19961312

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thesis entitled

Traditional Warfare Among the Kuji of Southern Ethiopia

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

the MA degree in Anthropology

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Date May 18, 1988

TRADITIONAL WARFARE AMONG THE GUJI OF SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

1988

ABSTRACT

TRADITIONAL WARFARE AMONG THE GUJI OF SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

BY

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The Guji of Southern Ethiopia had been engaged in endemic wars with neighboring groups throughout their history. Small-scale raids and ambushes have continued to the present decade, still occurring sporadically. This thesis attempts to explain the underlying causes, motives, types, and the nature of Guji warfare in general. It reviews some theoretical approaches to the study of violent human behavior and demonstrates that Guji warfare was rooted in their social structure, ideology and ecological factors. It also presents cases and ceremonies related to warfare and hunting while stressing the importance of explaining Guji warfare in its integrated and mutually reinforcing dimensions.

TO MY PARENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. John Hinnant, the chairman of my thesis committee, for his continuous encouragement, support and superb guidance throughout my studies. Dr. Hinnant sacrificed a lot of his time beyond the call of duty in reading the drafts, making corrections, and providing insightful suggestion and constructive comments that contributed to the development and final production of the thesis.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Robert McKinley, a member of my thesis committee, for his valuable feedback, clarity of thought, and for his availability whenever needed.

I also extend my special thanks to Institute of Ethiopian studies (IES) for giving me an opportunity to come to Michigan State University to pursue my graduate studies, without which it would have been impossible for me to fulfill my academic dreams. My sincere thanks to Anthropology Department of Michigan State University for a modest teaching assistantship which sustained me financially in achieving this goal.

My gratitude to all who directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of this graduate work. Among them recognition is given to Dr. Kebede Daka for typing the draft and final manuscript. I treasure Dr. Kebede and his wife Yerusalem for their friendship and moral support that makes my stay at Michigan State University more comfortable and enjoyable one.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Oromo have been known as belligerent warriors throughout their history, as reported by various writers since the 16th century. Bahrey, who first wrote about them in 1593, opens his account with "their readiness to kill people." A major section of Cerulli's (1922) great collection of Oromo folk literature consists of songs and prose texts which are concerned with war (Baxter, 1979:69). Besides this, many accounts indicate the frequent engagement of the various Oromo groups in warfare (see for instance Baxter, 1979; Legesse, 1973; Bartels, 1969).

The Guji, along with the Borana and a few other Oromo groups, seem to have maintained some aspects of this warrior character until today. The peace currently reigning among these groups, as carefully observed by Andrzejewski (1962:112), is due more to the stern measures and watchfulness of the administration than to the inclination of the people themselves. The merit of killing an enemy man and/or a big game animal is still highly honored among the Guji, and they are ready to do so whenever they get the opportunity. When they are successful in killing either enemies or big game animals, they take the genital organs of their victims (the ears and tails in the case of big game animals) and latter they hold kuda - a ceremony in which they boast about their heroic deeds. The detailed explanation of this ceremony, the parallel between warfare and hunting and its

implications will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

Throughout history, research on aggression and warfare has centered on whether it is innate in humans, a reaction to frustration, or a learned social practice responding to particular situations. Lorenz (1966) and Ardrey (1961, 1966) have contended that people instinctively guard whatever territory they consider their own and defend it, violently if necessary, against all intruders. They suggest that an inborn drive for aggression carried over from animal forebears explains all human's violent behavior, from wars to riots.

This view was adopted by many others, who suggest that warfare is innate in our biology, universal and involuntary, and that we can do little to obliterate it (see Tinbergen, 1968; Morries, 1967; Storr, 1968). Previous to this, Wissler (1923) took the view that warfare is present everywhere, and so included it among the nine cultural universals he identified in Man and Culture. The latest expression of the biological approach has taken the form of the sociobiology movement led by Edward Wilson (1975, 1978).

Most anthropologists today, however, do not agree with the argument that aggression or warfare is innate in human biology, and with the pessimistic view that it cannot be eliminated. But, almost all of them accept the fact that human beings are biological creatures and that there is inevitably a biological

aspect of everything we do, think, and feel. Their argument, however, is that, the ubiquitous presence of biological undercurrents in human activities does not indicate that biology determines what we do, think, or feel.

Aggressive behavior, as argued by Montagu (1978:7), is no more innately determined than is the behavior we call speech. Without innate potentialities for speech we would be unable to speak, no matter how rich the environment were in speech; without an environment of speech we would not learn to speak, for while the innate potentialities are there, we must be spoken to and live in an environment of speech if we are ever to speak. Thus, to most anthropologists any human behavior, including aggression and warfare, is rooted in learning and experience rather than in our biology. This view implies the possibility of controlling or eliminating wars.

In support of their argument, these later anthropologists (Montagu, 1968, 1978; Pilbeam, 1972), presented several hunting and gathering societies such as the Kung San of the Kalahari Desert, Copper Eskimos, Mbuti pygmies of the Ituri forest, Dorobo of Kenya, Tikopia of Polynesia - to mention only a few, where warfare and territoriality were not known at all or known only in a very rudimentary form. Other than this, the biological explanation cannot answer the question why some groups are more aggresive than others or why the same people are peaceful and violent at different times under different situations.

Dollard and his associates (1939) and their followers derive aggression and warfare from frustration. They suggest that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and contrariwise, the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. They postulated a one-to-one relationship between frustration and aggression. Their hypothesis, even after being modified (Miller, 1941), has been the subject of much criticism (see for instance Kaufmann, 1970; Robarchek, 1977b; and Falk and Kim, 1980) because frustration was presented as an exclusive cause of aggression. The tendency to simplify and narrow down the determinants of human aggression into a single cause has resulted in defining frustration in such broad terms as to make the concept almost a two way street, in which the cause (frustration) and the outcome (aggression) can be cited as a direct consequence of the other. Furthermore, responses to frustration may take forms other than aggression, such as acceptance, submission, resignation, dependence, and withdrawal.

Thus, following Malinowski (1948) and others, most anthropologists now examine the institutional structures, ideologies, and socialization processes that harness and channel aggression in culture (Brown and Schuster, 1986:155). Along this line, this study will present the causes, motives and the general nature of Guji warfare.

Not much has been written about Guji warfare. Hinnant (1977:21), who was not directly concerned with the causes and

motives of Guji warfare, mentioned the endemic nature of wars among them in the past. Haberland, when describing warfare among the Oromo of Southern Ethiopia in which the Guji are included stated:

> . . . whereas the "merit" of killing was honored among the other Ethiopian peoples as a man's personal merit, among the /Oromo/ it was merely regarded as the fulfillment of the natural order of things. What counted for them was not the heroic achievement - the killing of an enemy warrior or a dangerous wild beast - but simply killing as such. It is true that the sacrificial victim had to be a human being or an animal of particular kinds. But within this range it did not matter whether it was a young elephant, a delicate youth or an old man. A single killing could be accounted a merit for all the members of age - grade (Haberland, 1963:777).

Haberland is quite right in that, within a given range, it does not matter whether the victim was infant, young or old. All are counted equally. But beyond this truth, Haberland's statement on killing as a "fulfillment of natural order of things" does not tell us the causes and motives of wars nor their organizations. This thesis is an attempt to address such missing gaps. It demonstrates that:

1. Social structure, ecological factors, and ideology (cultural norms) are the root causes of Guji warfare.
2. Neither social structure, ecological factors, nor ideology by itself can fully explain Guji warfare when taken separately. Guji warfare should be understood in its integrated and mutually reinforcing dimensions.

Throughout the thesis a detail explanation of Guji social structure, ecological factors and ideological aspects will be discussed and the effects they have on their warfare will be examined.

Warfare, as it is ethnographically and historically known, displays overwhelming diversity. It has no uniform act or meaning among the world's cultures. This will necessitate a working definition for a given culture. Thus, throughout this thesis, I used "warfare" to mean "armed conflict between distinct and politically independent territorial units" (Fukui and Turton, 1979:4).

Except for two small-scale raids I observed in 1982, the data upon which the writing of this thesis is based, was collected through ethnohistorical technique. Elderly people, who had themselves participated in different types of armed conflicts and in hunting practices, were selected and interviewed from August 6 to 16 of the year 1982. Observation regarding the kuda ceremony was conducted in July of 1984. These responses and observations are substantiated by relevant written materials and by my own long experience in the Guji society.

