

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

“The Gusii are divided into seven clan clusters: Kitutu (Getutu), North Mugirango, South Mugirango, Majoge, Wanjare (Nchari), Bassi, and Nyaribari.” (11p1) Gusii, Bantu

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): GUZ

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

“The region is demarcated by the coordinates 0°30' and 1°00' S and 34°30' and 35°00' E” (11p1)

1.4 Brief history:

“The ancestors of the Gusii arrived in this area from the Kano plains, near Kavirondo gulf in the north. According to oral tradition, the Gusii were fragmented into several groups, one of which settled around the Manga Ridges, while others moved west towards Lake Victoria where they settled among the Luo. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Gusii speaking groups moved continuously in response to attacks from surrounding peoples. Around 1820 a group settled west of the Manga Ridges which provided a natural defence against the Kipsigis who continuously raided the Gusii cattle. Meanwhile several splinter groups moved through Luo Land and the southern parts of the present district, fighting with Maasai, Kipsigis, Luo and other Gusii groups.

By 1900 we find the Gusii living around present day Kisii Town, leaving a buffer zone of forest and savanna between them and the Kipsigis to the east and north, and the Maasai to the south and east. They were divided into eight subdivisions: Nchari (Wanjare), Getutu (Kitutu), North Mugirango, South Mugirango, Bassi, Machoge (Majoge), Nyaribari, and Muksero (Map 1). The total population was estimated by colonial administrators in 1907 to be around 75,000 persons (Northcote 1908).” (1p27)
“At the end of the 1700s, Bantu-speaking populations were dispersed in small pockets at the northern, southern, and eastern margins of the Kisii highlands and in the Lake Victoria Basin. Around 1800, the highlands above 1,515 meters were probably uninhabited from the northern part of the Manga escarpment southward to the Kuja River. At that time, the lowland savanna was being settled by large numbers of agropastoralist peoples ancestral to the present-day Luo and Kipsigis, dislodging the smaller Bantu groups from their territories on the savanna. The Gusii settled in the Kisii highlands, whereas other culturally and linguistically related groups remained along the Lake Victoria Basin or settled in the lower savanna region at the Kenya-Tanzania border (as did the Kuria, for example). The establishment of the British colonial administration in 1907 was initially met by armed resistance, but it ceased after World War I. Unlike other highland peoples in Kenya, the Gusii were not subjected to land alienation. The seven subdivisions of Gusiiland were converted into administrative units under government-appointed chiefs. The first missions were established by the Catholics in 1911 and the Seventh Day Adventists in 1913. Mission activity was initially not very successful; several stations were looted. Since Kenyan independence in 1963, schools have been built throughout the area; roads have been improved, and electricity, piped water, and telephones have been extended into many areas. By the 1970s, a shortage of land had begun to make farming unprofitable, and the education of children for off-farm employment became more important.” (11p2)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

“The Gusii were precipitously introduced to Western culture in the first decade of the 20th century when they came under British rule and the first Christian missionaries arrived. Their lives have never been the same, and the pace of social change has increased with each successive decade up to the present” (5p57)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

“Since pre-colonial times, abundant rainfall and very fertile soils have made Gusiiland one of the most productive agricultural areas in Kenya. The proportion of cultivable land ranges between 70 and 80 percent. [...]The area is a rolling hilly landscape on a deeply dissected peneplain at elevations of 1,190 meters in the far northwestern corner of the territory and up to 2,130 meters in the central highlands. The mean maximum temperatures range from 28.4° C at the lowest elevations to 22.8° C at the highest. The mean minimum temperatures are 16.4° C and 9.8° C, respectively. Rain falls throughout the year; the annual average is between 150 and 200 centimeters. There are two peak seasons of rainfall: the major rainy season (March to May) and the minor rainy season (September to November). In the nineteenth century much of present-day Gusiiland was covered by moist montane forest. By the end of the 1990s all forest land has been cleared; scant indigenous vegetation remains, and no large mammals are found.” (11p1)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

“The main clan occupying the area around the market is Bomorenda which numbered 11 572 persons according to the 1978 population census. Their territory is very densely populated with 638 persons per square kilometer which allows little expansion in agriculture. The farms are small, only about one to two hectares, and most families rely on non-farm income to supplement subsistence.” (1p22)

“In 1989 the number of Gusii was 1.3 million, and population densities ranged from 200 to over 600 persons per square kilometer. This population, increasing by 3 to 4 percent per year, is among those exhibiting the most rapid growth in the world. The average woman bears close to nine children.” (11p1)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

“After their maize was exhausted, they would have to purchase grain with which to make obokima, the staple porridge that is the main source of carbohydrate for all Gusii, or live entirely on green vegetables and beans. Doing without obokima was felt to be a severe deprivation.” (2p123)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

“Cattle are useful in the homestead's daily diet, but the great value derived from their role in the marriage system makes them too expensive to be counted on for subsistence. Cow's milk is used daily; it is allowed to sour in calabashes and then eaten. Few people nowadays can afford to kill a bull simply to eat, but beef is sometimes

bought in the market, though it is eaten in small quantities... Sheep and goats are less valuable than cows in terms of cash and marriage, but they have a prominent place in religious sacrifices and the entertainment of guests. Diviners usually specify the use of a sheep or goat of a particular sex and color for funeral and medicinal sacrifices, and such orders are always obeyed. A man of above-average means shows respect to his visiting in-laws or matrilineal kin by slaughtering a goat or sheep for them to eat, while a poorer neighbor kills a chicken for their consumption. A majority of Nyansongo families do not keep sheep and goats; instead they buy one or reclaim one that is owed them whenever a need arises, as when a medicine man asks for a goat as a fee for a curative potion. Every family has chickens, which are commonly given as gifts or sold in the town market, as are the eggs they produce.” (3p17)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

“Such divisions, in contrast to the clubs used in inter-lineages conflict, fought each other with spears (P. Mayer 1949:11).” (1p34)

2.4 Food storage:

Not Found.

