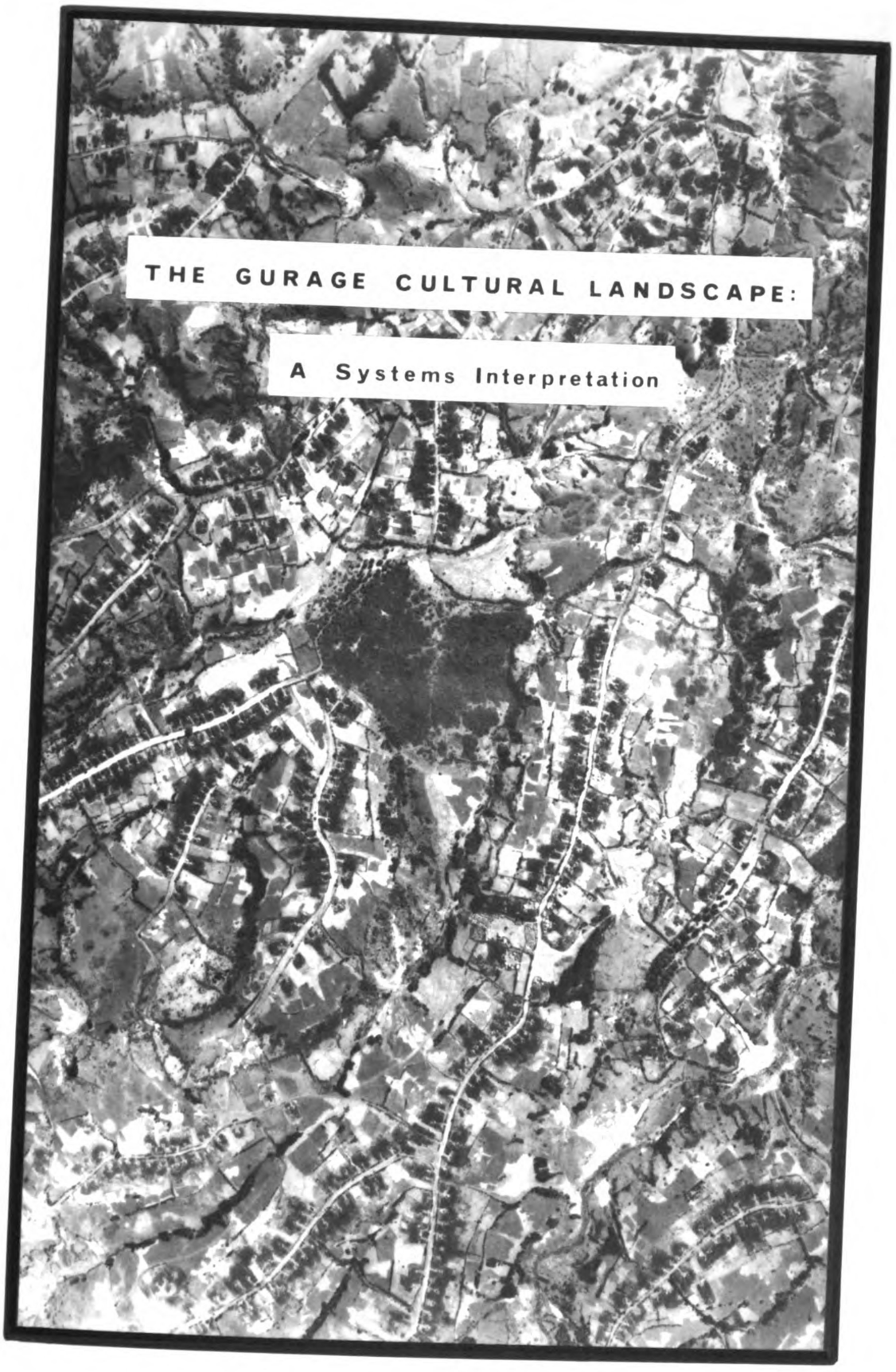
THE GURAGE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE:
A Systems Interpretation

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
CHARLES IPCAR

1970


THE GURAGE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE:
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A Systems Interpretation

By

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Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Geography

October, 1970

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. Ronald J. Horvath and Dr. William Derman for their guidance in preparing this thesis and for their encouragement and helpful criticism.

I would also like to express gratitude to Philip LeBel who as a fellow secondary teacher at Emdeber shared many of the field trips through the Gurage countryside and who has been very helpful in terms of advice on the interpretation of the cultural landscape.

Special thanks are also due to the many Gurage students who provided me with much valuable information, to their parents for their hospitality and patiance in answering questions, and to Abba Francois Markos, head of the Gurage Catholic Mission at Emdeber, for his help and advice.

The writer takes full responsibility for any error that may occur.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH APPROACH

One of the traditional responsibilities of cultural geographers has been the interpretation of the way of life of particular groups of people. In the present study I recognize two overall responsibilities: to present a systematic interpretation of a cultural area which will provide general and technical appreciation to professional geographers and to provide more general understanding to educated members of the study population.

No doubt this study will have only modest relevance to the Gurage people in its present form and at its present level of analysis. Still, local teachers could use the maps and statistical data to illustrate some of the all too abstract principles of the school geography curriculum. Other educated members of the Gurage rural development committees might find the maps useful for conceptualizing further regional projects. In turn professional geographers may find this work interesting as an example of a systems approach to the study of small areas.

In planning my analysis of the field data a number of concepts emerged which seemed important for the interpretation of the Gurage study area; these include concepts such as form, function, process, system, culture, region, and scale. Many of these concepts have a long history of evolution and diffusion and it should come as no surprise that there is much disagreement among men when attempting to

define them, let alone operationalize them to field situations. In this study I'm presenting what I consider a useful synthesis of a set of definitions for each concept.

A form is the visible aspect of something, its shape, as defined in terms of relative similarity to some ideal set of polygons, i.e., triangles, squares, hexagons, etc. Geographers owe much to William Bunge for an explicit method of determining relative shape.[1] Abstract form can be expressed in two dimensional space as an area or in three dimensional space as a volume.

A function is one use of something out of a full set of possible uses in relation to another thing or things. When people speak of the multifunctional use of something they mean only what they perceive as the complete range of use which in reality can only approach the full range.

A process is the flow of something through time and space which can be more closely defined in terms of dominant phase, duration, spatial expression, and type of phenomena involved.

From the above definitions it is possible to generate four composite terms which should facilitate my later discussion; this entire approach is modified after a research paper by Jack Eichenbaum and Stephen Gale.[2]

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1. W. Bunge, "Theoretical Geography," Lund Studies in Geography, Series C, #1, 2nd ed.(Lund: Gleerup, 1966), chap. 3, pp. 72-88.

2. Eichenbaum & Gale, "Form, Function, & Process: A Methodological Inquiry," Unpub. research paper, Univ. of Mich., 1969, pp. 1-33.

Much of traditional geographic inquiry would fall into the classification of the form-function approach. In this type of work we find the identification of geometric forms followed by an attempt to demonstrate functional relationships between various forms. In effect we have a type of synchronic analysis, a temporal cross-section of some area. Examples from geography would include work in early physical geography, settlement studies, and central place theory. An analogous approach has been followed by such anthropologists as Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown called structual-functionalism. As will be suggested later this kind of approach has severe explanatory limitations, one being the assumption of a status quo system; another serious objection is based on the assumption that the whole is always something more than the aggregate of its parts. However, as Eichenbaum and Gale point out "much of the theoretical and methodological literature(in geography) of the past seventy years has been predicted implicitly or explicitly, on the concept of form-function."[3]

The process-function construct has been utilized in two general ways by geographers. One group has used it for site confined studies of land use changes through time, a type of landscape evolution study,while others have traced the diffusion of a single innovation over space, relaxing the site constraint. The first approach would be represented by historical geography studies such as Preston James' interpretation of the Blackstone Valley in southern New England[4] or by William Bunge's forthcoming book

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3. Eichenbaum & Gale, pp. 4.

