

## Cattle Colour Symbolism and Inter-Tribal Homicide among the Bodi

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The Bodi are a cattle herding people of southwestern Ethiopia who are much feared by their neighbours as raiders and killers. Their system of classifying cattle by colour and pattern is closely associated with their social organisation in general and with inter-tribal homicide in particular. The purpose of this paper is to analyse their colour-pattern system and to elucidate its connection with raiding and homicide. It is shown that the death or sickness of a particular animal (the favourite ox, or *morare*) is a primary factor in the killing of non-Bodi by Bodi. We thus find, in the mortality of cattle, a mechanism by which the Bodi can explain the inevitability of war.

### INTRODUCTION: MEN AND CATTLE

It is well known that East African pastoralists give various names to their cattle on the basis of their colour and pattern. As Evans-Pritchard [1934: 628] has pointed out, "cattle names" are "of great interest sociologically, illustrating the use of language as a technique of economic relations, and showing the way in which symbols referring to colour and their distribution are formed." Special attention has been paid by anthropologists to the "favourite ox" (sometimes called "name", "bell" or "personal ox")<sup>1</sup> with which an individual "identifies"<sup>2</sup> himself. According to Evans-Pritchard [1956: 252], such oxen provide "a direct means of communication with the spiritual world". It has also been reported that the colour-patterns of favourite oxen are inherited<sup>3</sup> and that the exchange of such animals plays an important part in social life.<sup>4</sup> There is, furthermore, a close connection

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<sup>1</sup> See Evans-Pritchard [1940: 37; 1956: X], Clark [1952: 69], Gulliver [1952; 1955: 59, 246], Dyson-Hudson [1966: 100-1], Lienhardt [1961: 16-20] and Almagor [1972].

<sup>2</sup> Seligman [1932: 162]. The relationship of "identification" between a man and his favourite ox is also discussed by Beidelman [1966] and Gourlay [1972].

<sup>3</sup> Gulliver [1952: 74] remarks that "A man's own color is passed on to any grandsons who take his name."

<sup>4</sup> See Gulliver [1952: 72] and Almagor [1972: 87].

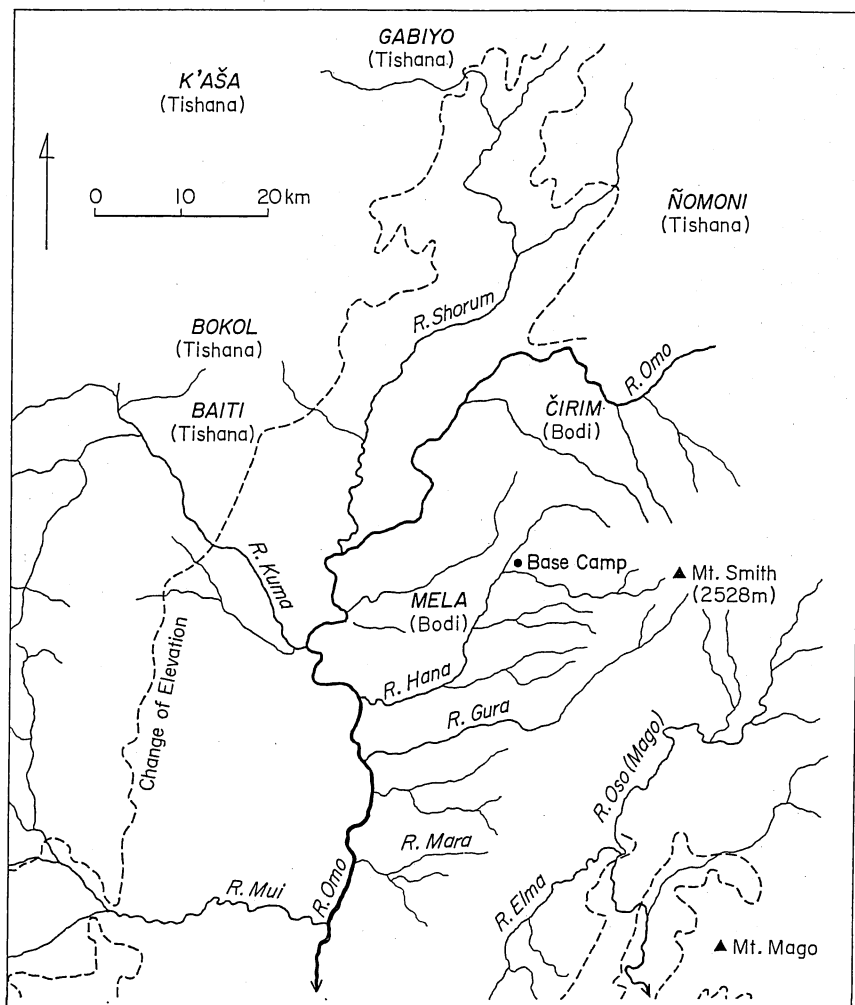


Fig. 1. Distribution of Me'en Sub-Groups

*MELA*: Group name recognised by the Bodi

(Bodi): Group name used generally

between favourite oxen and warfare. A Nuer, for example, "shouts out the name of his favourite ox when he hurls his spear at his enemy" [EVANS-PRITCHARD 1956: 252], while Almagor describes an even more direct relationship between name-oxen and raiding among the Dassanetch.<sup>5</sup>

It is well established, then, that the symbolism of cattle colour and pattern helps to create, in these societies, a close relationship between men and specific

<sup>5</sup> Almagor [1972: 88] notes that "Frequently, after a name-ox has been slaughtered and eaten, a group of age-mates goes out to raid the village of a neighbouring tribe."

animals. It is also clear that the institution of the favourite ox plays an important part, not only in general social integration but also in inter-tribal homicide and warfare, although this latter aspect has not yet been systematically investigated. The Bodi classify their universe by means of colour and pattern terms which correspond, metaphorically, to cattle. The purpose of this paper is to describe this colour-pattern system, especially as it applies to favourite oxen, and to show how it relates to social organisation in general and to inter-tribal homicide in particular.

## BACKGROUND TO THE FIELD RESEARCH

The Bodi, who live east of the Omo and north of the Mursi, number about 3,000 and call themselves Meʔen (sing. Meʔenit)<sup>6</sup>, which means "people". (They are called "Bodi" by the eastern agriculturalists and the local administration.) Linguistically they belong to the Surma [BENDER 1971: 192] or Didinga-Murle [GREENBERG 1971: 429] group of Nilo-Saharan languages. People who call themselves Meʔen live on both sides of the Omo valley. East of the Omo there are two sub-groups, Čirim (sing. Čirimit) in the north and Mela (sing. Melač) in the south, while west of the Omo there are five sub-groups, Ŋomoni (sing. Ŋomonit), Gabiyo (sing. Gabit), K'aša (sing. K'ašač), Baiti (sing. Baitit), and Bokol (sing. Bokolit) (see Fig. 1). Those Meʔen who live west of the Omo are also called Tishana. The Bodi and Tishana inter-marry and think of themselves as one people. Members of the Mela sub-group, however, take pride in their own identity and stress that their ancestry

<sup>6</sup> In the Bodi language, VʔV and VkV are interchangeable. Thus *meʔen* sometimes becomes *meken*. The following is a tentative description of the vowels and consonants needed for a description of this language.

Vowels:      i                      u  
                    e                      o  
                    a

Consonants:

	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Explosive					
Unvoiced	p	t	č	k	ʔ
Ejective		t'	č'	k'	
Voiced	b	d	ǰ	g	
Implosive					
Voiced	ɓ	ɗ			
Fricative					
Unvoiced	f	s	š		h
Voiced		z			
Nasal					
Voiced	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Liquid					
Voiced		l, r			
Semi-vowel	w		y		

and customs are different from those of the Tishana and even from those of the Ćirim sub-group. The Bodi as a whole depend mainly on pastoralism for subsistence, while the Tishana depend mainly on grain and/or root crop cultivation.

Fieldwork was conducted from a base camp near the River Hana, which lies in the territory of the Mela sub-group, and lasted in all for thirteen months—seven months between January 1974 and February 1975, and six months between February and July 1976. Some Bodi are able to understand the Mursi (Daama, sing.: Daamač) language but very few speak Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. My research was therefore conducted in their own language, without the aid of an interpreter.

## THE COLOUR-PATTERN SYSTEM

Bodi country is divided into two ecological zones, one of bush-woodland and one of grassland. The latter forms a central plain hemmed in by the Omo and its tributaries, while the former is found in the eastern mountain area and along the rivers, both in the west and in the centre. Pastoral activities are confined to the central grassland, while shifting cultivation takes place in the bush-woodland. Cattle are important not only in subsistence but also as mediators with the supernatural world, while grain, on the other hand, serves only to satisfy hunger. So interested are the Bodi in cattle that their daily conversations seemed to be about nothing else. Indeed, it was soon evident that in order to understand their society we would first have to grasp their cognitive system for talking and thinking about cattle.