2.5 Sexual division of production:

“Both men and women were engaged in farm work, but whereas men were responsible for and actively engaged in all the different agricultural tasks, women's duties mostly consisted of more arduous, time-consuming tasks such as hoeing, weeding, and planting. The men concentrated on tasks such as clearing new gardens and fencing, and the women prepared the soil for planting, hoeing and digging. The division of labor was not strict and men also helped with weeding and harvesting. Old men did no agricultural work at all and spent most of their time hearing disputes and discussing cattle and events in neighborhood. Old women had greater freedom than younger women in that they could, e.g., drink beer and enjoy a certain independence in decision making concerning production, but it is not known how long they continued to work in agriculture or who determined when they should stop.” (1p29)

2.6 Land tenure:

“Land was corporately owned by the clan, and rights to cultivation were obtained by clan members through clearing. Each wife had her own plot of land on which she raised food for herself, her children and her husband. The family head also had his own field, the emonga, which served a dual purpose. It was cultivated for emergency stores by all the wives and used as a field where the head of the family grew grain for exchange. Although the wives cultivated the emonga for reserves, the man had to do his own cultivation for his trading activities.” (1p29)

2.7 Ceramics:

No evidence found.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

“Cooperation and sharing between these units can never be assumed, for their relationship may be formal or openly uncooperative. Spatial separation emphasizes their independence of one another. Altogether, the lines of cleavage and formal relationship within the extended family are so numerous that mutuality and emotional warmth are exceptional rather than expected.” (3p188)

2.9 Food taboos:

“A husband had very little interaction with his brothers-in-law and parents-in-law. The relationship was one of deep respect, nsoni. In-laws were abansoni, people towards whom he observed a number of avoidance rules and a strict code of behavior. They were on peaceful terms and did not fight each other, but avoided interaction. When meeting they had to practice a number of avoidances such as not shaking hands (i.e., not touching each other), or eating certain foods with sexual connotations such as maize, eggs, or sugar cane. I have not heard any explanation for these food taboos but maize and sugarcane are obviously phallic in shape. Eggs are produced by hens, which women were not allowed to eat... Rules of behavior between a man and his mother-in-law are characterized by strong avoidance. A son-in-law is not supposed to shake hands with his mother-in-law; he may not enter her bedroom or cooking area; he may not watch her cooking. Nor is he supposed to eat a variety of foods in her presence such as beans, maize, sugarcane, chicken and eggs.” (1p53-54, 156)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Not Found.

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

Not Found.

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

Not Found.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

“It seems that a generation ago the age of menarche was considerably later than today, and many girls menstruated for the first time at seventeen or eighteen, whereas today it is thirteen or fourteen.” (6p63)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

Not Found.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

“The average woman bears close to nine children.” (11p1)

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

Not found.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

“As soon as a girl was considered “big enough,” however, even though she might not yet have menstruated, she would be married.” (6p63) “For a typical young man, the timing of his marriage is uncertain; it depends on his family's wealth, his patriarch's willingness to permit him the use of cattle, or his having a sister whose bridewealth can be used in his marriage. Wealthy or fortunate young men may be married by age twenty, whereas unfortunates must postpone it until they are able to raise the bridewealth inside the family or through their own efforts—often until thirty or later. For young women, the timing of marriage is not problematic; like circumcision, it is an event that occurs at approximately the same age for all (fifteen to sixteen) and is another predictable marker of graduation to more elevated status, that of omosubaati.” (7p87-88)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

“The character of Gusii bridewealth as primarily serving as a means of affiliating children to a husband and his patrilineage becomes even clearer if we consider the divorce rules. A husband could not divorce his wife and also keep his children. He must give up both and receive the full bridewealth back. Hence divorce was rare, and took place only in cases of witchcraft, or when a wife had run away to a hostile tribe (P. Mayer 1950a:51f). This divorce rule is comprehensible if we see bridewealth primarily as affiliating children to a man, thus making divorce a separation from a wife's childbearing capacities. Only if the children were defective, i.e., in cases of witchcraft, was it regarded as a logical course of action because children were thought to inherit this trait from their mother. The chances of recovering wives (and their children) who had run away to enemy territory were nil and hence a divorce would be demanded by the forsaken husband.” (1p56)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

“Despite the roughly equivalent number of polygynous and monogamous adults, more than two thirds of the community's children have polygynous parents. This is due to the fact that a sizable proportion of the monogamous men are young husbands whose wives have not yet given birth or have done so only once. By the time they have many children, these men will probably have taken additional wives and thereby become polygynous parents. Thus a large majority of Nyansongo children grow up in polygynous homes. In this respect Nyansongo is not exceptional, for in adjacent communities there are men with four and five wives and even a few wealthy elders with as many as eleven wives and scores of children.” (3p21)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

“Marriage can be established only through the payment of bride-wealth, in the form of livestock and money, by the husband to the wife's family. This act establishes a socially sanctioned marriage, through which a woman and a man become socially defined mothers and fathers.” (11p5)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

“A number of homestead heads and their descendants could trace exact genealogical relationships and considered each other to be real kin. These belonged to a riiga, a lineage whose members based their interaction and relationship on kinship, with rights and obligations stemming from the kinship status of individuals. Members of a riiga shared common potential heirship to each others' wealth.” (1p33)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

“The problem of controlling the behavior of contemporary adolescent girls is a difficult one for Nyansongo parents. The basis of the difficulty is that the girl is oriented toward young men who give her gifts and flatter her, expecting in return that she will yield sexually or even elope with one of them. Parents, on the other hand, view an adolescent girl as a family member who must of necessity leave home for marriage and who can at least reimburse the parents who took the trouble to raise her with a handsome bridewealth in cattle. What they fear most is her running off with a reckless young man who has no cattle and, secondly, her becoming pregnant or gaining a reputation as a “slut,” both of which tend to make her undesirable as a wife. In the contemporary situation, the fear of a girl's eloping and leaving her parents without the bridewealth cattle which are their traditional due is a real one, for scarcity of cattle and high brideprice have made elopement more frequent. But parents fear it so greatly that it colors all parent-daughter relations. In an extreme case, a recently initiated 9-year-old who failed to carry out an order of her mother was told by a neighbor woman at the stream, “So you disobey your mother! You'll probably run off and leave them without cattle!” Since the average marriage age is approximately 15, the problem of elopement does not usually loom very large until the girl is 12 or 13. At that time, the parents, especially the father, experience ambivalent feelings toward the daughter. The daughter is beginning to misbehave, showing a disregard of her mother's orders, and staying away from home more than her parents think she should. They want to punish her to arrest the kind of behavior which they believe will lead to wantonness and elopement, but they fear the punishment itself will give her an added incentive to leave home and injure her parents economically. This conflict is illustrated by the case of a Nyansongo father who proudly showed us a phonograph and records he bought to entertain his 15-year-old daughter at home so she would not have to go out to wild parties for such amusements. When, several months later, she came home from market after dark, the father became enraged, beat her severely