4. P. James, "The Blackstone Valley," Annals of AAG, Vol. XIX, #2, (1929), pp. 67-109.

on "Fitzgerald."[5] The second approach would be represented by geographers of the "Berkeley school" of Carl Sauer; process-function studies on a world regional scale are evident in Agricultural Origins and Dispersals.[6] More recently this diffusion approach has been adopted and further developed by a group of Sweedish geographers led by Torsten Hagerstrand, speaking in terms of "innovation waves."[7]

The form-process approach has had its greatest impact on physical geographers, being employed to help explain geomorphological processes. Carl Sauer explicitly borrowed this model from the geomorphologists when he called for a process interpretation of what he termed "the cultural landscape."[8] As Peter Haggett has pointed out "the most important effect of Sauer's essay was in urging that the same morphological methods so fruitful in the analysis of the physical landscape could be transfered to the study of the cultural."[9]

Implicit in the form-process approach is the suggestion of mutually dependent forms and processes. This suggestion has led some of our scholars to what has been termed "general morphological law," which in short

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5. W. Bunge, Fitzgerald: The Geography of a Revolution, (Schenkman Publishing Co., Cambridge, forthcoming November, 1970).

6. C. Sauer,"Agricultural Origins & Dispersals," Bowman Memorial Lecture, #2, Amer. Geog. Society, 1952.

7. T. Hagerstrand, Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process, Translated by Alan Pred, (Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967).

8. C. Sauer, "Morphology of Landscape," Reprinted in Land & Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl O. Sauer, Ed. by John Leighly, (Univ. of Calif. Press, Berkeley, 1963).

9. P. Haggett, Locational Analysis in Human Geography, (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1966), pp. 11.

states that processes generate spatial patterns(structures) that maximize or minimize some property or set of properties. Therefore if we have a theory which predicts the spatial distribution of one process it may well be useful for explaining another process which produces a somewhat analogous spatial pattern; a recent example of this approach was done by John C. Hudson for rural settlement location.[10] The major criticism to this approach concerns its neglect of the functional relevance of form for particular evolutionary stages.

In their paper Eichenbaum and Gale make a case for a more comprehensive form-function-process approach:[11]

> In effect, form-function-process provides a contexual or functional orientation for the form-process concept, giving phenomenological reference to the holistic metaphysic. This also permits the generation and testing of specific hypotheses directed toward the verification of the overall general systems hypothesis(general morphological law). And finally, in contrast to the notions of form-function and process-function, the form-function-process concept enables us to present space and time in a mutually interactive role.

In other words the inclusion of the functional parameter to the form-process approach enables us as cultural geographers to make comparisons between whole cultural systems in terms of their relative efficency to fulfilling human needs; in neo-Darwinian terms this would be

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10. J.C. Hudson, "A Location Theory for Rural Settlement," Annals of AAG, Vol. LIX, (1969), pp. 365-381.

11. Eichenbaum & Gale, pp. 7.

the successful exploitation of a particular physical environment. Alternatively we could study the cultural evolution of a single ethnic group as it moved from place to place, thinking in terms of a complex adaptive system; the Fulbe migrations in West Africa might be an appropriate case in point.

Explicit in much of the above discussion is the concern for a comprehensive approach to field study. "Comprehensive" should be taken to include basic classification, comparison of variations, connectivity between all classes, as well as overall generalizations. The systems approach seems particularly appropriate as a conceptual framework for all these concerns:[12]

> We define a system in general as a complex of elements or components directly or indirectly related in a causal network, such that at least some of the components are related to some others in a more or less stable way at any one time. The interrelations may be mutual or unidirectional, linear, non-linear or intermittent, and varying in degrees of causal efficacy or priority. The particular kinds of more or less stable interrelationships of components that becomes established at any time constitute the particular structure of the system at that time.

The system could be viewed as totally equivalent to the environment as in a general ecological system or as occupying a particular niche within that total environment; this latter approach is more useful for studies like the present one which are focused on a particular cultural group.

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12. W. Buckley, "Society as a Complex Adaptive System," Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist, (Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1968), pp. 493.

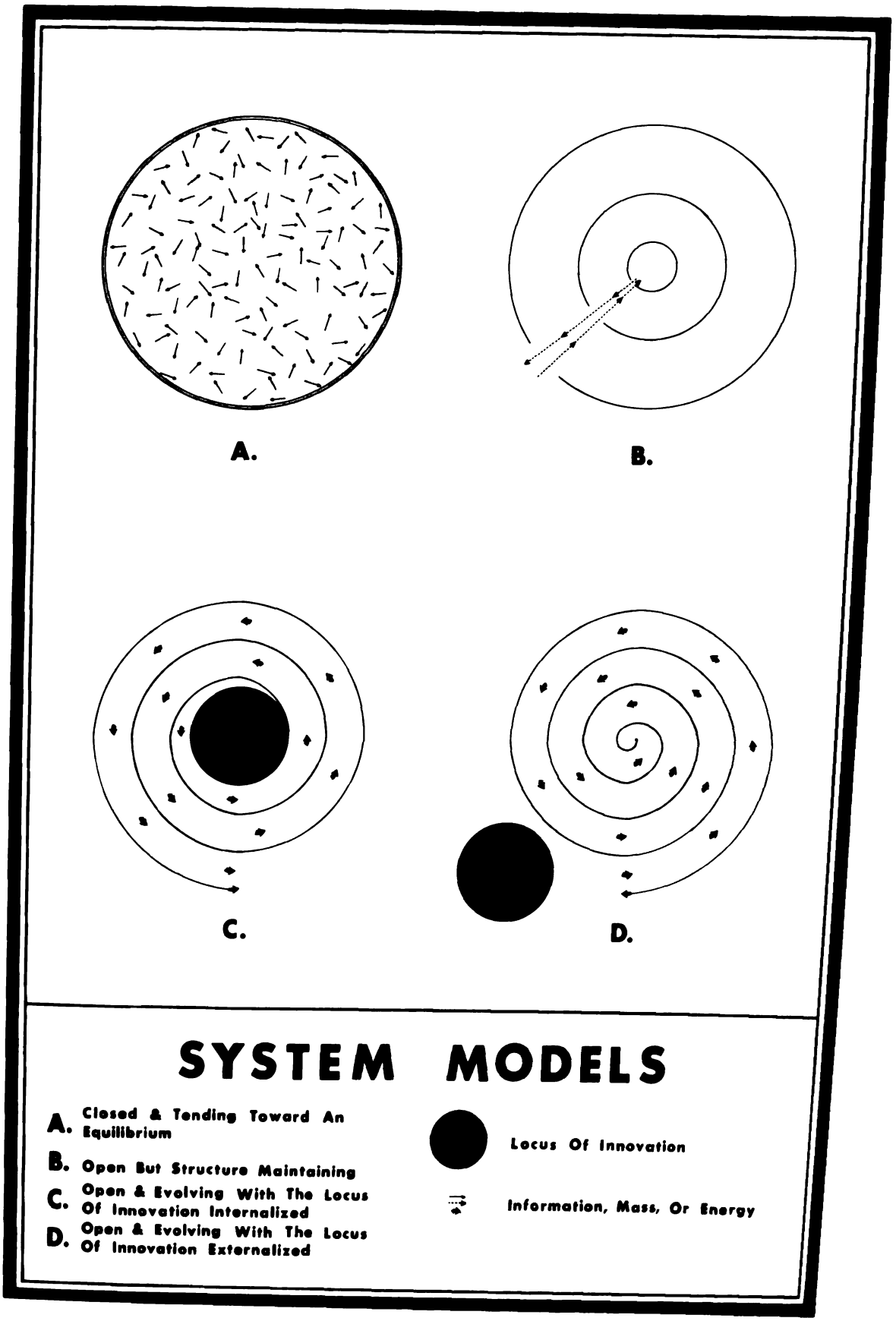
A.
B.
C.
D.
SYSTEM MODELS
A. Closed & Tending Toward An Equilibrium
B. Open But Structure Maintaining
C. Open & Evolving With The Locus Of Innovation Internalized
D. Open & Evolving With The Locus Of Innovation Externalized
Locus Of Innovation
Information, Mass, Or Energy

Figure 1

Another important idea is the distinction commonly made between open and closed systems, open and closed with respect to the transfer of information, mass, or energy. Open systems are defined as those in which some form of interaction takes place between a system and its surrounding environment; closed systems operate entirely independent of that surrounding environment. As many people have pointed out it seems likely that no situation on Earth could be described as an absolutely closed system. However, it seems useful in practice to conceptualize systems as being relatively closed or open.