At the beginning of my research I gathered fairly crude information about cattle names with the help of illustrations published by Evans-Pritchard [1940: 42–3] and Dyson-Hudson [1966: 97–8]. This did not prove satisfactory, however, because of the highly complicated nature of their cattle naming system. The next step,

**Table 1.** The Average Herd Composition of 21 Compounds

		No. in the Sample	Average No. per Compound
Female	Milk Cows	98 head	4.6 head
	Dry Cows	69	3.3
	Heifers	94	4.5
	Sucking Calves	40	1.9
	Total	301	14.3
Male	Bulls	19	0.9
	Oxen	22	1.0
	Bull Calves	42	2.0
	Sucking Calves	37	1.8
	Total	120	5.7
Grand Total		421	20.0

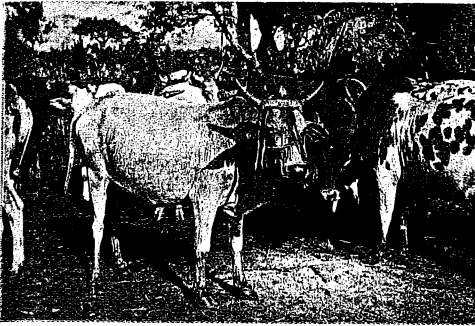




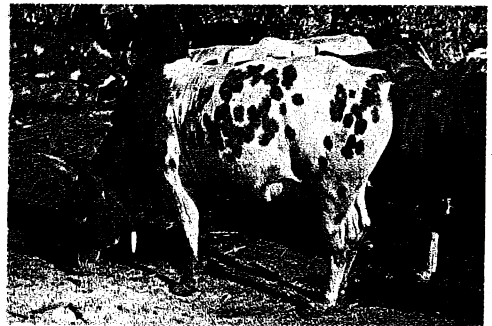
(a) various types



(b) *gidʿaŋi*



(c) *čaʔi*



(d) *kilindi*



(e) *šimaji*



(f) *ba-goloñi*

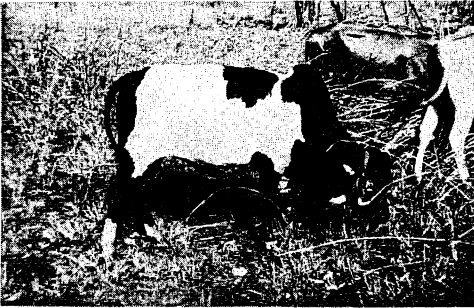
Photo. 1. Some examples of the colour-patterns of Bodi cattle (a-f)



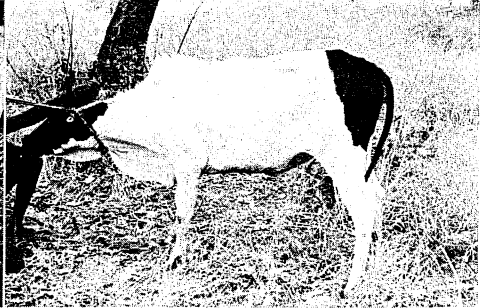
(a) *bilasi*



(b) *eldi*



(c) *čoburi*



(d) *ludi*



(e) *boligaasi*



(f) *baasi*

Photo. 2. Some examples of the patterns of cattle (a-f)

therefore, was to sketch cattle, individually, in the compounds, a method which had already been used by Umesao [1966] among the Datoga.

The cattle of ten compounds were sketched by coloured pencil, or painted, and their names recorded. The cattle of fourteen other compounds were individually observed and their names identified, but they were not sketched or painted. The cattle of three compounds we checked twice, once in 1975 and once in 1976. The total number of herd owners involved was 21, and of cattle 421 (Table 1).

The following are some examples of names which were elicited in this way (see also Table 2).

<i>boŋai de šimaŋi:</i>	bull calf with purplish hide
<i>oi da luuto (&gt;oi de ludi):</i>	bull with black head and buttocks
<i>luŋja gelli (&gt;luč če gelli):</i>	ox with black head, buttocks, and a patch on its back
<i>mor te ba-goloŋo (&gt;mor de ba-goloŋi):</i>	heifer with a reddish hide and white belly
<i>bi da goloŋo (&gt;bi de goloŋi):</i>	cow with reddish hide ( <i>bi</i> may mean "cow" as well as "cattle")

Table 2. Cattle Types and Numbers in One Compound

	Colour-Pattern	Male	Bull Calf	Ox	Bull	Female	Heifer	Milk Cow	Dry Cow
Colour	1. <i>goloŋi</i>					3	1	2	
	2. <i>šimaŋi</i>	1	1			1	1		
	3. <i>čaʔi</i>					2	1	1	
	4. <i>šileŋi</i>					4		1	3
	5. <i>gidəŋi</i>					1		1	
	6. <i>moŋi</i>					1			1
Pattern	7. <i>ludi</i>	4	3		1				
	8. <i>gelli</i>	1		1		1	1		
	9. <i>kalmi</i>	1	1						
	10. <i>baasi</i>					1		1	
	11. <i>čokaji</i>	1	1						
	12. <i>eldi</i>					1		1	
	13. <i>tulk'a</i>					1			1
Colour+Pattern	14. <i>šilasi</i>	2	2						
	15. <i>ba-goloŋi</i>					1	1		
	16. <i>ba-šileŋi</i>					1	1		
	17. <i>ba-gidəŋi</i>					1		1	
	18. <i>el-šimaŋi</i>					1	1		
	19. <i>šila-goloŋi</i>	1	1						
	20. <i>čoburi-gidəŋi</i>	1	1						
	21. <i>kilindi</i>	1			1	4	1	2	1
	Total	13	10	1	2	24	8	10	6

Table 3. The Main Colour-Patterns of Bodi Cattle\*

Colour	Male	Female	Black & White Pattern	Male	Female	Colour + Pattern	Male	Female
<i>goloñi</i> **	12	45	<i>ludi</i>	10	6	<i>lu-goloñi</i>	3	4
<i>ñayañi</i>	10	27	<i>gelli</i>	7	3	<i>gel-goloñi</i>	2	4
<i>šimañi</i>	4	13	<i>čoburi</i>	4	3	<i>el-ñayañi</i>	2	3
<i>ca?i</i>	5	6	<i>kalmi</i>	2	3	<i>ba-goloñi</i>	2	8
<i>bileji</i>	3	22	<i>baasi</i>	2	11	<i>bila-goloñi</i>	3	4
<i>gidayi</i>	2	13	<i>eldi</i>	5	5	<i>čoburi-goloñi</i>	4	1
<i>holi</i>	3	12	<i>tulk'a</i>	2	5	<i>kilindi</i>	5	16
<i>koro</i>	9	18	<i>bilasi</i>	5	3			
<i>moji</i>	2	5	<i>kordi</i>	2	6			
<hr/>								
Total (9/10)***	50/52	161/162****	(9/16)	39/42	45/51	(7/45)	21/26	40/88

\* Total number of cattle surveyed: 421

\*\* More than 1% frequency shown here

\*\*\* 9: more than 1% frequency

10: total number of the type surveyed

\*\*\*\* 161: more than 1% frequency

162: total number of colour-patterns surveyed



Photo. 3. Even small children were able to classify the 98 colours with ease.

It can be seen from these examples that their cattle naming system is based on colour, pattern, sex and age. In a sense, therefore, the name (*royo*, a general term applied also to people) is determined automatically. In Table 3, 25 common colour-patterns, with a frequency of more than one per cent in our total sample of 421, are set out.

There is no doubt that the Bodi pay particular attention to colour-pattern (*aʔeŋi*), whatever they are talking about. Indeed, this subject is related to virtually every aspect of their social and physical environment—age-sets, clans, flora and fauna, lightning, etc. There is space here, however, to give only a brief outline of their method of classifying colours and patterns.<sup>7</sup>

Probably the most objective method for collecting and interpreting data on colour perception is to use a chromaticity diagram, as Tornay [1973] has done for the Nyangatom. In the research reported here, 98 colour cards were shown, one by one and in no particular order, to a total of 25 informants (15 male and 10 female), including 8 children under the age of ten. Each informant named each card with virtually no hesitation and the responses of children were almost the same as those of adults. The overall pattern which emerged is shown in Fig. 2. Bodi basic colour terms<sup>8</sup> and their English equivalents are as follows:

- A) *goloŋi*: red and red-purple in high saturation
- B) *ŋaŋaʃi*: orange in high saturation
- C) *šimaʃi*: red-purple in low saturation and purple
- D) *čaʔi*: yellow-green, green and blue
- E) *bileʃi*: Yellow and yellow-orange, but in low saturation *bileʃi* and *gidʔaŋi* lie one upon the other
- F) *gidʔaŋi*: red, orange and yellow in low saturation and gray
- G) *holi*: white
- H) *koro*: black with blue-purple patches

We can now reach a deeper understanding of their folk taxonomy. It can be seen from Fig. 3, that Bodi colour terms may be arranged on four levels: (i) eight basic terms, (ii) compounds, made up of combinations of two basic terms, (iii) concrete terms and (iv) hetero-compounds, composed of a combination of a basic term and a concrete term. Concrete terms are similes, as, for example, *saimani-idi* (like a certain bird), *bato-idi* (like gnats), *moʃi* (like the colour of a certain animal, such as the defassa waterbuck—similar to blond in English), etc.

These terms are linked closely together. *Bato-idi* and *gidʔaŋi bato-idi* are said to be full brothers (*purn kona*) while FA (*gidʔaŋi-goloŋi*) and FB (*gidʔaŋi-ŋaŋaʃi*) are both said to be brothers (*ŋonige*) of F (*gidʔaŋi*). It should be noted that even basic terms are linked in this way. C (*šimaʃi*) and D (*čaʔi*), for example, are patrilineal kin (*ŋaniya*) and also comrades in a wide sense. A (*goloŋi*) and B (*ŋaŋaʃi*) are also *ŋaniya*, as can be seen from Fig. 3.

<sup>7</sup> I will discuss the details of Bodi colour-pattern classification in a later publication.

<sup>8</sup> Berlin and Kay [1969: 6]. But Tornay [1973: 68] prefers "terme simple" to "basic color term", on the grounds that it is less ambiguous.

