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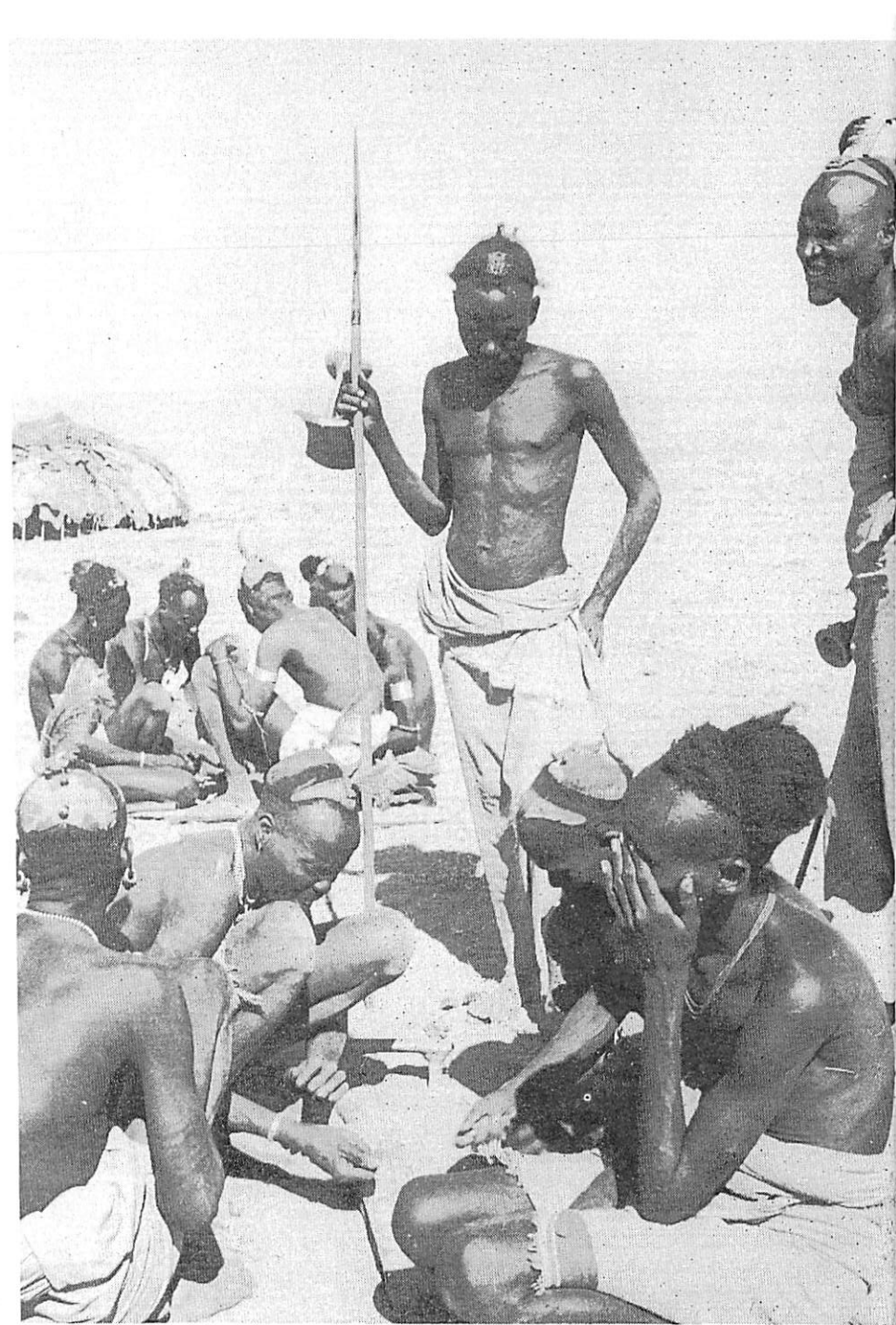
with a Preface by E. L. Peters

Pastoral partners

*AFFINITY AND
BOND PARTNERSHIP
AMONG THE DASSANETCH
OF SOUTH-WEST ETHIOPIA*

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The allocation of bride-wealth

One day, two young brothers who were bride-givers to a man named Ardero visited him to demand their deceased father's share of bride-wealth due for Ardero's second wife, who was their father's brother's daughter. They kept up a flow of speeches studded with phrases such as 'Did you really understand it?' and 'Bring it!' This last phrase is usually used when demanding the return of a debt. The claimants sometimes raised their voices, did not behave towards Ardero with respect and indeed even threatened him. This was repeated on three successive days.

On another occasion Yerar showed me his and his father's herd and named each of the beasts according to its colour, yield and other qualities and explained to whom it belonged. Of one cow he said, 'This is a gift.' When I asked what kind of gift, he distinguished it from a gift of the 'bond of gift' and stressed, 'It is part of the bride-wealth from my sister's husband.' Later, his brother-in-law confirmed this saying: 'It is true, I gave it,' an expression which is normally used of a gift given as a gesture of generosity.

Ardero's bride-wealth payments were expressed as a debt and Yerar's as a gift. In other situations bride-wealth was described as neither a debt nor a gift, but receiving bride-wealth was referred to as 'eating'.

I intend to examine the long and gradual process of the transfer and distribution of bride-wealth through the analysis of its transfer in a number of specific social contexts, and hope by this means to illustrate its consequences for the social relationships of the giver and receivers. Bride-wealth is not transferred *en bloc* to a group of bride-givers but is allocated *via* a series of individual transactions by the bride-receiver to those among the bride-givers with rights in it. The sequence of bride-wealth allocation varies from one person to another and in this chapter I examine some actual options which were open to specific individuals and what they did.

In the previous chapter I discussed the ways bride-givers endeavour

to control the marriages of girls in order to affect the direction of future relationships. I also stressed that, once a marriage has taken place, control over the relationships which derive from it is not automatic. Affinity, like any tie, must be developed and fostered if it is to be effective. Marriage provides a man with a variety of potentially useful affinal relationships. I concentrate on how, within the general and flexible rules which regulate the transaction of bride-wealth, a man is able to choose and plan in order to secure and maintain relationships which promise to be advantageous in the long term.

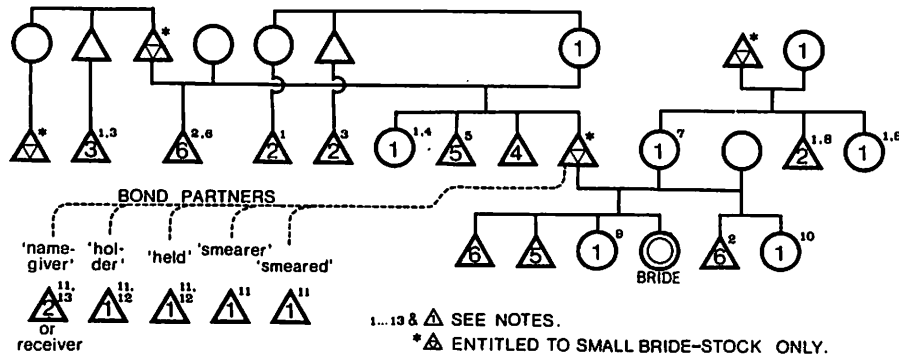
'Bride eaters' and 'cattle eaters'

The expression 'eating' is used for receiving bride-wealth and also as a synonym for sexual intercourse. But in contrast to other expressions, such as *tim* (bush), *burai* (stealing) and *boboy* (to copulate), which are mainly applied to pre-marital or extra-marital sexual activities and stress its illicitness, the term 'eating' is only applied to intercourse between a married couple. It emphasises the sexual rights a husband has over his bride.¹ Thus, a husband 'eats' his bride and bride-givers 'eat' livestock—in other words, the husband acquires rights over his bride while the bride-givers acquire rights over stock. The transfer of these rights is, in Dassanetch theory, simultaneous. In practice, however, they cannot be exactly co-ordinated nor be precisely symmetrical; since a great variety of claims in different categories of social relationships are certain to arise during the very long process of transferring these rights.