Walter Buckley further differentiates between systems which tend toward an equilibrium state, perpetuate a status quo of particular structure, or continually evolve new structure.[13] The third group which he refers to as "morphogenic systems" seem particularly relevant to cultural geographers concerned with the process of cultural change. As Eichenbaum points out there would be two ways of generating a morphogenic system, one with the locus of innovation internalized, the other with the locus of innovation externalized;[14] (Fig. 1) I will return to this point later in my review of the concept of culture.

Buckley also introduces the idea that systems can expand or degenerate depending upon the kind of feedback the system is receiving. Later in this study I will be describing a Western transportation system in these terms.

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13. W. Buckley, Sociology & Modern Systems Theory, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1967),

14. J. Eichenbaum, "Forgotten Movers: The Case of Urban Refugees," Unpublished Ph.D. proposal, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1970, pp. 6-8.

The concept of culture has been explicitly evolved to deal comprehensively with different groups of people and their ways of life. Throughout the history of Man there have been frequent encounters between different groups of people. Such groups would perceive one another as mutually strange according to the degree of difference in their ways of life; in practice this sense of strangeness could be mitigated if their ways of life were complementary rather than competitive, i.e., the Hausa and the Fulani of Nigeria.[15] The concept of culture then has emerged in the last hundred years as one attempt in a continuing attempt by scholars and others to classify and explain the way of life of particular human groups.

Historically "the concept of culture...crystalized in an explicit, generalized form only in the latter half of the 19th century, a development usually attributed to the influence of Gustav Klemm and Edward Tylor."[16] Many of the early scholars made serious attempts to explain cultural variation in terms of single factors such as race, level of technology, or parameters of the physical environment.[17] At the turn of the century Friedrich Ratzel was developing an evolutionary approach to culture. At the same time Alfred L. Kroeber was introducing the idea that culture was a distinct system, understandable in accordance with its own laws and principles. Later Leslie White developed Kroeber's ideas on cultural systems within an explicit evolutionary framework.

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15. For an expanded discussion of relationships between ethnic groups phrased in ecological terms see Fredrik Barth, "Competition & Symbiosis in North East Baluchistan," Folk, Vol. VI, (1964), pp. 15-22.

16. M.W. Mikesell, "Review Article: Geographic Perspectives in Anthropology," Annals of AAG, Vol. LVII, #3, (1967), pp. 617-634.

17. See the early writings of Ratzel and Huntington, and those of Griffith Taylor.

Another school of thought grew out of the independent efforts of Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown which advocated a synchronic structual-functional analysis of a cultural system. Malinowski's approach has been described as aiming:[18]

> at the explanation of anthropological facts at all levels of development by their function, by the part which they play within the system, and by the manner in which this system is related to the physical surroundings.

On his part Radcliffe-Brown emphasized social structure and its continuity through time; such an approach implies the assumption of a homeostatic system, one which is open but the basic structure remains unchanged.

A direct development from the structual-functional approach has been worked on by more contemporary anthropologists such as Charles A. Valentine and M.G. Smith. Their efforts have been directed at developing methods which can be used to study groups and institutions from the perspective of operating within some larger system. As Valentine points out to all social scientists, we are:[19]

> concerned with the problem of conceptionalizing relationships between definable smaller units such as tribes, village communities, or peasant groups, and larger wholes such as urban centers, national states, or traditional civilizations.

To Valentine, then, we would consider a cultural system to be composed of a set of interacting cultural subsystems.

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18. E. Nagel, The Structure of Science, (Harcourt, Bruce & World, New York, 1961), pp. 521.

19. C.A. Valentine, Culture & Poverty, (Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968), pp. 99.

M.G. Smith goes on to develop the idea that each cultural subsystem would in turn by made up of an integrated set of institutional subsystems, an institutional subsystem being defined as a standardized pattern of group activity analogous to the older concept of a trait complex:[20]

> I hold that the core of a culture is its institutional system. Each institution involves set forms of activity, grouping, ideas, and values. The total system of institutions thus embraces three interdependent systems of action, of idea and value, and of social relations. The interdependence of these three systems arises from the fact that their elements together form a common system of institutions. These institutions are integral wholes, as Malinowski would say, and their values, activities, and social forms are mutually supporting. The institutions of a people's culture form the matrix of their social structure, simply because the institutional system defines and sanctions the persistent forms of social life. To define the social structure, we must therefore analyze the institutional system. Likewise, to define a system of social value or action, we must first identify and analyze the institutional framework.

Implicit in the above statement is an inductive approach for dealing with field situations, a kind of synthesis which would approach the "total system." Anthropologists such as Gutorm Gjessing view such an approach as a practical necessity for field research:[21]

> A total system(no more than a total region) is not, however, a datum for analysis. It cannot be observed, but must be synthetically and hypothetically apprehended. The functional relationship between various social institutions can, on the other hand, be analyzed and then related to the total system. This process must be carried out on three levels: regional, temporal, and systemic.

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20. M.G. Smith,"Social & Cultural Pluralism," Annals N.Y. Academy of Science, Vol. LXXXIII, #5,(1960), pp. 767.

21. G. Gjessing, "The Social Responsibility of the Social Scientist," Current Anthropology, Vol. IX, (December, 1968), pp. 402.

A number of other social scientists have also been concerned about the temporal assumptions implicit in the structual-functional approach of the Malinowski school, their concerns being phrased in much the same terms as my previous discussion of form-functionalism among geographers. For example recent writings of Karl Deutsch support the position that "society may most fruitfully be viewed, not as an equilibrium or organismic system, but as an open, adaptive, self-directing system"[22], or in other words an explicitly morphogenic system.

Cultural geographers have been traditionally concerned with the interpretation of the spatial realization of cultural systems, making use of some combination of the previously mentioned concepts of form, function, and process. In reviewing what he saw as the two dominant approaches to cultural geography, Robert S. Platt has come to much the same conclusion as I, calling for a more coherent and comprehensive synthesis of approaches:[23]

> How can the student of functional pattern understand his data without reference to their cultural origin; and how can the student of cultural origin understand his data fully without appreciation of the functional patterns of human enterprise to which they belong?

Platt also observes that Sauer's concept of "cultural origin and dispersal" was significantly influenced by his early contact with Kroeber; this suggests that in this period some cultural anthropologists and geographers were working in phase with one another. There seems little

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22. Walter Buckley's introduction of an article by Karl Deutsch in Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist, (Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1968), pp. 384.

23. R.S. Platt, "The Rise of Cultural Geography in America," Readings in Cultural Geography, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962), pp. 40.

doubt though that cultural geographers have been mainly interested in Kroeber's concept of cultural regions rather than his thoughts on the evolution of cultural systems; Mikesell credits Kroeber with presenting the "first clear exposition of the concepts of cultural intensity and climax, i.e., the distribution of creative energy within a culture area."[24]

If we consider a cultural system in the framework of an evolving adaptive system, then we have to explain the mechanism or processes which generates the system. For example a morphogenic system could be largely the result of a continually evolving process of traditional patterns modified by innovative recombination; the locus of innovation would be internalized. It could just as logically be the result of adaption or adoption of cultural innovations diffused into the system from neighboring systems; the locus of innovation would be external to the system. One cultural anthropologist who has done considerable work on this subject is Robert Redfield; he would refer to these cultural systems as respectively orthogenetic and heterogenetic.[25]

For this study then a culture will be viewed as an abstract construct, an idealized systems model, which attempts to define the general or modal way of life of a group of people during a time period within some region. Furthermore it will be assumed that a cultural system can be approached inductively as the construct of an integrated set of

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24. Mikesell, pp. 622.

25. Redfield & Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," Economic Development & Cultural Change, Vol. III, #1,(1954), pp. 53-73.

institutional subsystems. An allied concern will be to define the spatial dimensions of the cultural system in a prelimenary fashion, its extent as well as the scales of operation.

A useful way to approach the concept of a regional system is by thinking of it as a high level of areal classification, as a generalized but highly ordered way of defining the spatial dimensions of some set of elements for a given period of time. Like all classification schemes, areal ones are generated from a series of assumptions relating to the range of elements involved and the level of analysis employed. For example in basic statistical terms a nominal scheme would represent the spatial distribution of some set of elements such as would be found on a typical land use map. The ordinal and ratio schemes would represent a qualitative or quantitative classification of the spatial distribution of some set of elements such as would be found on various chloropleth or isarithmic maps. According to Bunge, a regional scheme would involve a higher level of data classification, into that of areal units which minimize the variance within units and maximize the variance between units.[26] The next highest level of analysis would then be that of a regional system scheme, which would attempt to reflect the internal coherence within each unit as well as the interrelationships between adjacent units in a general systems framework.