(which fathers are not supposed to do to initiated girls), and threatened to kill her. This is a common situation and often ends, as in the case cited, with the father hastily arranging her marriage to a man who is able and willing to pay cattle. The girl desires the romance and attention offered by young men but is afraid to commit herself sexually and emotionally because of the strong pressures and punishments of her father. In the most typical situation, the girl engages in sexual intercourse with different boys in great fear of discovery and pregnancy. All girls have sexual relations before marriage, although it is impossible to estimate the average frequency of such relations. If the father does not act fast enough in arranging a proper marriage to someone she will agree to live with, she may resolve the conflict by eloping with a man of her choice who pays no cattle to her father. Thus the Nyansongo girl, destined to leave home on marriage and never return to live there, becomes increasingly difficult for parents to control after initiation has brought her into the status of unmarried womanhood.” (3p175)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

“Gusii men consider homosexuality almost inconceivable and could not recall cases of it. If the practice occurs at all, it is extremely rare and certainly not socially condoned.” (4p974)

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

“The clan is the unit of exogamy. Young people know their clan names, and that marriage with members of their clan is prohibited. The exogamy principle is usually followed, but rumors are now and then heard of marriages “too near to home”.” (1p121)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

“The Gusii view of conception is that the man's semen mixes with the woman's blood. If she has not received semen a woman's menstrual blood will flow. Hence conception is considered most likely to take place during menstruation. The man can build the child after conception through frequent intercourse. Conception occurs because the bloods meet (Mayer 1973:127). The child is formed by blood from both sides. Personal characteristics are acknowledged as being inherited from both the father and the mother, for example a disease, luck, cleverness and beauty (ibid.:135), but it is the male contribution which is most noted (LeVine & LeVine 1966:115)... Ultimately fertility is male controlled. Descent can only be established through bridewealth payment. A man's illegitimate children do not count as descendants.” (8p191)

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

“The Gusii view of conception is that the man's semen mixes with the woman's blood. If she has not received semen a woman's menstrual blood will flow. Hence conception is considered most likely to take place during menstruation... The curbing of female fertility and matrilineal descent is expressed and maintained in several contexts. First, female fertility is made subservient to male fertility in rituals. Second, through marriage women's links with their natal families are ritually cut off and they are—in a sense—made into agnates of their husbands. Third, through the control of cattle men are in possession of both male and female reproduction.” (8p191-192)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

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4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

1. Rape resulting from seduction. Since the typical Gusii seduction bears a strong behavioral similarity to rape, it is only necessary to understand the conditions under which Gusii females who are being seduced decide to bring the act to the attention of the public and eventually to the authorities. First of all, the standard reluctant pose of the Gusii girl provides many opportunities for a young man to misunderstand her motives. Although she may sincerely want to reject his advances because she finds him unattractive or because of her own current fears, the young man may confidently assume she is pretending and proceed to use physical force to achieve his aim. If her revulsion or fear is great enough she may cry for help and initiate a rape case. Such misunderstandings can be due to the eagerness of the youth and his consequent inability to perceive her subtle cues of genuine rejection, or to the girl's failure to make the signs of refusal in unequivocal fashion...

2. Premeditated sexual assault. In some cases Gusii youths decide to obtain sexual gratification from girls by force with no semblance of a friendly approach. One or more boys may be involved in an attack on a single girl. Usually the object is to frighten her first so that she will not cry or resist; for this reason young (11 to 13 years old) and easily frightened girls are more likely to be chosen as victims. The boys disguise themselves by draping cloaks or skins over their heads, hide at a place out of hearing distance of the nearest homesteads, and dart out from behind bushes when the girl comes walking by collecting firewood or carrying a pot of water. Sometimes they beat her badly and tear her clothing. Girls are brought into court with lacerations and bites inflicted by sexual attackers. They may drag her off to the hut of one of them, and there force her into coitus. They intend to let her go eventually, but they may hold her for a couple of days. By this time her father has gone to the chief for the services of Tribal Policemen in finding the attackers. If the policemen track them down in time, the case is more likely to be brought to the Resident Magistrate's court, since rupture of the hymen and other signs of attack are common in this type of rape.

3. Abduction. When a Gusii man lacks the economic means for a legitimate bridewealth marriage and does not have the personal attractiveness or seductive skill needed to persuade a girl to elope with him, he may resort to desperate measures. Determined to obtain a mate, he enlists the aid of some clansmen in an attempt to abduct a girl from a different clan. Sometimes the girl is one he knows fairly well but who has refused to live in concubinage with him. The young men act for him as they would in a legitimate marriage, accosting the girl and taking her away by force. Under these conditions, however, they take pains not to be seen by the girl's parents or anyone else of her community. Another difference is that the girl's resistance is sincere, since she desires a legitimate marriage or concubinage with a man she finds unusually attractive. The young men frequently are rough on her, beating her and tearing her clothes. When she arrives at the home of her would-be lover, he exhorts

her in peaceful terms to remain with him until bridewealth can be raised to legitimize their union. Her refusal is ignored in the hope that she will eventually acquiesce, and the wedding night sexual contest is performed, with the clansmen helping overcome her resistance. If she does not escape and report the offense to her father, the latter will eventually come with Tribal Policemen and arrest the abductor.” (4p982-984)

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

“No one may marry into his own clan, for all of its members are classified as relatives. Intermarrying clans are traditional enemies and in the past carried on blood feuds, as expressed in the Gusii proverb, “Those whom we marry are those whom we fight”” (3p40)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

“...wives are expected to be faithful to their own husbands, with no deviations allowed.” (4p971)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

“In the early stages of marriage brides spend a good deal of time in their home communities visiting their parents. Such a girl may accompany a group of unmarried females going to the marketplace and may pretend to be unmarried in order to be bribed and flattered by the men there.” (4p983)

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

Not Found.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

Not Found.