Dassanetch divide bride-wealth into two distinct categories: bride-wealth of cattle (*fotocho*) and bride-wealth of small-stock (*shebedam*).² For convenience I use the term bride-wealth to include both bride-cattle and what I shall call small bride-stock, i.e. sheep and/or goats. This distinction in turn indicates some social distinctions. The number of bride-cattle a bride-giver receives depends on his genealogical proximity to the bride and his order of birth in a small group of siblings. Each person with a right to small bride-stock should receive one ram and one ewe. Nevertheless, most, but not all, of the people who have the right to receive small bride-stock also have the right to receive bride-cattle. Small bride-stock, for example, may be transferred to a certain bride-giver in the year the wife gives birth, but the transfer of bride-cattle to the same person may be delayed for up to a further fifteen years.

Fig. VIII.1 shows the bride-givers who have a right to receive bride-wealth. Every bride-giver who is entitled to receive bride-cattle (the number inside the triangle or circle stands for the number of cattle a person has a right to receive) is also entitled to receive small bride-stock.

Fig. VIII.1 A paradigm of bride-givers' rights to bride-wealth.



Notes to Fig. VIII.1

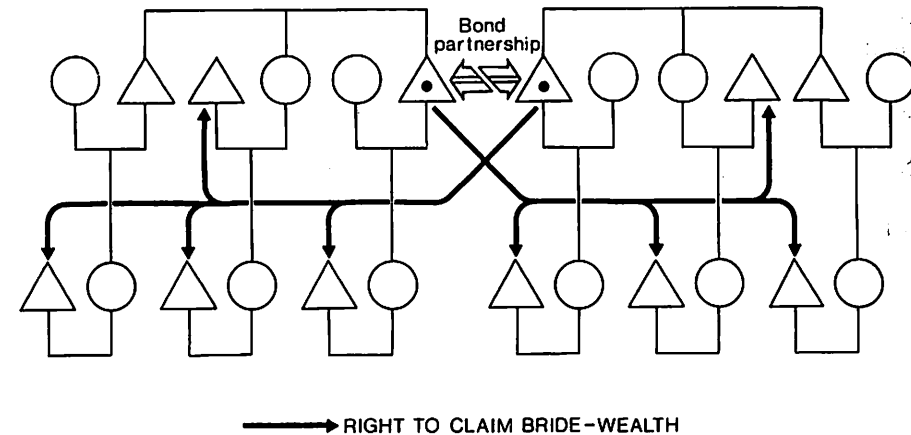
- 1 A sibling receives a portion of the bride-wealth received for the daughter of any other member of that sibling group, according to order of birth within the sibling group, and the order of birth of the daughters of those siblings, i.e. the principle of seniority of birth determines the allocation within both generations.
- 2 The rights to receive bride-wealth held by the bride's half-brothers and the half-brothers of the bride's father rest in the household not in the individuals. The senior household in each set (other than that of the bride's father) receives six cattle irrespective of the number of male members of that household. The next household in seniority receives five cattle and so on. The beasts are given to each set of full and half-brothers jointly irrespective of the number of brothers.
- 3 Only full sisters of the bride's father receive bride-wealth.
- 4 The oldest full brother of the bride's father receives five cattle, the second born four cattle, and so on. The bride's father receives bride-cattle according to his position in his sibling group, but transfers the cattle to his sons. The bride's father should receive 'his' share only after all his full brothers have received their shares.
- 5 If the bride is the eldest or an only daughter, only the eldest senior-born man of each household receives small bride-stock.
- 6 A mother does not receive small bride-stock. By custom she should also transfer the heifer to which she has a right to her youngest son.
- 7 Only full brothers and sisters of the bride's mother receive bride-cattle and small bride-stock.
- 8 A first-born sister receives a heifer and small bride-stock from the marriage of the second born full sister and the second from the third and so on.
- 9 The bride's eldest half-sister of a junior household receives bride-wealth from the marriage of the youngest half-sister of the household next in seniority to her own.
- 10 There may be conditional transfer of bride-cattle and small-stock. If a bond partner of the strong bonds gives an ox to his partner (the bride's father) when the latter 'goes to *dimi*', the partner has a right to receive bride-wealth from each of that partner's daughters' marriages. If a man enters into a bond after the *dimi* ceremony has been performed, the bond partner may acquire bride-wealth rights by the presentation of an ox.
- 11 If at the time a strong bond partnership is established any of the partners has a sister under the age of *dimi* (i.e. under eight), the other partner has right to receive bride-wealth from her marriage, provided that he presents his partner with an ox, either for the *dimi* ceremony or as a gift.

12 A 'name-giving' partner of a bride's father is regarded as her 'little brother' and receives bride-wealth from all the marriages of that bride and her sisters. A 'name-giving' partner may receive bride-wealth many times from only one bond partnership, i.e. as a 'paternal uncle' from the marriages of his 'brothers' (i.e. bride's brothers') daughters, and as a 'maternal uncle' from the marriages of his 'sisters' (i.e. bride's sisters') daughters. These rights are illustrated in Fig. VIII.2.

The total amount of bride-wealth a groom is expected to transfer is never discussed during the marriage negotiations, and the exact number of beasts the bride-receiver will eventually transfer is unknown when the marriage takes place. The actual number of beasts transferred varies from marriage to marriage, partly because the total number and the social composition of the bride-giving group varies. Furthermore, the number of living bride-givers at the time of the marriage does not indicate the total amount of stock which may eventually have to be transferred,³ because their number may increase. If, for example, children are born to the bride's father after the marriage the amount of bride-wealth will be increased because there will be more claimants. Generally speaking, although the distribution and allocation of bride-wealth takes many years and the number of beasts transferred each year is low, sometimes not more than one or two animals, the total amount of livestock a Dassanetch should transfer as bride-wealth is large, and may total up to eighty beasts or more. The allocation of beasts to individual members of the bride-giving group is regulated by certain rules which are presented in the notes to Fig. VIII.1.

Over the years the transfer of both bride-cattle and small bride-stock is regulated by the rules which govern the number of beasts transferred and the approximate times and order when those transfers should

Fig. VIII.2 Bride-wealth rights in the bond partnership of 'name-giving'.



occur. When these rules of bride-wealth transfers have been completed in full, a bride-receiver acquires the right to undergo a number of ceremonies which in turn permit him to achieve a higher social status. Let us look at these rules in detail.

When a man is preparing to go to the *dimi* ceremony he is interrogated by the 'bulls' about the bride-wealth which he has transferred. He must be able to demonstrate that his bride-givers are satisfied with the rate at which he has transferred stock. The rule, which can be waived only if the bride-givers do not object, is that twelve head should have been transferred. This means that the bride-receiver must transfer at least twelve bride-cattle in order to be allowed to proceed to *dimi*. It will be recalled that a man only 'goes to *dimi*' when his first-born daughter reaches the age of eight to ten years. The first set of twelve cattle are not only a prerequisite for the *dimi* ceremony but also legitimise all the children that his wife has already born, or will bear in the future. In the event of a divorce, or if his wife dies, a man must complete the transfer of at least twelve head of cattle in order to acquire full rights over the children that his wife had already borne him. If he does not do so, he relinquishes any rights over the children of that wife, which then pass to their eldest maternal uncle.⁴ Every husband, then, is expected to legitimise his children by the completion of the transfer of twelve head of cattle within seven to ten years after his bride first gives birth.

There is no time limit within which the transfer of small bride-stock should be completed, but its completion entitles a man to perform the 'departed oxen' ceremony (*it galan*), which gives him high prestige. However, not every husband who has completed the transfer can perform the ceremony, which is governed by many customary restrictions—to be discussed in the following chapter. But, regardless of whether or not they are entitled to perform the ceremony, most men try to complete the transfer as soon as possible because to do so gives a husband certain rights over his bride. It can be seen in Table VIII.1 that small bride-stock had been transferred and completed for ninety-two wives out of 147, that is for 62 per cent of all the wives in my sample.

