

REMARKS UPON THE HISTORY OF THE NANDI TILL 1850.

By G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD.

The reconstruction of the early history of a primitive people is based, not upon documentary evidence, but upon their ancient monuments, traditional lore, place-names, and, to a certain extent, their language. The existing tribes of east Africa possess few ancient monuments of their own—such remains as occur belong to a now vanished people—and the Nandi, who are essentially a pastoral tribe, and not adapted to the labour necessary to produce lasting works, can point to none, neither in their present territory, nor in areas formerly occupied by them, nor in the lands of other tribes of this sub-group. We are thus left with their traditional lore, place-names and language as sources of information. With their origin we are not here concerned; such facts as are known or conjectured will be found in Mr. A. C. Hollis's work, 'The Nandi: their language and folk lore', p.1; in his work on the Masai, p. iii; and in a paper by the present writer entitled 'On the connection between Egypt and the Masai-Nandi group' in *Ancient Egypt*, pt. 1, 1926, p. 10.

We thus start where tradition begins. The Lako, a Nandi tribe now living on Mount Elgon, say that they and the Nandi once lived on Mount Kamalinga, forty-five miles north-west of Elgon. (C. W. Hobley in the *Journal of the Anthropol. Inst.*, 1903, p. 332.) From this place they moved to Elgon, and while settled there, split up into more or less separate divisions. (It is perhaps significant that there is no true Nandi word for 'tribe,' the word used in Suk, *pereris*, having the appearance of being a distortion of the Masai *ol-orere*.) The first seceders appear to have been the Suk, who broke off at a time when the group language was in a very unformed state, having then no definite article, a peculiarity still retained in Suk. I am aware that Mr. Beech (*The Suk*, p. 2) gives a somewhat different account of the origin of the Suk; he says, "the old men are unanimous in declaring that there 'always were two original Suk tribes living on the Elgeyo escarpment' . . . Fugitives and adventurers from Sambur, Rudolf, Moiven, Karamojo, and Nandi intermarried with the two original tribes, and thus the Suk nation was evolved."

I admit there is a considerable admixture of 'foreign' blood in the Suk; but this appears to have come in since the secession from

Elgon, and the linguistic evidence points to the Suk being a primitive tribe of Nandi, who still retain their primitiveness.

At a somewhat later period, i.e., after the adoption of a suffix equivalent to our definite article, the tribes who now compromise the eastern Nandi moved away, this branch being now represented by the Endo or Chep-bleñg (still rather primitive), the Tuken or Kamasya, the Marakwet and the Keyu or Elgeyo. Another branch moved southwards and settled in the districts now called Lumbwa and Sotik; this comprises the Kipsikis or Lumbwa, the Puret or Buret (=mist) and Soot or Sotik. The people who call themselves Terik, and who are called Nyañyori by their Bantu neighbours, now settled west of Nandi, are perhaps an offshot of the Kipsikis branch.

While these migrations were in progress, part of the original stock stayed on Elgon, where they are still found; they comprise the Kony,* Sapeiny or Sabei, Lako, Pòk, Mbai and Sabaut; a seventh tribe is mentioned by Mr. Hollis (Nandi, p. 2) under the name of Kâpkara, which seems to be an error, since Kâpkara is a district of the Sabei country, and the tribe—names of this sub-group do not begin with the prefix kâp (=ka-ap, house, place or family of; the name Kâpkolosia, which might be quoted as an exception, is a sort of nickname given to (1) the Terik, (2) the Bantu Kavirondo in general by the Nandi.)

Up to this time, the tribe now called Nandi had not been formed. The traditional Nandi account is that the first settlers in their country came from Elgon, and formed the Kipoiis clan; this name possibly means 'the spirits,' and the name of one of these settlers is recorded as Kakipoch. He is said to have settled in the *emet* (country) of Aldai in south-western Nandi, and gave his name to a geographical division (*pororiet*). The site of his grave is still shown on Chepilat hill in Aldai, and is marked by the stump of an ancient olive tree; the account of his burial is that his body was laid on ox-hide, together with his possessions, and left for the hyaenas. Kakipoch's people were joined by a few Kipsikis, who were followed by people from the other branches. The Nandi account of the formation of their 17 clans is that four came from the Elgon and Lumbwa groups, viz. the Kipoiis, Kipamwi, Kipkenda and Kipiegen; one wholly from Elgon, the Kipkokos; five from the Elgon and Elgeyo groups, the Kipsirgoi, Moi, Sokom, Kiptopke and Kamwaike; four from the Lumbwa branch alone, the Tungo, Kipaa, Kipasiso and Kâpchemuri or Chemur; and