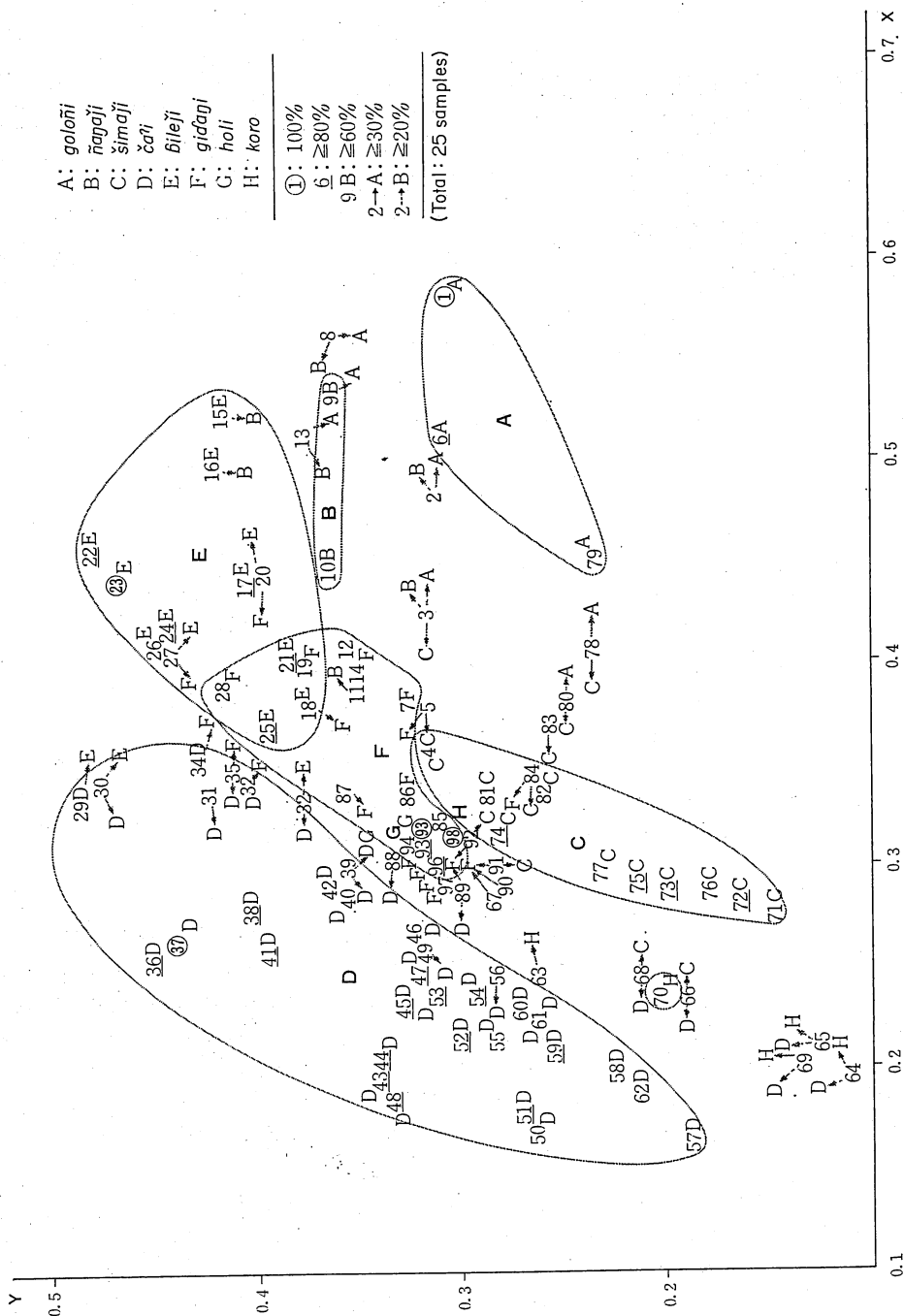


Fig. 2. Chromaticity Diagram of Colour Perception among the Bodi (98 Colour Cards Used)

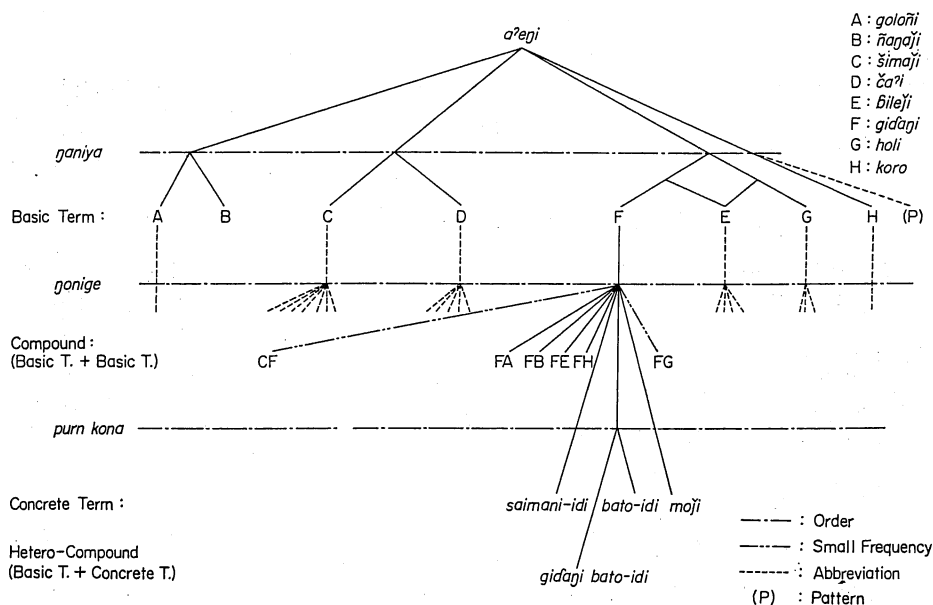


Fig. 3. Folk Taxonomy of Colours among the Bodi

Pattern terms are linked in a similar manner. The data on pattern vocabulary were collected from two informants, using monochrome cards showing various artificially produced geometric patterns, some of which are shown in Fig.4. These black and white patterns are divided into five patrilineal groupings (*ganiya*). There was very little disagreement between the informants in the allocation of patterns to these five groupings.

Now to return to the subject of cattle. It was pointed out in the first section of this essay that Bodi cattle terminology is based upon a combination of colour-pattern, sex and age. Here it should be added that cattle are grouped together according to the relationships between colour-pattern terms just outlined. That is, cattle are allocated to different "clans" (*kabčoč*) according to their colour and pattern, as is shown in Fig. 5 (which is limited, for the sake of convenience, to cattle with black and white patterns) and Table 4. These "clan" names, which are combined with terms referring to various natural phenomena, form the basis of much poetic imagery in song and ritual. The folk taxonomy of cattle, which we have now outlined, provides the framework within which particular or "favourite" cattle are chosen by individuals. This latter topic is taken up in the next section.

## FAVOURITE CATTLE

In cataloguing the cattle of a particular herd we came across three new terms, *morare*, *boyoč*, and *kallagataj*. These terms may refer either to particular cattle or to the colour-pattern itself. When used here in the first sense, therefore, the term is marked with an asterisk. Any animal, ox, bull or cow, may be designated *morare\**

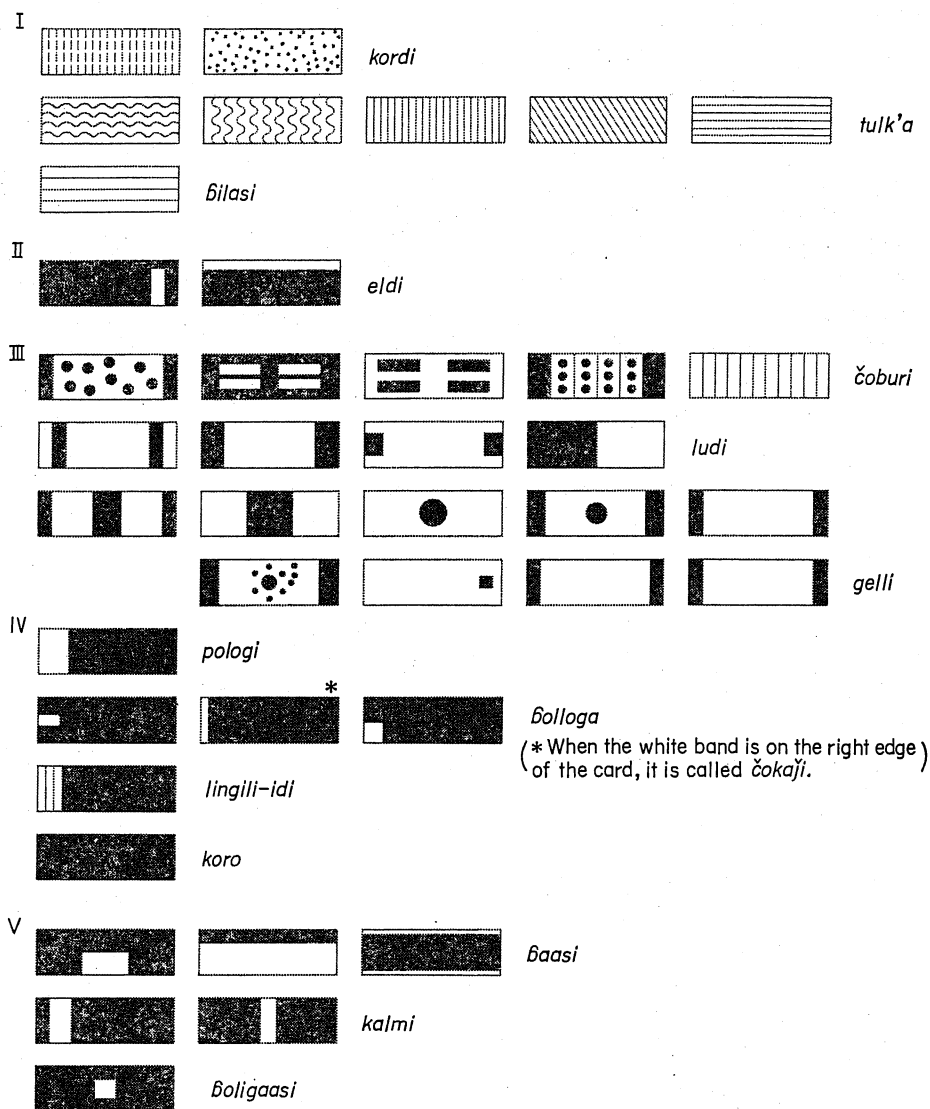
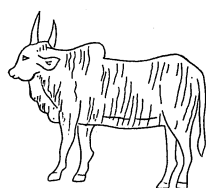