Although a woman is spoken of as 'wife' (*mine*) prior to the completion of the transfer of all the small bride-stock, the term is used only as a 'way of speaking' (*af takhama*). A woman becomes 'a real wife' only when the small bride-stock has been completely 'eaten' for her. The following dispute illustrates this point. A resident of Nyamumery settlement was visited by three sons of the father's father's brother's son of his wife, who came to force him to hand over cattle to them as heirs of their father's right to bride-wealth. They surrounded his byre and announced that the 'cattle will not go to graze unless you give us our cattle'.⁵ The three young men shouted and swore and among the

Table VIII.1 Age of husbands and stages of bride-wealth transfer.

Age of husband	Completion of bride-wealth	Order of marriage		Total wives
		I	II	
		1	2	
20-29	Completed small bride-stock		2	2
	Not completed bride-cattle			0
	Completed bride-cattle	10		12
	Not completed small bride-stock	10	2	14
30-39	Completed small bride-stock	11	6	20
	Not completed bride-cattle			0
	Completed bride-cattle	8	2	15
	Not completed small bride-stock	19	8	35
40-49	Completed small bride-stock	17	10	39
	Not completed bride-cattle	2	1	3
	Completed bride-cattle	7	3	12
	Not completed small bride-stock	26	14	54
50+	Completed small bride-stock	4	6	14
	Not completed bride-cattle		10	14
	Completed bride-cattle	2	3	16
	Not completed small bride-stock	6	19	44
Total wives	61	43	43	147
Total husbands	61	43		104

Note

The age of husbands was estimated and is subject to error.

phrases I recorded were: 'Your mother was not circumcised'; 'Your mother has been paid a compensation for pre-marital pregnancy'; 'Your grandfather did not go to *dimi*'; and, in particular, 'Small bride-stock was not completed for your mother'. All these abusive remarks denied the legal status of the man's mother's marriage. The fact that the transfer of small bride-stock, not bride-cattle, was used as the criterion, even by men who came to collect bride-cattle, indicates that it is the transfer of small bride-stock which gives legal status to a marriage. Judgements in adultery cases also stress the importance of transfers of small stock in determining a husband's rights.

In Nyamumery settlement a man was accused of having committed adultery with the wife of a distant agnate; he was found guilty and

asked to give two milch cows to the husband. This was a severe judgement and I asked one of the 'bulls' why they had ruled so. He answered, 'because she is a wife', and explained that if the transfer of her small bride-stock had not been completed only one milch cow would have been awarded. Much more important than claims for compensation over marital offences (which are relatively rare) is the acquisition of full rights over his bride, *vis-à-vis* the bride-givers, which a husband attains after completing the transfer of small bride-stock. Before the transfer is completed, the brothers of a bride can take back their sister temporarily, together with her young children, and indeed often do so if they think that the husband is procrastinating. A sister is retained until her husband transfers enough cattle to satisfy her brothers. The bride and her children are then returned to the husband. Once the transfer of small-stock has been completed a bride cannot be taken from her husband, even if there is a delay in the transfer of bride-cattle, and any dispute over bride-cattle must be taken to a 'compromise meeting'.

Since cattle and small-stock are not transferred simultaneously a discrepancy often exists between the bride-givers who have received cattle and those who have received only small-stock. The bride-givers may discuss this among themselves and decide that the bride-receiver has been transferring small bride-stock in disproportionately large numbers compared to his transfers of bride-cattle. There should not be a big discrepancy between the two. Bride-givers may refuse to accept small bride-stock until a substantial part of the bride-cattle has been transferred. The last transfer of small-stock marks the transformation of a bride into a wife, and the relinquishment of any legal controls over her by her brothers. The rights a husband achieves on completion of the transfer of small-stock may in practice be overlooked by bride-givers but they are never ignored by the 'bulls', as the next two examples show.

A man came to complain to the 'bulls' that his bride's young paternal cousins had removed her by force. The husband, who had completed the transfer of small-stock (*shebedam*), but did not mention this fact throughout the hearing, frequently repeating: 'She is a wife and I want her back.' The 'bulls' ignored the argument of the bride's cousins, who claimed that no bride-cattle had been transferred for her for four years. One of the 'bulls' concluded the hearing by quoting a proverb: 'When the bull sniffs the cow he should not be hit on the nose.' The young cousins of the bride were told that they did not have the right to take back their father's brother's daughter, that she must be returned to her husband, and that they should slaughter a sheep or goat which they should eat together with the husband.

Another example illustrates the legal control a husband has over his bride for whom small-stock has been entirely transferred. Ar had com-

pleted the payments of small-stock but had only transferred eight head of cattle for his second wife, who had borne him two sons. Ar, who belonged to the Inkabelo tribal section, came to the 'bulls' for justice. He claimed that his wife had been taken away by her brothers about three months earlier, and had since been married by them to a member of the Elele tribal section. An informant, who knew Ar well, told me that there was a history of quarrels between Ar and his affines, and that when his bride had been removed Ar had first said that he was not going to the 'bulls', but would wait until his affines wearied. My informant thought that Ar had not approached the 'bulls' immediately because, in the past, he had twice been brought before them for delaying the transfer of the bride-wealth for his first wife, and had hoped he might reach an agreement with his affines. The affines claimed that their sister had only been residing with the Elele man, had not been married to him and had only committed adultery. Nevertheless, the 'bulls' regarded the case with particular severity and ruled that the woman should return and that Ar should be compensated with three cows. A husband who has completed the transfer of small-stock, but not yet carried out the *it galan* ceremony may still send his wife away, but such a woman must wait for one year before she can remarry, and then only with her husband's permission. Only a widow for whom full small bride-stock has been transferred is bound to the levirate.

The transfer of bride-wealth payments through the years is not always a peaceful and smooth process; indeed most of the disputes I recorded were connected with bride-wealth. I observed a similar pattern in most of them: the bride-givers made constant demands which the bride-receiver resisted. In every base camp or residential unit at which I stayed, at least one of its residents had 'visitors', usually the bride's brothers or paternal cousins, who had come to ask for bride-wealth. Such visitors do not enter but sit outside and wait. The bride-receiver approaches the visitors, usually having already guessed the purpose of their visit. They discuss the matter for hours and the bride-givers usually spend the whole day in the bride-receiver's camp. Each time the bride-givers 'visit', their request for bride-wealth is discussed all over again. My impression was that most married men are under more or less constant pressure to make payments.

The following is a typical example of the sanctions which bride-givers activate against the bride-receiver. Yerbur, the eldest married full brother of Alain's bride Nachere, came to see Alain about transferring more bride-cattle. Yerbur had come from a settlement where he was living with his father, and spent the whole day in his brother-in-law's camp. Their discourse was friendly and Yerbur made no explicit demands but only hinted that Alain should allocate some cattle then, because Yerbur's father was under pressure from his own brothers.

Two and a half months later, Bilile, Nachare's younger unmarried half-brother, and Labur, Nachare's paternal half-cousin, came and demanded that Alain should complete the transfer. Their language was not at all friendly. They shouted that the six cattle that had been transferred in the four years since Nachare had given birth were insufficient, and they demanded three additional head. Alain replied that he had no cattle available at the moment but, when he in his turn received stock from the bride-wealth of his sister, he would send cattle. Five days later, when Alain was on the east bank, Bilile and Labur came and took away Nachare and her son to the camp of her eldest married half-cousin. Nachare's hut and its contents were left as they were. When Alain returned and learned what had happened he went to see Nachare's father and her brother Yerbur. Alain asked Yerbur to help him get his bride back but Yerbur said: 'Give them the bride-cattle they want. They are bad. My bride-cattle are not important and you can give it to me another year, but give their bride-cattle now.' Yerbur accompanied Alain to the camp where his bride was being kept, and spoke on his behalf. Alain remained silent; Nachare's captors were adamant. It looked as if Yerbur was on Alain's side and was trying to appease his uncle and cousins. Alain merely muttered from time to time, 'Yes, I understand.' They finally agreed that Inyakoko's father would receive a cow and Nachare's maternal uncle an ox. Alain asked a bond-partner to lend him a cow; six days later he took the beasts to the bride-givers and he and his bride returned home.

