

## **Questionnaire (put reference #:page # after each entry)**

### **1. Description**

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: *Maasai, from the Maa language family (9)*

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3 (9)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): *The Maasai inhabit the savannah borderland between Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa, an area of approximately 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>. 5 degrees, 0' 0" N 37 degrees, 0' 0" E (5, p. 608)*

1.4 Brief history: *"Until recently the Maasai lived a seminomadic way of life, migrating with their livestock herds according to seasonal fluctuations. Today they are less nomadic, but livestock, in particular cattle, are still central to their economy and culture. In Kenya the traditional grazing land of the Maasai has been divided into group and individual ranches, and many group ranches have been subdivided into individual holdings" (6. p. 608)*

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: *Formal education is gaining importance among the Maasai. Educated men and women have begun to oppose practices such as forced marriages (especially of schoolgirls) and circumcision of girls more forcefully. There are cases of women taking an authoritarian father or brutal husband to court for such grievances (Hodgson, 2001). There is also an emerging opposition among educated Maasai women to their lack of political influence. Another change is the growing evangelization among Maasai women and the occurrence of spirit possessions among them (Hodgson, 1997). (6 p. 608)*

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: *The Maasai live in large dispersed settlements (pl. inkangitie, enkang) consisting of several families, which together often count 50–60 people. (6. Pg 609)*

### **2. Economy**

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: *The traditional Maasai diet consists of six basic foods: meat, blood, milk, fat, honey, and tree bark. 2*

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: *Adult married men are primarily managers and supervisors. It is their responsibility to gather the necessary information on range conditions, water availability and marketing. They make the initial decision on residence location, decide on herd movement and splitting, on the watering location, the daily orbit of grazing and who will do the herding. They tell the herder where to go and often accompany the herd to make sure that it follows the intended orbit. Men usually oversee watering to ensure that animals are watered in an orderly fashion and are not pushed away by someone else's animals.*

*Women make all major domestic decisions, including those relating to childcare, food preparation, collection of water and fuelwood and house-building and maintenance. They also take part in livestock management. Each woman takes care of the cattle and smallstock allocated to her sub-household. Women care for very young stock, which spend the day around the boma. They make sure young animals have ample suckling time, supply fodder to young calves and occasionally supply water to sick animals in the boma. Women inspect the animals of their sub-household to make sure all have returned from grazing and are in good health. Problems are brought to the attention of the household head.*

*Much of the routine work of the Maasai household is carried out by children, who do almost all of the herding and much of the work around the boma. Children become involved from when they are 3 or 4 years old, helping with such tasks as carrying kids and lambs into or out of the house and watching animals around the boma. This fulfils three functions: it helps protect the animals from predators, it trains the children as future herders and it keeps the children occupied so their mothers can do other jobs*

*At 6 or 7 years old a child becomes a full-time herder, beginning with smallstock. Herding smallstock is a demanding job as smallstock wander and are easily lost or taken by predators. Children start herding calves at 8 or 9 years old. This is less arduous than herding smallstock and children welcome the change. By the age of 11, children, particularly boys, begin to herd older cattle, initially as apprentices to an older herder. Normally cattle herding is a supervisory activity as animals know the way and set the pace. Herders follow the animals, keeping them from straying and watching for predators.*

*Girls tend to do more smallstock and calf herding and less cattle herding than boys. Cattle herding is considered too arduous for girls, particularly if distances walked are long. If girls herd calves or smallstock, they usually return to the boma in time to help with young-stock management, preparations for milking and domestic tasks. (7)*

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos: *All game food including fish are taboo and not eaten 2.*

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

### **3. Anthropometry**

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

#### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): MEN: *For Maasai men in Tanzania, the age of first marriage was 29.38 years, in Kenya it was 25.56* (1. p. 404)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: *“Only 0.2% of men were reported as divorced or separated in the current study. The reasons for this are threefold. Firstly, the wife's parents may have to pay back all or part of the brideprice. Secondly, given the strong affinal relationship that develops between the two families (wife's and husband's), such a breakup has ramifications far greater than the individual couple. This aspect is summarised by Mitzlaff, “As marriage is not seen as a matter between two individuals it cannot be dissolved by these two partners” (1988:148). Thirdly, a wife (unless breastfeeding) is unable to take her children with her permanently, as children belong to the patriline.”* (1 p. 402)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: *From Tanzanian data (n=217), it is calculated that 52,6% of currently married men were in polygynous marriages and on average there were 2,7 wives per polygynist.* (1 p. 405)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: *There is a bride price that is negotiated by the men in the husbands' family* (6. p. 607)