4.22 Evidence for couvades:

Not found.

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

Not Found.

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

“In this context, the Gusii mother's avoidance of eye contact with her child can be interpreted as first of all an interactive habit that she brings to all interaction, and second, one that reflects her authority and status in the household vis à vis the children, and third, a reflection of the specific kin-avoidance norms (chinsoni) that will later apply to her interaction with each child. In addition, the Gusii mother is aware that eye contact is exciting to a child and builds expectations that the mother knows will be frustrated when she bears the next child. Furthermore, looking fondly at her own child in front of others can invite jealousy and witchcraft. For all of these reasons, both normative and strategic, the mother adopts gaze aversion as part of her maternal style of interacting with her own children.” (9p222-223)

“Chinsoni amounted to a detailed code of extreme modesty and restraint between parents and children: no touching, seeing each other undressed, or being jointly present when sexual topics were discussed. Even shaking hands (the usual greeting among persons of the same generation) was proscribed, not only with real parents but with parents-in-law and all classificatory parents within the clan. Similar codes of kin avoidance are found among many other Bantu-speaking (and other African) peoples, as well as among the indigenous inhabitants of Oceania and the Americas. For the Gusii, the most salient of these rules was the one prohibiting a father from entering the house of his married son, under any conditions. The central meaning of this custom is avoidance of contact between a man and his son's wife.” (5p66-67)

4.24 Joking relationships?

“The rules governing relationships between clansmen not of adjacent generations require less restraint and involve less embarrassment; they lack the elements of sex avoidance and respect which characterize classificatory parent-child relations. This lack of restraint is particularly striking in relations between an individual and his real or classificatory grandparents. He may discuss sex and insult them jokingly. In fact, the characteristic pattern of interaction in this relationship involves obscene insults, humorous inquiries about sexual activity, and deprecation of the other's sexual competence. Despite the reciprocal nature of this warm, joking relationship, real grandparents may make economic demands which must be respected by the grandchild.” (3p33-34)

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:

“Gusii institutions were not differentiated into political, economic, and religious spheres; patrilineal descent groups of varying scope provided the organizational framework for all social behavior, and all functions were vested in kinship roles.” (7p78)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

“While incest between brothers and sisters is considered abhorrent, there is actually one occasion when it is permissible. During the female circumcision ceremonies, already initiated, pubescent girls dance and roam the neighbourhoods in festive pranks. At night they will sleep in the homes of novices. This time is recognized as an opportunity for previously initiated boys and girls to have intercourse. This takes place in the huts, where many girls sleep in the living room or the mother's room of the hut. The boys sneak in at night and have sex with the girls. It must be quiet and they cannot identify each other in the dark, according to Mayer, on whose description I rely. At such times brothers and sisters may sleep with each other unknowingly. In this context it is only regarded as a mistake of “children's play” and that the boy has “opened the cattle gate” (Mayer 1953a:31). The notion is also present in the saying that: “My sister builds my house”, that is, makes it possible for her brother to have descendants (Mayer 1973:126). The identification of a daughter with bridewealth cattle is taken further by the neighbouring Kipsigi, where a father cannot use his daughter's bridewealth cattle for his own marriage since that would be equivalent to incest (Peristiany 1939).” (8p198)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

“Enyangi was divided into two nights, beginning with egetaorio. The groom and his age mates went to the bride's homestead where they were met by the bride's male age-mates with whom they engaged in wrestling matches. In the evening the

bridegroom's family provided a bull for slaughter which was eaten by all the guests. The egetaorio night was open to all who wished to attend, which included a large number of classificatory cousins of the bride and groom. The night was spent singing, dancing, eating and drinking (ibid. :11). On the following day, in contrast to the egetaorio, a serious magicoreligious ceremony, echorwa, was held. About 12 guests from each family attended (ibid. :12).

A special functionary, the "marriage priest", omogaka, or omongina bw-enyangi, who could be either male or female, was called to act as a master of ceremonies (P. Mayer 1950b:114). A goat of enyangi, a she-goat provided by the bride's father, was slaughtered. The groom and his age-mates left the homestead in the morning to spend the day in the bush, where he painted himself in war paint and smeared himself with ghee. Meanwhile the bride dressed in her ceremonial attire, consisting of, inter alia, a broad belt of beads around her waist. In the evening, the groom and his party of five young men, two boys and a girl, arrived and stopped at the gate to the cattle pen. At this stage the bride had to give her consent for them to enter the compound. It was an opportunity for her to claim a goat from her father before letting the groom pass. When allowed to proceed into the house through the cattle gate the men sat down and ate the sacrificed goat. At this time, the bride, who had been sitting in her mother's bedroom, passed by the male elders and handed the groom a calabash. The bridegroom in turn gave her a piece of stiff millet porridge, obokima bw'obori, on her open palm (P. Mayer 1950b:116). The bride and her attendants were shaved afterwards.

On the third day, under the direction of the marriage priest, a cup was passed around. When the bride received it she should kiss it to show her acceptance of the groom. At this point the bride would delay taking it from the groom's hand. The groom was again anointed with ghee. The bride and an uncircumcized girl entered the cow pen through the cattle gate carrying cows' horns full of ghee, with which she anointed three younger (real or classificatory) brothers of the groom. These boys left the cattle pen, and when they met the rest of the groom's party and the bride's brothers, they claimed to have severely beaten the bride. The bride's brothers retorted that they had prevented them from beating their sister. The bridegroom's group went to the door of the house that led to the cattle pen, eeri, where they lined up behind the groom who held a big shield of buffalo hide. The bride came from her mother's room, confronted the groom, and tried to take his shield from him under the encouragement of her kin, while the bridegroom, encouraged by his relatives, tried to hold on to his shield. After some time the groom surrendered his shield to the bride and food was served. The groom and his age-mates now left with the bride, who carried a calabash on her left side. Accompanied by a number of uncircumcised girls and boys, they walked to the groom's homestead. The shield was placed in the outer room, eero, where a cowhide had been spread on the floor. The groom and his age-mates sat down. The bride and her age-mates stayed outside the door of the mother-in-law's hut. She was not admitted immediately. The groom's mother and other women in the homestead chastised the bride, the mother-in-law hurling abuse at her, commenting on her deficiency as a wife, or saying that she did not cook well, or was lazy. They teased her, jostled her, smeared cattle dung on her and applied skin-irritating leaves to her body. During this humiliating ritual the bride was not supposed to cry or show any emotion. This continued until stopped by the mother-in-law. Afterwards, the bride would join the rest of the party on the cowhide in the eero. The first night at her husband's homestead was the time for the man to demonstrate his sexual prowess in front of his age-mates. If the bridegroom already had a first wife, a goat would be slaughtered as a sacrifice the same day, but if he was a bachelor they waited three days during which time the goat was not fed so that its intestines were completely emptied. The entrails of the slaughtered goat were used for divination. After the slaughter of the goat, the bride donned the marriage rings, ebetinge." (1p45-47)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