When a bride is taken away she is always taken to the camp of her half-brothers or paternal cousins and never to her father's. A bride's father is in a unique position among bride-givers to mediate in bride-wealth disputes between his own agnates and his affines and the bride-receiver, since a father does not receive cattle from the marriages of his daughters (except as an heir to another's right) and is not in direct competition with his son-in-law over livestock. His son-in-law needs him because the bride's father can not only direct pressures towards the bride-receiver but also reduce or divert those pressures. When a dispute arises a father will strive to mediate because he can gain nothing from a continuing dispute: he is structured to be a mediator since he is involved with both parties, but has no immediate self-interest. Of course, his role as a mediator is influenced by his relations with his agnates, affines and bond-partners, and he may well pursue the interests of his own generation. He may also be manipulated to exert pressures on the bride-receiver. Nevertheless, the fact that a father does not receive bride-wealth, a point which is emphasised whenever Dassanetch discuss the subject,⁶ enables him to act as the bride-receiver's man among the bride-givers, and it is he who is first appealed to use his influence. Furthermore, because a bride is never taken from her husband by her

father and is never brought to his home, a husband can maintain affectionate relations with his father-in-law and even reside in his camp. A husband need never fear that his father-in-law will use his bride against him. Whatever disputes arise over bride-wealth, relations between a husband and his bride's father remain good. The relationship is further protected by 'relations of respectful avoidance' (*somo*).

Another, and much harsher, way of extracting bride-cattle is to force the bride-receiver to pay up by preventing his calves and small-stock from leaving the byre; on such occasions a small fight may develop between the bride-receiver and his bride-givers. A 'compromise meeting' (*nyebukui*) is always held if a fight occurs, at which the bride-receiver sometimes slaughters a sheep or a goat. At such 'compromise meetings' the bride-receiver sometimes promises to transfer his personal name-ox (*ain bisiet*). Although such an ox counts for no more than an ordinary ox, it has particular value because it is an honour to the bride-givers;⁷ to give a name-ox as bride-cattle requires a strong reason, such as the need to settle a serious quarrel with affines.

Whatever the nature of the dispute, and whatever the way in which a compromise was reached, bride-stock were never transferred on the day of the compromise, unless the bride had been taken by force. The bride-receiver himself drove the beasts to the camp of the bride-givers where both drank coffee and ate the meat of a sheep or goat together.

Who gets what, when and why?

The persons entitled to receive bride-wealth are divided into three orders of ideal moral priority. The orders are not exclusive and not all bride-wealth debts of the first category have to be discharged before payment to the second category commences. In almost all instances I encountered, the orders of priority were not adhered to strictly, because the ideal order takes no account of the varying strength of claims to bride-wealth, nor does it correspond to the varying abilities bride-givers have to put pressure on a bride-receiver. Each of the three degrees of priority, however, is weighted with supernatural sanctions. Apart from the practical sanctions bride-givers can take against the bride-receiver (such as temporarily taking back his bride, closing livestock within a byre or disrupting his daily routine by frequent 'visits'), each bride-giver can also activate a supernatural force. This can only happen if the bride-giver is justifiably enraged because his claims have not been met; if his wrath is unjustified the invocation can cause no harm. Likewise, taking positive self-help or jural action of the sorts just described do not imply that the use of any such invocation is likely. The supernatural sanctions are not invoked in connection with specific disputes over the allocation of bride-wealth but remain an implied threat if all else fails.

But a justified invocation is not based solely on the priorities of moral claims. It is the overall strength of the right to bride-wealth (of which moral priority is only one element) that justifies invocation. The outcome of an invocation is proportionate to the strength of the right—a severe affliction for a strong claim and only a slight one for a weak claim. The order of moral claims is, therefore, only one criterion by which a right to bride-wealth is evaluated. This, and the other two criteria—the number of beasts the bride-giver has a right to receive and the genealogical proximity to the bride—are each divided into three categories of strength or priority; ‘first’ (*bi erkob*), ‘middle’ (*bi tomo*) and ‘last’ (*bi eldad*). As can be seen from Table VIII.2, these categories, as far as the bride-givers are concerned, do not overlap and only partially converge. The table has been compiled from answers to questions concerning the relative strength of various claims. There were differences in the evaluation of particular claims, since they were subject to the degree of co-operation that existed between bride-receivers and particular bride-givers, so that borderline cases are not always clear cut. However, the division of rights and their strengths presented in the Table represents a framework which may serve as a basis for analysis.

No single criterion indicates the whole strength of the right to claim bride-wealth. Some of the strongest claims according to the number of bride-cattle and the genealogical proximity to the bride, for example, are those of the brothers of the bride, but these are among the weakest according to moral criteria. Those with weak claims as far as the number of beasts are concerned and who are not cognates of the bride, for example bond partners of the bride’s father, should receive their share early according to the order of moral priority. Bride-givers are assigned to different categories of priority in respect to each of the three criteria of assessment. The discrepancy between the various categories creates a situation where the debt relations of a bride-receiver to his affines are complicated, for it is never precisely clear whose claim is the weightiest.

These options may be exploited by the bride-receiver but, before discussing the personal choices that a bride-receiver can exercise, and his actual tactics for transferring portions of the bride-wealth, let us look at yet a further complication. The notion that ‘bride-wealth is never lost’ means that the rights of a bride-giver are inherited and cannot be denied. This implies not only that everyone will receive his share in due course, however long he may have to wait, but also that even if a particular bride-giver dies before his share is fully transferred the right to receive that share is inherited by his sons. But even at the commencement of transfer all the bride’s grandfather’s generation will probably be dead and it is likely that some of her father’s set will also be dead. This subject is discussed in the next chapter, so here I only note

Table VIII.2 Criteria of bride-wealth rights and their relative strengths.¹

Moral claim	Number of beasts ²	Genealogical proximity to bride ³
<i>Strength I, first (bi erkob)</i>		
Fa Mo	Fa Br (half) (6)	Fa
Mo Mo	Br (half) (6)	Mo
Fa Br (half) ⁴	Br (full) (6)	Br (full)
Mo	Fa Br (full) (5)	Si (full)
Fa	Br (full) (5)	Fa Br (full)
	Fa Br (full) (4)	Mo Br
	Fa Fa Br So (3)	Fa Si
		Mo Si
<i>Strength II, middle (bi tomo)</i>		
Fa Si	Fa Mo Br So (2)	Fa Fa
Mo Br	Fa Mo Si So (2)	Fa Mo
Fa Fa Br So	Mo Br (2)	Mo Fa
Fa Mo Br So	Fa Mo (1)	Mo Mo
‘Name-giver’ ⁵	Mo Mo (1)	Fa Br (half)
‘Holder’ ⁵	Fa Si (1)	Br (half)
‘Held’ ⁵	Mo Si (1)	Si (half)
‘Smearer’ ⁵	Si (full) (1)	
‘Smeared’ ⁵	Si (half) (1)	
‘Name-receiver’ ⁵	‘Name-giver’ ⁶ (2)	
<i>Strength III, last (bi eldad)</i>		
Fa Br (half) ⁷	Mo ⁸ (1)	Fa Fa Br So
Fa Br (full)	‘Holder’ (1)	Fa Fa Si So
Mo Si	‘Held’ (1)	Fa Mo Br So
Fa Mo Si So	‘Smearer’ (1)	Fa Mo Si So
Br (half)	‘Smeared’ (1)	‘Name-giver’
Br (full)	‘Name-receiver’ ⁶ (2)	‘Name-receiver’
Si (full)	Fa Fa Si So (s)	‘Holder’
Si (half)	Mo Fa (s)	‘Held’
Mo Fa	Fa Fa (s)	‘Smearer’
Fa Fa	Fa (s)	‘Smeared’

Notes

1 The terms ‘first’, ‘middle’ and ‘last’ are literal translations.

2 The number of bride-cattle each bride-giver has a right to has been put in brackets. If a bride-giver has a right to small bride-stock only it is indicated by (s).