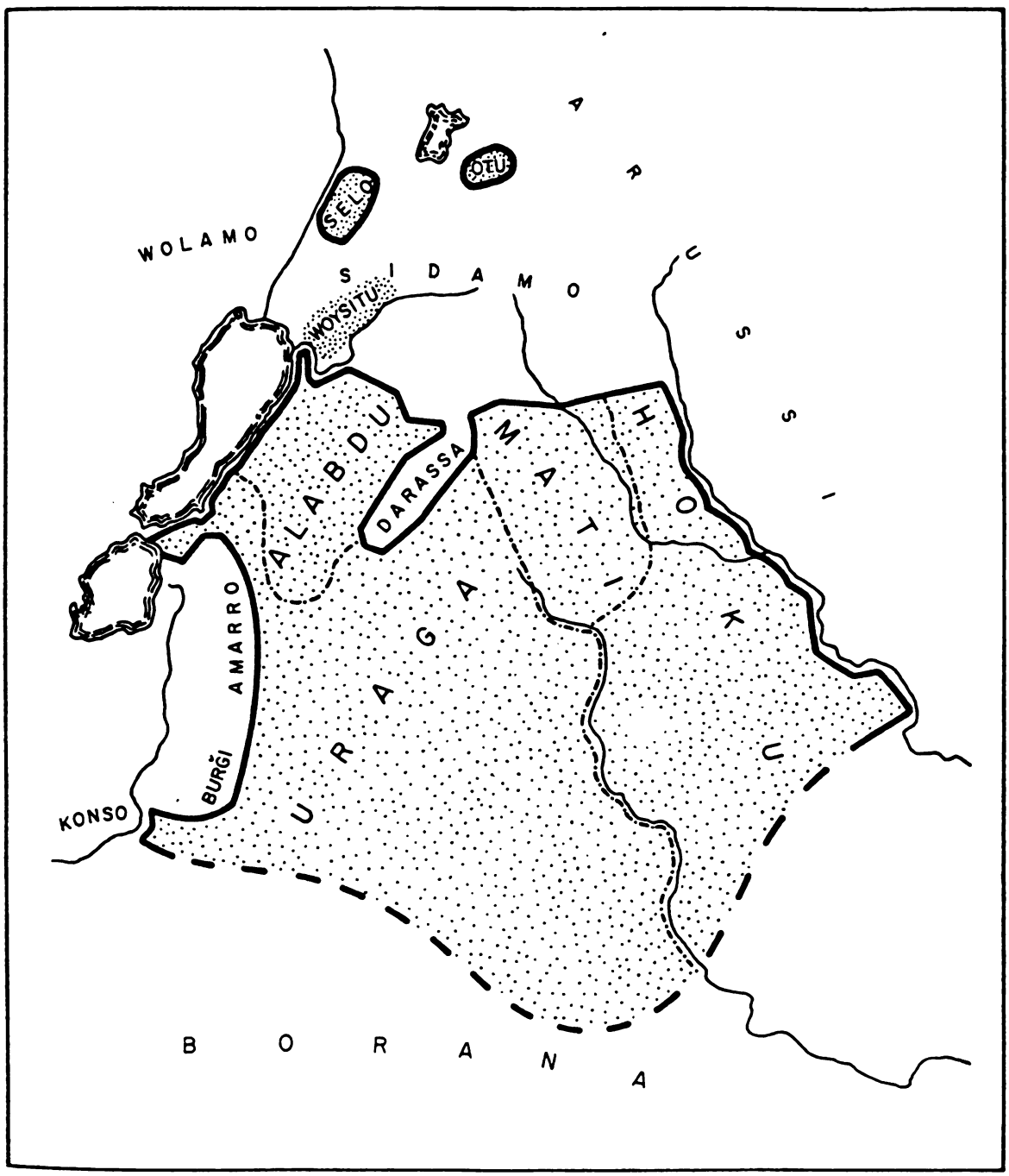
CHAPTER II

THE GUJI: AN OVERVIEW

In order to understand and analyze Guji warfare in its sociological context, it will be necessary to examine the socio-political organization of the Guji society, as well as patterns of cattle husbandry and religious beliefs. This chapter will present a general overview of these institutions.

The Guji, one of the many territorially independent groups of the Oromo, live in Southern Ethiopia; predominantly in the central part of the Sidamo Administrative Region. The boundaries of their territory are: Lake Abaya to the west and Ganale Guda River to the east. In the north the boundary is an imaginary line that unevenly stretches between the towns of Bore and Agere Selam. In the south the boundary is slightly north of the town of Negele Borana (see map, p. 8).

Regarding the map, it should be noted that some of the territorial boundaries of the Guji gosa (phratries), and that of the whole ethnic group, are now significantly changed. The Mati have made major inroads into the territory of the Hoku. And the Guji, as a whole, continued their long-term southward and westward expansion at the expense of the Borana. They are also gradually expanding over the land that was once occupied by the Arsi, crossing the Ganale Guda River to the east. This gradual expansion was largely a consequence, at least during the early days, of ritual wars that were organized under the gada system every eight years. Guji in their turn had lost much of their



Haberland's map of the Guji and their neighboring groups (Eike Haberland, Galla Sud-Athiopiens, 1963)

land in the north due to other southward expanding groups - the Sidamo and Gedeo.

There has never been a census that shows the population of different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. According to the official estimate of the Administrative Regions and Provinces, the Guji probably number more than half a million people. They belong to the cushitic language subfamily of Afro-Asiatic and speak Oromo, one of the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia.

Except in areas where they are bounded by hostile ethnic groups, where houses are clustered together for mutual protection against raids, the Guji live in olla (neighborhoods) of dispersed homesteads. A typical olla contains a single house, or a cluster of two or three round straw houses separated from each other by a cattle karaal, and by crop, and/or grazing land. It is quite common for family and lineage members to live next to each other. This, however, is not always the case. In previous days the head of a polygynous family would spread his family members over different ecological zones to disperse his herd and/or to prevent fights among co-wives. Young men were also be sent to distant areas to graze cattle for years.

According to a Guji tradition, Adola and its environs was the point of origin of the Guji and other groups with whom they have lived. In mythic time, a man named Gujo with his three sons (Urago, Mati, Hoku) and other members of the family left Bararty.

They moved northeastward and settled in a place called Girja. There they lived as prosperous cattle herders and barley farmers for many generations. With this long and prosperous stay at Girja it was said that they developed a strong emotional attachment to this land; an attachment which even today is expressed through various Guji songs. This seems to be the reason why most Guji now state their origin in this land as Guji Girja (the Guji who originated in Girja). According to tradition, the descendants of the Gujo later moved to the Uraga, Mati, and Hoku areas which they named after the first three sons of Gujo, while their collective name remained that of the founding father - Gujo, later to become Guji.

This Guji tradition of their cradleland is in complete agreement with recent reconstruction of the origins of Oromo in general. Based on historical linguistics, oral traditions, and cultural data, many scholars came out with more convincing evidences that the Oromo originated in and around the areas nowadays inhabited by the Guji, Borana and part of Arsi (see Lewis, 1966; Haberland, 1963; Fleming, 1964; and Legesse, 1973). However, there were several unanswered historical questions; the extent of the Oromo territory before their 16th century expansion; the immediate causes of their expansion; why and when their politico-religious institution (gada system) was invented; and the time and causes for the separation of different Oromo groups to form independent territorial units. These are the

questions yet to be answered.

Whatever the time and causes for their separation from other Oromo groups, the Guji were autonomous people, with their own clearly demarcated territories and political leaders (in the form of the Abba Gada) during Menelik's conquest of their land in 1897. According to informants, the population of the Guji was relatively small during those days. Land was communally owned by clans and there has always been plenty for every one to graze his herds and to cultivate. Movement was free for individuals within the territory allotted to the clan, and this was the base for the then widespread transhumance. Hunger and jealousy were not known according to tradition. It was said to be the time of abundance and glory for the Guji.

With Menelik's conquest, however, the major patterns of Guji life were completely changed. Most Guji land was taken from them and given to the followers of the king. Gada legal, political and arbitrational functions were replaced by the government administration. These changes restricted the once widespread transehumance and the Guji's basic right of deciding their own affairs at the local level. Taxes and labor services for landlords were imposed on them and the Guji were gradually reduced to the status of tenancy and poverty with little or no concern for them on the part of the government.

Unlike some other Oromo groups, which constitute a single

section, the Guji form a confederation of four independent but closely related sections known as Uraga, Mati, Koku, and Alabdu. In fact, the Alabdu by themselves are a confederation of two groups known as Halo and Woyestu, each of which has its own defined territory and leader. There are also two other smaller groups - the Selo and Otu, that live deep into the Sidamo territory (see the map above). They adopted many cultural elements from the people with whom they came in contact and therefore greatly diverged from the Guji culture.

The areas now occupied by Selo and Otu might have been places reached by the Guji during the great Oromo expansion, from where the main group may have been pushed back to their present territory, most probably under pressure from the Sidamo. This view can be supported by the fact that some old shrines of the Guji such as Dama, Dara, Awassa, Bansa, etc. . . which are now in Sidamo territory are often included with shrines now in Guji land during the prayers. Besides this, the oral tradition of the Sidamo collected by Getachew (1970) shows the presence of the Guji in most of the present day Sidamo land, before the Sidamo.

The Uraga, Mati, and Hoku - the focus of this thesis - regard each other as blood relations. Although each group has its own territorial boundaries and gada leaders, there is mutual interdependence. They act together in wars, help each other during economic crises, and conduct gada rituals together. There is very little cultural difference among them. Indeed,

individuals or families from one group can move and settle in other group's territory. Intermarriage is fairly common among them.

The traditional socio-political structure of Guji society was dominated by two cross-cutting organizations with the kallu (supreme religious leader) at the top. These bases of their social structure are:

1. Moiety - clan - lineage structure and
2. The Gada system.

The Guji gada system was intensively studied by Hinnant (1977), and on the basis of this study its main structural and functional features may be summarized as follows:

1. Gada is, first of all, a male institution. Women's participation in this institution is very much limited. Girls are said to be the daughters of their father's gada grade; and women are referred to as the wives of their husband's grade.