4.9 Inheritance patterns: *“The agnatic lineage system formalizes property rights to animals through inheritance and livestock allocation from fathers to sons. Wives are allocated cattle when they marry and move to the husband's homestead.”* (6. p. 612)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

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

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

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

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: *I found no concrete numbers, but by western standards it appears rape occurs frequently: “The relationship between husband and wife is one of inequality, not only in terms of age but, more importantly in terms of authority and power. If he so wishes, a husband may beat an obstinate wife into submission. The opposite would be unthinkable, as women are not supposed to exercise physical violence against their husbands; besides they do not have sticks with which to beat them.”* (6. p.615)

*“Women of a neighborhood also collect for punitive delegations (olkeshuroto) when husbands or wives have failed to fulfill their reproductive obligations. For instance if a woman, repeatedly refuses her husband sex, without any “good” reason, the other women of the homestead will take action and virtually carry her into bed, waiting there for the husband to perform the act in their presence. The refusal of a wife to sleep with her husband occurs chiefly in the case of young women married to elderly men.”* (6. p. 612)

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): *“The strictest rule relating to marriage partners is that the husband may not be of the same age-set as the wife's father, making the “ideal wife” the daughter of a man who is two age sets older than the prospective husband* (1. p. 401)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? *Females are allowed to have sex with men outside of her marriage as long as those men are in her husband's age set. However, she is at times forced to engage in sex with her husband.* (6. p. 612)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? *Children are commonly brought up by their “biological” parents. However, they refer to other person of their parents' generation as “fathers” (papa) and “mothers” (yieyio), for instance, father's brothers and stepmothers (wives of father) and mothers's sisters, respectively. If parents die, these close relatives take over parental roles. It is also common for relatives to periodically foster each other's children, or for childless women to adopt children from relatives or in-laws. Furthermore, as men of the same age group have access to each other's wives, the father of the child (pater) may not be its biological father (genitor).* (6 p. 608)

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

4.22 Evidence for couvades

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

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships?

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? *“The wedding is divided into two sequential events: the departure from the bride's home, and the arrival at the husband's. The major ceremony is upon arrival; the husband's family celebrates the acquisition of a young fertile woman who will bestow many children on their family. In the evening of the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom, his best man, and his age mates gather in the house to bless the girl and give her a new name, a name of the age group to be used only by them. The collective name giving symbolizes their common access to the wife of an age mate.”* (6. p. 614)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? See 4.27

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): *Generally ideal marriage partners are found within a social group, or within the same clan, but exceptions are occasionally allowed as sometimes men are able to take a wife from another group or tribe.* (6. P 607)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? *“The Maasai practice arranged marriages, and courtship at*

young age does not normally lead to marriage. Parents, in particular the father or, if he is absent, another adult guardian on the father's side, are the active actors in choosing marriage partners for their children". (6. p. 614)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: *Conflicts are avoided because men and women are allowed to have sexual relationships outside of marriage (6. p. 609)*

#### **Warfare/homicide**

4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: *"The society has no centralized political leadership. In the past, the Maasai had an effective military organization for raiding and warfare, and their warriors were known for great courage and strength."* (8 pg 35)

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

4.35 Cannibalism?

#### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: *"The Maasai live in large dispersed settlements (pl. inkangitie, enkang) consisting of several families, which together often count 50–60 people."* (6 p. 608)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): *Political authority and decision-making power is invested in the male age grade of "elders." While they are in the manyatta, the morans appoint their leaders, and these age-set leaders (pl. ilaiguenak, olaiguenani) become important political spokesmen when the morans are promoted to elders. Considering the critical importance of the age-set system in Maasai politics, women are excluded from important public political arenas and leadership roles.* (Ember & Ember p. 316)