3 The first (*bi erkob*) category includes kinsmen among those who belong to ego’s *gal-le* category. Those in the last category (*bi eldad*) all belong to the *lil-metch* category of relations which include partners as well as kinsmen.

4 Senior household only and excluding that of the father.

5 Bond partner of the bride’s father.

6 Though a ‘name-giver’ has a right to two head of bride-cattle he has been listed after bride-givers who have a right to only one head of cattle, because the name-giver’s right is conditional and can be fulfilled only if the

name-giver has presented an ox to the bride's father as a gift. 'Name-receiver' has been listed after other partners who have a conditional right to only one head of cattle because the big age difference between the partners means that this right is unlikely to be exerted.

7 According to seniority of households.

8 The mother of the bride has been put in the last category and after some bond partners, because she has no right to small bride-stock and also because her right is transferred to her son on her death (see note 7 to Fig. VIII.1).

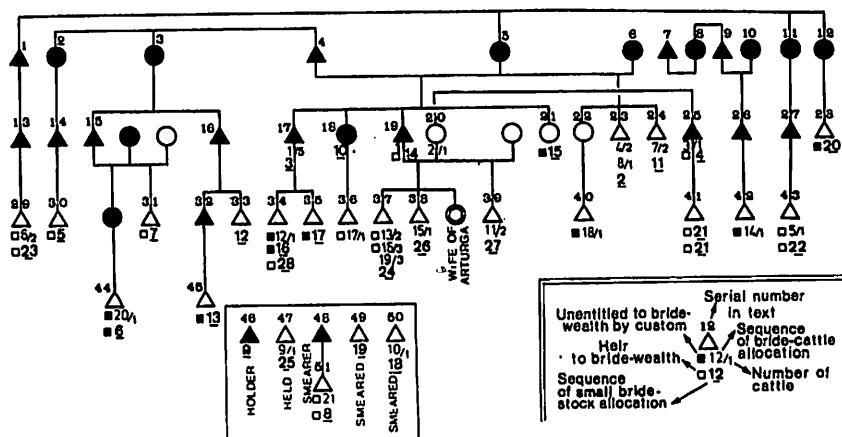
that, since inherited bride-wealth rights lose some of their strength, the criteria listed in Table VIII.2 do not necessarily apply to an inherited right. Thus the bride-receiver has more options that he can manipulate, within the categories of each criterion and between them, than Table VIII.2 shows.

Arturga, an elder in his early fifties, was married to Namiede, who was about forty. He had distributed bride-cattle and small-stock over a period of some twenty years. As could be expected, the degree of co-operation between particular bride-givers and bride-receivers had changed over the years. Although the actual sequence of allocation indicates social connections which existed at the time of each stock transfer, it was impossible to determine the precise nature of these connections at any particular time. My only concern is to reconstruct the sequence of allocation, based on the information supplied to me by Arturga himself. There must be some errors in reconstructing the sequence of transfers over such a long period of time, but I think that, by and large, my account is reasonably correct.

According to Arturga, he had transferred thirty-five head of cattle and fifty-eight small-stock over twenty years, which is an annual mean of 1.75 cattle and about four small-stock. Usually a bride-receiver transfers several beasts in any one year, and Arturga's allocations were probably on the low side. Nevertheless Arturga's case illustrates that the bride-receiver has relative freedom in deciding how many head he wishes to transfer to each giver and when he does so. There are certain expectations that the bride-receiver must fulfil; for example, an elder brother should receive bride-wealth before his younger brother, and a bride-giver with a weak claim should not receive his share before one with a stronger claim. But, the three different criteria by which a bride-giver's right is evaluated, the distinction between cattle and small-stock, and the fact that the bride-giver need not necessarily receive all his share at one time, all allow the bride-receiver to manipulate the transfers according to his personal interests. Indeed, a man endeavours not to concentrate his payments and to distribute both kinds of bride-wealth as widely as possible. Generally speaking, the sequence of allocation of cattle largely determines the sequence of small-stock transfers.

A bride-receiver cannot meet the rights of all bride-givers at the same time and not all affines are treated as equals. This means that a bride-receiver must find a balance between maintaining a relatively large network of effective ties as a pool of potentially long-term relations and the exploitation of specific affinal relationships for his immediate needs. The achievement of this balance requires that he should allocate bride-wealth in such a way that it will not provoke bride-givers to claim their rights and take sanctions against him, and yet enable him to utilise those affinal links that will best suit his changing interests. The very way bride-wealth is distributed—in that the bride-receiver himself allocates stock at his own discretion—in itself fosters disputes, not so much over the number of beasts allocated, as because certain bride-givers feel that they have been deprived of their share for too long, or interpret a particular allocation as a provocation. A bride-giver who has to assert his claim to his share expresses that demand as if he were requiring the return of a debt. If a legitimate claim to bride-wealth is left unfulfilled because the bride-receiver has already allocated stock in respect of a lesser claim, the bride-receiver can be pressured to meet the claims immediately. A bride-wealth gift may be defined as either an allocation of stock to an affine who has no prescribed right to receive it (as, for example, Arturga did when he allocated bride-wealth to (42), (40), (34) and (44) or as when he transferred an ox before it was due to (53)). When a bride-receiver makes such a gift, he usually states that he has done so because he 'liked' the recipient. But other reasons usually lie behind such a statement such as labour needs and relations with

Fig. VIII.3 The sequence of bride-wealth allocation to the bride-givers of Arturga.



partners in other enterprises. A bride-wealth gift increases the bride-receiver's brokerage power and he may deliberately publicise the presentation of a gift to one with no prescribed right. Certainly the receiver owes 'something' to the donor because he is not expected to return a gift, indeed he is unable to do so in the context of affinal relationships. The bride-receiver can therefore use the framework of bride-wealth allocation to establish relations with affines whose rights are weak, or who have none. But disproportionate or frequent gifts lay the bride-receiver open to the risk of bride-wealth claims and sanctions from those who have strong legitimate rights. A bride-receiver cannot start by distributing bride-wealth gifts as he might wish, but first must meet the claims of his bride-givers who have strong rights. Moral pressures cannot be flouted. It was no accident that Arturga started to distribute cattle as gifts to people with no rights only after he had made substantial transfers to claimants with rights. By and large, the more stock he has transferred the more freedom of choice the bride-receiver has.

When a bride-giver presses his claim he usually does so by referring to one criterion of his right. He may say 'Am I not one of the *gal-le* of the bride?', referring to the strength in his right based on genealogical proximity to the bride, which, as a general claim to bride-wealth, means very little. What bride-givers usually do is to refer to an allocation, either by right or as a gift, to a third person of whom it is stated 'He is of another kind', which implies that, although he is a bride-giver, he is not as close to the bride as is the claimant. Likewise a bride-giver may emphasise the fact that he has a right to four head while another bride-giver only has a right to one and that therefore his right should be met first. A husband can ignore such a claim as long as its relative strength is not clear. Though a bride-giver may emphasise only one aspect of the right, the bride-receiver is likely to take into consideration, and accordingly to calculate in his allocations, the totality of each bride-giver's right. One bride-giver, the mother's brother, for example, may be close to the bride in terms of genealogical proximity but have a right to two head so that his moral priority is in the 'middle' category. If the above overall right is compared with that of another bride-giver, a half-brother, for example, whose genealogical proximity to the bride is in the 'middle' category and who has a right to six head but whose moral claim falls in the last priority, it is difficult to determine whose overall right is stronger. On the other hand, a bride-giver who intends to claim may be reluctant to do so if his right, as compared with that of another bride-giver, has not clear-cut precedence. In pressing their claims bride-givers try to avoid situations in which the strength of their right is open to varying interpretations. Not every 'compromise meeting' is resolved in the bride-giver's favour. A bride-receiver may refer to other criteria of rights and could well emerge the stronger from such

a meeting, not only because his recent allocations have been given approval but also because the bride-givers who pressed their claim may have been deterred from trying again, thus giving the bride-receiver greater freedom of choice.

