

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Khoisan, Southern Africa, Hua/!Xoo

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): huc (Hua) / nmn (!Xoo)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Botswana



1.4 Brief history: A number of languages spoken by the San happen to be substantially similar to some specific Khoikhoi dialects. Based upon certain San and Khoi language studies, a considerable number of linguists are quite positive about the possibility that the Khoikhoi language could well have evolved out of a San language. Another reason for the similarities between the two peoples was the process of intermarriage between them. Today we cannot speak of distinctly identifiable San and Khoikhoi people anymore. Through time they have mixed and as a result the use of a combination of the words "Khoi" and "San" into "Khoisan" has become popular.

It is commonly believed that their roots are to be found along the north coast of the African continent. They were driven further and further southward by expanding more powerful nations in their quest for living space. The Black people were primarily located throughout the tropical and equatorial parts of Africa by the time the San reached the southern regions of Africa.

The tough and resilient little San people who were capable of producing the type of courage and compassion needed for their survival for such a long period, left us a way to glimpse into their world.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Deep in the Kalahari desert of South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, there is a small population of about 100 000 San or people left, trying to make a living the way their ancient predecessors did. Threatened by extinction, this has become more and more difficult for them and these days a large number of

have turned to either agriculture or stockbreeding in order to survive.

1.6 Ecology: unknown

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Population is about 200 and decreasing (Hua) !Xoo population is around 4,000 in Botswana

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): plant roots

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: They depended on hunting game comprising a variety of antelope species, together with gathering wild plant foodstuffs for their survival.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: men made knives and spears when they weren't out hunting.

2.4 Food storage: none

2.5 Sexual division of production: men do the hunting and women do the gathering. The division is very clear and stated at an early age

2.6 Land tenure: large desert area

2.7 Ceramics: There were not ceramics, though they do enjoy painting.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: food is evenly distributed throughout the community and it is considered rude to eat more than one's share or to hoard food, etc.

2.9 Food taboos: There were no food taboos found.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? none

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): 1.5m, approximately equal to 4ft. 9in.

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): unknown

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): unknown

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): unknown

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): unknown

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): unknown

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): unknown

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: was not stated, though it does say that divorces were not commonly accepted

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: There were no polygynous marriages.

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Sometimes a trade of goods would be given in exchange for the bride, though not always.

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Patrilineal society so inherited through the father's side of the family

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: unknown

- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: unknown
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): unknown
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? Partible paternity is not believed.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) unknown
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? unknown
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape unknown
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): always married outside of one's own tribe, usually of similar social status
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? unknown
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: no
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? unknown
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: unknown
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades unknown
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) unknown
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Very high respect was given to kin of both your blood and your in-laws. It was just as important to keep good relations with the in-laws as it was your own blood. This is was largely because the men would live with their bride's family until she got pregnant and had the child, at which point the couple would return to the husband's family.
- 4.24 Joking relationships? no
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names, or associations: patrilineal lines of descent and heritance.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: marry outside of one's own clan.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Marriage was a powerful social mechanism to unite different groups.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Took your fathers name
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) everyone had to marry outside of their tribe or clan
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? unknown
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Men from one clan had to seek wives in another. Because related clans within the tribe were geographically close to one another, it is likely that most men found wives within the tribe.

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: no percentage was given, though warfare between groups became very common

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: outgroup cause of death was usually raids while ingroup, though not as common, was usually jealousy or revenge

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

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Tribes stayed essentially within their own group and territory besides when the men would go to find their wives

4.18 Cannibalism? unknown, though I assume not.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: unknown

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): These two groups are very nomadic because of their limited resources. They will move camp whenever resources get scarce and follow herds of antelope or other animals for their food source.

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Tribes had a kinship base, and were made up of a number of linked clans, with the seniority of one of the clans being recognized. The head of the senior clan was recognized as the chief of the tribe.

5.4 Post marital residence: The custom was that the bridegroom had to spend the first months of marriage (until the birth of the first child) living at the village of his parents-in-law. Thereafter, the bride was expected to spend the rest of her marriage in the village of her husband.

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): They weren't terribly territorial because there were not many watering holes. So they would, in a sense, "lease out" land for others to use and then to leave as soon as they were able.

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): coming of age rituals were different and each sex has very distinctive roles in the society. For instance, when a woman is about to give birth, males are not allowed to see her before and for seven days after birth.