* Commonly, but wrongly, called Elgoni. The plur. of this word in the Kony dialect is 't-Kony (a Masai form, where 'l=il, not el.)

the remaining three from the Lo-'sekelaē Masai, viz., Kipkoitim (partly also from Elgon), Talai, the medicine-men's clan, (partly also from Kamasya) and Toiyoi. The historical order of the clans is probably somewhat as follows: Kipoiis, Kipkokos, Kipamwi, Kipkenda, Kipiegen, Tungo, Kipaa, Kipasiso, Kâpchemuri Kipsirgoi, Sokom, Moi, Kiptopke, Kamwaikē, Kipkoitim, Toiyoi, Talai.

The Nandi were originally called Chemwal, by which name they are still known to the Suk (Chemwel), and to the Masai (il-Tefigwal). Their country is said to have been called Chemñgal (Hollis, Nandi, p. 99); it is possible that this name contains the Turkana word ñgaal, 'the camels', and it may be connected with the tradition which accounts for the origin of circumcision in Nandi, which is that a man called Kipkenyo (= 'the man of old') came from a country called Do, which was to the east of the Uasin Gishu plateau (or Angata na-nyokye, 'the red plain'), and settled in the porriet of Kâkipoch, and there circumcised his children, because his brothers and sisters "all died when they reached puberty, so Kipkenyo decided when he had a number of children of his own to 'change' them all at this age. He therefore circumcised them, and as none of his children died, the Nandi followed his example." (Hollis, Nandi, p. 99). Sir Charles Eliot has suggested, with some probability, that this rite may have been borrowed from camel-riding Muhammadans. (Hollis, Nandi, p. xv.) He quotes Sir H. H. Johnston (Uganda Protectorate, p. 760) as saying that none of the Nile races, who form one side of the ancestry of the Nandi, circumcise when free from Muhammadan influence.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE NANDI COUNTRY.

The determination of the stages of the settlement of the Nandi country is a matter of some difficulty. We have seen that Kakipoch and his people chose the part now called Aldai, in S.W. Nandi. It seems to be a fact that the Nandi tribes avoided open plains, such as the Uasin Gishu plateau (where there are no Nandi place-names of historical value), which was perhaps not occupied by the Masai when the first Nandi left Elgon, as no traditions have yet come to light of encounters between the Masai and Nandi at this period. The Nandi came from a mountainous country, and settled themselves in wooded and semi-mountainous districts. The eastern tribes chose the hilly region of the Elgeyo and Kamasya escarpments, and Kâpcherañgany hills, and even Lumbwa "though a low district relatively to Nandi, is not a plain like the Rift valley, and is very uneven." (Hollis, Nandi, p. xv.)

Southern and western Nandi, to which the first settlers went, is very hilly. Western Aldai is a country of deep, precipitous river-

valleys, very rocky, but with fertile soil between the masses of rock. Sooin, the former eastern emet of Nandi, is a mountainous district, containing the Tindiret hills, which are well wooded. To the west and south of these areas are the Nandi escarpments. North and central Nandi consists of shallow river-valleys, with wide undulating water-sheds, moderately well wooded, except on the east, where, however, the name Masop points to the former presence of forests. The land rises a little on the west, to descend again in an escarpment to Kavirondo; it merges on the east into the Uasin Gishu plain. Rocky hills appear in the north, the most prominent of which are Saŋgalo, Kâpiyet, and the ranges of Sarura, Kipyonget (or O-sorongai) and Kâmulat-Kâptepe (the latter better, though wrongly, known as Kibolos). In this part, and particularly in the north, are found in great numbers the ruins of hut-circles, of stone and of earth, which are called by the Nandi ' mukowanisiek ', and which are ascribed by them to the ' Sirikwa ', who, it seems, were really a division of the Uasin Gishu Masai, and whose name appears to have been taken by the Nandi as a general term for ' the people who were before us ' (just as in England prehistoric remains are often called ' Druidical ' by the ignorant.) With the question of who this people was we have no concern here (see the Journal of the E. Africa and Uganda Nat. Hist. Soc. Jan. 1926, pp. 24, 25.) but one thing is certain, and that is, that these circles (and other antiquities) are the remains of a people who preceded the Nandi. Whether they had gone before the Nandi arrived in Aldai, we cannot say definitely; but such remains do not occur* in the area first settled by the Nandi, and it is possible that there were still some ' Sirikwa ' left in the north, enough to prevent the Nandi from attacking them till they had consolidated their position, and proved themselves formidable enough to drive them out. Mr. Hollis says (Nandi, p. 2) " I do not consider it at all certain that the Nandi country has been inhabited by the Nandi tribe for more than a few generations." A reasonable length of time to allow for the settlement of the country may be taken to be about 250 years, which is nearly 5 circumcision cycles of the Nandi (a cycle is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ years), and gives us the last quarter of the XVIIth century, or 1675—1700 as an approximate date for Kakipoch's settlement. The hut-circles of north and central Nandi are, therefore, at least as old as this, and probably older.