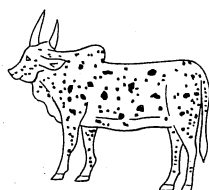
Fig. 4. Folk Taxonomy of Typical Patterns among the Bodi

or *boyoč\**, but only an ox may be designated *kallagataŋ\**. The special colour-patterns of *morare* and *boyoč* are determined by the naming system, but those of *kallagataŋ* are determined individually. Every Bodi is given a *morare* in the year following his or her birth, but only males have a *boyoč*, while those who have a *kallagataŋ*, (also confined to men) are few and far between. From my observations I am confident that *morare* is by far the most important of these concepts, and that *boyoč* and *kallagataŋ* should be considered as complementary to it. Above all, there is no doubt that the most important and typical "identification" is with the ox *morare\**.

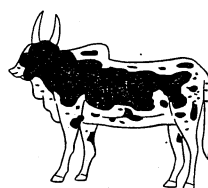




tulk'a

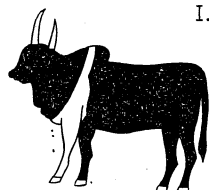


kordi



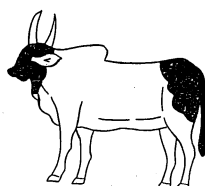
bilasi

I. gela, koḡoboro, oliya milotola, bio baldoñi haggasa

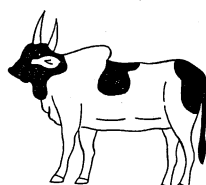


eldi

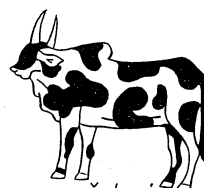
II. elameli ḡameliso, bio baldoñi bonde laka, čagu malisi



ludi

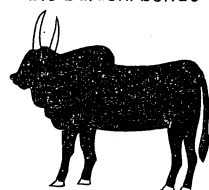


gelli



čoburi

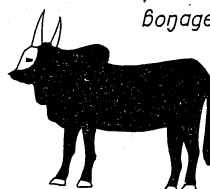
III. bio baldoñi bonde waya, bio baldoñi lomuli, lugušala oiña čoburi, kačkač gera  
boḡage waya



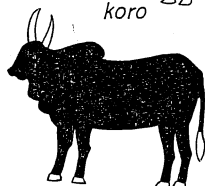
koro



bolloga



pologi

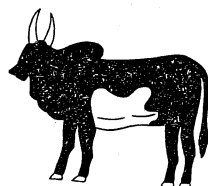


čokaḡi

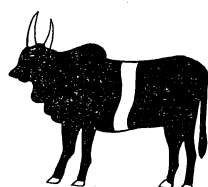


liḡgili-idi

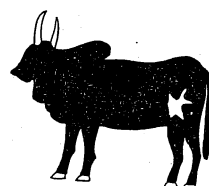
IV. koro da gañu malanšali, bio baldoñi ḡiḡgo korkori



baasi



kalmi



boligaasi

V. loḡoni de ziga, loḡoni koʻoli bor, koro da malanšali, bio baldoñi gimmake

Fig. 5. Folk Taxonomy of the Typical Patterns and Clans (*kabcoc*) of Cattle among the Bodi

Table 4. Folk Taxonomy of Cattle among the Bodi\*

- 
- I. *bio baldoñi luibuli, bio baldoñi kapač ŋoli,*  
*bio baldoñi dubare*  
 1. *ñileji*  
 2. *gidanyi*  
 3. *holi*  
 4. *moji*
- II. *bio baldoñi selačaʔi, bio baldoñi irañi,*  
*bio baldoñi goga, bio baldoñi selayundi,*  
*bio baldoñi sini modala*  
 5. *goloñi*  
 6. *ñanaji*
- III. *bio baldoñi dombuli, bio baldoñi bonde hana,*  
*bio baldoñi hana koliyo*  
 7. *lu-goloñi*    8. *gel-goloñi*    9. *ba-goloñi*  
 10. *lu-ñanaji*    11. *gel-ñanaji*    12. *ba-goloñi*
- IV. *konyogila derto, konyogila ñilečoito*  
 13. *derdi*
- V. *bio baldoñi durber, bio baldoñi binda, bio baldoñi alačuli*  
 14. *šimaʔi*    15. *ba-šimaʔi*    16. *el-šimaʔi*  
 17. *čaʔi*    18. *ba-caʔi*    19. *el-čaʔi*
- VI. *koro da gañu malanšali, bio baldoñi jijo korkori*  
 20. *koro*  
 21. *bolloga*  
 22. *pologi*  
 23. *čokaʔi*  
 24. *lingili-idi*
- VII. *bio baldoñi bonde waya, bio baldoñi lomuli, lugušala oi ña čoburi,*  
*kačkač gera boŋage waya*  
 25. *ludi*  
 26. *čoburi*  
 27. *gelli*
- VIII. *loŋoñi de ziga, loŋoñi koʔoli bor, koro da malanšali,*  
*bio baldoñi gimmako*  
 28. *kalmi*  
 29. *baasi*  
 30. *boligaasi*
- IX. *elameli jameliso, bio baldoñi bonde laka, čagu malisi*  
 31. *eldi*
- X. *gela, koyoboro, oliya milotola, bio baldoñi haggasa*  
 32. *kordi (koriyo)*  
 33. *kili-moji*  
 34. *ñilasi*  
 35. *tulk'a (tula)*
- XI. *bio baldoñi paʔjaka, kirošala oŋo seleʔi*  
 36. *kilindi*
- 

\* The typical colour-patterns of cattle are shown in the Table.

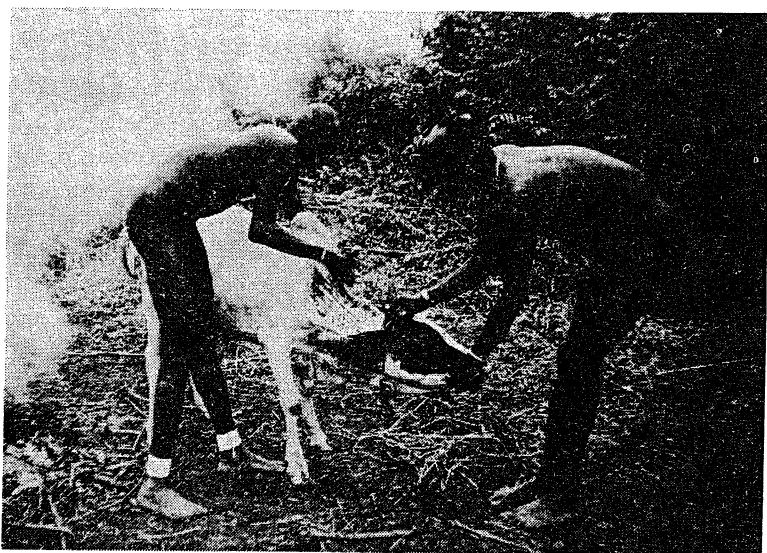


Photo. 4. Men spread cattle dung and ash on the backs of their favourite animals, mostly *morare\** and *boyoč\**.

*Morare\**, *boyoč\** and *kallagataŋ\** wear special bells and necklaces. An ox or cow *morare\** wears five bells (*šokšoba*), while a bull *morare\** wears a warthog tusk (*gis*). A *boyoč\** wears a bell (*gelit*) and a hide ornament, while a *kallagataŋ\** wears a different kind of bell, called *kod'oŋ*. The young men spread ash and cattle dung on the backs of their favourite animals, mostly *morare\** or *boyoč\**, every day. Although blood and milk are their main food in the cattle camps, they should not drink

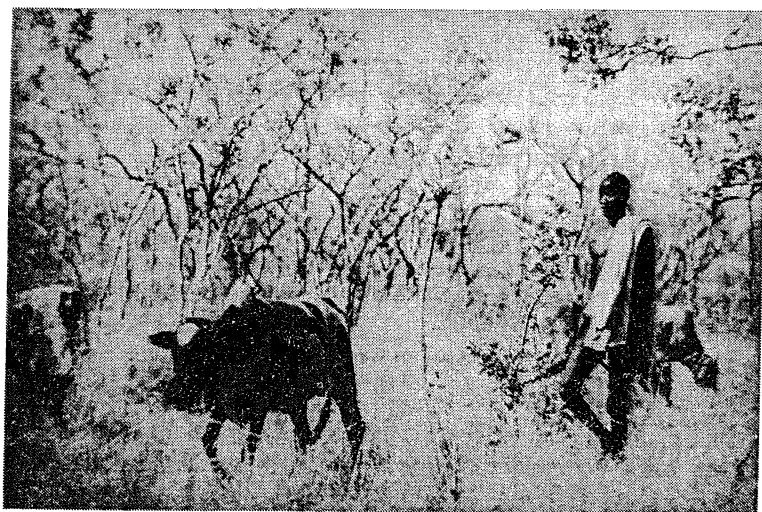


Photo. 5. A man hums his personal poems about his favourite ox *morare\** as he follows it at a ritual.

the blood of their own *morare*\*. A man's father, father's brother, mother and mother's brother should neither drink the blood and milk nor eat the meat of his *morare*\*. He and his relatives should not eat the meat of his *boyoč*\*, but they may drink its blood and milk. There are no such restrictions where *kallagataŋ*\* are concerned. Individuals compose special poems or songs about their *morare*\* which they hum while herding and shout out at dances. They also compose other poems, called *billi*, which they chant to their favourite oxen on ceremonial occasions and in the settlements during the night—this last being reminiscent of the Nuer [EVANS-PRITCHARD 1956: 251].

