the use of water, and if disputes arise they are settled by the council of clan-members. Murder-compensation, among the Masai and the Nandi-Suk (and very probably among all the Nilo-Hamites) is a matter dealt with by the clan, or sub-clan, in a corporate way: clan members (or sub-clan members) are expected to contribute to the payment, or share the compensation paid by the murderer's clan.

All these corporate activities of the clans give them a political significance. It is, however, of great interest to note how such corporate activity is generally centred on minor issues and does not affect the wider social structure of the people concerned. This becomes apparent if one examines the territorial distribution of the clans. Only in a very few cases does a single clan cover a single territorial section; generally clans are territorially dispersed throughout the land and greatly fragmented. The prevalence of a single clan in a given territory (and generally small groups from alien clans are also intermixed with the prevalent clan) can probably be regarded as evidence of a different territorial

distribution that might have prevailed in the past. The present type of territorial distribution of the clans had a bearing on the corporate activity of the clans, so that when clans are referred to as acting corporatively, this applies to the territorial fragments of the clans. Thus, e.g. when Forbush states that a water course is claimed on behalf of the clan, the term "clan" refers to the group of clan-members who live on the spot where the course had been found.

The fragmentation of the clans throughout the land of the Nilo-Hamites, makes it evident that the territorial organization of these peoples differs greatly from their clan system and works on a different structural principle. The same statement is true for the other main elements of the social structure such as the military, the juridical and the age systems. All these elements work on a different basis from the clan system, though there are points in which they all structurally interact with the clan system. (Such are: the way in which the local community is organized on a clan pattern; the formation of the council of clan-members; the clan distinction in ceremonial performances; etc.)

From a political point of view we may say that the clan systems of the Nilo-Hamites lack such cohesive power as would give them a fundamental political function in the social structure. Indeed, it is clear that the Nilo-Hamites do not derive their structural status from their own particular society, or do not define their relationship to tribal fellows or even outsiders, by establishing and ascertaining their position in the structure of the lineage or clan system. This, as is known, is the method followed by other African peoples, like the Lucr, whose society is also from the political point of view, outstandingly decentralized.

III

Fundamentally the territorial organisation of the Nile-Hamites may be described as a segmentary system of territorial units which it is possible to reduce to a typical series of major, minor and minimal units. At the top there is the land Masailand, Nandi-Sukland, etc., which can be regarded as the maximal territorial unit.

The definition of the maximal territorial unit is made in terms of opposition to outsiders. Those who live on a different land are for all purposes strangers, and, maybe, enemies.⁽¹⁾

The other territorial units are defined not by territorial boundaries (or these are not so apparent and so significant), but by social limits. Therefore, they exhibit a typical vagueness of characters. Probably ecological reasons may account for the phenomenon, particularly where the nomadic mode of life still prevails. As a matter of fact it is with such tribes as the Masai and the Turkana who are almost entirely pastoral nomads, that the vagueness of the territorial divisions is particularly evident. Gulliver describes the Turkana territorial organisation as "a neutral feature of Turkana social organisation."

The absence of any centralized form of chiefship is also to be reckoned as another cause of that vagueness. Owing to that absence, there is no check on the establishment of new territorial units and the easy dissolution of the old ones.

(1) It is, perhaps, significant to the point made above that the Dorobo tribes who live on the same land as the Masai and the Nandi are not regarded as enemies, though they are not part of the peoples with whom they live in a kind of cultural symbiosis.

The vagueness of the territorial units is confirmed by the fortuitous way they are started. The point has been illustrated for the Masai by Frobenius. People from the various Masai clans and for iterial sections may be brought together by their transhumant wanderings in search of water and good grazing. Residential neighbourhood and common interests foster among them a sense of solidarity. This is asserted in opposition to other similar groups of people and territorial units, and may eventually lead to a claim for some kind of independence, which in the main is expressed in the holding of tribal ceremonies of their own.

A very similar process has been recorded for the Turkana by Culliver. The tendency for the Turkana is to join whatever initiation centre suits them best. All social transactions which interest those who are present, are regularly carried out at the centre which is generally found on a water source in common use.

It is also important to note how the formation of all the new units takes place irrespectively of their member's old allegiance and previous territorial relationship.

All territorial units other than the land, are defined in opposition to units of the same order, within the land itself. Thus, members of a major or minor or minimal territorial unit, though members of the same people, regard themselves as distinct social groups to the exclusion of other similar unit members who are regarded to a certain extent, as strangers and occasionally even as enemies.

Territorial units in fact have distinct political functions. The minimal unit (the Masai or village of the Masai; the Kolwet or village of the Kandi-Suk; the primary neighbourhood of the Turkana; the otom of the Toso in the first stage of its development; the ndupn or village-quarter of the Lotuko) has a limited political activity. The unit is formed by a group of families, but does not coincide with

the extended family. (1)

Occasional disputes are settled locally; minor ceremonies (individual initiations) are occasions of common interest for the unit; the defensive military reaction to an external attack relies on the corporate efforts of all the able bodied men of the unit. For other occasions of wider implication the minimal territorial unit falls within the sphere of action of the minor territorial unit.