As the instance of Arturga illustrates, there are considerations other than the strength of any right *per se* that influence the bride-receiver's distribution. Basically there are four additional factors.

First are demographic changes among the bride-givers, and in particular the deaths of the older generations of affines, and the inheritance of their rights. In Arturga's case his bride's father was the heir to his own mother's share of small-stock, and fourteenth in order of priority. Number (41), who had inherited a right to small-stock from his grandmother, received his share twenty-first in order. But if (5) and (7) had been alive it can be assumed that they would have been among the first to receive their shares. The bride's eldest paternal uncle (17) was alive when Arturga's daughter was born and received his share among the first, but, if he had been dead, his son and heir (34) would almost certainly have had to wait several years for that share. If we combine the allocation of cattle and small-stock into one general sequence of allocations, the generation of the bride's father received their share first and the succeeding generation of affines last. It may be conjectured that until his death the bride's father played a central role in directing demands on Arturga and thus influenced the distribution and sequence of the allocation. Had the father of Arturga's bride been dead at the time of the marriage, Arturga's freedom of choice might have been greater.

The second factor that influences the actual allocation is the number of stock already transferred.

Third are changes in the life-cycle of some bride-givers. In the instance of Arturga, the marriage of (38) or the 'going to *dimi*' of (41) each meant a change in their social status, which encouraged Arturga to transfer stock to them and thereby alter the basis of his relations with them.

Fourth, the amount of livestock transferred to affines over the years is, to a large extent, determined by whether, or not the bride has given birth to children who live, and whether there is a girl amongst them. If a woman does not bear a daughter her husband is encouraged to take another wife so that he will be able to 'go to *dimi*'. As far as bride-wealth allocation is concerned a woman who 'did not bring daughters' to her husband is distinguished from a barren woman or a woman whose children died at birth. A barren woman is called *niakhataran*, the word used to designate any woman between her marriage ceremony and her first pregnancy. Dassanetch state clearly that such a woman is more like an unmarried girl than a wife and therefore the husband is not expected to transfer any bride-wealth. Nevertheless, a husband usually

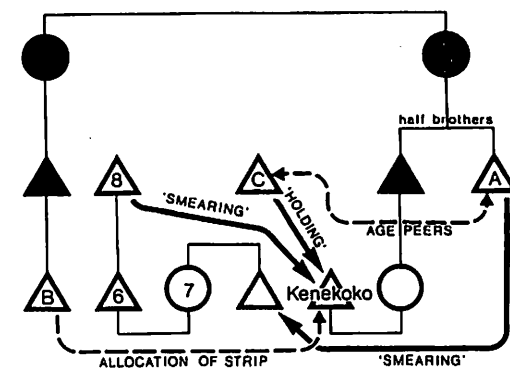
transfers a few cattle as a gesture of goodwill in order to maintain good affinal relations after a time has elapsed. Some bride-wealth is expected for a woman whose children have died, but seldom more than a few head. But bride-givers cannot exert much pressure, let alone take sanctions, against a man with an unproductive bride. Disputes usually arise when a bride has borne only sons. The bride's kin may not be satisfied with the stock they receive, but there is little they can do, either to block their daughter's husband's way to another marriage or to prevent him allocating stock to his new affines. At one 'compromise meeting' the affines of a first wife demanded more bride-cattle. The husband recounted details of the fourteen head which he had distributed among the givers of his first wife, and added; 'My little wife [i.e. his second] has borne me a daughter. I must give her people enough cattle to permit me to go to *dimi*.' In other words, in a polygynous household, the bride-receiver gives priority in allocation to the givers of the wife who has borne him a daughter rather than to the givers of the wife who has not. These provisos inevitably affect a bride-receiver's calculations about allocation and his investments in relationships.

Other factors may influence a bride-receiver's choice, for example, the transfers to (29), (43) and (50) were probably affected by the fact that Arturga had no young sons to herd for him at that time, whereas the recipients had, and were able to help him make up that shortage of labour. A man may also choose to reinforce a weak bond partnership tie, as when Arturga gave a gift to (42).

Sometimes a bride-receiver transfers cattle to one bride-giver while another, with an obviously stronger right, is unable to claim, because of the kinds of relationship of his social network. A claimant may be manipulated into a position in which his claim is neutralised, as the following example illustrates.

Kenekoko allocated an ox and a cow to B (see Fig. VIII.4), who was the father's mother's sister's son's son of his wife. B's right to two head was inherited and was met about five years after Kenekoko's wife first gave birth. At the time it occurred this allocation seemed rather odd because A's right, which was stronger by all the criteria, had not yet been met.⁸ Kenekoko's wish to strengthen his relations with B, who had allocated him a strip regularly inundated for the last three years, lay behind this. The allocation made by Kenekoko to B could have been regarded as a provocation, since A's right was clearly stronger. A's lack of action can be explained by the network of relations which connected Kenekoko and him to other people. Number (8) was the 'smearer' of Kenekoko; A was the 'smearer' of, and had looking after his herd, the young affine of (8) and (6); Kenekoko's 'holder' was an age-peer of A. If a bride-receiver either wants to block a claim or does not want a particular allocation to be interpreted by others as a provocation to them he

Fig. VIII.4 Kenekoko's bride-wealth decision.



BRIDE-WEALTH RIGHT:

	△ A	△ B
Cattle	4	2
Proximity	II	III
Moral claim	III	III

makes use of some ties in his social network. He can activate these by visiting selected bride-givers and dropping hints about the possible counter-pressures that could be brought to bear. Kenekoko did not need to do this because he anticipated that A was well aware of his existing relations with C, (8) and (6), which would prevent A from pressing his claim.

When a man marries he becomes indebted to a set of bride-givers, and his position in relation to his bride-givers appears inferior and difficult. Apparently, he is only one yet must allocate bride-wealth from his own herd whereas each of the many bride-givers has rights in his livestock and may, moreover, take sanctions against him, block his proceeding to the *dimi* ceremony and his achievement of full rights over his bride. In that they appear to control the sequence of allocation, the bride-receiver would seem to be in such a position that he must accept their terms.

I hope I have shown above that this impression is not entirely accurate. The bride-givers themselves are not a homogeneous group. Some only have bride-wealth rights through bond partnership with the bride's father. The bride-givers are not co-residents; each of them has his own resources and interests and is enmeshed in a network of ties which does not coincide with those of the others. There may well be disputes among them about the kind of ties they wish to develop with

the bride-receiver. All in all, the latter is left with relative freedom of action to allocate to individual bride-givers as it suits his interests: within the general rules he can manipulate the various criteria of bride-wealth rights for his own benefit. A successful bride-receiver is a man who manages to allocate to those bride-givers he wishes and thereby achieve their effective co-operation without provoking other bride-givers into pressing their rights and taking sanctions against him.

The transfer of small bride-stock

Only a few husbands perform the 'departed oxen' and the 'household' (*gol*) ceremonies marking the completion of the marriage ceremonies that incorporate a wife into her husband's generation-set and clan. In effect, completion of the allocation of small-stock gives the husband an effective legal hold over his wife. A man cannot hold any formal office in his generation-set until he has done this, but it is connected with the transfer of bride-cattle. Bride-givers try to keep a balance between the two types of stock, even though they do not form a homogeneous group and do not follow a co-ordinated policy, because individual advantage is unlikely to coincide with common advantage.