2. Gada divides the stages of life, from childhood to old age into a series of formal steps. There are thirteen such steps in the contemporary Guji case (see Appendix one). Transition ceremonies make the passage from one stage to the next. Within each stage activities and social roles are formally defined, both in terms of what

is permitted and what is forbidden. For instance, Soluda herd small animals, Kussa participate in organized war parties, gada administer the country...etc.

3. Recruitment into the gada system is based not upon biological age as in an age set system, but upon the requirement that one remains exactly five stages (ideally forty years) below one's father. It was based on the maintenance of one socially defined generation between father and son, which prevents adjacent generation from competing for status. All of a man's son's occupy the same grade regardless of their age.

4. The ideal length of one rank is eight years (but see the variation from the table under Appendix one).

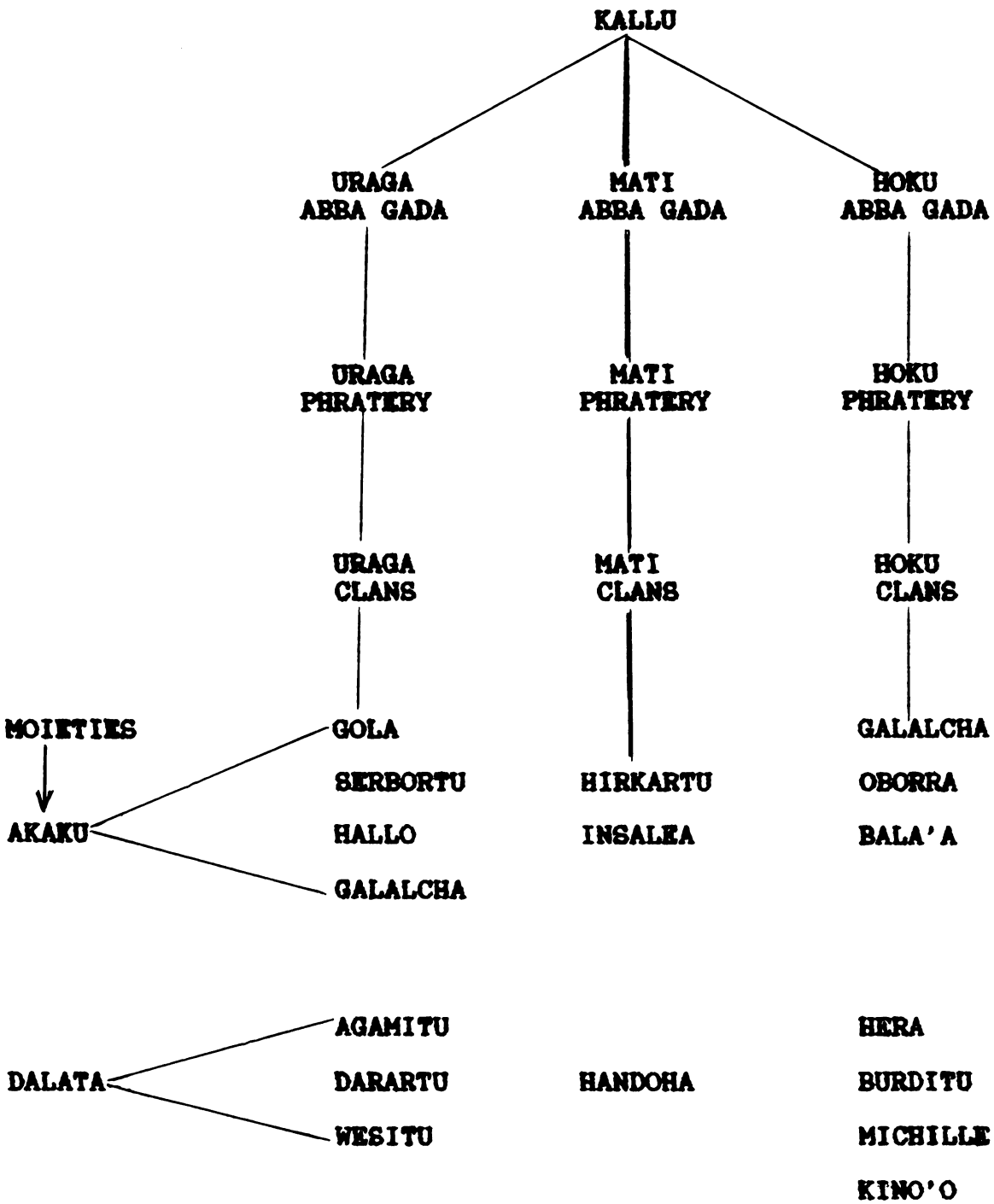
Regarding function, the gada grade that assumes office once every eight years was the most important grade in the gada cycle. The kallu and other lineage leaders at the clan level were responsible for selecting the Abba Gada and their assistances (yaa). After assuming the office, the major activities of the gada grade were: to administer the country, to reconsider old Guji laws in the gada assembly, to move about the country according to the prescribed calendar performing a number of different ceremonies at various sacred shrines, and to select Abba dula (war leaders). In the past, the gada system assumed military, economic, legal and arbitrational responsibilities.

Today, however, the function of gada in Guji has been reduced to ritual activities.

There are two non-exogamous moieties known as akaku and dalata[1] in Guji. Under these moieties there are seven non-totemic and exogamous clans in Uraga and Hoku phratries each, and three in Mati. Each clan is divided into a variable number of segments called mana (house), which in turn is divided into a great number of patrilineages (Hinnant, 1977: 19).

The overall structure of Guji society at a higher level may be drawn as follows:

1. In the past these moieties were known as kontoma and darimu.


KALLU
URAGA ABBA GADA
MATI ABBA GADA
HOKU ABBA GADA
URAGA PHRATERY
MATI PHRATERY
HOKU PHRATERY
URAGA CLANS
MATI CLANS
HOKU CLANS
MOIETIES
AKAKU
DALATA
GOLA
SERBORTU
HALLO
GALALCHA
AGAMITU
DARARTU
WESITU
HIRKARTU
INSALEA
HANDOHA
GALALCHA
OBORRA
BALA'A
HERA
BURDITU
MICHILLE
KINO'O

The Guji family, like most Cushitic families of rural Ethiopia, is a large patriarchal extended family. An ideal family contains one husband, several wives, and as many children as nature allows. A man, if he is eldest son, along with his spouses and children is expected to live with or near his parents. Younger sons live where seem it seemed appropriate to them. The family of most ordinary men, however, consists of a husband, a wife and their children.

Marriage, in most cases, is either arranged or based on self selection. Bridewealth is paid by the groom's family to the bride's family in the form of cattle and money nowadays. Although the number of cattle paid for bridewealth is small, in comparison to some east African herders like the Nuer,[1] family and lineage members help each other in the payment as they do in the case of homicide. There is one very rare type of marriage in which the bride groom is not required to pay bridewealth: i.e. Adibana - marriage in which case the girl goes to the groom's house without his knowledge to offer herself in marriage. Killers of enemies and big game animals may not also be required to pay bride wealth for the reason to be discussed in chapter IV.

The Guji have a mixed economy of animal husbandry and crop cultivation in the fertile land which stretches over a wide variety of altitudes. In previous days cattle herding has played

1. The Guji pay only 3 or 4 head of cattle for bride wealth; while Evan Pritchard reported the payment of more than 25 cattle among the Nuer. (E. E. Evans-Pritchard - Kinship and marriage among the Nuer pp. 74-89)

a predominant role in their economy. This activity is not only important for economic purpose, but it is also important in social and ritual life. The social status of a person among the Guji finds its expression in the number of head of cattle that one owns. The owner of many head of cattle is a respected person. Ritually cattle are used for sacrificial purposes.

Traditionally, if two hundred heifers (one hundred each year) gave birth to calves within two consecutive years, the owner had a right of holding a kuma gate (discarding the 1000th) ceremony. In this ceremony one of these heifers was firmly tied and taken into the forest where it was left as an offering to wild animals. This was an indication that the man has reached the ultimate level of herd development for which he would be widely known after this ceremony.[1]

Cultivation was despised in earlier days. People who worked on land were called as gagurtu or gara (those who do not have knowledge of cattle breeding). Today, however, cultivation of land has gained greater importance among most Guji and farming combined with herding and bee keeping is the preferred pattern. This tendency is clearly reflected in one of their recent songs in which they condemned and gave advice to those individuals who do not work but wander through the villages:

Horate hori-hinkabdu - you don't breed cattle and don't have your own;

1: Kuma toko, one thousand, generally used to indicate the largest number, even though the Guji counting system can extend beyond that number.

Kotate koti-hinkabdu - you don't cultivate and don't have your own plot;

Duriye ganda labdu - the vagabond that roam the village;

Aka iti-horatanu sit hima - I will tell you how to become wealthy

Jibota kolasani - castrate the bulls

Goromann bobasani - let the heifers graze

Gajedi lafa qoti - bow down and plow the land

Oljedi muka qori - look up and climb the tree (keep bee hives)

Edu sann jira horni - wealth is derived from those activities.