### The Combination of *Morare* and *Boyoč*

*Morare* and *boyoč* are combined, not randomly but according to the colour-pattern system. Thus, if one's *morare* is *ludi* (black head and buttocks) and/or *gelli* (black head and buttocks with a black patch on the back), then one's *boyoč* must be *koro* (black) in general. If one's *morare* is *lu-goloŋi* (red head and buttocks) and/or *gel-goloŋi* (red head and buttocks with a red patch on the back), then one's *boyoč* must be *goloŋi* (red) or *ŋaŋaji* (orange). If one's *morare* is *šimaŋi* (purple), then one's *boyoč* must be *čaʔi* (green-blue). These examples are enough to illustrate the rules for the combination of *morare* and *boyoč*. The explanation has to do with the application to cattle of the terms *ŋaniya* (patrilineal relationship) and *kabčoč* (clan) which have already been discussed (Fig. 3-5 and Table 4). On one occasion I was going through the 98 colour cards with a girl about twelve years old. Suddenly one card attracted her attention and she exclaimed, tearfully, *Ikon deani* ("Oh, it's mine!"). The card she had seen, which was pure red, had moved her deeply because it was her *morare*. Whenever I asked a person "Which colour do you prefer?", they always selected that colour card which corresponded to their own *morare* and/or *boyoč*. A favourite game of children is to collect pebbles, such as obsidian or quartz, and to identify them, according to their colour, size and shape as calves, cows, oxen and bulls. They then single out their favourite pebbles, which inevitably correspond to their own *morare*. In this way a child learns, from an early age, how to identify and recognise the various colour-patterns.

### Naming System

We must now consider the system by which *morare* and *boyoč* are allocated to individuals. There are three different kinds of personal name. Firstly, there is the "navel name" (*rogo de kuliŋeun*) which is given a few days after birth. It often refers to the place where the child was born, to an accident which happened before or immediately after its birth or to some other significant event which occurred about the same time. The navel name is given by the mother and it is therefore sometimes called "mother name" (*rogo de ŋone*). It is used mostly within the family and is often not even known by close neighbours. One girl, for example, was named Gezine ("seeds" of beer) because her mother had made beer during her pregnancy. Secondly there is the *puen* name, which is given a year after a child's birth.

*Puen* refers to the spraying of milk or yoghurt which is performed at most rituals. A particular individual names the child, spraying him with yoghurt, an action which is then repeated by other close neighbours. The name-giver presents the child with a wooden milking vessel, which is intended to ensure that he will be strong and healthy. In recognition of this service the name-giver is theoretically entitled to receive a cow at some stage in the future. It is through this *puen* name that the child receives its *morare* and *boyoč*. That is, the colours of the child's *morare* and *boyoč* are determined by those of the name-giver's *morare* and *boyoč*. The *puen* name is a kind of metaphorical expression of the particular *morare* or *boyoč*. For example, a girl who received a red (*goloñi*) *morare* was named Lilinta (red dragonfly). Because the *puen* name is based on the *morare* or *boyoč*, it is also called "cattle name" (*rogo de biyoñi*).

Thirdly, there is the "kraal fence" name (*rogo de saala*). This is given to a person by his age-mates, during his teens, and is based upon the colour-pattern of a favourite stock animal. A young man, for example, whose *morare*\* had a purplish hide with a white belly (*bi de bašimañi*) was addressed as Bašimañi. A girl whose *morare*\* was black with a white belly (*bi de baasi*) was called Šočša, which means a bird with a white belly. The *saala* name is, for the most part, used only between age-mates (*lukur*).

The *puen* name is by far the most significant from the point of view of its implications for the individual. By receiving it a person becomes, for the first time, a member of Bodi society, and acquires his own *morare* and *boyoč* with which he will identify himself in the future. Having received a particular *morare* (and, in the case of males, *boyoč*) a child is given a necklace of corresponding colour-pattern by its father. Thus, if the *morare* is red (*goloñi*) then the necklace beads must also be red. If the *morare* is of the colour-pattern called *ludi* (black head and buttocks), the beads of the necklace will be arranged so that they are black in front and white behind. Children learn to identify themselves with their *morare* and *boyoč* by wearing the various necklaces, and by listening to and becoming familiar with the various songs, which refer to their own particular colour-pattern. But how is the name-giver decided upon?

### Choice of Name-giver

An example of the naming system just outlined is provided by Fig. 6. F, the eldest child of D, should have been named by D's father, A. But since A was dead at the time, his wife, B, named F, who nevertheless succeeded to A's *morare*—that of his grandfather. C, D's brother, named G (the informant from whom the present information was gathered), who is the second child of D. G succeeded to C's *morare* and *boyoč*.

H, the first child of G, should have been named by his grandfather, D. The latter, however, was dead at the time, so that H was named by his grandfather's half-brother, E, and succeeded to E's *morare* and *boyoč*.

I, the second child of G, was named by a friend (*laali*) from whom G had received an ox in the past. I succeeded to the friend's *morare* and *boyoč*.

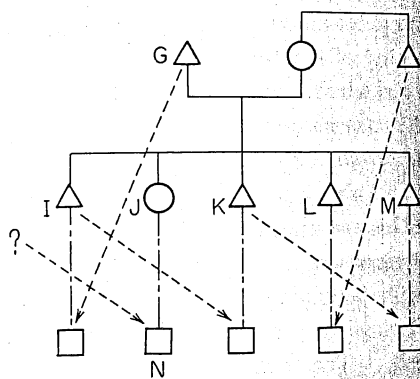
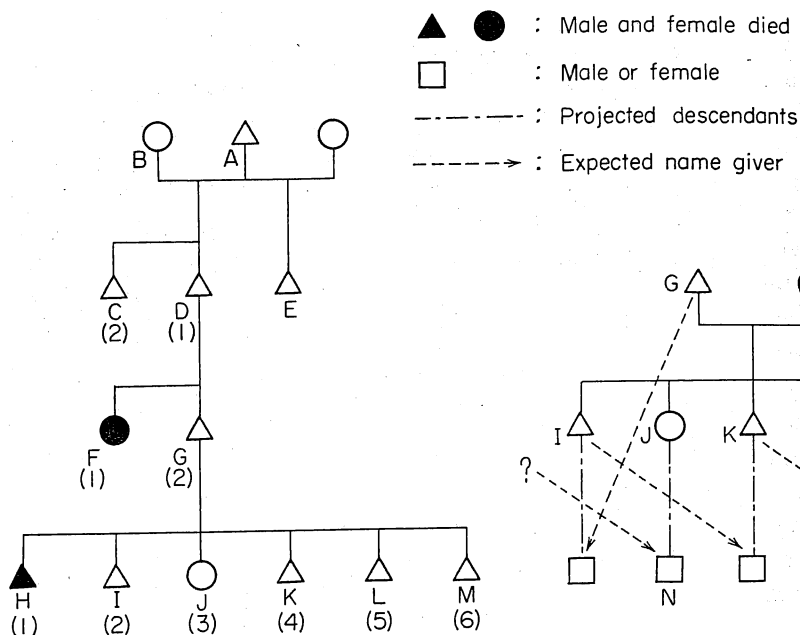


Fig. 6. G's Circle of Kinsmen linked by Name-Giver and Name-Receiver Relatives

Fig. 7. Expected Name Givers of the Grandchildren of G

J was named by another friend who had helped G in the past with bridewealth and J, being a girl, succeeded to this friend's *morare* but not to his *boyoč*. The friend's father and G's father were also close friends, having exchanged *morare*\* and *boyoč*\* in the past.

K was named by a male friend of G's wife, and succeeded to this friend's *morare* and *boyoč*.

L was named by G's wife's father's half-brother's son, to whose *morare* and *boyoč* he succeeded.

M, was named by a woman who is one of G's close neighbours (*wola*) and succeeded to her *morare*.

At present, G expects that the first children of I, J, K, L and M (H died in infancy) will be named by the following persons (Fig. 7). The first child of I will be named by G. The case of the first child of J, G's only daughter, is a little more complicated. If, when she marries, J becomes the first wife of her husband, her child, N, will be named by its father's father. If J is the second or third wife of her husband, another of her husband's kinsmen will name N. The first child of K will be named by K's elder brother, I, the first child of L will be named by L's mother's brother (*oine*), and the first child of M will be named by M's elder brother, L.