This unit (the olongo or section of the lualaba; the secondary segment of the Bandi-Suk; the secondary neighbourhood of the Turkana; the stem of the Teco; the village of the Lotuko) is formed by the aggregation of a number of minimal territorial units. This numerical strength is fundamental for the formation of the minor territorial unit. It is significant that members of such a unit develop a full awareness of their social and political rights when they realize the force of their number. (2)

The corporate activity of the minor territorial unit is most evident when the ceremonies for the institution of the age-groups are performed, and people from all parts of the unit assemble.

The offensive military organization is also generally based on the minor unit, and every unit may engage in military expeditions of its own. Generally, however, though the minor territorial units tend to stand apart and act independently at each other they unite when special strength is required as in the case of raids or attacks against strong enemies, or for ceremonial purposes. Matters of common interest to the unit are discussed by a council to which all the minimal

(1) Among the lualaba, a man, when he forms his family and his own cattle herd, does not stay at his father's place but builds his own village away from him. Cf. also the Teco etc.

(2) Fortbridge writes as follows of the lualaba lailayoh: "In other areas they were unofficially unorganized to enable them to retain their own pasture grounds, and to justify their tribal economies of their own." (by underlining).

units may send representatives.

The major territorial unit (the province of the Kasai and of the Mandi-Sulu; the "major parts" of the Turkana; the sections, now in abeyance, of the Teco; the main areas of the Lotuko;) does not always possess a political function. Some, like the province of the Mandi and the "major parts" of the Turkana, seem to have a purely geographical significance. Generally, even for those major units with political character, political activity takes place on rare occasions. This must be so, and follows from the decentralised nature of Nilo-Hamitic societies. Peace making, with an external enemy or between two major units, settling disputes among member-sections, are example of the few situations which usually demand action on a higher level. Otherwise the Nilo-Hamites are intolerant of any control or action from above.

The effects that territorial organisation produces upon society disclose a fundamental principle of that organisation, which may be called the principle of territorial ambivalence. People who ^{are} brought together by their residential proximity, live in the same ecological conditions, and have in common social, economic, jurat, ceremonial and military interests. This community of interests gives rise to a corporate consciousness by which people distinguish themselves as a group in opposition to other similar groups brought together for analogous reasons and interests. It is evident, therefore, that while territorial divisions cleave rounder the whole of society, they also produce a new cohesive force which gives distinction to new social groups within society itself. The phenomenon is due to the principle of territorial ambivalence. The effects of this principle are produced in every type of society, but they are not always stressed to the same extent. Among the Nilo-Hamites it is the dividing effect that prevails. This may

explain why the latent opposition which divides the territorial units so often reaches the climax of war and makes enemies people who are members of the same organization.

The dividing effect of the territorial ambivalence is generally counterbalanced by the unifying effect of some other structural principle. A common example of such a principle is the centralized chiefship institution. This institution through its centralized power gives cohesion to all the territorial divisions, and makes their members conscious of a higher level unity which integrates all their interest. In societies with no centralized authority there are generally other agencies producing the same cohesive effect. Among the Nilo-Hamites it is the age system that possesses that integrating power necessary for counterbalancing the dividing effect of territorial ambivalence.

IV

The structure of the age system takes living shape in the local groups. All the activity carried out in a corporate form at any level of the territorial organization reflects the structural stratification of the age system. Thus, though the actual shape of the age system is cast in a territorial mould, the system as a whole overflows all territorial divisions. This is especially evident among the Totoko where the local shape of the age groups is stressed by the use of distinct names for every local net of class members. This local differentiation of groups and names does not hinder our seeing the fundamental identity of the age system structure. The structure of the age system is one and the same for every Hilo-Hamitic people with possibly secondary differentiation among member-tribes. That fundamental identity of structure is first shown by the fact that every class member feels at home in every part of his people's country, and not only is he welcomed by his class-mates, but if he wishes to migrate from his home and settle down in another part of the land he can easily adjust himself to the local structure of the age system and find his proper position in the new setting.

The integrative power of the age system has been recorded in different instances by our authorities. The typical hospitality norms which regulate the social life of the Hilo-Hamites are such an instance. Class-mates are the people a man approaches first (or among the first ones) when he travels in other territorial units than his home: the traveller who spends the night in a place is no stranger to the inhabitants if he is a member of the same age system

as they are.

For the Masai we have repeatedly emphasized the general value for the institution of the age class of the mbolosat ceremony held by the Kikonyuka section and of the Encherr ceremony held by the Kibongo section. Having noted the tendency of the Masai territorial sections to act independently, the universal recognition and acceptance by all of them of these ceremonies is rather significant phenomenon. It shows the unity of the age-system throughout Masailand, and it shows how the age system acts as a cohesive force for all the territorial sections.

The Mandi-Buk are conspicuous for the cyclical method they follow in naming the age classes. The same method and the same names prevail among all the Mandi-Buk tribes. There are many things dividing the Mandi-Buk tribes: different territories, different clans, etc., but in spite of these differences, they all regard one another as "brothers", while they consider other peoples such as the Masai and the Turkana, though culturally akin to them, as "enemies". The only functioning system which can inspire and justify that "brotherhood" is the age system.

The Turkana are emphatic in expressing the integrating power of their age system. "All Turkana have the same age names. Names (class names) are the same. They are all one." And they also insist: "we are all brothers; we are all one; we may move wherever we like."