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26. Bunge, pp. 14-23.

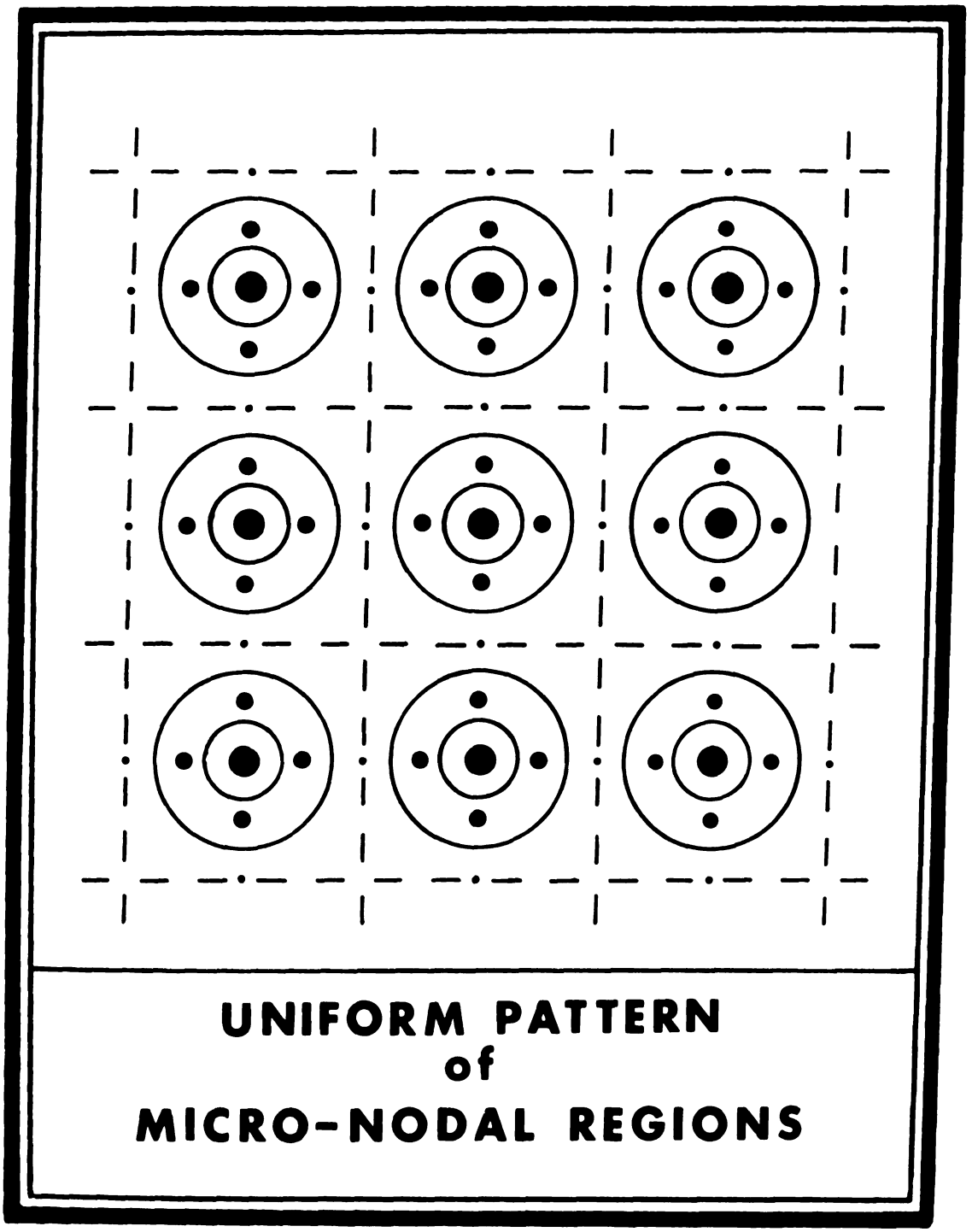

Figure 2

In a number of regional classification schemes distinctions are made between "uniform" and "nodal" regions. Uniformity or homogeneity as a general criteria is explicit in much of traditional physical and cultural geography; examples that come to mind would include climatic, vegetation, physiographic, as well as cultural regions. However, the nodal concept is also widely recognized by cultural geographers as they point out that much of human activity appears to have spatial focus. It goes without saying that the nodal concept is an integral part of central place theory. Allen K. Philbrick has made an important contribution to this dialogue about uniform and nodal regions, stating that while the terms uniform and nodal are commonly used to describe separate situations it is also possible and worthwhile to consider situations where both concepts complement one another:[27]

> The areal structure of occupance is composed of a number of nested orders of areal functional organization arranged in a functional hierarchy. This nested functional hierarchy is characterized by alternate shifts from parallel relationship(uniform pattern) to nodal organization as the size and complexity of the units of occupance progresses from parcel to establishment, from groups of parallel establishments to the community, etc., in a progression from large to smaller scale.

To summarize, then, a system could be expressed spatially as a uniform pattern of subsystems each of which has a centrally located node. In such a model case it becomes clear that the terms uniform and nodal are also directly related to the scale of spatial analysis, and will alternate as we shift from large to smaller scale. (Fig. 2)

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27. A.K. Philbrick, "Principles of Areal Functional Organization," Econ. Geog., #33,(1957), pp. 308.