It is now possible to set out the ideal structure of the system of naming and of *morare* succession (Fig. 8). Firstly, an eldest child receives the *morare* of his grand-

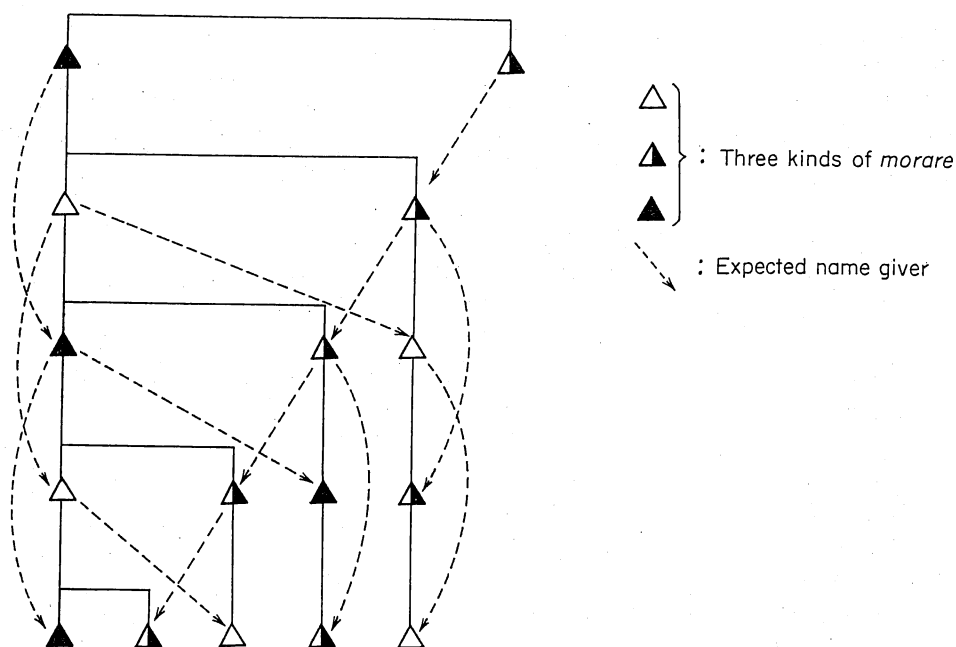


Fig. 8. The Ideal Structure of the Naming and *Morare* Inheritance System

father. When he marries for the first time, his father, if he is alive, contributes a stock animal at the betrothal ceremony and plays a leading part in the ritual. His father will then name the first child of this new marriage. The system of *morare* succession, therefore, provides a link between generations within a patrilineal kin group. A second child, on the other hand, is ordinarily named by, and receives the *morare* of, its father's brother. In the absence of such a relative, or if relations between its father and father's brother are not good, a second child will be named by a close friend (*laali*) of its father. The remaining children are named by close friends or neighbours, who are not necessarily related by patrilineal kinship or affinity. The relationship set up between name-giver and name-receiver is a permanent one and forms an important link in the social network established by ego in later life.

#### The Exchange of *Morare*\*

When he is about two or three years old a boy begins to collect, together with older children, pebbles of various colour-patterns, as mentioned before. The pebbles, which are arranged according to colour-pattern and shape within a small sand "fence", represent cattle, and are divided into calves, cows, oxen and bulls, according to their size and shape. Each child pays special attention to those colour-patterns which correspond to his own *morare* and *boyoč*. In this way children learn to recognise various colour-patterns in both cattle and the natural environment. By the time he is twelve years old, and ready to herd cattle in the grazing areas,



**Photo. 6.** A favourite game of children is to collect pebbles, such as obsidian or quartz, within sand "fences" and to make them represent, according to their colour, size and shape, different kinds of cattle.

a boy will have become almost entirely proficient in the cattle naming system.

As he gets older a young man becomes more and more eager to get his own *morare*\*, and he begins to search for an appropriate animal in the kraals of his name-giver, patrilineal kinsmen, mother's brothers, age-mates and close neighbours.<sup>9</sup> The process of obtaining or asking for such an animal (either *morare*\* or *boyoc*\*) is called *rogen*, the most sought after animal being a bull calf which will, in most cases, be castrated. The following is a typical exchange, during the *rogen* process, between a young man and a cattle owner.

Young Man: "I came for *rogen* and want your cattle."

Cattle Owner: "It is good. I will give you a *ludi* bull calf. But it is still sucking milk. Wait and when it grows and is weaned, I will give it to you. You can come and take it then."

A few months after this agreement the young man will go to take the calf from its owner's homestead. He takes with him a gourd of honey wine with which to entertain the owner and neighbouring elders. After the owner has taken a mouthful of yoghurt and sprayed it out over the calf, the young man drives it away to his own homestead. If it is a bull calf, the young man chants his own poem (*billi*) as he brings it back to his kraal, at night, and from this time onwards his attention is focussed on this newcomer to his herd. He observes it closely in the grazing areas and in the kraal for several months, and decides whether to castrate it or not. Once castrated, it becomes his favourite ox, while if it is not castrated (this is very unusual) it may not necessarily become a *morare*\*. With the acquisition of his first *morare*\*, the

<sup>9</sup> Young women do not show the same eagerness to get their own *morare*\*.



young man achieves one of his greatest ambitions: he now has a favourite animal of his own, and not merely such symbolic objects as beads and pebbles, with which he had to be content during his childhood.

Young men usually live together with their age-mates, in groups of four to ten, apart from the homesteads of married men. The members of such a camp belong to the same age-set (a new one is formed every four to five years) and show a strong spirit of solidarity in herding, meat eating, other ritual occasions and raiding. It is expected that cattle will be exchanged between age-mates who are close friends (*laalen*)<sup>10</sup>, as the following example illustrates.

A and B belonged to the same age-set, lived in the same cattle camp and were close friends. B formally asked A for a *morare*\* and *ḥoyoč*\* three times, in A's kraal. B was given a bull calf, a cow and an ox by A. A, on the other hand, formally asked B for a *morare*\* and *ḥoyoč*\* twice, in B's kraal. A was given a cow and an ox by B. Although the number of cattle exchanged was not equal, the balance would

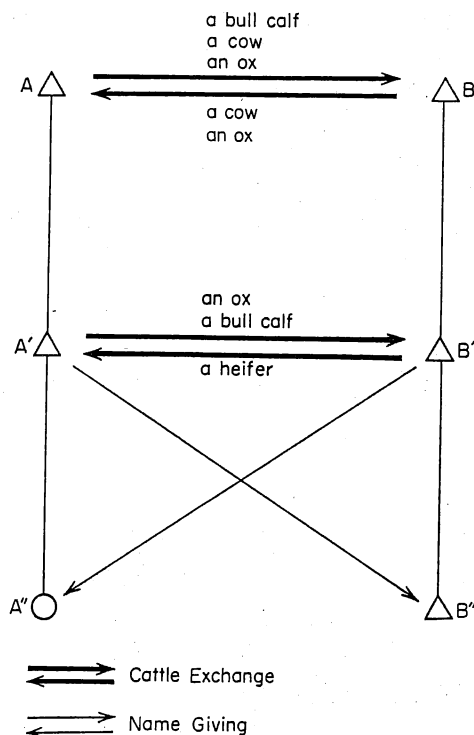


Fig. 9. An Example of Cattle Exchange between Close Friends

<sup>10</sup> *Laalen* (sing. *laali*) may mean both friends as well as promises. Intimate friends exchange cattle on the basis of long-term reciprocity. An immediate exchange of cattle or other goods is described as *tačen*.

be made up in the next generation, since the relationship of close friendship (*lalukute*) between A and B would be inherited by their children. Thus, A', a son of A, and B', a son of B, are also *lalukute*. B' asked A' for an ox which became his *morare*\* and he also received a bull calf from A' and a contribution to his bridewealth payment, while B' gave a heifer to A'. The second son, B'' of B' was named by A', while B' named the third daughter, A'', of A'. A' expects B' to give a cow as *morare*\* to his daughter, while he will give B' a cow from the bridewealth payment he receives when his daughter marries.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the *lalukute* relationship is maintained in the second generation through the exchange of cattle. During childhood a boy's social network is restricted, being largely determined by that of his father. During their teens, however, most boys begin to live with their age-mates and to make new social relationships of their own. These ties of friendship are strengthened and built up by the exchange of *morare*\* between *laalen*. Thus the *morare* institution may be seen to play an important role in the establishing of social networks by individuals, and therefore in the general integration of Bodi society.

### Colour-Pattern Symbolism in Age-Set and Generation-Set Organisation

The principles of colour-pattern classification which have been discussed above are relevant not only to relations between individuals but also to those within and between age-sets, generation-sets and territorial groups. In an age-set, the *morare* of one of its members is selected as the symbol for the whole group, the member in question being outstanding in terms of his personal attributes and qualities. When such a *morare*\* becomes old it is slaughtered at the *bal*<sup>12</sup> of the chief's settlement. The age-mates of a man whose *morare*\* has been slaughtered cut the hide into thin

Table 5. Generation and Cattle Colour-Patterns in the Hana Area

Generation	Chief's Name	Animal	Cattle Colour-Pattern Symbolising the Generation
Present Generation	Oikabur	<i>ɣolit</i> (Elephant)	<i>gidanji</i>
Previous Generation:			
1.	Baša	<i>dun</i> (Defassa Waterbuck)	<i>moji</i>
2.	Lugoloñi	<i>ɣolit</i>	<i>gidanji</i>
3.	Kaṇadiḃoga	<i>dun</i>	<i>moji</i>
4.	Galamogut	<i>elkumit</i> (Patas)*	<i>el-goloñi</i>
5.	Daličḃagoloñi	<i>ɣolit</i>	<i>gidanji</i>
6.	Bulasela	?	?