It is proper at this stage to stress a point connected with the integrating power of the age system. When we insist on this aspect of the age-system, we do not mean that the age groups ever act as regimented bodies, but we mean that the age system provides the basis of unity for the structure of the Afro-Hamitic societies. An external formation of the age groups - such as we conceive when thinking of a regiment - seems to be entirely foreign to the way the age system

functions among the Nilo-Hamites. It is indeed a remark that our authorities rarely make, but it can be clearly deduced from the evidence they offer, namely that the functions of the age system are never carried out with the full corporate participation of all the members, nor is any of the classes ever functioning as a single body of agents gathered from all over the country over which the tribe is scattered. The age system and the age classes are structural categories with their living members split into a number of groups in the various territorial units of the tribe's land.

With relation to the clan and the territorial systems we note this peculiarity in the Nilo-Hamitic age system, that while the former two systems fraction the social integrity by causing separate social units to be formed, the age system covers with its structure the entire social ground, integrates it, and counteracts the dividing effects of the other two systems. People who are somehow strangers to each other because they are members of different clans and different territorial units, come to regard themselves as akin, as "brothers", on the basis of the age system. Indeed, this system being the only system that coincides with the whole extension of society, is the sole agency that can provide all the members of the Nilo-Hamitic societies with a general and identical basis for their structural status.

The following diagram may serve to illustrate the integrating function of the age system with relation to the clan and territorial systems. The vertical lines (capital letters) divide what represents the territorial units; these are separate from each other. The oblique lines (small letters) show the fragmentation of the clan system over all the territorial units. The horizontal lines (arabic figures) show the stratified form of the age system. They cross the space from end to end and thus express the integrat-

ing power and the unifying function of the age system.

				g 1
			f	2
	c	d	e	3
b				4
a A	B	C	D	E 5

The integrating function of the age system shown with relation to the clan and the territorial systems.

Territorial system - Capital letters.
 Clan system - Small letters.
 Age system - Arabic figures.

V

The introduction of the individual member into the structure of the age system is begun at the time of his individual initiation. In connection with the Nandi-Suk it has been stated that such introduction takes place by birth. This opinion should be regarded as inaccurate for it is founded on a misinterpretation of the naming cyclical system and its structural value, as the foregoing analysis has made clear.

Usually our authorities stress the biological significance of the individual initiation. After initiation, they say, a boy becomes a man. Analysis, especially in the case of the Masai (but see also what Gulliver has to say on the Turkana, p. 252), shows that an initiate is by no means regarded as a man when he emerges from initiation. What analysis shows is that he is introduced into the working structure of the age system. The initiation may truly be considered, from other aspects, as a social recognition of a man's biological fitness for virile activities. The point is that such social recognition is officially granted when a boy is first introduced into the structure of the age system. And in this lies the real social importance of the individual initiation for the Nilo-Hamites, and the reason why it is so closely connected with the structure of the age system.

After his individual initiation a man is associated with a minor age group and thus his position in the structural stratification is first established. He is now an active member of society. In contrast with this attainment, the position of the uninitiate is very significant. He has

no status as an individual member of society. Whatever rights he may entertain, he has no status for claiming them personally. Others with a proper status will claim them on his behalf. ⁽¹⁾

The status attained by class members is fundamentally identical for all. And, therefore, also their capacity for every social and political activity is identical. This is an essential principle of the political organisation of the Nilo-Hamites. It explains the theoretical foundation of political decentralization.

The fundamental identity of status is very soon differentiated by effect of structural progression, for this principle affects the status of class members from their start in the age system stratification. The causes of differentiation are further increased by the emergence of personal distinctions which enhance the social prestige of class members and give them a greater influence. This point will be discussed again below.

A commonplace of the literature on the Nilo-Hamites is the reference to the so called "class in power". Analysis shows quite clearly that there is no such thing as the class in power, but that power, that is to say political authority, does not rest on "a republic of young warriors", but is distributed over all the age classes. It is the integration of all these classes performing different functions and wielding a corresponding grade of authority that makes up the political and administrative system of the Nilo-Hamites.

The misrepresentation of the "class in power" has been caused by an over-exaggeration and an over-formalisation of the military function of the age system. Military activity

(1) Cfr. the Masai proverb: "Melang in-gishu ol-ogol le-kishon" "the clan is the strength of the child. No matter how young or weak a child may be on his father's death he is strong on his own kraal for his friends will see that he inherits the cattle." Hollis (a), p.245, n.42. See also p.309.

is of such a nature that it requires more than any other activity the corporate participation of the groups concerned.

Our authorities (Merker for the Masai; Evans-Pritchard in his analysis of the Nandi-Suk; Gulliver for the Turkana;) emphasize the difference between the defensive organisation, but when a defensive action demands it, all able bodied men without distinction of class take part in it. The reason for this is in the nature of things, for the response to an attack is generally a sudden necessity requiring the combined efforts of all those who can stand it.

Generally the offensive system has been over-formalised, and the part played by the junior and senior initiates, not yet formed into a class, has been greatly exaggerated. Because these initiates have been freshly trained in the use of arms, they are usually referred to as "the warriors" without further qualification of the term. Now the structural status of these initiates is still at low level. From the military point of view they are "freshmen" or, as Peristiany calls them for the Kipsigis, "inexperienced." For this reason, they are given a certain freedom in attempting minor raids. And they long for them. Not only do they need the chance to practise their skill, but they look for the opportunity to show off their personal abilities, and enhance their prestige. Their status entitles them to bear arms and to take initiative in military matters, and for this reason they tend to become arrogant to their seniors. However, it is not correct to regard them as independent of the "elders"; in fact they are not as is shown by the way the elders may deal with them.⁽¹⁾

(1) A very good instance is offered by the action taken by the Kipsigis "elders" against the Maina class. The class period of this class was curtailed by the "elders" for the Maina initiates 1) had no proper respect for their kot-ap-chi (people of the house) and did not use correctly the complicated kinship terminology, with the result that, if it were not for the vigilance of the elders, most Maina would have disgraced themselves by committing incest. 2) They did not confine themselves to stealing cattle from punik (strangers) but also stole from their fellow Kipsigis. 3) They showed ignorance of and disrespect towards the customs of their fathers." Peristiany, p.44.