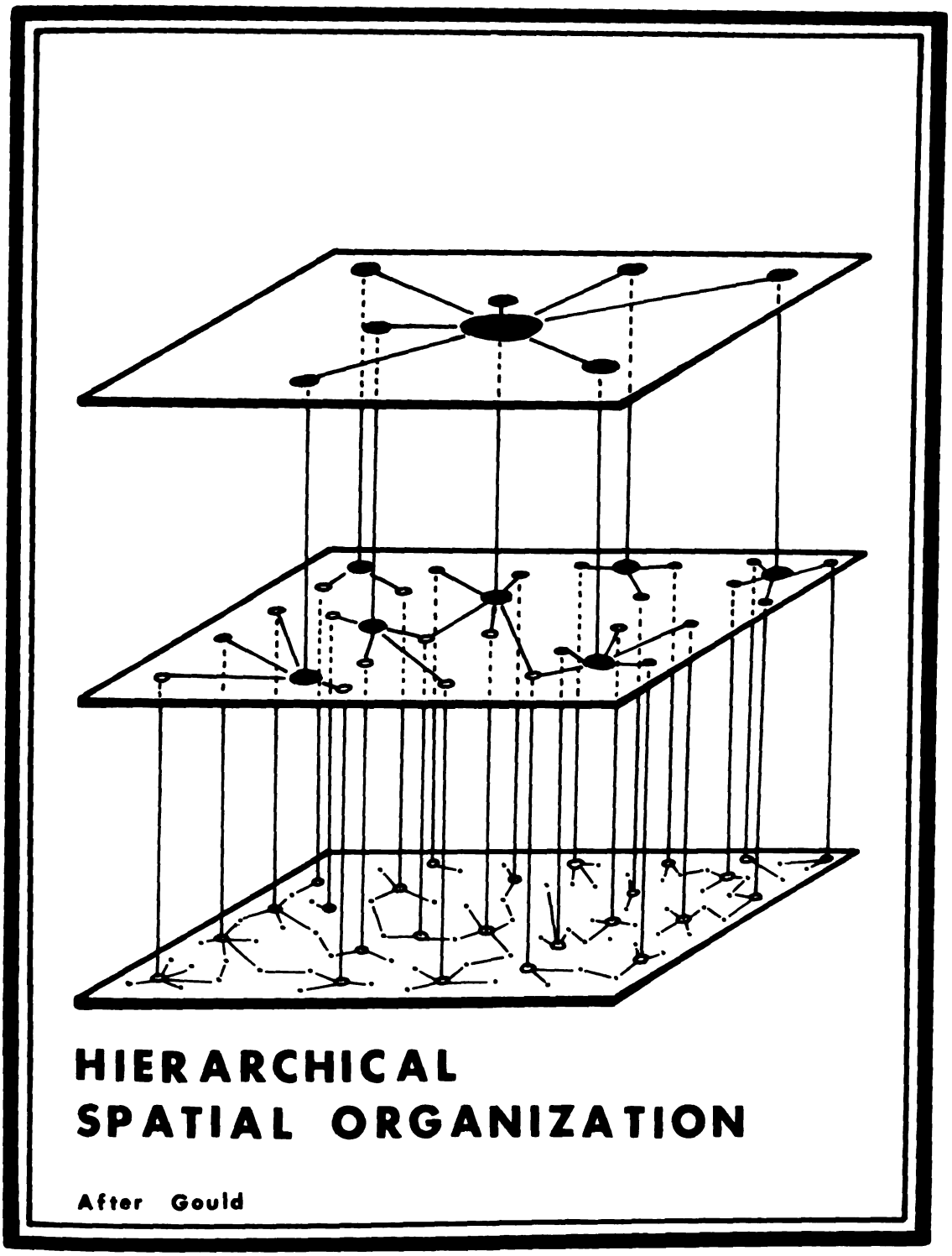

Figure 3

In my own analysis of a cultural regional system I hope to demonstrate both the uniformity and nodality of particular landscape patterns as revealed at different levels of scale. Such an approach is essential for determining the existence of what has been described above as a nested hierarchy of nodal systems.One problem will be to try and determine the scale at which a system functions, as we progress from the local to regional level; different levels of regional hierarchy are illustrated in Fig. 3. This general problem of situation and scale has also come to the critical attention of Harold H. McCarty:[28]

> Every change in scale will bring about the statement of a new problem, and there is no basis for presuming that associations existing at one scale will also exist at another.

I will also be using some of the ideas developed in central place theory in my analysis of the field data. At this stage in my research it seems evident that the nodes of various service systems do not necessarily coincide at single central places. Instead what we have is a set of central places for each system, some of which may coincide with central places of other systems. For example there are religious centers, market places, and rural courts, which cluster together in some locations but are individually isolated in other areas. There will also be a preliminary attempt to distinguish the position of each central place within a regional hierarchy.

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28. McCarty et al, "The measurement of Association in Industrial Geography," Dept. of Geog., Univ. of Iowa, Report # 1, (1956), pp. 16.

In summary then I will be presenting a systems interpretation of a cultural landscape which will proceed inductively from the micro-specific(local) to the macro-general(regional). At each scale level there will be an interpretation of the forms present, an attempt to explain the functional relevance of the forms in closed and open systems terms, and an attempt to define the processes by which these forms have been spatially realized.

At the same time it must be acknowledged that much of my primary data is of reconnaissance nature, meaning only qualitatively reliable and in some instances incomplete. Much of the field data was collected on a part time basis over a period of nine months while the writer was teaching geography classes at the Emdeber secondary school in the study area. Air photographs were a great help in the planning of field trips, as was the advice and company of a more experienced scholar of the Gurage, Philip LeBel. Major secondary sources for the study area include a recent ethnographic study,[29] articles in professional journals, and the air photographs mentioned above.[30] General background material also has a wide range of reliability, and in some areas is totally lacking. Therefore although I intend to demonstrate a systems approach to the interpretation of the Gurage cultural landscape, there can be no attempt at this time to test the suitability of that approach in any rigorous fashion. The importance of this study should be assessed on

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29. W. Shack, The Gurage, (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1966).

30. Air photographs at a calculated scale of 1:25,000 were taken in 1957 by the U.S. Mapping Mission under contract to the Ethiopian Government; copies of the photographs are available at the Imperial Highway Authority, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

how well it manages to pull together existing sources, synthesizes a research approach, frames propositions, and discusses data requirements for the testing of such propositions, all of which would be a necessary prerequisite for future work in the study area.

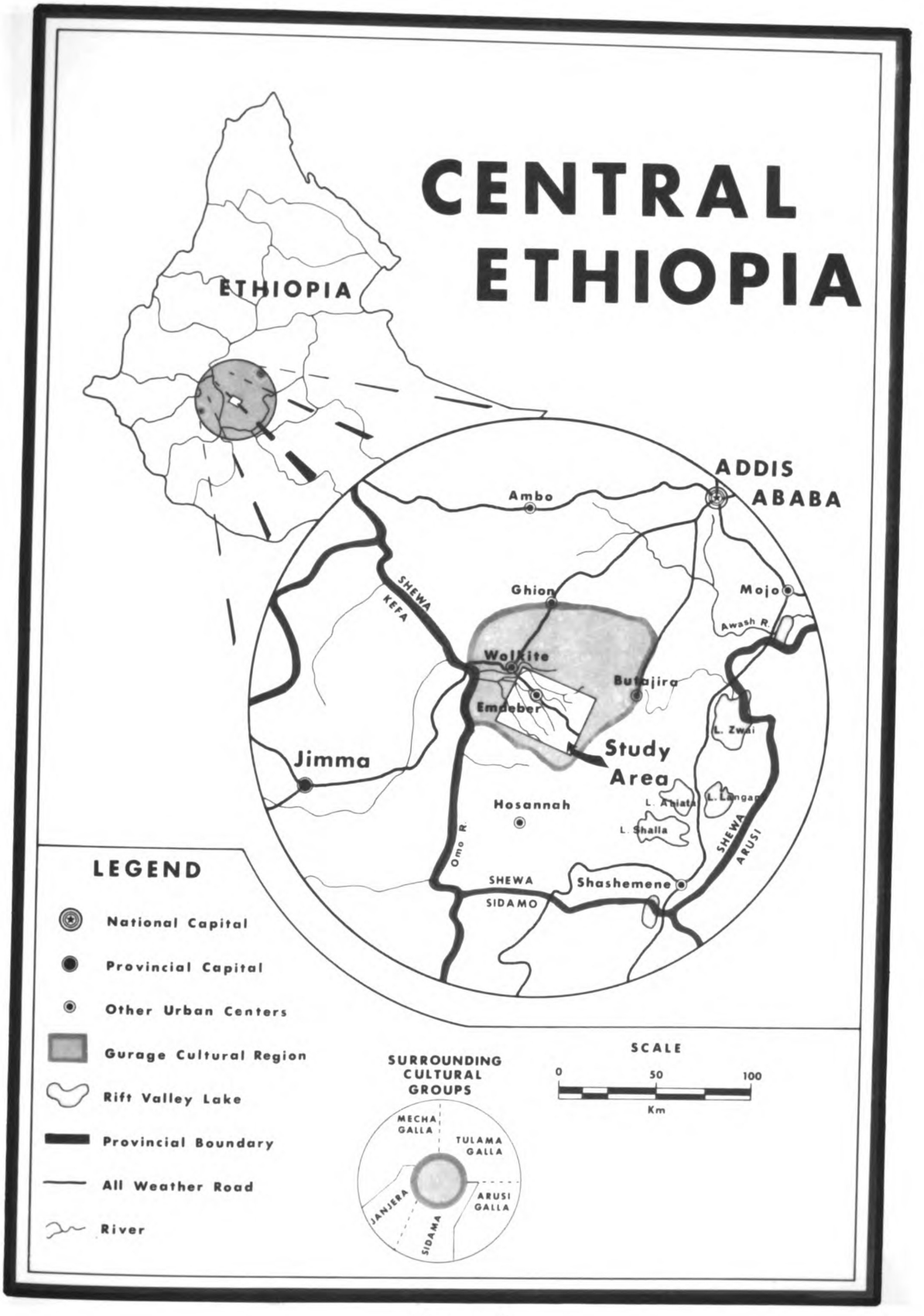
CENTRAL ETHIOPIA
ETHIOPIA
ADDIS ABABA
Ambo
Ghion
Mojo
Awash R.
SHEWA
KEFA
Wolkite
Butajira
Emdeber
L. Zwai
Jimma
Study Area
Hosannah
L. Shalla
Omo R.
SHEWA
ARUSI
SHEWA
SIDAMO
Shashemene
LEGEND
National Capital
Provincial Capital
Other Urban Centers
Gurage Cultural Region
Rift Valley Lake
Provincial Boundary
All Weather Road
River
SURROUNDING CULTURAL GROUPS
MECHA GALLA
TULAMA GALLA
JANJERA
ARUSI GALLA
SIDAMA
SCALE
0
50
100
Km

Figure 4

CHAPTER II

GENERAL SITUATION OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area is located in the southwestern portion of the Ethiopian high plateau, some 180km west of the capital city of Addis Ababa. This area can be reached by following the Jimma Road to the town of Wolkite and then branching off to the southeast. The Gurage cultural region covers considerably more territory than the study area, as may be seen from the general location map (Fig. 4). The boundaries of this cultural region, on the basis of a recent linguistics survey[31], extend a little north of the Jimma Road, east to the Rift Valley escarpment, west to the Omo Trough escarpment, and south to the Kambatta Massif escarpment. Culturally the Gurage people are bordered on the west, north, and east by three subgroups of the Galla people: the Mecha, the Tulama, and the Arusi. Immediately across the Omo Trough and to the south are two subgroups of the Sidamo people: the Janjera and the Kambatta(see inset, Fig. 4).