For the bride-receiver, the allocation of small-stock is more complex than that of cattle. A bride-giver may refuse small-stock but will very rarely refuse cattle. Small-stock are likely to be refused, and this is because, while the benefit a bride-giver gains from two head of small-stock is slight, the bride-receiver moves one step nearer to achieving full legal rights over his wife. More important, however, is that early transfer of small-stock may be interpreted as implying a wish to restrict co-operation and reciprocal relationships. If a bride-giver is offered his share of small-stock before the cattle he may suspect that the bride-receiver wants to close down relationships. Furthermore, once a bride-giver has agreed to accept his share of the small-stock, his right to claim cattle has been weakened. A bride-receiver may argue, however, that he is only in a position to offer small-stock as a first instalment. I heard such an argument used with success by a bride-receiver at a 'compromise meeting' in Nyamumery settlement. All those who took an active part in the discussion were themselves husbands and well aware of the difficulties involved in trying to satisfy all the bride-givers at the same time. A man does not usually bring small-stock to a bride-giver as a surprise, but first estimates the bride-giver's attitude, hints that he wishes to make such an allocation and only when he is almost certain that his offer will not be rejected drives the small-stock to the latter's camp. A bride-giver often indicates that he prefers coffee beans to small-stock; the bride-receiver then trades the stock for beans. The bride-giver occasionally invites the bride-receiver to drink this coffee

with him, and often an invited party of neighbours eat one of the animals together. The right of refusal is a useful—and used—prerogative of bride-givers. I encountered many instances in which a bride-receiver had to wait for the death of certain bride-givers, who refused to accept their small-stock, in order to complete the transfers and achieve his rights. The heirs of a bride-giver rarely refuse.

When asked to specify with which bride-givers a man does or does not eat meat or drink coffee, Dassanetch answer in general terms of respect and friendship. Nevertheless, a pattern can be discerned. A bride-receiver first allocates small-stock to his bride's father and brothers. These transfers are usually accompanied by the joint ritual consumption of meat, which is the first ceremonial recognition the agnates of the ascending generation give to the marriage, and marks their formal approval of the beginning of the allocation of bride-wealth. This meal is especially important if the initial marriage procedures were marred by disputes and can smooth the way for subsequent transfers. The expectations of some bride-givers for close co-operation with the bride-receiver may, as described above, motivate them to refuse to accept small-stock. Therefore, a bride-giver who is offered small-stock may take advantage of the opportunity to press his right to cattle or press the bride-receiver into certain concessions, such as sharing a strip, assistance in agricultural activities or co-operation in animal husbandry; a bride-receiver may prefer to give way rather than face a stubborn refusal to accept small-stock. If the bride-giver insists that certain conditions be fulfilled before accepting his share of small-stock, and the bride-receiver refuses to meet these demands, deadlock may be reached; a bride-receiver, therefore, will try to allocate small-stock to those bride-givers who will accept their share without causing him too much trouble. Such 'safe' bride-givers include first, those entitled to only one head who have already received it, or those entitled to more but who have already received a substantial part; second, those with whom co-operation has been firmly established but whose rights are low in priority; third, those who cannot press their right because of the complexity of their relations with persons who are also connected to the bride-receiver, and fourth, those with weak rights, such as those who have inherited them or a bride's father's bond partners.

A bride-receiver thus aims to exploit any situation in which the bride-giver cannot refuse his small-stock. He should try not to rush transfers of small-stock but rather to manoeuvre between the various bride-givers and allocate stock to each as the appropriate opportunity presents itself.

It is up to a bride-giver to suggest a joint ritual meat eating or coffee drinking. Some may use the occasion to show their satisfaction with the way the bride-receiver has allocated their share of cattle, or as a public

demonstration of the good relationships that exist between them. Equally, not to make such an offer may be interpreted as dissatisfaction with the allocation or their relationship. A bride-receiver may ignore such signs of dissatisfaction except from his bride's brothers or her father's brothers. Sometimes a bride-giver who feels deprived, but whose right is weak, may approach a close agnate of the bride to ask him to influence the bride-receiver. If a number of bride-givers complain about the way the bride-wealth is being allocated, the bride's agnates can show their disapproval by not offering a beast for consumption when one of them is presented with his small-stock. Such holding back is a clear warning that unless the bride-receiver takes the interests of other bride-givers into consideration, he may soon be faced with a refusal to accept small-stock and find his path to completing the transfer blocked. If a bride-receiver is able to plan his allocation of small-stock freely, he leaves to last the transfers to people with whom he has effective relationships and who have already received cattle. After his twentieth transfer of small-stock Arturga only allocated to those who had already received bride-cattle.

A man who succeeds in smoothly transferring small-stock to his bride-givers eventually reaches the final stage, that of allocating small-stock to his bride's father's father, or more likely to his heirs. The heir occupies a crucial position since his right is the last to be met. Nominally the father's father of the bride, being the senior member of the bride-givers, represents the whole group of holders of bride-wealth rights, and thus his acceptance of the last transfer of small-stock implies that all the bride-givers recognise the rights of the husband.

Completion of the transfer of small-stock can also facilitate a man's second marriage: if a number of bride-givers are dissatisfied with the number of cattle already transferred, they can cause great difficulties by spreading rumours about his behaviour towards them. A completed allocation shows a man's potential affines that his relationships with his first affines must have been satisfactory.

Conclusion

Close agnates can, to a certain extent, influence a man's selection of a spouse, but once a marriage has taken place, it is up to the husband to exploit the set of potential relations which marriage has opened up for him. A man pays his own bride-wealth in his own time and thus demonstrates his independence of his father and brothers. No bachelor needs to wait either for the household herd to multiply or for his sister to marry in order to take a bride himself. Transfers of bride-wealth are spread over many years and neither a groom nor the herd of his household are impoverished at the point of marriage, nor are the bride-givers

suddenly or spectacularly enriched. Marriage, therefore, provides a bride-receiver with a starting point from which he can build his own set of useful and enduring relationships, independently of his father and brothers. The way bride-wealth is allocated enables him to select those bride-givers with whom he wishes to co-operate and with whom he endeavours to maintain a network of effective ties.

The long and gradual transfer of bride-wealth is the counterpart of the long and gradual process of bestowing rights over the bride to the bride-receiver. Usually, the rights a husband has over his wife increase with the number of beasts transferred. Dassanetch also say, however, that a man is called upon to transfer fewer cattle if he has good relations with his bride-givers.⁹ Several times when I mentioned the name of a man who had transferred fewer than I had anticipated, the comment was: 'Oh, that man has good relations with his affines.' Men contrive to transfer as few beasts as possible while still maintaining good relations with their bride-givers. Sometimes it is in the interest of bride-givers not to press for rapid transfer but rather to slow it down, and thereby to maintain their rights over the bride-receiver for a longer time: the refusal of the father of Natade and her father's brothers to accept the bulk of the bride-wealth from Bilile in one payment, as described in Chapter VII, is a case in point. The transfer of bride-wealth is not usually smooth and peaceful; most bride-receivers are under constant pressures to transfer stock, and disputes and quarrels over bride-wealth are commonplace—indeed, an integral part of the process of its allocation.

The very way bride-wealth is allocated fosters disputes. Bride-givers cannot help themselves to bride-wealth—it must be given individually. This means that regardless of where a dispute takes place (usually in the camp of the bride-receiver) and the extent of the bad feelings, the bride-receiver must always go to a bride-giver's camp and hand over the beasts there. Bride-wealth demands are highest, and most disputes take place, during the dry season. On the other hand, by custom bride-cattle are actually transferred during the wet season of plenty. If the bride-giver and the bride-receiver have parted with bad feelings after a dispute in the dry season, there is a cooling-off period before the plenty of the wet season which enables the bride-giver to provide hospitality to the bride-receiver when he actually brings the stock. After any dispute, the joint consumption of meat, coffee or milk when bride-wealth is transferred provides an excellent way to re-establish good relations between the donor and the receiver.¹⁰

Arturga, whose allocations I have summarised, was about fifty years of age. He will almost certainly die without transferring to all the bride-givers who have a right. Some rights will only be partially met, and others not at all. The statement that 'bride-wealth is never lost'

applies effectively only to the death of a bride-giver while the bride-receiver is alive, when the right of the deceased is inherited by his son. It does not apply to bride-wealth which has not been allocated by a bride-receiver during his lifetime, a son does not pay the bride-wealth debts of his father. Dassanetch associate women with cattle, and explicitly so when they say that both bride-givers and bride-receiver 'eat' within the moiety. Thus for a son to transfer bride-wealth for his father, who is of the alternate moiety, would be tantamount to incest, because he would be paying bride-wealth debts for his mother with his own cattle.