\* Some informants gave the name of an imaginary animal (*olk'odit*) which is said to herd cattle and which stands for the colour *ñaṇaṇji*.

<sup>11</sup> This information was obtained from A', who seemed perfectly confident of the strength and reliability of his relationship to B'.

<sup>12</sup> The *bal* is an area, to the east of the settlement, where the men are accustomed to sit and talk under a shade tree.

strips which they tie around their heads. Some of them may offer the "bereaved" their own cattle.

A generation-set, which is made up of seven age-sets, has its own colour-pattern symbol. The present generation in the Hana area, for example, is called Elephants (*ɲolit*), and is symbolised by the colour *gidʼaŋi*, while the previous generation-set (Defassa Waterbuck: *dun*), was symbolised by the colour *moʃi*, like that of a lion (see Table 5). It can also be seen from Table 5 that alternate generations have the same cattle colour-pattern. At the installation ceremony of a chief, an animal is slaughtered which has the colour-pattern corresponding to the generation-set of which the chief is a member.

On the other hand, the *morare* of a chief is also the symbol of a territorial group. The *morare* of the present chief is *ludi* or *gelli*, a bull calf of the latter designation (*ɓoŋai de gelli*) having been slaughtered at his installation ceremony in January, 1976. A *gelli* animal has a black head and buttocks with a black patch on its back, so that it is not uncommon to see an animal which is *gelli* on the left side but *ludi* on the right side (see Fig. 5: III). They made their present *loŋon* ("banner" or "standard") from the right side of the hide of the *ɓoŋai de gelli*<sup>13</sup> which was slaughtered in



Photo. 7. A *loŋon* ("banner" or "standard") made from the hide of a particular bull

<sup>13</sup> The left side of the skin was *gelli* and the right, *ludi*. The Bodi are divided into two moieties, called *komo* and *koluo*. The chief comes only from the *komo* moiety, which is senior to *koluo*. The right half of the skin becomes the *loŋon* of the chief and his territorial group. The left half (*gelli*) becomes the *loŋon* of the *koluo* moiety. This kind of duality appears in most aspects of Bodi thought and culture.

January 1976. The *logon* is thought to bring vitality and virility (*barite*) to the population and it is therefore the most common symbol of a territorial group. When the members of such a group go into battle they take their *logon* with them.

Finally, each clan has its own particular colour-pattern symbol. When an elder is buried, for example, he should be wrapped in the hide of an animal, the colour-pattern of which corresponds to that of his clan. From what has been said so far it is clear that the symbolism of cattle-colours plays a vital part in the social integration of Bodi society. It is also connected, however, with inter-tribal relations, as we shall see in the next section.

### MORARE AND INTER-TRIBAL HOMICIDE

Having identified himself with a calf of a special colour-pattern and having brought it back to his kraal, a man chants poems in its praise at night, if it is male, and after it has given birth if it is female. He decorates it with a special bell and with other ornaments and, while herding it in the grazing areas, he is particularly careful to observe its behaviour, assessing, for example, its health and intelligence. If he decides to make it his favourite animal he will, after several months, make four slits in its right ear. If it is a cow neither he, his father, his father's brothers, his mother nor his mother's brothers must drink its milk. Nor must they drink the blood of any animal with which he has identified himself. Favourite animals are usually oxen but occasionally a cow, called *ham*, is chosen. It is no exaggeration to say that a man regards life without his *morare* as hardly worth living. It sometimes happens that he has to part with his *morare*\* in order to pay bridewealth, in which case he will chant its poem the night before he sends it away. In the morning, he is forcibly held by some of his age-mates, and others fire several shots into the sky, as the animal is driven away from his kraal. It is, however, very rare for a special *morare*\*, which has had the four slits cut in its right ear, to be sent away in this manner.

If a man's special *morare*\* becomes sick, he will slaughter another animal of a particular colour-pattern, *holi* (white) being that which is most preferred, in order that it might recover. Alternatively he may decide to kill a member of a neighbouring group. When it is evident that his special *morare*\* has reached an advanced stage of senility his age-mates will take it to the chief's settlement, firing several shots into the sky as they do so. Meanwhile, others of his age-mates hold on to him as he sobs uncontrollably. The animal is slaughtered by his age-mates at the *bal* of the chief's settlement. The meat is not eaten by the owner nor by those of his relatives who are forbidden to drink its blood while it is alive. The chief, however, has the right to take a part of the meat from around the breastbone. At the end of the ceremony, the skull of the animal is fixed in the branches of the shade tree at the *bal*.

Sometime after this ceremony, the man who has lost his *morare*\* will take a few age-mates with him on an expedition to kill a member of a neighbouring group. They are most likely to go into the Dime or other highland areas to the east, or to the

territory of the Mursi in the south. During periods of peace between themselves and the Mursi, however, they will not normally kill individual Mursi. Nor do they go on such expeditions west of the Omo, because they believe that the main Bodi clans, including that of the chief himself, migrated from that direction in the past. Expeditions of this kind are called *lufa*, in order to distinguish them from large-scale fighting between tribal groups which is called *kaman*. The killer aims at the right side of his victim, and attempts to deliver the *coup de grace* to the right kidney. Knives, hatchets and rifles are carried, but rifles are not used when taking settlements by surprise. A man will not go on such an expedition alone because it is important that the death of the victim should be independently witnessed. If there is no witness the killer will cut off the victim's penis and bring it back to his camp in order to demonstrate to his age-mates that he has indeed killed a man.

When he returns home one of the killer's kinsmen slaughters an animal, usually a bull calf of a special colour-pattern, and the killer's body is purified with its blood. If he still has a *morare*\* alive, he will slit its ear (its left ear if the right one has already been cut) in four places. A few months later deep cuts are made, usually in his right, but sometimes in his left arm, with the head of an arrow which is normally used for drawing blood from the jugular veins of cattle (see Photo 9). This operation is



Photo. 8. A man slitting the ears of the *morare*\* of an age-mate who has killed a member of another tribe (March, 1976)

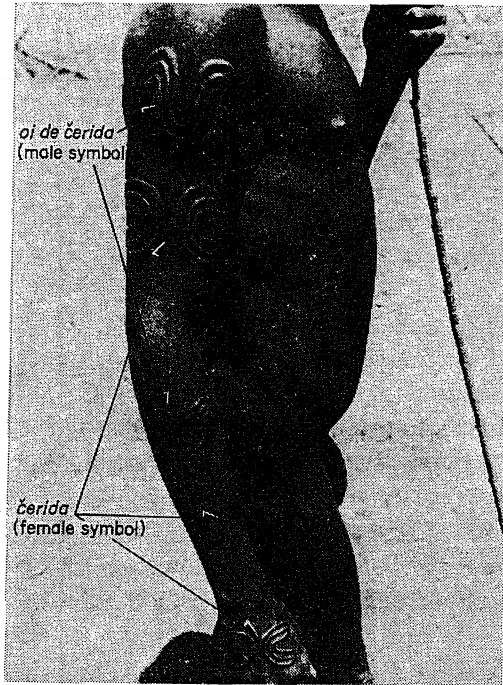


Photo. 9. A man who has killed has deep cuts made in his arm

performed by one of his age-mates.

By way of illustration I now give an account of four such killings. Personal names have been abbreviated.

(1) The case of Ch. (age: ca. 30).

This man has had three *morare*\*, all of which were oxen and one of which was still alive at the time in question. He received his first *morare*\*, the colour-pattern of which was *gel-gid'ani* (greyish head and buttocks with a greyish patch on its back), from his father. By 1974 this animal had become senile and was slaughtered by his age-mates in the normal fashion. Ten months later he went on a *lufa* expedition, accompanied by 25 young men, to the village of Garo in eastern Dime country. They spent one night in the bush, about one kilometre from the village, and then separated into small groups (*bore*) before attacking each homestead in the early hours of the morning. Hiding beside a path, Ch. pounced on an old woman who was running away, and killed her with a knife. First he cut her throat and then stabbed her right kidney. He dragged her body into the bush, mixed a handful of soil with her blood and then scattered the mixture. He has not yet had the cuts made on his arm for fear of the police. His aim was to kill and not steal cattle but his companions, from the start, were only interested in taking cattle. Not being able to find any, however, they killed four Dime as follows.

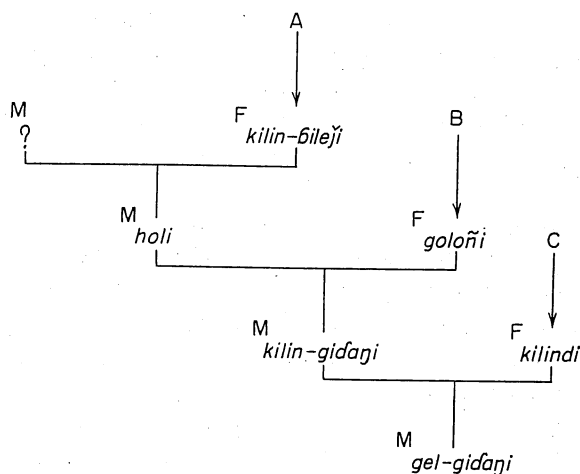


Fig. 10. Genealogy of a *Morare\** (Ch.)

A & B: These cattle were given to ego's father by a Mursi friend.

C: This animal was the part of bridewealth of ego's sister.