"The bridegroom brought with him an ekee of meat, after which the wife submitted to the name-taking ceremony. The wife knelt before the elders who mentioned six to eight names. She selected one to be her new name as a married woman. Then she stood up, took the ekee of millet flour, and went to her mother-in-law's room. She was called back again to take the container of meat, which was given to the children to eat." (1p47)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

"Each clan, although an independent military and territorial unit, was exogamous and patrilocal, so that wives had to be imported from clans against which feuds had been conducted. The Gusii recognize this in their proverb, "Those whom we marry are those whom we fight." Marriages did not mitigate the hostilities between clans on a permanent basis; in fact, women were used by their husbands' clans to aid in military operations against their natal clans. A captive from an enemy clan might be tortured in a pillory-like device while a married woman originally from his clan would be sent to relate tearfully to her kinsmen, "Our brother is being killed!" and to urge them to save his life by a ransom in cattle. Marriage among the Gusii was thus a relationship between hostile groups and it continues to be nowadays although blood feuds are prohibited. Clan territories in some areas have been broken up into discontinuous fragments, but local communities are homogeneous with respect to clan membership. Social relations between adjacent communities of different clans are minimal, whereas neighboring communities of the same clan have a considerable common social life. Marriages are still contracted with the aid of an intermediary (esigani) between members of alien and unfriendly groups." (4p966)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

No evidence of arranged marriages.

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries whom:

"The pressure to obtain cattle and pasture in competition with other groups encouraged defensive cooperation of local descent segments and conflicts with distant segments, i.e., clans and larger clan segments. This conflict situation in turn meant that members of different clans who were linked through marriage were potential enemies, and the cattle of one clan was the source of its expansion at the expense of the affinal clan's herds." (1p65)

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Not found.

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

“These subdivisions shared a common language, culture and traditional history. They also had totemic animals and occupied distinct territories (except for the mixed clan settlements in the Getutu chiefdom). There was much conflict and constant feuding between clans of different subdivisions over cattle and grazing.” (1p28)

“Lineages in turn could fight each other but converged in common defence against groups of lineages with different ancestors. The named subdivisions within the clan jointly controlled land and defended themselves against other such units. Such divisions, in contrast to the clubs used in inter-lineages conflict, fought each other with spears (P. Mayer 1949:11). Through population growth subclans would reach a size where they separated from the parent clan and adopted exogamous principles, forming a new clan. Therefore it is probable that larger subclans on the verge of seceding were also engaged in feuds and territorial expansion at the expense of the other subclans (P. Mayer 1949:32f).” (1p34-35)

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

“There was much conflict and constant feuding between clans of different subdivisions over cattle and grazing.” (1p28)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

“The precolonial Gusii — seven contiguous but politically autonomous groups speaking one language (Ekegusii) and recognizing a common patrilineal ancestor named Mogusii — were a mobile people, migrating from the north in their eighteenth century to their present location, then migrating within their territory in response to external military threats from neighboring peoples, internal divisions among Gusii clans, and opportunities for expansion in open land. Their culture was not static; on the contrary, they absorbed immigrants and customs from the surrounding Nilotic-speaking peoples (Luo and Kipsigis and, to a lesser extent, the Maasai). Nevertheless, despite some internal variations, there was not only a common language but also a common culture and social organization among the people who called themselves Abagusii.” (5p57-58)

4.18 Cannibalism?

Not Found.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

Not Found.

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

“The pattern of interclan feuding restricted residential mobility and reinforced the tendency of patrilineal descent groups to preserve their residential integrity for, even when they migrated, it was safer to do so as a group rather than individually. [...] The migration to the areas of new settlement broke up the territorial unity of clans, so that each clan has a place of original residence plus one or more places several miles away where people of the same clan reside. As this statement implies, the areas were not randomly settled by individual families, but were occupied by pioneers who then offered land to members of their own lineage.” (10p65)

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

“Today, wealth and influence for men come from business, employment, advanced education, and positions in (or links to) the administrative and political hierarchy. Access to these sources of wealth and influence lies outside the field of social action regulated by segmentary principles and alliances. A family gains wealth, prestige and influence by buying land, investing in businesses, educating children, and by having a member in the local or national bureaucracy. As one informant put it:

“Today's wars are economic — not tribal” (1p125)

“Pre-colonial political power and authority were vested in local male elders' councils and in the big-men who dominated their neighborhoods. In the absence of crosscutting forms of social organization, political life was factionalized into descent-based groups of varying ramifications. Only the Kitutu clan cluster developed a rudimentary political office of chief, OMOGAMBI (lit., "giver of verdicts"). Women were alienated, and geographically separated, from their natal clans and were thus in a position of little influence and power during the first years of marriage; however, older women, who had gained power by dint of the number of their sons and daughters-in-law, were often in charge of negotiations between fighting parties. Men continue to dominate political life, and leadership in the latter part of the twentieth century is based on elected office in local government bodies and in administration as chiefs and assistant chiefs.” (11p7)

“Gusii institutions were not differentiated into political, economic, and religious spheres; patrilineal descent groups of varying scope provided the organizational framework for all social behavior, and all functions were vested in kinship roles.” (7p78)