It is also to the point to re-state here in a general way a conclusion which has been brought to the fore by the preceding analysis, namely that the military activity of an age group is not attempted and carried out to the exclusion of the other age groups. Such a conclusion may indeed be considered as a general principle of the military organisation of the Nilo-Hamites. Its validity is also confirmed by the inclusion in the defensive system (if it can be regarded for once as a formal system) of all the classes.

An offensive action is generally a large scale operation, and it requires the co-operation of all classes fit for fighting. The organisation of these is made on the basis of age system stratification. Gulliver describes it for the Turkana: "the men would assemble by age set and region, more or less under the supervision each of the Senior Man." He says also that the junior classes are in the van and the senior classes in the rear. Something similar is suggested for the Masai by Herker who calls the senior classes "Reserve."

Gulliver describes also the way in which a raid could be started. His description may be taken as indicative of the ways followed by the other Nilo-Hamites. "Raiding", writes Gulliver; "was initiated in three sorts of ways: firstly, by an age set (or part of a set), secondly, by a recognised war leader, and thirdly, by a diviner." He also mentions the possibility (a significant possibility!) of any individual class member starting the raid by summoning his age mates. It seems to us that there is no real difference in these ways of starting a raid, except perhaps in the one in which the "diviner" is said to take the initiative. For, in practice, the age sets function through their individual members, and the war leader is just one member of his age set like any other, the only difference being that his military distinction gives him a better chance of being followed in his summons. The intervention of the "diviner"

has also been mentioned for the Masai by Fosbrooke. His description may also be taken as indicative of the way the Turkana and the other Nilo-Hamitic practitioners behave in this matter. The laibon, says Fosbrooke, would make a not too vague allusion to a prospective booty in some definite place, and the young warriors so challenged, would not be tardy in following suit and taking to arms.

In conclusion, it seems certain that structural stratification of class members provides the basis of their military organisation. The territorial extension of this organisation may vary. Rarely, if ever, as appears from our literature, does military organisation extend over the whole land. Usually more than one territorial unit combine forces, even when military action is not directed against outside enemies, but against other sections of their own people.

VI

The age system performs a specifically social function by setting class members in a definite social position. Such a position is the fundamental qualification for every form of corporate social life. It gives authority for this, an authority which in practical matters takes a differentiated expression in consonance with the progressing rhythms of the age system stratification. So that it is correct to say that some social transactions are the privileges of definite classes: marriage, building a family, amassing wealth, having one's own sons initiated, performing religious ceremonies, are all social activities of that kind.

The example of the Masai best illustrates this very important function of the age system. A Masai after his initiation and first association in an age unit has not yet sufficient authority for establishing his own family, nor strictly speaking for marrying. Such are the privileges of the "elders" or of those initiates whose class has finally been instituted as a single group. The norm is theoretically so strict that Leakey could envisage the case of a senior initiate (e.g. a member of the senior age unit) getting married and not being authorized to beget children. All these restrictions are lifted after the class has been instituted. At this time a Masai initiate has obtained the authority for settling down in a place of his own, for possessing cattle and for having his own family.. He is economically and, to a certain extent, socially independent of his father. (Fosbrooke describes the above mentioned activities as the privileges of the "junior elders").

Peristiany reports that a Kipsigis is not allowed to

possess cattle of his own until after his initiation, and marriage can take place only when he can provide for himself at least a substantial portion of the bride-wealth. Oulliver stresses the importance of economic independence for the Turkana; even after a Turkana has married, he will be considered a full social man, akile, only when he has achieved his economic independence of his father.

The method of settling disputes, and in general the whole juridical system of the Nilo-Hamites, as far as we can judge from our present knowledge, give evidence of the fundamental identity of status and at the same time of the differentiation of authority of class-members. The typical instance is offered again by the Masai. Foshbrooke states that it appears to be the privilege of the aggrieved party to select the judges. These are chosen, on their reputation of fairness and justice. This way of selecting judges shows clearly the authority of the average class member and the limitations of the so called class leader. Leaders, whatever their distinction, are on the same structural position as their age-mates. It is for this specific reason that, as Foshbrooke remarks, "the proceedings (of a dispute) are not invalidated if no laigwanan (or leader) is present."

Discussion of cases among all the Nilo-Hamites takes place generally within a council of elders. The internal organisation of these councils, and the way they conduct discussion and take decisions, have never been properly reported. It seems that they are not formally instituted as a juridical body of councillors with well defined power and functions. Council-membership is open to all class members.