A great variety of crops are now grown in different altitudes of the Guji land. Corn and teff are predominant in the lowland and middle altitudes, while barley is the main crop in the highlands. Bee keeping is common, especially in the high and middle altitudes where flowering gatame, badeesa, tni, and abicha trees proliferate. Hunting and gathering, which might have played a substantial role in previous days, serve only a very limited function in Guji society as a source of food. Other economic activities such as trade and handicrafts were not appreciated; but even before Menelik's conquest of southern Ethiopia, there existed small scale local trade of cattle, iron, garments, tobacco, magado (earth salt), food items, and ivory between the Guji and their neighboring groups in the form of barter.

With regard to religion, Guji have developed a very complex set of beliefs and practices. I agree with Haberland's comment

that more than any other people in Ethiopia, the Guji lay very great emphasis on augury, by which most of their undertakings are governed (Haberland, 1963:783). They believe in abstract concepts and physical objects as well as in power vested in certain individuals and families. I will review some of these here.

Waka (high god/sky), who is said to have created everything, is the center of Guji religion. He is believed to have lived among men until he was annoyed by the evil deeds of human beings and finally moved to the sky where he is living now in seclusion. Guji also believe in the existence of durisa/setana (devil), whose main function is said to mislead people to do something wrong. He is believed to possess individuals and make them suffer from unexplainable illnesses which might be cured by wara waka or wara ayana (cults). There is also one concept called kayyo, which has several interrelated aspects. For the purpose of this thesis we need only to know one aspect of kayyo. Kayyo is not a thing, but a symbolic representation of good or evil that manifests itself in bird calls, in other animals like snakes, and persons. The good and bad aspects of kayyo are interpreted by knowledgeable individuals.

It is surprising that every major undertaking of Guji is governed by kayyo. Before going out for wars and hunting, requesting a girl for marriage, holding certain important ceremonies. . . etc, people have to carefully examine kayyo. If

it is said to be bad, they in most cases, postpone or cancel their plans. If the kayyo is good they know that all will be well.

Guji "worship" natural phenomena such as rivers, trees, land, and the like. It is not these objects themselves that are worshipped, but the spirit of the waka which is believed to dwell in them. The objects only act like Christian church or Moslem mosques under which prayers and sacrifices are made for waka. Not all rivers, trees, or land are the objects of religious devotion. But only those which are associated with some important Guji rituals such as the gada system or those objects which are related to myth of origin. Thus the maa boko tree where important gada ritual take place and Woyyu Adola (holy land of Adola) which is associated to the myth of origin are popular among many such natural phenomena.

Certain individuals and families are believed to posses inherent or acquired power through which they could do good or harm others. The kallu (supreme religious leader) and abba gada, who are respectively considered to be woyyu (holy) and worra kalacha (virile family) are among these individuals. Their curse is feared like a poisonous snake bite, while their blessing is very important for individuals success in wars, hunting, good life, and for the well-being of the society. The Shabola families, who are believed to have power to control lightning and the dalacha, who are believed to create internal problems for

individuals are also considered to be woyyu. Guji are very careful not to offend these families, because of fear of the consequences -lightning and stomach travail - that are believed to follow.

There are also two groups of individuals - buda (people with the evil eye) and falfala (sorcerers). The former power is believed to be inherent while the latter is acquired. Buda and falafala are said to have negative effects on the victims and are always condemned.

With this general background of the Guji socio-political, economic, and religious aspects, we now proceed to describe and analyze warfare.

CHAPTER III

WARFARE

This chapter will present the types of wars fought among the Guji, causes and motives of wars, traditional peace making procedures, and the relationships between warfare and hunting. Attempts are also made to outline the major changes that took place in Guji warfare and hunting practices.

3.1) Types of Wars

Before dealing with different types of wars it is important to examine the internal relationships of the Guji at different social levels. In Guji, as in other neighboring ethnic groups, there have been all sorts of quarrels and fightings among the members of a family, lineage, or clan for numerous and varied reasons. The tense relationships between co-wives, insult, theft, falfala (sorcery), things related to cattle and property have been the sources of quarrels and fightings. However, Guji were extremely careful not to spill Guji blood. To do so was believed to be very dangerous and highly polluting.

Gujin Guji ajesse - Guji killed Guji

Digan wol balesse - destroyed/polluted each other with blood/leprosy

Diga kia ket - my blood and yours

Maltu wolta hamesse? - what makes it disagree with each other?

Besides the fear of being polluted or caught by leprosy, the Guji knew very well the severe punishment (both economic and

legal) that would follow the killing of Guji by a Guji. We shall deal very briefly with the traditional treatment of such cases.

If the members of the same family or lineage killed each other by danu (accident), the killer must tightly hold the body and call out: "My family, my lineage, my ola. . . reach me! I have killed my brother/sister." When someone arrived, he must run away from the eyes of his relatives, which were believed to be dangerous to him. In this case the killer would not be killed. A complex reconciliation ceremony known as harka wol michirachu (twisting each others' arms), would be held, in which he was reintegrated into his family and lineage. On the other hand, if the killing was beka (deliberate), the killer would not be killed, but all his property would be confiscated and he would be driven out off Guji society. In other words, he would loose both his belongings and right of being a Guji citizen.

If the killing was between the members of different families or lineages, and if it was by accident, the killer must hold the body and call out as in the case described above. Then he must run to cross a river,[1] and must hide himself from the deceased family or lineage members. Elderly people (including gada officials) would later intervene and reconcile the two groups. Guma (blood price) would not usually be accepted for accidental killings. But if the killing was deliberate, the killer would either be lawlessly speared by the deceased family

1. Once he crossed a river, he would be safe and not be killed

or lineage members or if he was lucky, elderly people may intervene and guma would be paid. Traditionally, guma was paid in cattle and the set amount was kuma (one thousand) head of cattle.[1]

Since an individual or a family alone could not afford to pay guma, in previous days members of the killer's lineage, clan, and his in-laws were obliged to contribute in the payment. They would pay their share not only to save the life of the killer, but also to maintain nagaf tokuma Guji (the peace and unity of the Guji).

Before guma was paid and final reconciliation was made, the members of the two families would not eat together, would not shake each other's hands, and would not work together. They referred to each other as wora diga (families under blood guilt). A refusal or delay in the guma payment would soon provoke the victim's party to take revenge. This may lead to feuding that could destroy the peace and unity of the Guji. For these reasons, the Guji always discouraged homicide in their society. When it happened they were always ready to solve the problem as soon as possible. They are always allies with each other against outsiders.

The Guji, who worked so hard to avoid or minimize homicide in their society, were highly aggressive against non-Guji groups. There had been endemic wars and cattle raids with almost all

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1. kuma toko (one thousand), as mentioned earlier, is the largest symbolic number among the Guji; the actual amount was one hundred head of cattle.

neighboring groups from time immemorial. Even after their incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire, they continued cattle raids and small scale wars with their neighbors, especially around their boarders.

According to the information obtained from informants, the Guji engaged in four different types of armed conflicts with their neighbors: a) dula, b) lola, c) cattle raids, and d) gadu. Each of these armed conflicts had its own organizational framework, causes, tactics, and strategies, as will be discussed below:

DULA

Dula was the oldest type of war known to the Guji.[1] It was a big offensive war, initiated and organized under the rule of the gada system every eight years. As has already been mentioned in Chapter II, the gada system divides the stage of life from childhood to old age into a series of formal grades, each of which assumes specific duities and rights. In due course, these would be transferred, normally by a formal ceremony, to the next gada grade that had up to then different duties and rights. One of the many duties that the gada grades had to take over at one time was warfare.

Traditionally, the members of the kussa grade were required to wage dula against neighboring enemy groups, towards the end

1. Another name for dula is butta.

of their gada period. They were led to dula by the Abba Dula (father of war) who was elected in the warriors' assembly from the ruling gada class, on the basis of bravery, luck, ability to organize, family heroic history (warra mida), and the like.

The Borana, Arsi, Sidamo, Gedeo (Darassa), Wolaita, and Burji are Guji's neighbors. The relationship of the Guji with all these neighboring ethnic groups (except with the Gedeo) was actively hostile. In the earlier days, their contact was greatly limited to the bordering areas where they have fought with each other. The barter trade that had existed among some of these groups (including the Guji) was not developed to the point where it could create significant relations and cooperation among them. Intermarriage among them was not encouraged at all.

Even after Menelik's conquest, the relationships among most of these groups were, to a larger extent, limited to the market places and towns, which are neutral zones, where different ethnic groups meet and exchange their produce and information about their social and natural environment. Apart from market places and towns their contacts are still slight and the passage into each others territory is not always easy. In the past, all movement outside one's own territory was hazardous.

Guji's relationship with the Gedeo was different. It was not always harmonious; but was much better than, for example, that with the Sidamo, Arsi, or Borana. This better relationship

was probably the result of two factors. First, the Guji and Gedeo regard each other as blood relations. In the Guji myth of origin, it was said that Darasso (the founding father of the Darassa/Gedeo) was the elder brother of Gujo (the founding father of the Guji). Both of them were said to be the sons of Ana Sora. Thus, even today, Guji do not drink milk, dadi boka (honey wine used for ceremonies), or give blessing at ceremonies until Gedeo receive the first share - the respect usually given to elder brothers.