A widow who has passed child-bearing age is unlikely to be taken in leviratic marriage. She usually resides with a married son or daughter, and bride-wealth transfers for her cease. On the other hand, husbands whose wives die prematurely continue to pay bride-cattle but, obviously, do not transfer small bride-stock. In many instances I recorded, a husband was continuing to transfer cattle even after a divorce. This clearly shows that although conjugal relations have come to an end affinal ties continue. A typical comment from a divorced husband was 'She [i.e. his former wife] is bad but her brothers are good.' I suggest that he, like many others, was reluctant to write off the investments he had made over the years in the relationships established with his bride-givers.

With the passage of time and the gradual transfer of bride-wealth a change in the relations between bride-givers and bride-receiver takes place. At the beginning of a marriage the bride is the focal point, and the bride-receiver transfers stock in order to increase his rights over her and her children. Likewise, bride-givers demand stock because they are related to the bride or her father. However, after the transfer of twelve head of cattle, and especially when it coincides with the completion of the transfer of small-stock, transfers shift from being payments of bride-wealth into transfers designed to strengthen selected social relationships which have already demonstrated their utility. The first stages of an affinal relationship are dominated by mutual suspicion: when a man marries he only vaguely knows what sort of pressures the bride-givers will exert on him in the future. Equally, bride-givers themselves cannot be sure how good a wife the girl they have given will be and what her productive capacity will be. A daughterless bride has in a sense fulfilled the expectations of neither her husband nor her kin. Such a woman causes the discontinuation of affinal relations in the second generation, since her husband's kin and her own do not become joint bride-givers. Only when the bride has given birth is the bride-receiver expected to transfer the first twelve head of bride-cattle to those with the strongest claims. But equally, it is recognised that a bride-receiver cannot allocate bride-wealth to all bride-givers and that the sequence of

allocation and distribution reflect his interests. After some transfers have been made, and if affinal relations between the bride-receiver and some bride-givers are good, they tend to establish bond partnerships (see Table V.3). These bonds are usually strong ones, and the most frequent is the strongest bond of all—that of 'name-giving'. Furthermore, when the bride-receiver's daughter marries, many members of the two groups of givers and receivers become joint bride-givers in respect of that girl's marriage. When Arturga's daughters marry, for example, his wife's brothers will also become bride-givers with rights to receive bride-wealth from those marriages. It could be, for example, that (37) (in Fig. VIII.3) will receive in the same year two head of cattle from Arturga as the completion of his share and a further two head from Arturga's son-in-law in his role as a maternal uncle of Arturga's daughter. If Arturga has established a bond with (37), then both (37) and Arturga will receive bride-wealth from the marriages of each other's daughters. (see the multiple and complex rights involved in the bond of 'name-giving' in Fig. VIII.2).

All in all, at the marriage of the bride-receiver's daughter the ties between bride-givers and bride-receivers become enmeshed in a complex variety of rights. The distinction between people who have rights and those who must meet the claims is not always clear-cut. That some bride-givers and some bride-receivers share a common interest in the later stages of allocation perpetuates their relations. Stock transfers at this stage should be regarded as strengthening existing multiplex relations between them rather than as bride-wealth payments. The vested interests in the future common to both the bride-receiver and some bride-givers also limits the spread of disputes. Generally speaking, because rights to receive bride-wealth are so widespread and other aspects of relationships within the networks of affinal ties are also involved, some people on both sides are usually anxious to reach a quick settlement. But there is more to it than that. It is the half-brothers and father's brothers' sons who demand bride-wealth and become involved in disputes over its transfer, and not the full brothers of the bride. In contrast to a bride's full brothers, her half-brothers do not receive bride-wealth from the marriage of their half-sister's daughters. The paternal cousins of the bride are also concerned more about their father's share or his inherited rights than in the future marriage of the daughter of their paternal cousin, from which marriage they have no bride-wealth rights. Sometimes they also endeavour to activate the pressures of other bride-givers who have no vested interest in future bride-wealth rights and thus are anxious to receive their share immediately. The bride's half-brothers and paternal cousins are often in dispute with the bride's full brothers over the policy they should adopt towards their affines. They sometimes decide to act on their own initiative but

frequently the counter-pressures of the bride's full brothers and her father are sufficient to avoid any serious sanctions against the bride-receiver. If sanctions are used against the bride-receiver, the father of the bride and her full brothers become middlemen and endeavour to settle the dispute without damaging the bride-receiver's reputation or disrupting his daily routine.

It will be recalled that one marriage into a family excludes the possibility of other marriages into it. Two brothers, for example, cannot marry related women. Although this rule considerably limits the range of brides available to a man, it disperses affinal ties instead of concentrating them within certain groups of bride-givers. It also means that no bride-receiver can be under multiple pressures from the same set of bride-givers and that the strategy and choices of allocation of bride-wealth by a bride-receiver are not tied down by the calculations about the allocations of one of his agnates. Nevertheless, what essentially binds kinsmen at one time but differentiates them at another is the rights they hold in the bride-wealth received for their 'sisters' and 'daughters'. Effective kinship is expressed through rights in stock; the range of effective kinsmen a man has, as opposed to those who are merely 'distant' or members of a kinship category, is constantly being redefined to accord with changing circumstances.

Finally, because bride-wealth from the marriage of each of a man's daughters is allocated to different bride-givers according to birth order or seniority of houses (see notes to Fig. VIII.1), the concentration of many claims to bride-wealth in the hands of a limited number of bride-givers is avoided. Instead claims are dispersed among the maximum potential number of the bride's agnates. In other words affinity, as represented by the strict tracing of connections, provides only a framework within which the bride-receiver can manipulate the distribution and allocation of bride-wealth to suit his and selected bride-givers' interests: interests which are formed and strengthened in the daily give and take of close economic and social co-operation.

Notes to Chapter VIII

1 I have deliberately used the term bride, rather than wife, to describe that long period which lasts from the time the young bride joins her groom until her husband completes the transfer of bride-wealth and she is transformed into a wife. I have used the terms bride-givers and bride-receivers respectively though these are not categories explicitly distinguished by the Dassanetch. When the emphasis is on the transfer of either stock or rights, I use the terms bride-giver or bride-receiver, while in other contexts (especially in Chapter IX) when affinal ties have become well established I have referred to the bride-receiver as a husband.

2 The term *focho* is also used as a general term for bride-wealth, and the distinction is made only when it is necessary to distinguish between the two types of stock.

3 A situation which appears similar occurs among the Karimojong where 'the point of difference between high and low bride-wealth is the range of future affines who receive a share'. See N. Dyson-Hudson (1966), p. 84.

4 During the *dimi* ceremonies of the various tribal sections in 1969 two men (one from the Inkabelo and the other from Inkoria tribal sections) out of a total of 132 participants performed the *dimi* ceremony for their sisters' daughters.

5 A Dassanetch usually demands bride-wealth by saying *focho*, which translates as bride-wealth, and also 'my bride-wealth'. But if he comes to demand the bride-wealth in the name of his father, or of his father's inherited right, he usually says 'our cattle' (*gwokinio*), referring thereby to one unit of inherited rights to bride-wealth.

6 The rule that a bride's father 'does not receive bride-wealth' even applies to his share of the bride-cattle which he receives as a sibling by birth order. This right is transferred to his sons who may add the bride-cattle to their own herds.

7 For the social significance of name-oxen see Almagor (1972b).

8 A, the father's half-brother of the wife of Kenekoko, was entitled to four head of bride-cattle because he was the son of the third wife of A's father (see notes on p. 176).

9 One indication of this is that Arturga 'went to *dimi*' after transferring only ten head of cattle and his bride-givers raised no objection.

10 This is similar to the situation described by J. H. M. Beattie (1960), p. 69, in which the roles of the offender and offended are transformed into those of host and guest.