The size of the councils may vary according to the importance of the matters discussed, and the sections of the population involved. Territorial groups within one or more territorial units, clan groups, members of age groups, may

all form their own councils for special matters of common concern. Private disputes, inheritance, crimes, calamities, behaviour of juniors, may all provide the subject-matter for discussion. Whatever the size of the councils, their internal structure is a projection of the structural stratification of the age system and of the differentiations between the classes. The evidence leaves no doubt about this point. Obviously, those who like the Masai incopior, emerge above their age mates by reason of personality and success take a leading part in the discussion and may easily influence the final decisions. It is generally the most senior of those present in the council who is regarded and acts as president. But there is no formality in the office, as there is no formality in the formation of the council. The status of the most senior is fundamentally the same as the status of any other councillor, except for the fact that when the council assembles he is found at the higher stratum of the structural stratification. The senior man, therefore, is supposed to act as the first among equals.

Huntingford describing the functioning of a Nandi council says that all the people may attend, but "warriors who are present are supposed not to intervene till their advice or opinion is asked for". As we know, "the warriors", in this context, are the initiates not yet formed into a class. Their status is still at the lowest point of the structural stratification, and therefore their authority is also very limited: "they have to give way", as Huntingford puts it, "to the claims of seniority in the council."

A further and a higher stage in the structural stratification is reached by class members when they attain the right of sponsoring the candidates for initiation and for the institution of their age group. Among the Masai this form of social activity is institutionalised in the piroa relationship. This relationship is reciprocal between the

candidates and their sponsors. The structural distance which divides them is equal to the structural distance which in the kinship system divides father and son. This remark provides the key to the piron-relationship. It is a general fact that the piron-elders belong to the same class as the candidates' fathers. Obviously, therefore, the status of piron-elders gives them sufficient authority for sponsoring the initiation of the candidates, for theirs is equal to the status of the candidates' fathers. Among the other Nilo-Hamitic peoples sponsorship is not so institutionalized as among the Masai, but in the light of the piron-relationship of the latter one can understand the reason why the sponsors for initiation are always selected by the candidates' fathers and generally from among their own closest friends.

The piron-relationship of the Masai provides also a good illustration of the structural progression of the age classes. Analysis shows that the power of the piron-elders over the candidates is most effective, and is exercised to the exclusion of the other classes. The privilege of the piron-elders is a matter of jealous claim, as the case of the Daretto elders against the Dwati elder clearly indicates. (See above, p. 34, n. 1.). We can also safely guess that the rivalry between the two succeeding classes of piron-elders comes to the fore at the meetings of the councils when they have to decide upon the closing of the class-period and the opening of a new one, and thus upon the establishment of a fresh piron-relationship.

The last rhythm upwards of the structural stratification gives, as appears, the authority for performing religious ceremonies. The point is barely hinted at by our authorities, and should be the subject of more accurate research in the field. It is generally noted that when ceremonies of a religious character are held they are performed by the "elders". It is they who at the institution of the age groups offer prayers to God for the candidates and the

country, and give their blessings. Oulliver has remarked that the institution ceremonies of the Turkana cannot take place unless they are attended by one member of the most senior classes extant. If none of these are available in one place, people are expected to travel to a different initiation centre. This relationship of the most senior elders with the supernatural is a trait generally, though vaguely stressed by our authorities. A peculiar case which we think should be related to the structural status of the most senior elders is reported by Peristiany, p.246, for the Kipsigis. This tribe has a religious leader called Poyot an Tumda - the elder of the ceremony. His duty is to offer prayers to God for the candidates and the country at initiation and at other ceremonies. His office is described as hereditary, but when the Poyot an Tumda dies, he is not succeeded by his son but by his assistant. The reason given is that at the time of the Poyot an Tumda's death his son is always "too young" for the task. The proper age for it is over 55 or 60, a very old age for the Kipsigis. When the son of the late Poyot an Tumda comes to proper age, if he wants to pursue his father's activity, he must do so at a different place. In the light of the foregoing analysis it seems to us that the insistence of the Kipsigis on the proper age of the Poyot an Tumda can only be explained as the requirement of a proper structural status giving authority for religious leadership.

VII

The fundamental identity of status and the practical differentiation of authority distributed over all the classes and their members leave scope for the individual members to develop their personal talents and enlarge the field of their social influence. In the light of the foregoing analysis all the qualifications, other than structural status, such as wealth, success in war, personal character, ritual leadership, which have been described as other sources of authority for the Nilo-Hamites are set in their correct perspective. There is sufficient evidence to show the weight of any of those qualifications for the personal prestige of class members. Our contention at the moment is that those qualifications enhance and specialize, so to speak, the prestige and the influence of individual class members through the structure of the age system.

Wealth for the Nilo-Hamites is sought in cattle and wives. These latter are only obtained through cattle in form of bride-wealth. Therefore wealth is essentially a matter of cattle. But the right to own cattle is only obtained by class members through their introduction into the structural progression of the age system. Influence is generally secured by generous display of one's own riches in offering age mates and friends frequent meat festivals.⁽¹⁾

Distinction in war is greatly coveted by all the Nilo-Hamites. But military activity may only be taken part in after initiation, and, though the actual fighting depends

(1) The Masai junior initiates who want to be called "N-gamini - benefactor" have recourse to their fathers' generosity for offering meat festivals to their mates.

entirely on personal valour and courage, the organisation of the army is based on the structure of the age system.

When personal character is described as a source of influence, generally reference is made to ability and skill in making speeches and swaying the opinion of other people. Such skill is trained from the very start of the institution of the age groups. A typical instance is offered by the Masai insopior. These are the initiates who in the proceedings for the institution of the age units have emerged as the most talented men of the age groups. They are the elite, and from their number the temporary officers of the age units are selected.