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: unknown

5.8 Village and house organization: The basic housing structure was a round hut (matjioeshuis) made of a frame of green branches planted into the ground and bent over and tied together. This was covered with reed mats. It could be dismantled and re-erected in a new location when grazing in the area became depleted. Sometimes the mats were simply removed and rolled up. People left the frames behind if they knew they would be returning to the same site. During the warm weather, it was cool inside with the crevices between the reeds allowing the air to circulate. During winter, the inside could be lined with skins to offer extra insulation against the elements

Each village encampment consisted of members of the same partilineal clan - a group of male descendants of a particular ancestor - with their wives and children. Villages also included some members of other clans, as well as some dependants or servants.

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): no specialized housing

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Sleep on the ground.

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Each village had a headman, a hereditary position passed on to the eldest son of the founding ancestor for every generation. Headmen made decisions such as when and where to move. They also acted as mediators or judges in criminal or civil disputes.

5.12 Trade: unknown

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? There was a hierarchal system in place, where chiefs were the head of the system.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: unknown

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): The Healing Dance is the center of their culture. If sickness occurs, it must be handled as soon as possible during the healing dance. Members of the community with "the ability" dance an exhausting dance until they go into a trance. Once in a trance it is believed that the shaman crosses over to the other world where they can receive the power to heal. Sometimes the dancers might pass out or bleed from the experience. This ritual might go on for up to two nights.

6.2 Stimulants: none

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): The ritual and festive activity which took place when a child was born often recurred in other rituals. Prior to delivery, the mother to be was taken to a hut where she remained for at least seven days after delivery. Both she and the child were seen to be vulnerable and so certain avoidances were practiced. No men were allowed to enter the hut, the mother and baby had to avoid inessential contact with water. A special fire was also lit in the hut. After this period of seclusion, both were ceremonially reintroduced into society.

6.4 Other rituals: The key elements of all ceremonies involved a period of seclusion associated with vulnerability and danger. During these periods certain things, notably water, were avoided, whilst others, such as fire were associated with protection. The ceremonies also involved a clear process of reincorporation into society, but as persons with new roles.

The new and full moons were important times for rainmaking rites and dancing, and it seems that the moon was viewed as the physical manifestation of a supreme being associated with heaven, earth and especially rain (of key significance to people in drier regions, whose existence was so dependent upon rainfall).

6.5 Myths (Creation): Two prominent figures stand out in their religious mythology. The first is Tsui-//goab, the deity who was sometimes seen as the founding ancestor. He was 'the creator, the guardian of health, the source of prosperity and abundance, and above all the controller of the rain and its associated phenomena of clouds, thunder, and lightning.' By contrast, //Gaunab was 'primarily an evil being, who causes sickness or death.' The other major figure is Haitisi-aibib, a folk hero and magician of great repute who could change his form. Haitisi-aibib died many times in different places, but had the ability to come to life again - often being reborn in a different form. His 'graves' are widely distributed, and it was seen as good luck for passers-by to add to the piles of stones already there, or to leave branches, pieces of their clothing, or skins.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): They left us a fantastic heritage of rock art in the form of beautiful engravings and paintings all over the country.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Boys and girls had different coming of age rituals though it was not specified, what each of these were.

6.8 Missionary effect: Missionaries have had a large effect on the peoples of Botswana. Churches have been established and bibles have been distributed in the area. However, to this day, education is still not important. In fact, most people between ages of 7 and 20 were said to have never been to school.

6.9 RCR revival: When the missionaries came in, almost all of their previous traditions were lost. However, the traditions and rituals that stuck around are still in practice.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: unknown

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? unknown

6.12 Is there teknonymy? no

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) They have a few "gods" that they recognize, though it is more for ritual and traditions rather than worship.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: no

7.2 Piercings: no

7.3 Haircut: hair was kept short or braided

7.4 Scarification: no, though battle wounds were a proud mark

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): headdresses worn a lot and beaded necklaces were worn by both men and women

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: wore headdresses and copious amounts of jewelry for rituals like the healing dance

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: both men and women wore the headdresses and beaded pieces

7.8 Missionary effect: Missionaries came in and essentially took over and wiped out the previous culture that was there. That is why the Hua population is increasingly depleting.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: There was no revival in cultural adornment. Some necklaces, etc. are still worn however.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: unknown

8.2 Sororate, levirate: unknown

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

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Genetic evidence suggests that they are some of the oldest if not the oldest peoples in the world.

Though I know I do not have too much information on the practices between man and wife, this is because the majority of the research I found was on the language itself, being a click language, rather than the culture.

Numbered references

1. <http://www.south-africa-tours-and-travel.com/khoisan.html>
2. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=huc
3. <http://khoisan.org/social.htm>