The second and probably the most important reason was the economic interdependence between these groups. The Guji obtained the cereals and ensete they needed from the Gedeo; while the Gedeo in their turn obtained the cattle products they needed from the Guji. There was also intermarriage linkage between the members of these groups. For these reasons, the Guji and Gedeo do not kill each other, unless there is an unavoidable situation. Even if they kill each other, they do not wear butter on their hair (a sign of having killed an enemy man or a big game animal).

Dula (big offensive war), in most cases, therefore, was directed against the Sidamo, Borana, and Arsi - who were the despised enemies of the Guji and who had a great number of cattle to be looted. The number of warriors which participated in dula, depended on the number of the young and able-bodied men who entered the kussa grade. It should, however, be noted that it was not only the members of the kussa grade who have participated

in dula wars. Other people from both the junior and senior grades voluntarily followed the Abba Dula (father of war) to kill enemies and to build their prestige as warriors. Indeed, going to dula, according to informants, was the interest of any able - bodied man in the past.

One of my informants, who himself had participated in a dula war, estimated the number of warriors who had gone to dula with him at over two thousand men. Women would not directly participate in dula, and in fact in any type of armed conflict. They were expected only to prepare gala - food, drink, and any other necessary things for the warriors.

Before the warriors would go out for a dula, oracles together with other knowledgable persons had to carefully examine kayyo. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, kayyo is a symbolic representation of good or evil, that manifests itself in bird calls, in snakes, in other animals and persons. Above all, the important thing in kayyo is one species of bird called sembre kayyo (the bird of kayyo). It is believed that these birds carry messages concerning the future from waka (god) to man (Hinnant, 1977: 42) Thus, depending on the different types of calls made by these birds, and depending on the direction from which the calls were made (left - right, up - down), the kayyo experts would predict the outcome of the dula.

If kayyo was said to be good, oracle leaders would decide

the appropriate date to set out for the war and would tell this to the war leader. If kayyo was said to be bad, the campaign would be postponed or rituals such as animal sacrifices, huluka, (tying a vine between two trees at above head height and then passing beneath it in the believe that it would strip away any bad kayyo) or prayers would be made to control kayyo. In addition to the good kayyo obtained or achieved, before launching the campaign, warriors needed to get the blessing of the Abba Gada (gada leader) and that of their parents, which was believed to be important for success in wars. War magic, body decoration as a means of frightening the enemy, and uniforms were not known among the Guji.

On the proposed date and time, warriors being in cirra/cibra (segments) of four or five groups, would rush into the target territory either on horse back or on foot. The only weapons used before Menelik's period were: sharp-ended sticks, spears, knives, and shields. With these they would kill and castrate any enemy men they could find, take human and cattle captives, burn houses and crops, loot whatever pleased them, and would return back within one to five days.

We do not have any record of the number of enemy men killed or taken as captives, or about the number of cattle and amount of property looted or destroyed in dula wars. Different Guji informants estimated the number of enemy men killed in one dula engagement from about 10 to 150; the number of cattle captured

from about 200 to 2000, and the number of human captives from about 3 to 25. It was difficult for them to estimate the amount of property destroyed, except to say that pratically everything was burned. Battle causalties (death, wounds, human captives) on the part of the Guji seem to be much fewer than those of the enemy groups since dula were usually launched when the enemy groups were unaware and/or not prepared. These figures are presented here not because they are reliable, but simply to give the reader the general picture of the causalties in dula wars, at least from the informants' point of view.

Women, in general, were not killed by the Guji and by their neighboring ethnic groups unless it was by mistake.[1] They were also very rarely taken as war captives. Among the Guji, if a man had killed an enemy woman, he would not have the right to wear butter on his hair or the right to hold a kuda. Instead, he was highly despised and laughed at for killing a woman.

This implicit convention that prevented women from being killed or from being taken as war captives, was an important aspect of warfare among the Guji and neighboring groups. The convention enabled women to play a crucial role in the economic relations of these groups and in peace-making procedures among them. Despite the antagonism and wars among these groups, women of all groups were fairly free to cross the enemy territory to exchange the produce of their country with that of others. Thus,

1. According to Guji informants, Arsi used to kill women and take their breasts as a trophy. For this reason they were the most feared group among the neighbors of Guji.

through women intermediaries, every group would get what it needed from others which otherwise would not be possible. In addition to this, when a battle between two groups continued for three or four days, old men of both sides would send women with truce messages (see peace making below).

The treatment of war captives and booty is another important dimension of Guji warfare. War captives were treated in either one of the following three ways. Guji informants told Hinnant one way of dealing with war captives as follows:

> . . . if a boy was captured in a war he would be taken to the Guji captor's house and would drink milk out of the hand of his captor. He then sits on the Gulanta (log separating the outer house from the sleeping area) and becomes a real son. He can inherit property. If an older man is captured he is considered as wherever relative his age indicates . . . . A former captive who has been taken into Guji will fight on the side of the Guji against his former people. (Hinnant, 1972: 112).

This type of adopting the enemy individuals and families into one's own family and lineage was very common among Guji in the past. There are families and lineage known in Guji now, who were integrated into Guji society in this way. Besides the equal rights and privileges they enjoyed with the Guji, most of the captives were given ritual powers, like representing cults in their area, or important positions in certain ceremonies, so that they may be respected and not attacked by some Guji members both verbally and physically.

The second alternative was that the Guji captor would send old women to the enemy territory with the name and description of the man captured. His people then could pay wado (a ransom of many cattle) and get him back. The last and relatively recent alternative was to sell the captive as a slave.

War spoils were taken by the man who capture them first. If, for instance, cattle were captured by a group of warriors, every man would rush to earmark the beasts for himself as soon as the warriors returned to Guji territory and were confident that they were safe from the enemy's attack. A man who could first seize the animal, and cut its ear or any part of its body, had an absolute claim to it.

Aei

Gada was very widespread in southern Ethiopia. The Arsi, Borana, Sidamo, Gedeo and Burji, all had their own gada system. These societies in their turn had waged war expeditions against the Guji and against other neighboring groups to fulfil institutional requirement. The second type of war among the Guji, therefore, assumed a defensive form known as Aei.

In chapter II, it was mentioned that Guji houses in the bordering areas were usually clustered together for mutual protection against wars and raids. Thus, as soon as the enemy group began to attack these areas, all able-bodied men would fight against them. Women, children, and elderly men who were

not expected to participate in any type of war, would try to flee into the interior with their cattle. They also had the responsibility of shouting the message from a hill top to alert neighboring Guji groups about the incident.

Once the message was heard, each neighbor had to spread it to the next, until it finally reached the whole Guji territory. It is surprising that such a message would spread throughout the vast Guji territory within a few hours. All warriors and able-bodied men would then rush out to the site of the attack to kill the enemy and to avenge their fellow men, to retrive the booty collected by the enemy, and to give assistance to the attacked community. This type of war would soon be changed into "all out" warfare if the enemy group did not leave the country within about two or three days. There was no formal leadership in defensive wars.

Raids

Traditionally, raids seem to have occured every few months if not more frequently, and still occure sporadically. They were initiated by hariya (age-sets), who used to take the dry herds of their families to the lowland areas for better grazing and water resources. These young men were highly interested in killing big game, enemy men, and in raiding enemy cattle in order to gain prestige and wealth. Thus, being in a group of about ten to thirty men, they would go into the enemy territory. They used hit-and-run style raids in which they attacked and killed the

enemy by surprise, carried out the maximum booty within the shortest time possible, and returned to their territory that same day. In raids, leaders were created at the spot from primus intern pares.

I had occasion to observe a similar type of raid in the Summer of 1982. It was initiated by a group of young men from the Mati area. Using a brief disorder created by shifta (out-laws), as an excuse, this group entered Sidamo territory and started firing their guns at the enemy who fled into the interrior to save their lives. The Guji then looted crops and property, burned houses, and captured about one hundred head of cattle, which the individual captors added to their own herds. After about a week, the Sidamo in turn came to the Guji territory and burned four houses, killed a man, captured a similar number of cattle and returned home within about four hours.

In such raids, and in all types of armed conflict for that matter, discipline, command and coordinated actions were poorly developed. Individual warriors for the most part fought on their own. They advanced and retreated at their own discretion. But warriors obeyed the domestic behavior code and respected the Abba dula and other elders. The disapproval of fellow warriors was a strong deterrent from doing things that might endanger the success of the group operation.

Raids among most East African herders, as observed by

various writers (see for instance, Baxter, 1979; Almagor, 1979; and Dyson-Hudson, 1980), were often carried out without the knowledge or approval of the elders. In this armed conflict the individual raiders may gain prestige, cattle, or both; but the group may suffer from the social disruption of retaliatory raids. This would create some sort of opposition between the elders and the warriors. Among the Guji, this type of opposition was clearly reflected in the case described above. The elders whose cattle were raided by the Sidamo, explicitly warned the young men that they would expose them to the administration so that they would be punished if they continued such raids without their knowledge.