Within the Gurage cultural region there are a number of subgroups, seven of which have formed a loose political federation known as "Yasabat-bet Gurage" or "The Seven Houses of Gurage."[32] The study area is focused on the central "house" of Chaha, defining its boundaries with four of the other six subgroups(Fig. 5). Within

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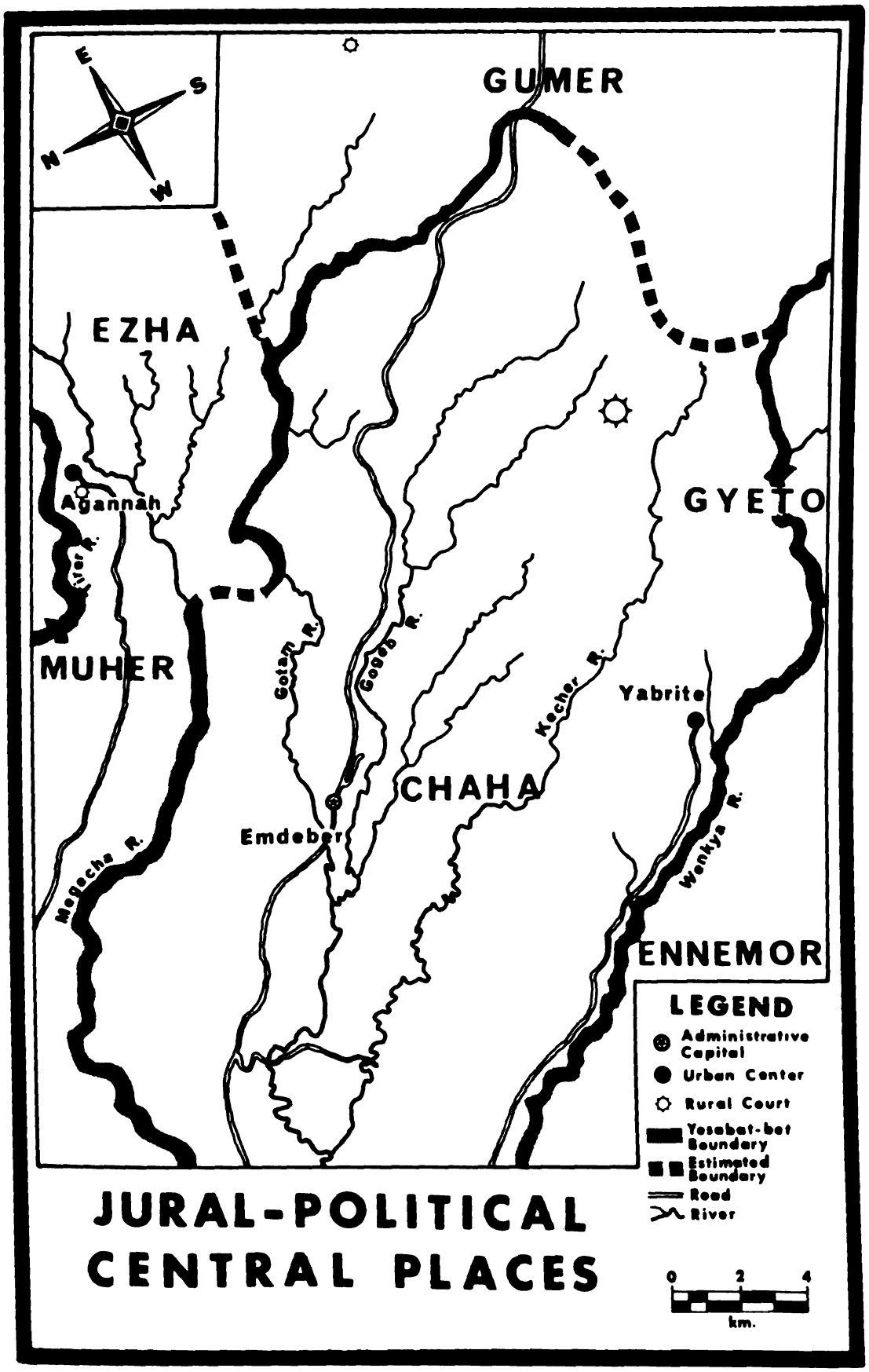
31. R. Cooper et al, Unpublished preliminary linguistics map of Ethiopia, 1969.

32. See Shack for additional notes on the history of the formation of the Sabat-bet, The Gurage, pp. 205.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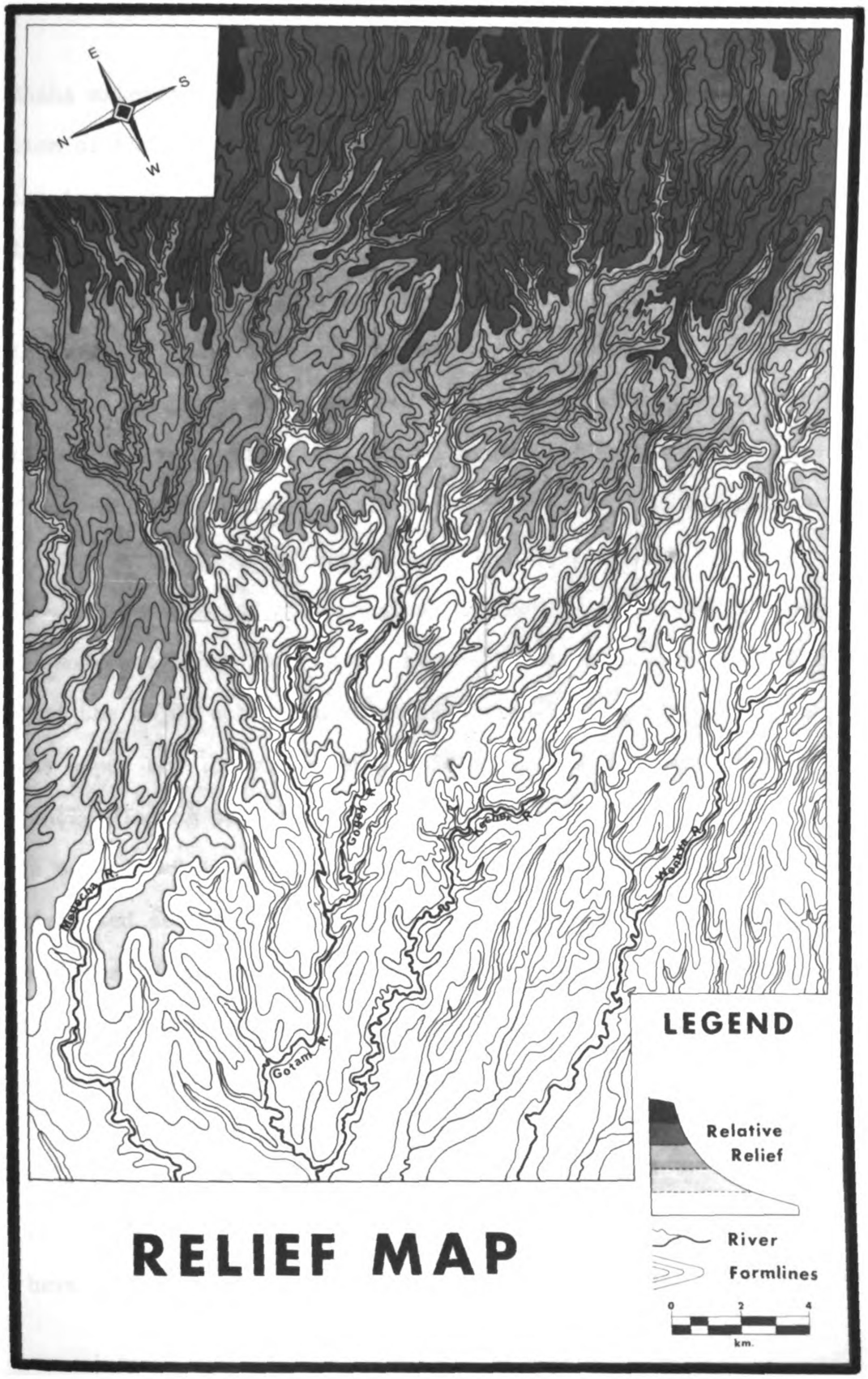
CHAHA
Emdeber
Mogacha R.
Wenkya R.
ENNEMOR
LEGEND
Administrative Capital
Urban Center
Rural Court
Yesebat-bet Boundary
Estimated Boundary
Road
River
0 2 4
km.
JURAL-POLITICAL CENTRAL PLACES