5.4 Post marital residence:

“Residence is at the husband's home. Divorce was and still is rare; it entails the return of the bride-wealth. At the death of a husband, the widow chooses a leviratic husband among the deceased's brothers.” (11p5)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

“The whole Gusii nation was considered as one gigantic descent group descended from an eponymous ancestor, Mogusii. The Gusii nation was in turn divided into eight subdivisions, most of which occupied specific territories. The genealogical grid was not one of exact, known or demonstrated connections with the eponymous ancestor.” (1p30)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

“There were no other structural principles around which other aspects of social organization, such as age sets, political offices, or secret societies, could crystallize. The segmentary social space was also replicated in physical space.” (1p33)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

“The rules governing relationships between clansmen not of adjacent generations require less restraint and involve less embarrassment; they lack the elements of sex avoidance and respect which characterize classificatory parent-child relations. This lack of restraint is particularly striking in relations between an individual and his real or classificatory grandparents. He may discuss sex and insult them jokingly. In fact, the characteristic pattern of interaction in this relationship involves obscene insults, humorous inquiries about sexual activity, and deprecation of the other's sexual competence. Despite the reciprocal nature of this warm, joking relationship, real grandparents may make economic demands which must be respected by the grandchild.” (3p33-34)

5.8 Village and house organization:

“Gusii society consisted of families constituting structurally equivalent corporate groups, which acted as legally and economically independent units represented by a male head. This was the largest structural unit to contain differentiation of status and relations of ascribed authority. The extended polygynous family was geographically divided into two units, the village where the married men and women and daughters lived, omochie, and the cattle camps (ebisarate), where the young, unmarried men lived. The latter were located on the grazing areas where the young men guarded the families' herds and conducted raids against the cattle of other clans and subdivisions” (1p35-36)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

“The extended polygynous family was geographically divided into two units, the village where the married men and women and daughters lived, omochie, and the cattle camps (ebisarate), where the young, unmarried men lived.” (1p36)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

“Children are allowed to stay up during a beer party held in the house, but smaller ones often fall asleep in the arms of mother or grandmother or lie down to sleep on the floor despite the noise. On ordinary nights, the mother sleeps with her infant and husband (when he is home and not staying at the house of another wife). One or two of the younger children are usually huddled close to the mother, especially when the traditional, slightly raised, hide-covered, dried mud bed is used. When the more common rope-spring bed on legs is used, they may sleep on the floor beside it or in a nearby children's house (esaiga) outside.” (3p139)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

“Gusii society consisted of families constituting structurally equivalent corporate groups, which acted as legally and economically independent units represented by a male head. This was the largest structural unit to contain differentiation of status and relations of ascribed authority. The extended polygynous family was geographically divided into two units, the village where the married men and women and daughters lived, omochie, and the cattle camps (ebisarate), where the young, unmarried men lived. The latter were located on the grazing areas where the young men guarded the families' herds and conducted raids against the cattle of other clans and subdivisions. As soon as a man's father died he gained full social independence and established his own homestead. An old man could have many wives, as well as sons who, together with their wives, were under his authority.” (1p35-36)

5.12 Trade:

“The homesteads which produced large grain surpluses were also likely to trade beyond the confines of local exchange. The availability of large food crops attracted traders from the neighboring Luo who bartered livestock against grain at wealthy homesteads.” (1p62)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

“Pre-colonial political power and authority were vested in local male elders' councils and in the big-men who dominated their neighborhoods. In the absence of crosscutting forms of social organization, political life was factionalized into descent-based groups of varying ramifications. Only the Kitutu clan cluster developed a rudimentary political office of chief, OMOGAMBI (lit., "giver of verdicts"). Women were alienated, and geographically separated, from their natal clans and were thus in a position of little influence and power during the first years of marriage; however, older women, who had gained power by dint of the number of their sons and daughters-in-law, were often in charge of negotiations between fighting parties. Men continue to dominate political life, and leadership in the latter part of the twentieth century is based on elected office in local government bodies and in administration as chiefs and assistant chiefs.” (1p7)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

“In consequence, religion is not an object of daily attention for Nyansongans, but rather a set of beliefs and practices which spring into action during an emergency when supernatural punishment is feared.” (1p56)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

“ABARAGORI , who are usually women, determine the cause of various misfortunes. Diverse healers also exist, such as the ABANYAMORIOGI (herbalists), who use various mixtures of plants for medicines. ABABARI (indigenous surgeons), set fractures and treat backaches and headaches through trephination. ABANYAMOSIRA (professional sorcerers) are normally hired to protect against witchcraft and to retaliate against witches. An OMORIORI (witch smeller) ferrets out witchcraft articles (e.g., hair or feces of the victim, dead birds, and bones of exhumed corpses) that may be buried in a house. A witch (OMOROGI) can be a man or a woman but is usually the latter. Witches are believed to operate in groups; they dig up recently buried corpses in order to use the body parts as magical paraphernalia and to eat the inner organs. Witches usually kill their victims through the use of poisons, parts of corpses, and people's exuviae. Witchcraft among the Gusii is believed to be an acquired art that is handed down from parent to child.” (1p8)

6.2 Stimulants:

Not found.

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

“A boy becomes omomura only upon being circumcised and passing through the period of seclusion, hazing, and ceremony that follows. Boys nowadays are circumcised at nine to eleven years of age; it was at age ten to twelve in 1956 and perhaps sixteen to eighteen in precolonial days. The word omomura may be derived from the Maasai word murrān, “warrior,” since the Maasai are considered prototypical fierce warriors by the Gusii and the circumcised Gusii male was a warrior in the precolonial times. The initiation ceremonies that constitute the transition to this stage are considered the most important rites of passage a male Gusii undergoes. This is a passage from childhood, characterized by dependency and intimacy with the mother, to manhood, ideally characterized by not only military bravery but greater personal responsibility within the homestead and preparation for marriage. The altered status of the young man in the homestead is recognized ritually in two events when he emerges from seclusion: his father takes an oath not to punish him physically any more, and he is informed that he must not enter his mother's house until he presents her with a goat, and then only in the entrance foyer. Initiation thus completes the youth's extrusion from the house in which he was born and reared, and it removes him from paternal supervision and discipline — on the publicly stated assumption that he has the sense to behave correctly (which includes obedience to the father). As omomura, he lives in his own house in the homestead, and brings his bride to that house.” (7p82-83)