Gadu

This type of armed conflict was made for halu bassu (avanging one's family or lineage member killed) or simply to satisfy one's own ambition or ego. Individuals who had these goals, formed groups of 2 to 5 men, and went into enemy territory, where they would hide themselves under bushes or behind rocks. They then would kill passers by, shepherds, or any other enemy men they could find and come back with genitals or whatever booty they could find. The aim of this type of armed conflict was primarily killing rather than looting property or raiding cattle.

3.2 CAUSES AND MOTIVES OF WARS

Armed conflicts among the Guji were rooted in multiple

causes and motives, which may be grouped into three broad categories: structural, ecological, and ideological.

As it has been discussed in previous sections, the gada system divided Guji society into various grades, through which male members passed in succession as they advanced from childhood to old age, acquiring specific duties and rights. When a particular group reached the kussa grade, it was required to wage war against the neighboring non-Guji groups. This type of war would continue every eight years as a new group entered the kussa grade. It was part of young men's rites of passage into the next gada-grade. Thus, the structural requirement of the gada system was one of the primary causes of wars (especially of the dula) fought among the Guji and their neighbors.

The subsistence economy of the Guji, as mentioned earlier, was based on cattle raising and on cultivation of grains. While grains, in most cases, serve only to satisfy hunger, great value was placed on cattle for religious purposes, for social status, and for bride wealth and guma (blood price) payments. Cattle were, therefore, considered to be the most important form of wealth among the Guji and among their pastoral neighbors. One way of acquiring such an important asset, besides the normal way of multiplying, was raiding - which caused conflicts. In societies like Guji, "raiding was certainly an important means of repairing stock losses, where however skilled and diligent the herder, animals were always at risk from

disease, drought, and raids of other groups" (Fukui and Turton, 1979:9).

In addition to conflicts emanating from reciprocal cattle raids and theft, the Guji competed with their pastoral neighbors for access to grazing land and water resources, which are important for multiplying and transforming their herds. Infringments, particularly in areas where there were shortages, resulted in conflict and wars.

The Guji, however, did not emphasize ecological factors as the primary causes of their armed conflicts. They rather emphasized mida/mirga (a right or an intent to kill enemies or big game animals to demonstrate one's bravery or masculinity) and revenge as the primary causes and motives of the wars fought by them and their forefathers. Their preference for killing over economic benefits (cattle raids or looting property), was clearly stated in one of their war songs:

Ifuma shafan male shafon nama hingabitu
Ifuma jedan male bojun dira hinrafstu

- People do, but to churn milk in smaller containers does not help them to become fat (i.e. it is not beneficial).
- People may say, but capturing cattle or looting property does not satisfy or make a hero man sleep (i.e. he has to kill).

As stated in the song, no thing was more satisfactory, for the younger men, than the killing of an enemy or big game animal. It was so, not only because it would bring the killer high honor and social status, but also it would bring him gifts of cattle from his relatives and friends, and priority in marriage, in a society where polygamy was the rule and where getting a wife was not easy (see chapter IV for a detail).

The killing of enemies or big game animals for honor and social status was not unique to the Guji. It has long been present among different Oromo groups, as an important cultural value. Bartels' comment on the Mecha Oromo was a good example:

> The honor of a man was bound up in having killed either enemies or big game; that of a woman, in giving life . . . . She braved . . . the troubles of married life and childbirth - in the same way that a hunter, for the sake of honor, defied the perils of the wilderness and a warrior the perils of battle. In addition, killing on the part of men ensured fertility for the women (Bartels, 1969:408).

Baxter, when describing the Boran Oromo in this regard, also writes :

> "To kill an enemy, lion, or elephant is the aim of every young man and was formerly an essential, and still is a frequent, preliminary to a respectable marriage, which is the first step towards formal recognition as a social adult (Baxter, 1965:62).

These brief comments clearly illustrate that the values placed on killing for honor were important motives for waging

wars among the Guji and among the Oromo in general. It is, however, misleading to assume that the Oromo were perpetually killing people. They punished those who were aggressive towards them, while incorporating (through adoption) those who accepted and submitted themselves to them.

Fighting for revenge was another important motive of the Guji wars. They say "haluni dira woga sagaliti bati" which means taking of revenge may be delayed but must be done. Among them, if one does not take revenge for a killed relative or for stolen cattle, one would be highly despised and insulted through various Guji songs. Children are taught, from early childhood, to be warriors and to be ready to take revenge on behalf of killed family member and relatives. For these reasons, everybody in Guji was eager to kill and take revenge for a relative killed or for stolen cattle. Once a man has reciprocally killed a man from any enemy group, or reciprocated cattle theft, revenge was considered to have been taken, since Guji value required blood for blood or theft for theft.

As opposed to peoples such as the Mae Enga of New Guinea highlands (see Meggitt, 1977), who deliberately fought for acquisition of land, Guji wars were not aimed at territorial expansion, although their consequences were just that. The aims were rather seen primarly as killing enemies for <u>mida</u> and for revenge. Economic motives seem to be supplementary to these primary aims.

3.3 PEACE MAKING

Peace making, although the peace may be only temporary, is an integral part of any war. Among the Guji and their neighbors, it was a matter of mutual agreement between the groups through the intermidiacy of women. The data I collected on the traditional peace-making procedure was in complete agreement with the responses given to Hinnant by the Guji elders on the subject. It is therefore worthwhile to present this responses here.

> When a battle had continued for 3 or 4 days, the old men on both sides decided that since many people were being killed and the crops needed tending and the children were starving, they should send old women to the other side to begin peace moves with the senior men there. They would send over five very old women. The five old women went to where the senior Sidamo men were having a meeting called songo. They go and stand quietly until asked who they are. They say that they are Guji and that they bring a message from the senior men of their country. They say that Gujis are dying and that they are killing Sidamos who might even be their soda (in-laws). So they want to end the conflict. The Sidamo tell them to return to their country. The next day the Sidamo send five old women who say that the Sidamo agree with the Gujis and where should they make the appointment to kill the oxen and end the conflict? The Guji discuss and name a place and time. The Sidamo women go. The next day both sides come together and kill two oxen, pouring the blood on both sides of the boundary. Meanwhile the warriors stand on their sides of the boundary spears raised. The two sets of five women stand before them telling them to leave the threats behind. The old men hold ends of a bone -any bone- and other breaks it. Then all eat the meat together as a sign of peace (Hinnant 1972:154-155).

Although this peace-making procedure related to the Guji and

Sidamo, it was equally applicable for the Guji and their other neighbors. Such peace-making, however, was only temporary, since disputes would simply escalate again over murder, cattle theft, gada requirements, grazing rights ... to continue the vicious circle of reciprocal killings and raids.

3:4 WARFARE AND HUNTING

Among the Guji, warfare and hunting of big game animals such as lion, elephant, buffalo, and rhinoceros were, from time immemorial, governed by similar motives and rules. The primary motive of both practices was mida/mirga - a right or intent to kill for demonstrating one's bravery and thereby obtain social status and previlage in the society. The killers of big game were given equal status and privilege with the killers of enemy men, and both have equal right of holding the kuda ceremony.

Besides the mida motives, the killing of big game animals could supplement the economy of the Guji, to some extent, as in the case of cattle raids. Elephant tusks, hides and horns of buffalo and other game animals (from which shields, buckets . . . were made) can only be obtained through hunting and had been used as exchange items among the Guji themselves and with their neighbors.

With regard to organization, warfare and hunting had very similar rules. Adamo (a large hunting expedition) was led by the Abba Adamo (hunting leader) who was elected from the ruling gada

grade as in the case of dula (large offensive war). The number of participants in both practices was very large (from about 1000 to over 2000, according to informants) and would follow their leaders on a voluntary basis. Women did not participate in either hunting or warfare practices. The importance of kayyo, getting the blessing of the Abba gada and elders, taking gala (food) with oneself were emphasized in both warfare and hunting practices. Even the weapons used for both practices were the same. One clear difference between the two practices was the duration of time spent in the field. The hunters who used to hunt in their own territory could stay much longer in the field, while the warriors who fought in the enemy territory could not do that, because of the "all out" wars that could be organized against them.

Adamo would be declared by the Abba Adamo towards the end of dry season, when forests were less dense and when the game were weak and less aggressive. After carefully examining the indicators of kayyo, men on foot would enter the forest to strike, when possible, and drive out the wild animals into the open. Horsemen then would follow and kill them with their spears.

In both warfare and hunting practices, a man whose weapon first struck and caused a drop of blood, had the right to be considered as having killed an enemy or a big game animal whether he actually did it or not. After being granted the right of

having killed, the killer would cut the genital organ of his victim, the ears and tail in the case of big game animal (as a trophy), and would smear his horse (if on horseback) with the blood of the victim. He then would begin to loudly sing the song of the killers (gerarssa), until he arrived home and was congratulated by his family and relatives in a receiving ceremony called goppa.