Figure 5

the formal administration system of the Ethiopian government, Chaha is a subdistrict("wereda") of Shewa Province, its administrative capital being located in the town of Emdeber. As a political subdistrict Chaha occupies a much more extensive area than that traditionally occupied by the Chaha people. For the purposes of this study "Chaha" will refer to the cultural subregion.

The present territorial boundaries of Chaha are for the most part represented by major rivers. Where this is not so the boundaries are defined by villages, market places, forest groves, stone markers, or in some cases are still openly disputed. For example if we refer back to the political map(Fig. 5) we'll find that the Megecha River separates Chaha from her northeastern neighbor Ezha; however, just north of the Daquna ridge, where the Megecha and Gotam rivers nearly converge, that boundary changes over to the Gotam River. Southwest of Chaha, just across the Wenkya River, lies Ennemor. Directly south in the highlands is Gyeto, separated from Chaha by the upper waters of the Wenkya and separated from the Ennemor Plains by the mountain range of Mt. Aster. Gumer is located just southeast of Yewerah Market and is separated in part from Chaha by the upper tributaries of the Gotam River; the boundary between Chaha and Gumer are least reliably known by me at this time. A corner of the territory of the Muher people can be seen on the northeast side of the map, just across the Tirer River while the seventh house, Akilil, is off the map further to the southeast. To the northwest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LEGEND
Relative Relief
River
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4
km.
RELIEF MAP

Figure 6

Chaha extends to the Wabi River, about 15km off the map; a large portion of this area lying north of the Gotam River was confiscated by the invading Amhara after the defeat of the "Sabat-bet" forces in the late 19th century.

As can be seen from Fig. 6 the physical relief of the area varies greatly, both in elevation and type of terrain. Differences in overall elevation were measured on the order of 800 meters. In general three principal subregions can be identified in the study area. The first would be in Gumer which could be described as a highland plateau in the early stages of erosion. A lower plateau, now commonly refered to as the Plains of Atat, begins just north of the town of Emdeber and extends out about 25km to the banks of the Wabi River. In between we find the major subregion which is a transitional slope zone between the upper and lower plateaus; this transitional zone features long gently sloping spurs with relatively narrow steep-sided river valleys in between. It seems likely to me that this middle zone represents a dissected series of fault scarps as is suggested by the presence of numerous waterfalls; direct geological relationships, however, are difficult to observe in the field due to the lack of fresh outcrop and a uniformity of rock type, generally sandstone or trachyte.

The drainage system of the area is dendritic in pattern, with localized variations probably related to faulting. The three principal rivers are the Megecha, the Gotam, and the Wenkya. Their tributaries have their source in the highlands of Muher, Gumer, and Gyeto and in

general flow northwest, later joining the upper waters of the Omo River. As mentioned above river valleys are narrow and steep-sided, with rapids and waterfalls as common occurences along the stream course. The major rivers and tributaries flow all year with the maximum discharge between the months of June and September.

There is little technical information available on the soil types represented in the study area, beyond a few qualitative observations. The soils are generally clay loams, red in color in the middle zone, with darker types prevailing on the upper and lower plateaus. This color differentiation is a common occurence in highland Ethiopia and is mainly attributed to surface soil formation conditions; obviously agents of erosion are more active in the transitional zone than on either of the plateau subregions, and it would be reasonable to expect a more mature soil structure to be developed on these plateaus rather than in the transitional zone.[33] In areas of advanced erosion, a hard insoluble iron oxide crust has formed, not unlike the laterite surfaces reported in the more tropical regions of the world.

In terms of climate the study area would be classified as a temperate, wet highlands(Cwb). No official local statistics are available but from my own period of observation, combined with regional statistics, some general remarks can be made. Like many highland regions in the tropical latitudes, the annual daytime temperature range is fairly small, between 12° and 22°C. On the other hand the diurnal variation

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33. "The Resources & Economy of Ethiopia," Report # 13,(Standford Research Institute, Menlo Park, Calif., 1969), pp. 12.

is quite large, especially on clear nights during the dry seasons when temperatures in the valley bottoms occasionally drop to freezing. Like much of the central Ethiopian highlands two seasons can be distinguished, largely on the basis of the amount of rainfall. A major rainy season extends from early June to late September("Zar"), and a major hot dry season("Abar") dominates the rest of the year. It has been estimated that from 1100 to 1400mm of rain falls annually during the wet season. [34]

On the local level the Gurage recognize two general climatic zones, related to elevation but defined in practice by crop temperature tolerance. The coffee bush would be one such marker, not tolerating even an occasional frost; such a boundary would have to be traced zigzag fashion within the transitional slope zone, since the tops of spurs are more secure from the threat of frost than the adjacent valley bottoms. The Amhara-Tigre of central Ethiopia would recognize this boundary as distinguishing between their traditional climatic zones of "dega" and "woina dega" which would lie at an elevation of about 2400 meters.

It would be difficult to try to reconstruct the "original vegetation pattern" of the study area, so densely settled has it been for at least the last four hundred years. Individual types such as acacia ("grar"), pencil cedar("tid"), and Podocarpus gracilior("zigba") are

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34. Ibid., pp. 16

no doubt indigenous to the area but their present spatial distribution has been in large part determined by the Gurage people. A few existing larger forests may represent remnants of some original highland forest (such as the Gecha and Auria forests) but even these have been modified by selective cutting and planting. In terms of existing vegetation the two plateau subregions would best be described as highland savanna, as rather extensive coarse grasslands with a few scattered acacia trees, and with riverine palm and brush dominant in the stream valleys.[35] The transitional subregion is so densely settled that it can only be described in terms of areas of housecrop cultivation, tree growth(including exotic eucalyptus strands as well as indigenous groves), pasture, and erosion. In the table below we can get an overall idea of the proportion of each type:

Land Use

Area Type	Area	Percentage
Housecrop cultivation	52km^2	8.7%
Tree growth	42km^2	7.0%
Pasture	465km^2	77.4%
Erosion	41km^2	6.9%
	600km^2	100.0%