Assuming, then, that the last quarter of the XVIIth century is a tolerably approximate *terminus a quo*, we may work from that period in attempting to reconstruct the stages of the settlement. The first part to be settled, we know, was the south; it certainly formed more

* Except on the escarpment itself.

or less the present *emet* of Aldai on the west, and probably the former *emet* of Soin on the east; and it may be conjectured that the first *pororosiek* were Kâkipoch in Aldai and Tuken in Soin. The presumed limit of this settlement is shown on the map by the red dotted line drawn from Kâpwareñg eastwards through Kosoiua. During the XVIth century, as the tribe grew, it advanced northwards, and occupied the *emotinuek* (pl. of *emet*) of Chesume, Em-gwen and Masop; at the same time, more *pororosiek* were formed. It is possible that in this period, the Nandi may have come into contact with the 'Sirikwa', if any of them were left; we have, however, no traditions of this. The final expansion of the tribe was about the beginning or middle of the XIXth century, when the southern part of Wareñg and the lower Kipkaren valley were occupied.

During the early part of the XIXth century, the Nandi came into contact with the Uasin Gishu Masai. (The Masai were at the height of their power about 1800-1850). A story recorded by Mr. Hollis (Nandi, p. 106) called 'How the Masai were first repulsed by the Nandi,' begins with the words "at the time when the Masai occupied some of the Nandi grazing-grounds." It is not certain how much stress can be laid on this excerpt, but it seems to imply that north and eastern Nandi were not permanently occupied by the Masai. It also confirms the evidence offered by certain Masai place-names in eastern Nandi, which indicate that the Masai had temporary possession of a strip of Nandi roughly 5 miles wide; the names in question are, from N. to S., 'N-dalat, in location 3; Lo-'l-keringeti ('the of the ditch')* in loc. 2; 'N-dulele ('the solanum campylanthum plant') in loc. 3; Ol-o-goliet in loc. 3; Lo-'l-meneñgai ('the of the corpses') and 'N-dupeneti in loc. 5; and Ol-lesos in loc. 6, the latter on the border. These names are now used as district (*koret*) names by the Nandi. The place called Lo-'l-meneñgai takes its name from the numerous stone cairns there, which the Nandi call '*makuonik*,' and which they say (with great probability) are the graves of Uasin Gishu Masai who were killed in battle, not with the Nandi, but with other Masai† These cairns also occur in 'N-dupeneti. That these cairns are Masai can hardly be doubted, in face of the tradition; and we know that the Masai erect cairns in certain cases. (Hollis, Masai, p. 305). The inference to be derived from these cairns is that the Masai occupation though not permanent, was yet of some length, perhaps 50 years. It is probable that they were driven out about 1850, since about that time the Uasin Gishu Masai were attacked by the En-aiposha (Naivasha) and Kisongo Masai, and destroyed, the remnant being annihilated by the Nandi. "Another branch called 'L-osigella or Segelli [Lo-'sekela] took refuge in the Nyando valley but were wiped out by the Nandi and Lumbwa." (Hollis, Nandi, p. xv.) It was from these that the Nandi obtained their system of rule by medicine-men.

Formerly Nandi comprised six *emotinuek* or counties, which contained 15 *pororosiek* as follows:

Soiin: Kâmelilo, Kâpchepkendi, Tuken.

Aldai: Kâpianga, Kâpsile, part of Kâkipoch.

Masop: Koileke, parts of Kâpchepkendi and Kâkpiptalam.

*or, 'of the fort.' †The 'L-Aikipyak, according to some.

Wareñg: Parts of Kâptumoiis and Kâkipoch.

Em-gwen: Kâptumoiis and Kâpsiondoi.