In the goppa ceremony, the father, mother, and uncle (father's brother) of the killer, who should hear the news before his return, would wait and welcome the killer at his parents' door. A complex ritual took place at this point. They would sacrifice a sheep with whose blood the killer was washed and made to pass under the caracas - huluka, to cleanse him from a state of ritual pollution he entered into by shedding blood. This is a preliminary purification which would later be followed by a kuda sacrifice. Then, they would shave his hair and put butter mixed with coffee beans on his head, after which he would wear beads around his neck, pierce his ears, and let his hair grow longer. His relatives and friends would come to his house to visit and sing war songs with him. Some of them would bring him gifts of cattle. He also would visit his relatives and friends in their houses. Every household visited by him would be required, at least to anoint his growing hair with perfumed butter.

The fact that Guji equate the killing of an enemy with the

killing of big game animal is interesting. Equivalent to this is also a woman giving birth to a child. Giving birth to a child on the part of a woman is considered to be equal to the merit of killing enemy or big game animal on the part of a man. All these achievements approximately require equal amount of pain, hardship, and risking one's own life as a perior conditions of later pleasure.

Hunting, as mentioned earlier, serves only a limited function in Guji as a source of food and as a source of items for exchange. Giving birth to a child, on the part of a woman, also does not have immediate economic benefits. Thus, Guji's equating warfare, hunting, and giving birth to a child on the part of a woman, seem to indcate the primacy of status and honor motives (which are immediate after a successful achievements of these practices) over economic gains.

3:5 CHANGES

Significant changes have taken place in Guji warfare and hunting practices since their incorporation into the Ethiopian Government at the end of the last century. One of the reasons for these changes seem to be the gradual decline of the gada system, either because of its own internal dynamics or because of the replacement of its political and military functions by the central government administration. The gada system, as was mentioned earlier, previously initiated and organized dula

groups every eight years. Incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire made these institutionalized wars impossible (Hinnant, 1978:229) due to the rigorous control adopted.

The frequency of cattle raids, small scale armed conflicts, and hunting has also greatly declined due to government control and due to the decline of transhumant activity. With Menelik's conquest, the vast land over which the Guji once roamed freely, was taken from them and given to the landlords who would charge high taxes for usage. This made transhumance, which was the best ground for both hunting and raids, very expensive and forced the Guji to devise another system called dabare in which they loan cattle to relatives in different altitudes to exploit variations in climate and resources.[1]

The introduction of fire arms seems to have made very little or no changes in the overall organization of wars or in the fighting methods of the Guji. This might be due to a similar distribution of the weapons among the Guji and their neighboring groups. On the other hand, the introduction of fire arms seems to have a significant effect on hunting practices. With the use of guns, the Guji greatly reduced the number of once abundant trophy animals, to the point where they can be rarely seen, if at all. Now they occassionally hunt smaller animals such as antelops, wild pigs etc... either individually or in groups as a way of spending their spare time, not as heroic or status rewarding activities.

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1. A person to whom the cattle were given as loan has a right to freely use their products, but cannot own them.

CHAPTER IV

KUDA

In this chapter I will use a case study to describe and analyze kuda. Kuda was a sacrificial ceremony prepared by those individuals who had killed enemies and/or big game animals. Should this ceremony be omitted, it was believed that the killer would get leprosy or would become insane. Among the Guji, leprosy and insanity are the sign of pollution that one may enter into after a major killing, and kuda is believed to cleanse one from such pollution (see below, for how the ceremony is used towards this purpose). In addition to its believed cleansing aspect, kuda would serve another important purpose. It was the ceremony in which true killers were distinguished from those who claimed to have killed enemies and/or big game without really doing so, and would deserve different treatments accordingly.

4:1 The Case Study

This case study will present the kuda ceremony of Wako Bali.[1] Bali claimed to have killed an enemy man. But some people of his area did not believe his claim. The main purpose of his preparing a kuda ceremony was, therefore, to bring proof and witnesses in order to end the mistrust of his achievement. The cleansing aspect of kuda was given only secondary attention in this case. Thus after preparing a young bull (that symbolizes

1. All the Guji personal names in this chapter are my own creations since the actual subjects did not want their names to be mentioned.

the killed enemy man) to be sacrificed and local drinks to be served at the ceremony, he invited all the Guji men of his area who claimed to have killed enemy men and/or big game. The fact that non-killers and women, who were considered inferior, had not been invited did not prevent me and others (including women) from attending the ceremony.

It was the morning of July 16, 1984. The place was in the Bore district of the Jemjem Province, Sidamo. I saddled my horse and joined a group of killers who were heading to Bali's house to attend his kuda ceremony. There was no problem of distinguishing them from non-killers. They put on their best clothes, hirbora laka (ivory arm rings), ostrich feathers into their well buttered hair, and beads around their neck. In addition to this, some of them held the branches of meti and eri trees that distinguished them from non-killers. Others had their guns with them.

As soon as we arrived, those of us who were non-killers dismounted and joined non-killers who have already arrived and assembled infront of the door. The killers began riding back and forth or around a circle, while boasting loudly about the enemies and/or big game animals they had killed and about the manner of the killings. This process continued for about ten minutes or so after which they dismounted and asked to enter the house.

Only killers were expected to enter the house to enjoy themselves with the prepared local drinks, to chant war songs and

songs of self-praise, and to dance with women (in separate group) who were singing and praising them in the house. None killers were expected to stay outside for the whole day and were served drink there. Such a restriction could have been a stumbling block hindering me from observing what was going on inside the house if Bali, who was aware of my intention to study the ceremony, did not assign me a position of serving local drinks both to the killers and women in the house and to the non-killers outside the house. This gave me ample opportunity to observe the details of the events that was going on both inside and outside the house.

My greatest impression while observing in the house was the scramble of the women to sing and dance with some known killers. There were even at times quarrels among some of those who wanted to sing with these killers. In my quest for understanding why singing and dancing with popular killers is demanded by women so highly, I was told that having a killer as a lover was an important thing that would raise the status of a woman. She would be respected as a lover of a hero and would be given priority in some social and ritual activities. The quarrel between some of them was, therefore, seen as an attempt to have some of these known killers as their lovers and maintain a higher status.

Almost all the invited killers arrived at about 11.00 in the morning. It was thus time to sacrifice the bull, which was killed

at the right front of the door after haririty (the passing of one's hand or ritual sticks along the back of the sacrificial animal, while invoking waka for long life, health, peace and abundance). The cleansing ritual took place at this moment. Bali stepped on the sacrificed bull, starting from the thigh to head, as a symbol of stepping over (escaping) any disasters that may result from spilling blood. A fire was then started in front of the doorway, where the whole carcass, except the hump, was roasted on the flame and consumed by all the participants of the ceremony. The hide was cut into long pieces, distributed and placed around the heades of all those who claimed to have killed enemy men and/or big game animals.

At about 3.00 p.m., the hump was hung from a branch of a tree, prepared and placed in the right front of the door for this purpose. All the killers were asked by Bali's father to come forward, turn by turn, to cut, and take, a piece of the hump as a proof for their heroic deeds. However, three well known and respected elderly killers were assigned to first ask the killers what they had killed, where, and with whom.

The process of cutting and taking a piece of the hump began with Bali himself. He started shouting out about his heroic deeds while going around the hump. Everybody was looking at him when he ran into his house to come back with a gun which he looted from the killed enemy man. He then took out his long knife and prepared to cut a piece from the hump. But the

assigned elderly killer did not allow him to do so. Instead, they began to ask him questions such as: What did you kill? Where? How? Who were your witnesses? He once again started to shout out, calling the name of the enemy man he claimed he had killed, the place, the manner of killing, and the names of his witnesses who positively testified to his killing. He insulted all those who did not approve his killing and asked them to come out and speak. Nobody came out with any opposition, and therefore, Bali was permitted to cut his piece from the hump as a proof for his heroic deed.

After Bali's turn was over, every killer was in a hurry to claim a piece of the hump, following the same procedure. A problem, however, arose when it was the turn of Gumi Aga. The assigned elderly killers queried him and he gave the name of an enemy man he had killed, the place, and the manner of killing. But he could not find someone who could testify to his killing. Later, the interrogators asked him if he had taken the genital organ of his victim and if he had shown it to any Guji man. His answer was negative. Nobody therefore, had grounds to believe his killing of the enemy.

Aga's lineage and clan members, who were very much ashamed of his deed and who were very angry with him, soon prepared to do what custom required them to do. They wrenched him from the group, shaved his long hair (the sign of having killed), smeared him with human feces mixed with soil, and chased him away from

the ceremony. Aga's lineage-and clan-mates were despised, laughed at, and insulted by others through various war songs as the result of the misdeeds of their member.

After about one hour of interruption, the process continued and every man who claimed to have killed an enemy and/or big game got a chance to pass through the procedure. Group songs outside the house then followed and non-killers and women were also allowed to join in. At about 5:30 in the afternoon, the total number of participants was over 250 persons, out of whom 73 had killed enemies and/or big game. At this time, every killer was in a hurry to mount his horse once again. They soon started to ride past the door, while shouting out their brave deeds. Being on their horses, some of them began to fire guns at the sky. Individuals who had killed mire (two or more enemies and/or big game animals within one day) took other men on their horses to demonstrate their superiority. At about 6:30 the whole ceremony was over and killers returned to their homes.