F: Female    M: Male

G attacked a homestead with two brothers who were his close neighbours. He cut the right side of a man's neck with his knife, killing him on the spot and taking his trousers.

B attacked a homestead with his brother and killed a boy who was running away, also by cutting his neck, this time with a hatchet. B had intended to steal cattle but he went back empty handed.

O attacked another homestead with two brothers, his age-mates. He also had intended to steal cattle but could find none. He stabbed a man in the right side of his neck and finished him by stabbing his right kidney. He did not, however, rob him of anything.

T attacked a homestead with two of his age-mates. He cut a man's throat, killing him on the spot and taking his large cloth.

## (2) The case of Ku. (age: ca. 25)

This man's *morare* is *lu-goloñi* (red head and buttocks). In 1970, when his first *morare\** (an ox with red head and buttocks) was ill, he went on a *lufa* expedition to a place called Moiso<sup>14</sup> in Mursi country. He was accompanied by a man of a senior age-set and by two others of his own age-set. They lay in wait for Mursi in the bush near the river, for two days, eating a special food, called *gala*, which is taken on such expeditions because it keeps well. Eventually two Mursi men came to the river to drink. The senior Bodi shot one of the Mursi in his right shoulder, while Ku. shot the other one in his right belly. They took the victims' clothes before re-

<sup>14</sup> Called Moizoi by the Mursi (David Turton, personal communication). See his article [p. 196] in this issue.

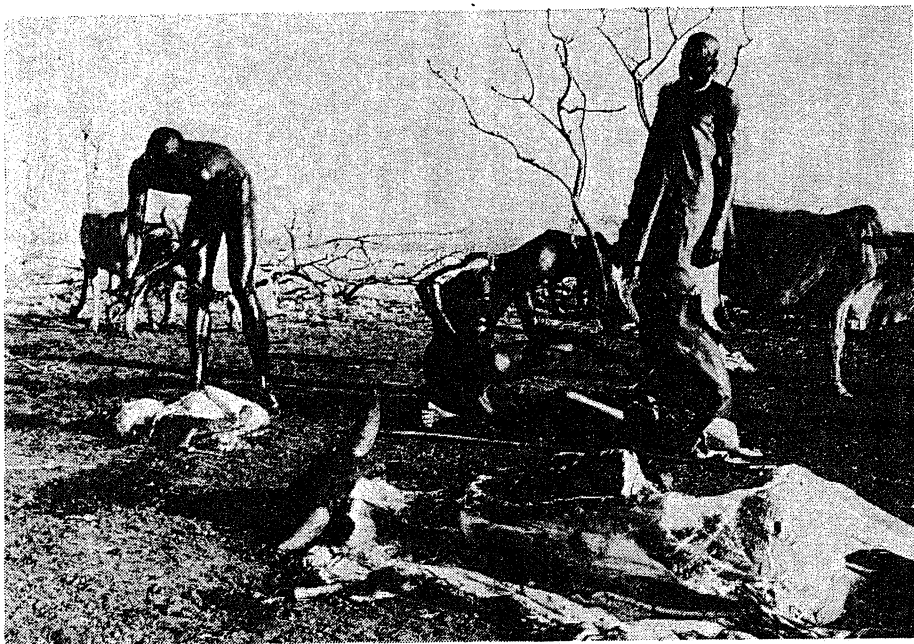


Photo. 10. The ritual of purification for men who have killed members of another tribe (March, 1976)

turning to their compounds. Ku. slaughtered a red heifer to purify himself with its blood, and his right arm was cut in the manner mentioned above. After this, his *morare*\* recovered but then became ill again. He then slaughtered a white bull calf after which it again recovered. Several years later it became senile and his age-mates took it to the chief's settlement and slaughtered it.

(3) The case of Ge. (age: ca. 40)

This man's *morare* is *gel-goloñi* (red head and buttocks with a red patch on its back) and *lu-goloñi* (red head and buttocks). He has had seven *morare*\*, but when the first two died he was too young to go on a *lufa* expedition. His third *morare*\*, an ox with a red head, red buttocks and a red patch on its back, was a calf from the bridewealth of his father's brother's daughter. He castrated it and it became his favourite ox, but it then became ill. He slaughtered a black brindled bull calf and it recovered, becoming fat and sleek. A year later, however, it became ill again and on this occasion he went on a *lufa* expedition to a place called Olkumit, in the eastern highlands, with his mother's brother's son. He shot and killed a man who was working in his fields, the bullet passing through the right side of his belly. This happened at mid-day and people came in pursuit when they heard the sound of gunfire. The Bodi hid in the bush until nightfall and returned home by walking all night. This happened in 1972 when the Bodi were still at peace with the Mursi, and it was for this reason that Ge. did not go on an expedition to Mursi country. He was advised to



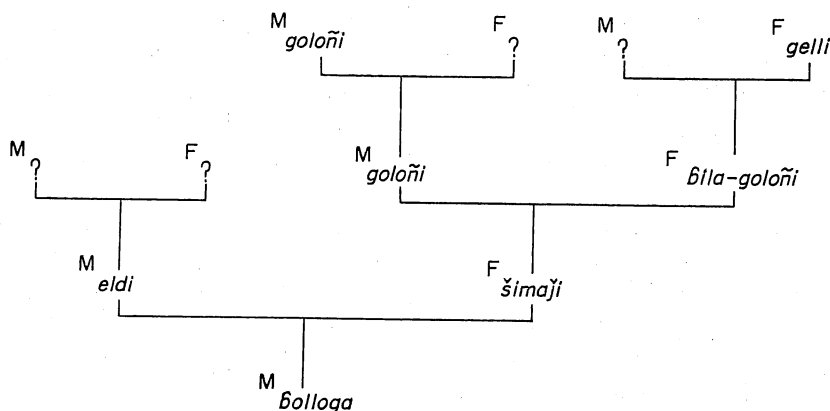


Fig. 11. Genealogy of a *Morare*\* (Mu.)

Ge's *morare*\*, however, did not recover and it was taken by his age-mates to the chief's settlement to be slaughtered. Shots were fired into the sky and while the animal was being slaughtered, Ge. was in tears, and held by his closest age-mates. The meat was eaten mainly by his age-mates but the breastbone was given to the chief. The skull was placed in the branches of the tree at the *bal*.

(4) The case of Mu. (age: ca, 20)

This man's *morare* is *bolloga* (black except for a white forehead). His first *morare*\* died in March 1975. It was slaughtered in the bush by his age-mates and its skull was placed in the branches of a tree at his compound. Several days after its death, he shot a woman in an area called Fardi in the northern highlands, her death being witnessed by some of his age-mates. In the same month many Bodi raided the northern highlands, together with the Tishana, taking more than one thousand cattle and killing hundreds of people. In May 1976, Mu. had the cuts made on his arm.

## CONTINUING INTER-TRIBAL HOMICIDE

It has now been explained that the death (or sometimes illness) of a man's favourite animal (mostly an ox) is a primary factor in the killing of members of neighbouring groups. As the Bodi put it, *morare\* resso kego šuredo (dikto, balundo) na kokoi kaji* Damač (Suč), "When a *morare\** dies, I become resentful and go to kill a Mursi or a highlander." For the Bodi, cattle do not belong to the animal world (*kayeña*), but to that of mankind (*meʔen*). The *morare\** institution is the most striking illustration of this belief.<sup>15</sup> If his *morare\** is ill a man will sacrifice another

<sup>15</sup> According to Almagor [1972: 88], the Dassanetch also assert that "the name-ox is the man."

animal to aid its recovery, as though he wished himself to recover from an illness.

Thus, while cattle continue to die, there will, of course, be no lack of occasions for men to go on *lufa* expeditions against neighbouring peoples. The Bodi chant poems, of which the following is an example, which describe the exploits of previous generations on these expeditions.

Wo ooo, the heroes of the Moji<sup>a)</sup> killed people, *morare*, yee,  
 Wo heyee, the heroes of the Moji killed all the villagers, *morare*,  
 The heroes of the Moji killed villagers, *morare*,  
 Biolug<sup>b)</sup> attacked Dorterese<sup>c)</sup>,  
 Biolug attacked Dnguličali<sup>c)</sup>, bee hee,  
 The men from Kulo<sup>d)</sup> clan of the Moji killed all the villagers, bee hee,  
 The men from Kulo clan of the Moji killed people, *morare*,  
 The men of the Moji attacked Dngul de Koidun<sup>c)</sup>,  
 The banner marking a *luuto*<sup>e)</sup> pattern defeated people  
 The banner marking a *gelto*<sup>e)</sup> pattern killed people, *morare*,  
 Attacked and attacked Gogolonje<sup>e)</sup> in Mursi<sup>f)</sup> territory, yee,  
 The men from Kulo clan of the Moji attacked Elma<sup>c)</sup>,  
 The men of the Moji attacked their river,  
 The men of the Moji attacked Elma, ee yee,  
 Biolug attacked Dorterese, bei yee,  
 The men of the Moji fought to get goats, ee,  
 The men of the Moji attacked Magoloni<sup>c)</sup> in Mursi territory.

a) The name of the previous generation-set.

b) The mother's brother of the man who composed the chant, who belongs to the Moji generation-set.

c) Place names in Mursi territory.

d) The clan name of the man, *Biolug*.

e) The *morare* of Biolug is *ludi* or *gelli*.

f) The Mursi are called Mun as well as Daama by the Bodi.

When I asked the Bodi, "Will there be an end to killing and warfare if you get many cattle and abundant pasture?", they replied "No; they will go on for ever."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> I intend to discuss in a later publication the ecological aspects of Bodi warfare.

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