Chesume: Tipiñgot, Cheptol, Kimñgoror, Kâkimno and Murk ap Tuk, or Kâpwareñg.

At the time of the British administration of the country in 1896* the area embraced by these divisions extended from the Tindiret hills, to about the present limit near Chepilat, and included a large part of the plain below the escarpment on the south through which the railway now runs, which is still called Soiin by the Nandi. On the east and west the boundary has remained more or less unchanged; while on the north, it extended approximately to the Murkusi river. In 1906, after the close of the Nandi War, the whole of the *emet* of Soiin comprising the Tindiret hills and the uat land to the south, was cut off from the tribe; which necessitated a re-distribution of the *pororosiek*, which are now divided as follows:

Soiin: none.

Masop: Kâkpiptalam (part of), Koileke (part of.)

Wareñg: Tipiñgot (part of), Kâpchepkendi (part of), Kâmelilo, Kâkipoch (part of).

Em-gwen: Kâptumoiis, Koileke, (part of), Kâkipoch (part of), Kâpchepkendi (part of), Kâpsiondoi, Tuken, and Kâkpiptalam (part of).

Aldai: Kâpsile, Kâpianga, Kâpchepkendi (part of), Kâkipoch (part of), Tipiñgot (part of).

Chesume: Kâkimno, Cheptol, Kimñgoror Murk' ap Tuk', Tipiñgot (part of).

Besides these, there are a number of smaller divisions called *korot* (pl. *korotinuek*) which almost correspond to our 'parish'; and still smaller ones called *siritiet* (pl. *siritaiik*) which may be compared, in point of size, to our 'tithing', or 'township'.

* The first station was at Kipture, some 4½ miles east of Kâpsabet.

THE NANDI SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT.

The modern system of 'orkoinotet' or rule by an *orkoiyot* (medicine man) is a recent development, and was borrowed direct from the Masai. Previous to this, the government seems to have been in the hands of *kiruogik* or councillors (sing. *kiruogindet*, from *iruoch* (to consult). As we have no definite information as to the system pursued prior to 1850—the approximate date of the introduction of the *orkoinotet*—it may be of service to review briefly the methods used by other kindred tribes.

(1) The Suk. "The Suk have no chiefs whatever of their own, though two of them have been created Government headmen. Each village is a family, having its old man at the head. Clusters of villages collect round one of these old men, who may be celebrated for his wisdom or wealth or both, and he is henceforth distinguished from the others by the name *ki-ruwok-in* or adviser. He, however, has no real authority, and the young men seldom trouble to obey him unless it suits their own purpose to do so. There is no word for 'chief' . . . It follows necessarily that there is no hereditary succession." (Beech, Suk, p. 6).

(2) The Endo. "This tribe have apparently four chiefs (i.e. in 1910) . . . Offenders against the decrees of these are brought before an assembly of all or any one of the sections. Judgment is passed after the elders have expressed their opinion. A black and white goat skin is worn by the chief. No other may wear it. A chief if dying points out his successor. If he fails to do so, his successor is appointed by general election." (ib. p. 36).

(3) Turkana. The Turkana have "two grades of chiefs: (1) *Lemurok* or medicine men; (2) *Lekatuknok* or advisers. These two grades exist side by side . . . *Lemurok* are hereditary." (ib. p. 36).

(4) En-jemus. "There is a supreme chief with supreme power; but judgment is usually passed in accordance with the opinion of a council of elders. If a man disobeys a chief, he is beaten. If he continually does so, he is expelled from the tribe. The chief's son succeeds." (ib. p. 37).

(5) Kony. The Kony have three divisions, called Kiporitiek, Kipsaratuk and Somekek, over each of which is a chief called *mgoriondet* (pl. *mgorenik*) under whom are sub-chiefs (*mgorenik che mingechen*). In 1923, the three chiefs were called Arap Kieptek, (Kiporitiek), Arap Kasisi (Kipsaratuk) and Arap kiepkwony (Somekek). These chiefs may or may not be *orkoiik*; of the three named above Arap Kieptek alone was.

(6) Keyu. The Keyu appear to have a system of councillors (*Kiruogik*); they have no other word for 'chief.'