Commenting on the office of the Kipsigis Poyot ap Tunda, we have seen how the emergence of ritual and religious practitioners is controlled and limited by the structural requirements derived from the age system. In this connection the comment recorded by Fosbrooke and made by the Masai elders on the action of the Daretto elders against the Dwate elder is very significant, "even if the laibon had given his sanction for the circumcision, the Daretto elders would have been justified in acting as they did." In other words, the action and the power of the Masai prophet in that particular instance would have been controlled and limited by the non-elders' rights, which were claimed on the ground of their structural status. The example, we believe, has a general value, and it shows the type of reciprocal control that class members are able to exercise upon each other following the progressive stratification of the age system and the differentiation of functions for the classes.

VIII

At this point, we fully realize the deficiencies of our literary sources and the need of more extensive field research. However, though we are conscious of such limits and we look to the foregoing analysis of the Nilo-Hamitic age systems as a preliminary survey of the evidence, we believe that our contention on the political functions of the age system in the structure of Nilo-Hamitic societies is sufficiently demonstrated.

What analysis shows is this: the age system provides class members with a basic structural status which is fundamentally identical for all and is acknowledged and required for every type of social activity. The position of class members in the structure of the age system is defined with remarkable precision in relation to all other members of society. Every class member is aware of the functions he is entitled to perform and of the power that he can claim in public matters. It is in the definition of everybody's structural position that the structure of the age system provides the Nilo-Hamitic societies with the machinery for the organization of every form of corporate activity, social, military, juridical and ceremonial. The stratification of the classes, and the differentiation of authority, determine a typical differentiation of functions among all classes. Political authority is distributed in this way over all class members in different degrees and for different types of activity. Control of power is derived from the consciousness of one's own authority and functions, and is carried out by the assertion of such authority and the exercise of such functions. It is this control that makes the balance of power among all classes effective as is necessary for the

sound maintenance of such societies as the Nilo-Hamites present. In the setting of the age system structure and in the exercise of the various class functions, the individual class member is given great opportunity for the specialized development of his personal talents and the assertion of his influence.

It is the integration of all these factors that makes what can be regarded as the political system of the Nilo-Hamites. This system is typical, and differs from the other political systems which have hitherto been described in Africa. Professors Fortes and Evans-Pritchard in the Introduction to their edition of "African Political Systems" writes as follows: "It seems probably to us that three types of political systems can be distinguished. First there are those very small societies ... in which even the largest political unit embraces a group of people all of whom are united to one another by ties of kinship, so that political relations are coterminous with kinship relations and the political structure and kinship organisation are completely fused. Secondly, there are societies in which a lineage structure is the framework of the political system, there being a precise co-ordination between the two, so that they are consistent with each other, though each remains distinct and autonomous in its own sphere. Thirdly, there are societies in which an administrative organisation is the framework of the political structure".

The kinship, lineage, and also clan, systems are politically of no practical significance among the Nilo-Hamites. The administrative organisation which the above quoted classification envisages is entirely foreign to the Nilo-Hamites: they know no chief nor administrative machinery in the usual sense of the word. The framework of political structure among the Nilo-Hamites is provided by the age system. It is not that the age system is to be identified

with the political system, but in the type of society presented by the Nilo-Hamites the age system provides the machinery for every form of corporate activity, and, as we know, political activity is par excellence a form of corporate activity.

SUMMARY

In the Introduction the aim of the work is indicated as the analysis of the structure of the age-system and of its functions in the social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites.

With reference to the terminology used the suggestion of Radcliffe-Brown for the adoption of "age-set" and "age-grade" is discussed and discarded. "Age class" is regarded as more suitable than "age-set" because it implies a social differentiation between the age groups. Ambiguity in the use of the word is avoided by prefixing the qualification "age." The 'age grades' as defined by Radcliffe-Brown are discussed with special care. The evidence shows that they do not obtain among the Nilo-Hamitic peoples, and, therefore, the term is dropped and "age categories," which is more broad and generic, is adopted.

Finally it is stated that the very few cases of age systems of women are not taken into consideration because they are a reflection of age systems of men, and not independent institutions.

Chapter I describes the age system of the Masai. The general social system of this people is first outlined. The discussion following is focused on the institution of the age class, and proceeds through analysis of the ceremonies. The initiation of a candidate depends on his father's social status ("passing of the fence"), but before initiation can take place, the ceremony for opening the legal period of the class (Embolosat) must be performed. Only the ceremony performed in Kenya among the Kakenyuke is accepted throughout Masailand. The period for the institution of the age class is closed by the performance of the Ngeherr proper, which is also accepted throughout Masailand, though it is performed

among the Kising of Tanganyika. The territorial value of these two ceremonies shows the all-embracing extension of the age class.