“For women, some of the details are similar, but many are different. The egesagaane, “uncircumcised girl,” was, like her male counterpart, a hard-working toiler at the bottom of the hierarchy in the domestic labor force, but the tasks she performed were different: carrying water from the stream (in pots balanced on her head), caring for babies, and (later) helping her mother in cooking, grinding, cultivating the fields. (If parents lacked children of the appropriate sex, however, boys could be pressed into infant care, and girls could be assigned herding, at least temporarily.) As with boys, initiation ceremonies involving circumcision were the rite of passage to the next age grade, but girls underwent these at a younger age (nowadays seven to eight; precolonial times, early to middle teens) and with a ceremonial content that emphasized themes of sex, marriage, and procreation rather than military valor and social autonomy. Of the two terms for a circumcised but unmarried girl, enyaroka literally means “a circumcised thing,” and emphasizes the ordeal she has gone through; omoiseke is the more general term for a marriageable girl. Nowadays, girls are circumcised so young that there are many years (about seven) between initiation and marriage (at about fifteen years old), but preparation for marriage is a salient theme of life throughout these years. Parents view the unmarried girl with some ambivalence: the mother knows that however attached she is to her daughter, the girl must leave forever; both parents feel they have a right to be compensated for having nurtured her, but are rightly fearful that she will deprive them of the bridewealth compensation by eloping—thus leaving them with no source of bridewealth for one of her brothers.” (7p87)

6.4 Other rituals:

“The groom and his age-mates now left with the bride, who carried a calabash on her left side. Accompanied by a number of uncircumcised girls and boys, they walked to the groom's homestead. The shield was placed in the outer room, eero, where a cowhide had been spread on the floor. The groom and his age-mates sat down. The bride and her age-mates stayed outside the door of the mother-in-law's hut. She was not admitted immediately. The groom's mother and other women in the homestead chastised the bride, the mother-in-law hurling abuse at her, commenting on her deficiency as a wife, or saying that she did not cook well, or was lazy. They teased her, jostled her, smeared cattle dung on her and applied skin-irritating leaves to her body. During this humiliating ritual the bride was not supposed to cry or show any emotion. This continued until stopped by the mother-in-law.” (1p46)

“After the completion of negotiations, the young men who brought the cattle were given food and drink before they took the bride to the bridegroom's homestead. She stayed up to two months in the bridegroom's home and in the cattle camp of the young men. During this period the bride's mother was to send the young couple a basket of stiff millet porridge and a calabash of sour milk (still a favorite drink) at least three times. The gifts were carried by young girls since the bride's mother was not allowed to visit her daughter in person in the first year after the marriage. Each time the basket was empty it had to be sent back filled with grain to the bride's mother together with the calabash. When the calabash was returned a little milk had to be left. If all the milk was consumed, the parents would say that the young couple was “wishing poverty on them” (P. Mayer 1950a:19).” (1p44)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

“Before the advent of Christianity in the region, the Gusii believed in the existence of one God, who was the originator of the world but did not directly interfere in human affairs.” (11p)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

“When beer is plentiful and guests are many, a drinking bout is enlivened by singing and dancing. This is particularly likely to happen if a man has brought his lyre, a traditional Gusii instrument, to accompany the singing, but unaccompanied singing is also frequent. One man starts a song, then everyone joins in. The songs are traditional Gusii melodies; some extol the virtues of famous leaders of the past, while others have reference to contemporary figures, sometimes in a satirical vein. The women join in the singing, and in the dancing that begins soon after. During a song, one person gets up and moves his arms rhythmically to the music, taking an occasional step forward as he does so. The persons recognized as the most skillful dancers vibrate the muscles of their necks, shoulders, and arms, while making very few gross movements. A number of persons may dance simultaneously, but each one does so individually; there is no coordination among them. At a large, crowded party, there is little space for dancing, and someone who wants to dance may have to wait until another leaves the

floor. At the height of such activities, however, everyone is participating by either dancing or singing, and the atmosphere is one of restrained hilarity.” (3p62)

“There is little formalized or ritualized social life in Nyansongo. There are no drums, no group singing in the fields, and few organized group dances. Furthermore, even festive activities are not adorned by masks, wood carvings, or decorative art, all of which are virtually absent from Gusii culture. The people of Nyansongo generally take their pleasures in informal settings requiring little in the way of preparation, coordination, or ornamentation.” (3p60)

“The Gusii soapstone carvings have received international distribution and fame. The stone is mined and carved in Tabaka, South Mugirango, where several families specialize in this art. The craft is bringing in a sizable income to the area through the tourist trade.” (11p9)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

“ABARAGORI, who are usually women, determine the cause of various misfortunes.” (11p8)

6.8 Missionary effect:

“The Gusii were precipitously introduced to Western culture in the first decade of the 20th century when they came under British rule and the first Christian missionaries arrived. Their lives have never been the same, and the pace of social change has increased with each successive decade up to the present. Yet their contemporary survival strategies, family life, and patterns of child care can only be understood in terms of traditions inherited from their ancestors. Here we present an overview of Gusii culture and institutions in precolonial times and how they changed between 1907 and 1974, of the Gusii life course as experienced by adults and learned by children, and of the community in which we studied Gusii young children and their parents from 1974 to 1976.: (5p57)

6.9 RCR revival:

“There are four major denominations in Gusiiland: the Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Swedish Lutheran, and Pentecostal Assemblies of God. Active Seventh Day Adventists are oriented toward European family ideals, and they practice a form of Protestant ethic. Although the churches are very active, certain aspects of non-Christian beliefs still permeate the lives of most Gusii.” (11p8)

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

“Funerals take place at the deceased's homestead; a large gathering is a sign of prestige. Women are buried beyond the yard, on the left side of the house, whereas men are buried beyond the cattle pen, on the right side of the house. Christian elements, such as catechism, reading out loud from the Bible, and singing hymns, are combined with the traditional practices of wailing, head shaving, and animal sacrifices to the dead. The preferred person to dig the grave is the deceased's son's son. Before burial, the corpse is dissected in order to ascertain whether death was caused by witchcraft. After burial, the widow/widower is in a liminal state and cannot move far from the homestead until after a period of a few weeks to two months, when ritual activities, including a sacrifice, are performed. One basic theme of the funeral is the fear of the dead person's spirit. The deceased, enraged at having died, may blame the survivors and must therefore be placated with sacrifices.” (11p9)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

Not Found.