4:2 Discussing and Analyzing Kuda

Kuda in the first instance seems to have the effect of distinguishing killers from non-killers and elaborating the high value, privilege, and social status attached to killing. Only killers were invited to attend the ceremony, allowed to wear arm and ear rings, ostrich feathers, and beads. They held the branches of meti and eri trees, which distinguish them from non-

killers when going to attend kuda, and they would ride infront of their host's door, while boasting about their heroic deeds. They were the only ones who were expected to enter into their host's house to sing and dance with anybody's wife.

Besides the privileges they were given to dance with anybody's wife and to wear different ornaments, Guji killers were also entitled to wear butter on their heads after killing, they would let their hair grow longer (bagaja - sign of killing), and pierce their ears. They were given cattle gifts by their relatives and friends, and priority in marriage. They were also entitled to special funerary rites and the right to be addressed by the name of the horse on which they have killed enemy man and/or big game animal as Abba bari, wate, galcha. . . (the father of Bari, Wate, Galcha . . .). All these privileges and social statuses were elaborated in kuda through different acts and war songs.

Kuda not only distinguishes killers from non-killers and elaborates the high value, privileges, and status attached to killing, but it also distinguishes true killers from those who falsely claimed to have killed enemies and/or big game animals. A bad thing in Guji is lying (Hinnant, 1972:1). To speak the truth, on the other hand, is highly valued and encouraged. Kuda plays a significant role in strengthening such socially accepted values by granting respect and privileges to those who speak the truth and by punishing those who tell lies.

It is clear from the case study that Aga suffered a severe punishment for his false claim of killing. For a killing to be approved among the Guji, it has to be done in front of witnesses. If there were no men around, one had to take the genital organ of his victim (ears and tails in the case of big game animal) and show it to friends or to any Guji men as a proof of killing.

In Guji it is believed that one gets hold of the fresh ears and tails of big game or the genital organ of enemies only if one actually kills the game or enemies. So, even if one individual kills an enemy or a big game animal in the absence of a witness, once he is successful in obtaining and producing these trophies to his friends or to any Guji men, he is sure of having a witness and is safe from being ridiculed in a kuda ceremony. That is why the elderly killers asked Aga if he had taken the genital organ of his victim and showed it to any Guji man.

Lipsky believes that different Oromo groups took the genital organs of their victims to present them to their brides so as to get married. He writes:

> Traditionally, and still among the more isolated and warlike/Oromo/groups, the bridegroom was required to present the sexual organs of someone he had slain to his bride before the marriage could be carried out (Lipsky, 1962:84).

However, the custom of presenting the sexual organs of the victims to brides as a requirement for marriage, was not known among the Guji and, I suspect, among other Oromo groups, despite

Lipsky's suggestion. The main purpose of taking the sexual organs of the victims was to present them as a proof for killing but not as requirement for marriage. Based on statements by Guji and Arsi informants and evidence observed in the kuda ceremony, the taking of the genital organs might not even be important if the killing happened in front of witnesses or in public.

What was important for marriage was the killing itself rather than presenting trophies to bride as a pre-requisite for marriage. Although non-killers do get married, the killers were the ones who were given priority in marriage for at least two important reasons: First, they could afford paying bridewealth since they were given gifts of cattle from their relatives and friends for their killings. Secondly, Guji like to have killers as their in-laws for the prestige and respect associated with them. Beside this, women are also eager to marry killers for the prestige and status it brings them. Because of this some Guji families do not even require killers to pay bridewealth.

One other important aspect which was clearly reflected in the kuda ceremony was, the unity and competition existed among Guji at different social levels. Aga's lineage and clan members were united by the ceremony to punish their kinsman for his false claim of killing an enemy man. They suffered together from the shame and humiliation brought on them by Aga. Other lineages and clans whose members' claims were honest, were very happy and proud of them, which further promoted their unity. In both cases

kuda united individuals at lineage and clan levels. But the competition among different clans to have brave and trustworthy individuals was also evident in the kuda ceremony. Members of one clan would try to find some mistakes in members of the other clans in order to ridicule them. Through such behavior they would deter individuals from doing things that were not approved by the society. The overall unity of the Guji was also symbolized in kuda by war songs and dances at about the end of the ceremony in which all killers, none-killers and women participated.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

So far, this study has presented different theoretical approaches to the study of violent human behavior and an overview of the socio-political and cultural background of Guji society. It also presented the types, causes, motives, and the general nature of Guji warfare and discussed the kuda ceremony in relation to the killing of enemies and/or big game animals.

In the course of our discussion, we have questioned the usefulness of traditional and global theories, which either view violent human behavior as innate and universal or which relates it to a single cause. We rejected the former theory, which advocates the universality of aggression and warfare, by presenting several hunting and gathering societies where warfare and aggression were not known (see chapter I). We also exposed the inability of this theory to explain why (if aggression/warfare is innate) some human groups are aggressive/warlike, while others are less aggressive or not aggressive at all; or why the same people are aggressive and peaceful at different times under different conditions. From this we have concluded that warfare, like any other human behavior, is rooted in learning and cultural experiences rather than in our biological structure.

Frustration - aggression theory was criticized because it presents frustration as an exclusive cause of aggression or

warfare. Warfare as clearly stated by authors of symposia on warfare and aggression (Fried, Harris and Murphy, 1968; Nettleship, Givens and Nettleship, 1975; Givens and Nettleship, 1976) is a complex social phenomenon that defies a simple monocausal explanation. Besides this, as mentioned earlier, responses to frustration may take forms other than aggression, such as acceptance, submission, resignation, dependence, and withdrawal. Furthermore, Kaufmann (1970:26) showed that some of the most brutal and wholesale aggression such as the attempted genocide of the Jewish people by the Nazis, had no detectable frustration as antecedent. Nevertheless, frustration when combined with other causal factors can be a contributing factor for aggression and warfare.

In this study, we based our explanation of Guji warfare on ecological factors, social structure, and on ideological aspects of Guji society. The extent to which these approaches, when taken separately or in combination, are useful to explain Guji warfare is the subject that deserves some attention.

The ecological approach, which usually relies upon the analysis of competition for scarce resources in relation to population density, is important to explain Guji wars and raids to some extent. Like any other East African herders, the Guji have competed and fought with their neighboring ethnic groups for access to and control of livestock, land, and water resources which are the basic necessities for their survival.

Competition for scarce resources undoubtedly was one of the causes of Guji warfare. But it was not the only reason for which the Guji fought their neighboring ethnic groups. Wars and raids were endemic in the past when, according to informants, the population of the Guji was very small and when there was no significant shortage of land, cattle, or water resources. The Guji in most cases, fought with their neighboring ethnic groups for mida/mirga (a right or an intent to kill enemies to demonstrate one's bravery or masculinity) and for revenge, which cannot be adequately explained by ecological approach without taking into account Guji social values or ideology.

Like the ecological approach, social structural analysis, to some extent, is important to explain the causes and organization of Guji warfare. The social structure of the Guji, particularly the gada system, as demonstrated in previous chapters, is directly related to warfare. The Moiety-clan-lineage structure is also important to determine the people with whom they cooperate and with whom they fight. But, when taken alone, the structural explanation is tendentious because it fails to articulate how the "apparent interests of social groups are converted into organized political action" (Ross, 1986:171).

Guji have developed cultural mechanisms by which they motivate individual members to participate in wars and raids. They extricate killers from non-killers and reward the former with economic and social lucratives. As discussed in previous

chapters, killers of enemies and/or big game animals are allowed to wear different ornaments, are given higher social status, prestige and honor, given cattle in the form of gifts, priority in marriage, special funerary rights and the right to hold kuda ceremony.

The whole purpose of the kuda ceremony, when examined carefully, is to celebrate the high values, privileges, and social status attached to killing. It is clearly one way of teaching Guji about the importance of killing and its socio-economic benefits so as to move them to fight. Thus, ideology and social norms are important to explain how Guji are initiated and motivated to fight.

Guji warfare is thus rooted in their social structure, ecological factors, and in their ideology. We cannot simply choose one among them and ignore the others since all are equally relevant. Any attempt to explain Guji warfare without taking into account all these causal factors, therefore, is not only being tendentious but exhibiting unreasoned distortion of judgment.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX ONE

GRADE	DURATION	ENTERS GRADE IN JUNIOR & SENIOR CYCLE
SULUDA	1 BALLI (GRADE)	JUNIOR
DABALLA	1 BALLI	JUNIOR
KARRA	2 - 1/2 BALLI	JUNIOR
KUSSA	1/2 BALLI	SENIOR
RABA MIDO	1 BALLI	JUNIOR
DORI	1/2 BALLI	JUNIOR
GADA	1 BALLI	SENIOR
BATU (YUBA)	1 BALLI	SENIOR
YUBA	1 BALLI	SENIOR
YUBA GADA	1 BALLI	SENIOR
JARSA GUDURRU	1 BALLI	SENIOR
JARSA KOLULU	1 BALLI	SENIOR
JARSA RAKA	UNTIL DEATH	SENIOR

Guji gada grades, their duration and their status in the cycle. From Hinnant's, The Gada System of Guji of Southern Ethiopia, Ph.D Dissertation, Chicago, 1977).

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