The tribal authority, such as it is, is thus seen to have grown from the adoption of an old man as 'family elder', which is still seen among the Nandi, who in each district have a *poiyo ap oret*, the clan elder, and for each family group a *poiyo ap kokwet*. The word *kokwet* has three meanings: 'neighbour,' 'small place of assembly', and 'family group'. The family groups are distinguished by tree-names, such as *Simotuet*, *Teldet*, *Choruēt*, *Mokoiyuet* (all species of fig), *Tepeswet* (*Croton* sp.), *Kakoruet* (*Erythrina tomentosa*), *Kipuiumetyet*, *Kimoluet* (*Vangueria edulis*), *Mopet* (*Dolichandrone platycalyx*), *Kipsakchat* (*Bauhinia reticulata*), etc. The fig-trees seem to predominate. The *simotuet* (nr. *F. elegans*) is regarded "as almost sacred" (Hollis, Nandi, p. 87), and a species of fig, generally *teldet* or *choruēt*, is chosen as the council tree (*kāpkiruogēt*) of the district elders; the fig-tree, in short, is regarded with special favour, almost with reverence as it is all over Africa and India (A. Werner, *The Native Races of British Central Africa*, 62, 63.) and as it was in ancient Egypt. The predominance of the 'council-tree species' as a family name, and the meanings of the word *kokwet* support a theory that whatever it is now, the *kokwet* arose from the grouping of a few neighbours—probably related—round a tree for various social purposes, and that the *poiyo ap kokwet* arose in the same way as the Suk *kiruwokin*. These 'family elders' may originally have been called *kiruogindet*, and as they acquired more power, ceased to be 'family counsellors', and became 'district councillors'. The lesser officers were called *kiptaiyat* (pl. *kiptaienik*) who were in charge of a *korēt*; and *olaitoriot* (pl. *olaitoriniki*) who were over a *sirieiet*, and were responsible to the council of the *kiruogik*. The *olaitoriot* has dropped out of use now as an official title, and is used to mean 'rich man'; the *kiptaienik* are retained by Government.

About 1850, however, the Masai system of *orkoinotet* was introduced. The Masai word for medicine man is *ol-oiboni* (from *bon* to make medicine); the word taken by the Nandi to denote the office was *orkoiyot* (pl. *orkoiik*). This term was not a new one, but had been in use earlier (Kony, *orkoandet*; Suk, *werkoiyon*), and had more or less the meaning of the Swahili *mganga*, "a native doctor, medicine man—, the recognized representative of superior knowledge on all subjects mysterious to the native mind, and regarded with respect, fear or toleration accordingly." (Madan's Swah.-Eng. Dictionary, s.v.) *Mganga*.) It was distinct from the other species of witch-doctor, which dealt in black magic, and corresponds to the Swahili *mchawi* (*N. ponindet*; Suk, *ponin*).

These new *orkoiik* formed a clan of their own, called Talai, to which all *orkoiik* belong. The head of the clan is also the chief of the

tribe; he foretells the future, interprets omens and is generally regarded as one possessing supernatural powers. His position is hereditary. Under the *orkoiik* a dual system of councillors was instituted. The *orkoiyot* appointed a *motiot* (pl. *maotik*) in each *pororist*, and the people appointed a *kiruogindet*. The *kiruogik* were responsible to the *orkoiyot* through the *maotik*.

The Nandi have thus had two separate systems of government which have become mingled. But it cannot be said that there is or ever has been any tribal authority which can enforce obedience to its orders. The *orkoiik* have more power than the older *kiruogik* had; it is not, however, the power of constituted authority, but the influence which results from fear. Such control of the country as there is is really in the hands of the 'circumcision age' (*pinda*) in power, the members of which are always the youngest generation of warriors. The *orkoiyot* and his men have no constituted authority over these, but from their position as powerful medicine men, they possess a certain degree of influence.

ON THE ORIGIN OF VARIOUS TRIBES OF KENYA AND UGANDA OTHER THAN BANTU.

(A reply to Mr. C. C. Luck's essay on the origin of the Masai,
Journal for August, 1926.)

by C. L. BOLTON.

Mr. Luck has put forward two theories in his essay

(1) That the Masai are the actual descendants of the half tribe of the Manasseh from the west of Jordan, and the Nandi of Moab.

(2) That many proofs exist of the influence of the ancient world civilisation of Egypt-Mesopotamia on central Africa.

Dealing with theory No. 1, the following arguments against it are submitted.

I. Linguistic. Sir C. Eliot had put the case against a semitic origin for the Nilotic languages in his Introduction to Hollis' book "The Nandi". His arguments have not been answered, and the identification of a few place and clan names, which are in some cases open to criticism, e.g., Masai from Manasseh, is not of great weight when balanced against his case. All the Nilotic languages appear to