During this period which may last from 15-20 years or more, two temporary age units are instituted. The period for the institution of these units is opened and closed by the Endungore-Engibata. These ceremonies are often described as a single ceremony performed by the sponsors of the candidates. The Endungore has a negative aspect different from that of the Engibata, and it closes the past unit. The Engibata opens the period for a new unit. After the endungore is performed no candidate may be initiated and associated into the previous unit. After the Engibata is performed, candidates may be initiated and they are associated into a new unit. The Endungore-Engibata are performed twice during a class period, and their value is limited to the sections in which they are performed. The initiation of candidates is through circumcision. Analysis shows that the importance of this ceremony has been only too frequently overemphasised. The general statement that after circumcision a boy "becomes a man" does not portray the real situation of the Masai. Even after circumcision a boy will for a long time be curtailed in his social and sexual activities. The individual initiation is usually performed singly at the candidate's village. Those who have been initiated during the same season form a minimal age division. Three minimal age divisions are grouped into a single age unit by the performance of the Unoto. This ceremony institutes the age unit, but does not close the initiation period. Candidates may still be initiated until the next Endungore is performed.

The two age units lead to the institution of the age class which associates the same age units into a single group. The right-hand unit is senior to the left-hand. But with relation to the class following upon it the left-hand unit becomes senior to the right-hand unit of this class. The distinctions of

seniority are privileges which give rise to a typical open rivalry between the juniors who wish to be senior, and the other seniors. This also demonstrates the basic importance of seniority.

From among the initiates leaders are selected. These are not chiefs but men of importance and mediators. Special emphasis is laid upon the ingoplor, i.e. those initiates who have emerged by reason of their character and personal qualities.

The internal structure of the segregated villages of the initiates is not very clear. The discussion shows beyond doubt that the function of the age units is that of training the initiates by forming them into separate groups each contributing to the social, military, economic and political activities of the country.

Other minor ceremonies may be performed before the final institution of the age class, and these anticipate the status of class-members for the individual performers. However the ngeherr proper institutes the age class, and this only gives full status to class members.

The study of the interrelations of the age classes shows that these are differentiated from one another, and that it is not correct to aggregate the members of all the age classes under a general term such as "the elders." This must somehow be qualified.

The authority of the members of the age classes is paramount. The power of the prophet is beyond doubt of a ritual nature, although he may exert some political influence.

The internal structure of the age system of the Masai is brought home by an analysis of the names of the age groups. Special names are given to the minimal age divisions and to the age units. These names are finally dropped for the single name of the age class accepted throughout Masailand and recorded for future generations.

The overlapping phenomenon as revealed by the institution of the age units is illustrated by a series of diagrams. The

complication of the Masai age system is thus clearly established.

The pattern of the various initiation ceremonies confirms the peculiar character of circumcision, which follows a pattern of its own. The ceremony itself has no structural value, and, therefore seems to be foreign to the age system as such.

Chapter II deals with the Nandi-Suk peoples. A brief study of their general social organisation, also based on an analysis of their political institutions made by Evans-Pritchard, shows that these peoples form an essentially single ethnographic and linguistic unit with minor differentiations in their territorial, military and political systems.

A conspicuous characteristic of the Nandi-Suk is the cyclical system, of naming, i.e. a fixed series of names for nominating the age classes. Structurally the cyclical system has no significance. The Kipsigis offer the starting point of the discussion because we are better informed about them. The institution of the age class is apparently opened by a special ceremony ("Great News") preceded by the "Ipinda war," i.e. the war of the age classes. This open rivalry obtains also among the other tribes of the Nandi-Suk. It shows that the institution of a class overlaps the period for the institution of the previous class.

Circumcision is accomplished by a complicated ceremonial and constitutes the individual initiation. Candidates are initiated at different seasons; minimal age divisions are formed, but no age unit is ever instituted. The minimal age divisions are associated into a single unit by the institution of the age class. This is finally achieved by the performance of the closing ceremony, which has the form of a "handing over ceremony." Beech states that this ceremony is not performed by the Suk, but there are reasons for doubting the accuracy of his information on this point.

The overlapping phenomenon of the Nandi-Suk age system is not marked by the many complications of the Masai, because the age unit is not instituted. The minimal age divisions are related to one another in terms of seniority. Initiation takes place during the legal period for the institution of the class. The differentiation of the initiation date causes the differentiation of seniority between members. It is not accurate to state that the Nandi-Suk are "born" into a class: they are initiated, though the relationship between a candidate and his father and the rigidity of the cyclical system make it possible to state the name of the class into which a child will be initiated.

The functions of the age system of the Nandi-Suk are social, military and political, but no class operates in any of these activities to the exclusion of other classes, and, therefore, there is no such body as "the class in power."

The age system of the Turkana is studied in Chapter III. The nomadic mode of life has a strong influence on the social life of the Turkana. To their instability is due the vagueness of their territorial divisions.

The structure of the Turkana age system is based primarily on two moieties. A man is initiated into the moiety opposite to his father's. Initiation takes place every good rainy season (3 or 5 years). The ceremony has a twofold nature, a collective aspect expressed by the candidates spearing a bull in an order which defines their seniority; and an individual aspect expressed by a period of segregation spent by everyone of the candidates with his personal sponsor.

Candidates are initiated in two separate groups according to the two moieties, and this division gives rise to two distinct age units. The discussion of the naming system followed by the Turkana is very important for it shows that, though the age units are instituted at different initiation centres, the various groups thus initiated are not considered

as separate units, but as a single unit with either of the two basic moieties. Different names for local groups are progressively dropped, until two single names for the two age units have emerged.

The institution of the age units takes place on the same day at the initiation centres. Members of the two age units initiated on the same date are coevals. At the same time they are distinguished in terms of seniority from the members of the preceding units.