5.4 Post marital residence: *In the first year of marriage, or until she has built her own house, the young wife lives with her mother-in-law or another adult female in-law in the homestead.* (6. p. 615)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): *the uncircumcized boys, who are often far beyond puberty when they undergo the surgical operation, do not have any "legitimate" sex partners. They do not dare to associate with the young uncircumcized girls for fear of corporal confrontations with the morans, and in addition, by not being circumcized, they are still "impure" and girls and women shy away from them.* (6. p. 614)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): *for men with several wives Successive wives build their houses alternately on either side of the gate coming into the settlement; the first wife builds her house on the right side, the second on the left, the third on the right, and so on. The people on the right- and the left-hand side, respectively, form a subdivision of the agnatic family into two matrilineal groups. This division is of importance for inheritance of the family's livestock, social identity, and ties of sentiments.* (6. p. 608)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: *"Major structural principles in Maasai culture and society are the patrilineal clan organization (pl. ilgilat, olgilat) and the male age-set system (pl. ilajijik, olaji). The population are divided into several major descent groups or clans, namely the ilaiser, ilukuma, ilataiyiok, ilmolelian, ilmakesan, iltarro sero, and ilmamasita (Jacobs, 1965). These groups are again subdivided into smaller segments of agnatic subclans and lineages, which in principle are exogamous units."* (6. p. 608)

5.12 Trade:

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

#### **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): *"For men, there is a progression from childhood to warriorhood to elderhood. At the age of four, a child's lower incisors are taken out with a knife. Young boys test their will by their arms and legs with hot coals. As they grow older, they submit to tattooing on the stomach and the arms, enduring hundreds of small cuts into the skin.*

*Ear piercing for both boys and girls comes next. The cartilage of the upper ear is pierced with hot iron. When this heals, a hole is cut in the ear lobe and gradually enlarged by inserting rolls of leaves or balls made of wood or mud. Nowadays plastic film canisters may serve this purpose. The bigger the hole, the better. Those earlobes that dangle to the shoulders are considered perfect.*

*Circumcision (for boys) and excision (for girls) is the next stage, and the most important event in a young Maasai's life. It is a father's ultimate duty to ensure that his children undergo this rite. The family invites relatives and friends to witness the ceremonies, which may be held in special villages called imanyat. The imanyat dedicated to circumcision of boys are called nkang oo ntaritik (villages of little birds).*

*Circumcision itself involves great physical pain and tests a youth's courage. If they flinch during the act, boys bring shame and dishonor to themselves and their family. At a minimum, the members of their age group ridicule them and they pay a fine of one head of cattle. However, if a boy shows great bravery, he receives gifts of cattle and sheep.*

*Girls must endure an even longer and more painful ritual, which is considered preparation for childbearing. (Girls who become pregnant before excision are banished from the village and stigmatized throughout their lives.) After passing this test of courage, women say they are afraid of nothing.” 2*

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation): *The Maasai believe in one supreme God, Ngai (also named Engai or Enkai). That supreme God is androgynous—that is, both female and male. Ngai's primordial dwelling, the Ol Doiyo Lengai, literally “The Mountain of God,” is located in northern Tanzania. Ngai created the forest, mountains, lowlands, and highlands. Natural forces, such as rain, thunder, drought, and lightning, act as gifts or punishments from God. (Saitoti, 1989) (1. 2006)The Maasai God appears in two manifestations: Ngai Narok, characterized by goodness and benevolence, is black, whereas Ngai Nanyokie, the angry one, is red like the British colonizers who disrupted Maasai life. Ngai Narok is associated with the north and presides over rain, fertility, the sun, and love matters, whereas Ngai Nanyokie is associated with the south and a vengeful attitude and behavior. (5. p. 397)*

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: *Generally the Maasai do not have any belief in the afterlife, nor do they have any form of ancestor worship. The closest one can come to achieving immortality is through family legacy, producing many sons and wealth in the form of cattle. (4. p. 37)*

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) *There is no ancestor worship*

## **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint: *Maasai warriors who have been circumcised will cover their entire bodies with red ocher (3, p.43)*

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut: *When Maasai men are circumcised they grow their hair long, and spend a lot of time grooming and taking care of it. (3 p.43)*

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): *Maasai warriors would wear headdresses made from lion manes and ostrage feathers when going to a cattle raid, or to retrieve stolen cattle (3, p.46)*

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Types of clothing: *“Maasai clothing varies by age, sex, and place. Traditionally, shepherds wore capes made from calf hides, and women wore capes of sheepskin. The Maasai decorated these capes with glass beads. In the 1960s, the Maasai began to replace animal-skin with commercial cotton cloth. Women tied lengths of this cloth around their shoulders as capes (shuka) or around the waist as a skirt. The Maasai color of preference is red, although black, blue, striped, and checkered cloth are also worn, as are multicolored African designs.” 2*

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

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

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

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