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

Not Found.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

“Before the advent of Christianity in the region, the Gusii believed in the existence of one God, who was the originator of the world but did not directly interfere in human affairs. It was the concept of an ancestor cult that, together with their ideas about witchcraft, sorcery, and impersonal forces, provided a complex of beliefs in suprahuman agencies. The ancestor spirits (EBIRECHA) existed both as a collective and as individual ancestors and ancestresses of the living members of a lineage. They were not propitiated until there was tangible evidence of their displeasure, such as disease or death of people and livestock or the destruction of crops. By the late twentieth century most Gusii claim to be adherents of some Christian church. There are four major denominations in Gusiiland: the Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Swedish Lutheran, and Pentecostal Assemblies of God. Active Seventh Day Adventists are oriented toward European family ideals, and they practice a form of Protestant ethic. Although the churches are very active, certain aspects of non-Christian beliefs still permeate the lives of most Gusii. Afflicted by misfortune, many Gusii visit a diviner (OMORGORI ; pl. ABARAGORI), who may point to displeased spirits of the dead and prescribe sacrifice to placate them.” (11p8)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

“The groom and his age-mates left the homestead in the morning to spend the day in the bush, where he painted himself in war paint and smeared himself with ghee.” (1p45)

7.2 Piercings:

“Ornaments, most of them borrowed, would consist of metal wire coils, beads, and armlets; there would also be rings fixed to the ears by the holes which are pierced in every Gusii's lobes during childhood.” (12p25)

7.3 Haircut:

“If a man died, all his wives and close agnates were supposed to shave their hair, but this was not expected of his daughters and their children. When a woman died her husband's agnates and their wives would shave but the woman's natal kin would not. Her natal kin attended the funeral but briefly. Finally, a woman had to be buried at her husband's home, and it was considered very dangerous if she died at her natal home. The so-called “gray hair rules” which prohibited a woman from growing gray

hair at her parents' homestead also precluded an old woman, who might die soon, from staying in her native clan territory (P. Mayer 1949)." (1p51-52)

7.4 Scarification:

Not found.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

"New clothes have been specially laid by for the novice's emergence from seclusion; now he puts them on. Until perhaps twenty or thirty years ago, a boy would receive the traditional dress of youth and young men — a small skin, taken from a kid, and a larger one, decorated with iron beads, to be worn skirtwise. Ornaments, most of them borrowed, would consist of metal wire coils, beads, and armlets; there would also be rings fixed to the ears by the holes which are pierced in every Gusii's lobes during childhood. (12p25)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

"At the end, the girl puts on her new clothes and goes out to show herself in public. Nothing better epitomizes the difference of atmosphere between girls' and boys' initiation than do the modes of dressing adopted by each sex on this occasion. The boy novice's new European-style clothes, which are to become his everyday wear, do not in any way distinguish him outwardly from other boys. The girl, on the other hand, puts on the traditional outfit which was fashionable best dress for girls up to a generation ago, but which no modern child would dream of wearing except for a ceremonial occasion. The long back apron and short fringed front apron of well-smoothed skins, coloured a festive red with etago, and adorned with as many strings of beads as she can beg or borrow from her friends — these are instantly conspicuous among the cotton dresses of other girls and women. Thus on market days, when the novices parade among the crowds, it is only the girls in their rich archaic costume who show outward sign of having just passed through one of the outstanding experiences of a Gusii life." (12p36)

7.8 Missionary effect:

Not Found.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

Not Found.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

"Gusii kinship terminology is classificatory, merging lineals with collaterals. Specific lineal terms are used to denote the immediate family: TATA (own father), BABA (own mother), MOMURA (own son), and MOSUBATI OMINTO (young woman of our house). All other women and men of Ego's generation, however, including "real" brothers, are called MAMURA OMINTO. In the mother's family, the reciprocal term MAME is applied to mother's brothers, their wives, and to sister's children. In any clan in which Ego has kinship connections, individuals of Ego's parents' generation are called TATAMOKE (small father) or MAKOMOKE (small mother). All members of the descending generation are OMWANA ONE (my child), those of the grandchildren's generation are OMOCHOKORO, and those of the grandparents' generation are SOKORO (grandfather) and MAGOKORO (grandmother). Gusii terminology also distinguishes links that have been established by a transfer of marriage cattle." (11p5)

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

"Children fathered by the levirate are known as sons and daughters of the deceased, who paid bridewealth for their mother, rather than of their physiological father." (3p53)

"Thus the marriage system of Nyansongo is characterized by clan exogamy, patrilocal residence, bridewealth, and the levirate." (3p40)

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

Not Found.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

"Bestiality, on the other hand, is familiar to Gusii men. It is impossible to estimate its incidence, but everyone interviewed could recall cases of it from different localities, and one case of it appears in the records of the Resident Magistrate's court. When a boy of early adolescence, up to sixteen, is discovered having intercourse with a goat or cow, punishment is light, as it is assumed that the youth is attempting to find out if he is potent in a rather harmless way. The animal is considered defiled and is either killed or traded to an alien cultural group, the Luo or Kipsigis. If the animal belonged to someone other than the boy's father, it must be replaced. The son is warned against such activity by his father and sometimes by other elders as well. Nevertheless, it is probably performed clandestinely by many boys who are never caught at it. When a boy older than about sixteen is found having intercourse with an animal it is taken more seriously and treated in the same manner as incest within the nuclear family, or as mental disorder." (4p974)

"Proper social interaction among the Gusii entails the avoidance of eye contact, particularly between those of unequal status, including parents and their children. Adults rarely converse in the en face position but tend to speak side by side, back to back or at a 90-degree angle, in which one looks at the ground while the other speaks. Mutual gaze usually occurs at the moment of greeting and is avoided during the interaction that follows. Excessive eye contact is interpreted as disrespectful familiarity or improper intrusiveness with sexual or aggressive intent." (9p222)

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