The age class is never formally instituted among the Turkana, but is conceived as a mental category which defines the seniority of the members of two coeval moiety units with relation to the preceding units. The statements of the Turkana on the "oneness" of their age units supplies strong supporting evidence.

Seniority is the key principle to the internal structure of the Turkana age system, and of all their social activity. It is also a fundamental principle of their military organisation. Political power rests upon the class members, and the most senior among them has special distinction and influence.

An appendix to the former chapter deals with the sketchy evidence on the Toposa age system. We are not sure of the internal structure of this system, and the relationship between the two initiation ceremonies (anaget and nyithapana) also escapes us. It is, however, certain that the system serves as a social and political system, and not only as a military system.

The documentation on the Teso, discussed in Chapter IV, is based on a single source. The relationship between the eigworone and the esapan initiation ceremonies constitutes, at present, the main problem of the age system of the Teso. The structure of the age groups constituted is based on a moiety system. It is not clear how membership in either of

the moiety is obtained, but at the time of initiation the defining of such membership, especially for doubtful cases, gives rise to a patent opposition between the "two initiating sets." Arrangement for initiation is made according to the seniority principle. The initiates are junior for 4 years, seniors for a further 4 years.

The esapan is stated to be the initiation into elderhood, but there is no evidence to connect it with the eigworone which is stated to be the initiation into manhood. As a matter of fact, in connection with the esapan two different ceremonies are described, one being an individual initiation for boys, the other, held about every 15-20 years, being a "communal festivity" and of the nature of a "handing over" ceremony. A relationship between the Teso eigworone and the (Nilotic) Lango ewor, and between the Teso esapan and the Turkana aithapanu is suggested but cannot be proved. The evidence is, however, sufficient to show the social, military and political functions of the age system. A singular ritual function is indicated by Wright in connection with the series of names used for the groups instituted at the eigworone. This matter, however, is far from clear.

Chapter V deals with the Lotuko age system. The territorial system is very well defined, and the village is especially highly organised. This influences the entire age system, which consists firstly of sub-units instituted every year for four years in every village-quarter, where there are candidates. Every four years a unit is instituted in a village or group of villages. The unit has a special name at every village. Every 16-20 years all the units of a rain section are instituted into a single age class. The status of every member changes and extends (from the quarter of the village to the section) according to the group into which he is initiated. The interrelations of the age classes and other groups are based on seniority. The function of the age system

is primarily social and military, while it provides also a basis for corporate labour organisation, this being a unique case among the Nilo-Hamites.

An appendix on the Lango and Lokoya age systems shows that among these tribes also, the age system has fundamentally a social and military function, but the age classes do not function to the exclusion of other classes.

In Chapter VI we try to give a synthetic description of the age systems of the Nilo-Hamites. Analysis shows that the age class is the basic element of the system. It is the final stage of the class period, i.e. of the period during which class members are initiated and associated into the age sets. The class incorporates all the minor groups formed during that period. The initiation of class members takes place at different times of the class period. It may be performed either individually or in groups of individuals, but never occurs simultaneously for the whole class. This fact points to the importance of seniority for the structure of the age system. All class members distinguish one another in terms of seniority, and also the class as a whole is separated from the other classes in terms of seniority.

The initiation ceremonies can be considered as individual and collective ceremonies. The class and the minor age sets are not instituted by the performance of the individual ceremonies but by the performance of the collective ceremonies. Only these, therefore, can be spoken of as possessing an instituting value. By this value the collective ceremonies determine the rhythms of the age system structure and give time a structural significance.

In the structure of the age system we may distinguish two essential principles: the rhythmical progression of the groups, and the permanence of the structural shape. The first principle causes the stratification of classes and of their members, and the progressive change of their seniority status.

The second principle defines the "office" or function of the classes at the various stages of their progression in the structural stratification. The nature of this office is not affected by the changing of the classes.

Analysis makes thus apparent the functions of the age system: the orderly differentiation of the classes and of their members; the definition of behaviour patterns which mark their relations; the definition of the structural status of class members and hence of the authority every class member is entitled to exert in corporate activities; the distribution of power among all the classes of the age system.

In Chapter VII we study how these functions of the age systems are carried out with relation to the social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites. We note first that the general characteristic of the Nilo-Hamitic societies is political decentralisation. There is no chief nor any form of centralised administrative machinery. We note secondly and thirdly the political irrelevance of the lineage and clan system and of the territorial system. Special emphasis is given to the dividing effects of these two systems on the social organisation of the Nilo-Hamites. Such effects are counterbalanced by the integrating power of the age system, which is largely evidenced by all our sources. The age system is the sole agency providing the Nilo-Hamitic societies with a general and identical basis for ascertaining the structural status of their members.

Structural status is obtained by introduction into the structure of the age system. This status is fundamentally identical for all class members, and, therefore, class members' capacity for social and political activity is also identical. This identity, however, is very soon differentiated by effect of structural progression, i.e. by the progressive changing of seniority status. It is for this reason that the various forms of corporate activity, military, social,

juridical, ceremonial and ritual, are distributed among all classes in such a way that the right of carrying them out is obtained by a certain class only when it reaches a definite stage of the structural stratification.

A further source of differentiation among class members is provided by personal talents and success, but the influence of such a source works within the frame of the age system structure. Through the structure of the age system power is distributed and balanced among all classes. The integration of all the factors mentioned above forms the political system of the Nilo-Hamites.