Source: Air Photographs, 1957
Calculated from a 77% sample

Table I

35. Ibid., pp. 19.

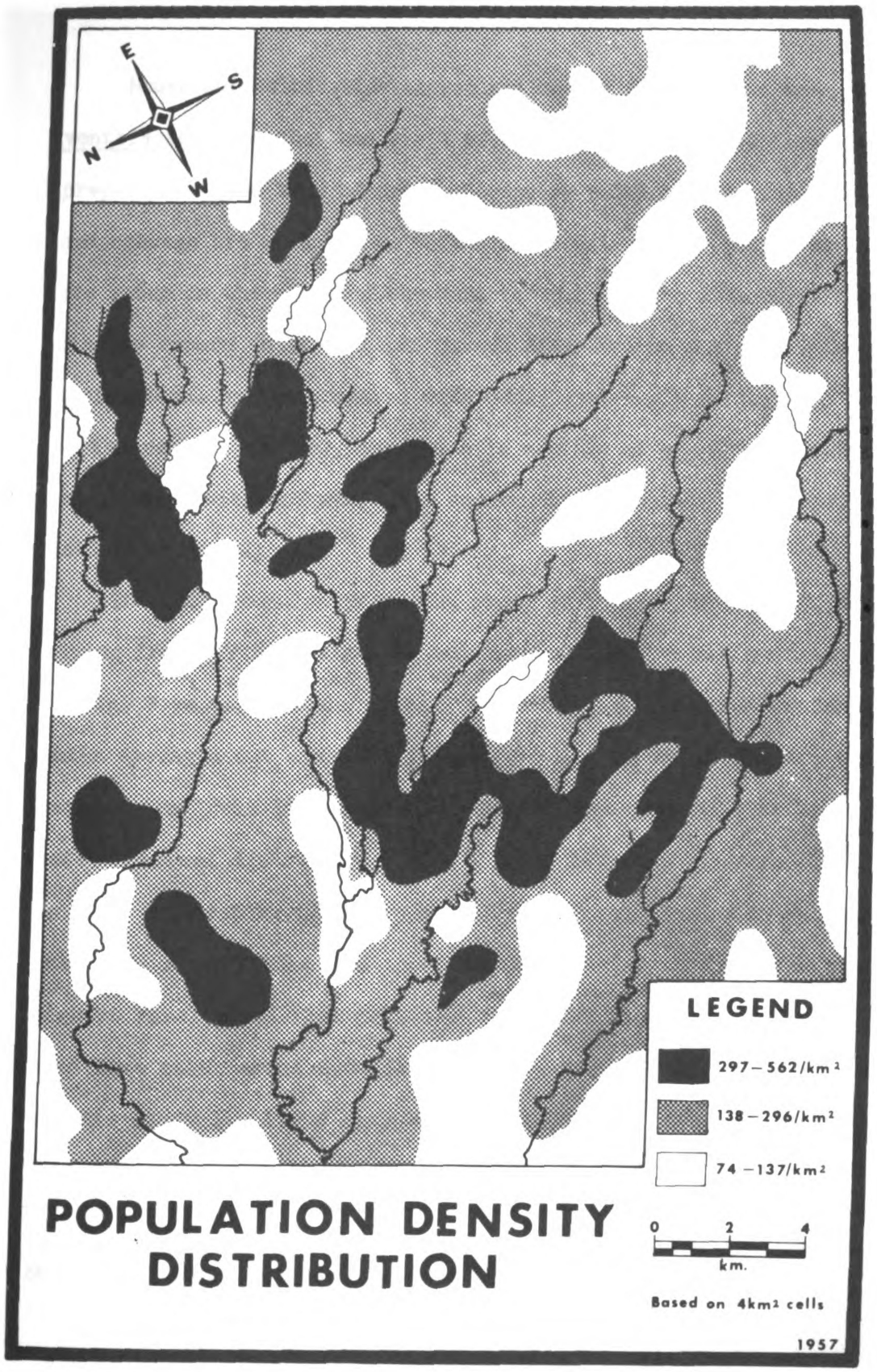
E
S
N
W
LEGEND
297 – 562/km²
138 – 296/km²
74 – 137/km²
0 2 4
km.
Based on 4km² cells
1957
POPULATION DENSITY DISTRIBUTION

Figure 7

Housecrop cultivation is focused on the false banana tree, Ensete ventricosam, the root and stalk of which are ground into flour for the preparation of a type of bread. Secondary crops such as corn, onions, and cabbage are grown close to the house while cash crops like coffee are grown in the shade of the "ensete" plants. The main point that I plan to return to is that the Gurage have evolved a highly intensive agricultural system(compared with other systems in Ethiopia as well as the rest of Africa), one which is capable of supporting high population densities and where the opportunity to obtain additional arable land is virtually nil.[36]

The total population of the study area is about 131,000, estimating from a 77% area sample and assuming six persons per household. In Fig. 7 we can see the spatial distribution of population density, which averages out equal to 215 persons per square kilometer. Upon using a $4km^2$ cell it was found that the population distribution approximates a normal distribution within the study area(see Appendix A). It is also interesting to note that in some areas population densities exceed well over 500 persons per square kilometer, certainly one of the highest rural population densities reported in all of Africa. At the same time other areas have unusually low population densities. Later in this study I will be suggesting some factors that may help explain this evident variation.

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36. E. Smeds, "The Ensete Planting Cultures of Eastern Sidamo, Ethiopia," Acta Geographica, Vol. XIII, #4, (1955), pp. 38.

In a recent ethnographic study William A. Shack summarizes the general characteristics of the Gurage cultural system:[37]

> Gurage culture is essentially uniform. Apart from the varied forms of language and religion, there exists a common set of artifacts, a common technology and mode of production, a common design in house building and patterns of settlement, and a common form of economic and social organization. The maintenance of these traditional forms of culture, which distinguish Gurage from other ensete cultivating tribes, is to the Gurage of paramount importance. Cultural uniformity has persisted alongside the development of manifold different language groups. The mountainous nature of Gurageland, an essential factor in the development and maintenance of politically autonomous and linguistically different tribes, has had no effect on the form of Gurage culture.

According to Shack the cultural system represents a combination of the Sidama system to the south and the Amhara-Tigre system of the north. For example the mode of production centered around the cultivation of the ensete plant appears indigenous to the Sidama peoples of the south. The kinship system has changed away from the bilateral descent system of the north to one of unilineal patrilineal practices resembling more those to the south as is evidenced by "the systems of naming, land tenure, inheritance and the development of patrilineal descent groups and clan structures "[38] ; however, there is little evidence among the Gurage of age grades which are also common to the Galla groups and some of the Sidama peoples.[39] The Gurage language

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37. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 7.

38. Shack, "Some Aspects of Ecology & Social Structure in the Ensete Complex in South-West Ethiopia," Preliminary version of an article in Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. XCIII, #1,(1963), pp. 5.

39. J.H. Hamer, "Voluntary Associations as Structures of Change among the Sidamo of S.W. Ethiopia," Anthropology Quarterly, Vol. XL, #2,(1967), pp. 74.

has been classified as Semitic, as being more closely related to the Amhara-Tigre language group than to that of the Cushitic speaking peoples to the south; linguists do find considerable influence of Sidama elements in the Gurage language(more strongly reflected in some dialects than others), mainly in vocabulary but also in syntax and morphology.[40] The Gurage political system is characterized by its segmentary form, spatially expressed as semi-autonomous clan districts, which differentiates it from the age grading system of the southern Galla and the centralized kingdoms which formally existed in Janjera and some of the other Sidama regions. However, the indigenous religious system is characterized by its centralized hierarchical form and borrows heavily from the system of animistic belief and ritual to the south.[41]

A historical overview might begin with the occupation of southwestern Ethiopia by Sidama cultural groups. In the seventh century, A.D., northern forces are thought to have advanced south into this area following the breakup of the Aksumite Kingdom. According to the Ethiopian Chronicles a major highland Christian army under Emperor Zara Yacob advanced south in the fifteenth century in a crusade against the "heathen unbelievers;" it has been suggested by some scholars that a large proportion of this group settled in the Sabat-bet area, intermarried with the indigenous Sidama groups and through generations evolved the composite cultural systems which dominates the region today.

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40. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 7.

41. Shack, "Some Aspects of Ecology & Social Structure," pp. 5-6.

In the early sixteenth century Muslim forces from the southeast led by Ahmad Gran swept through the region and overran much of highland Ethiopia before being defeated; this long campaign greatly weakened the existing Amhara-Tigre forces. In the late sixteenth century pastoral Galla groups began their two pronged advance up the Rift Valley and the Omo Trough, converging together again some one hundred years later on the central plateau north of the Wabi River; in this way the Galla effectively isolated the Gurage from contact with the other Semitic groups of the central highlands for long periods of time.[42]

Between 1600 and the late 1800's, the Gurage were under almost continuous attack from Muslim kingdoms to the south, Christian armies from the north, and Galla groups from the east and west; furthermore when the Gurage were not banding together to defend themselves from outsiders they were feuding with each other: Chaha against Ennemor, Chaha against Ezha, and clan against clan. In the final confrontation with the armies of Emperor Menilik II, between 1875 and 1889, the Gurage were decisively defeated in a long series of battles.

After their defeat those Gurage who were not immediately sent to Addis Ababa as slaves were reduced to the serf-like status known as "gabbar;" they became "tenants on their own land, (and) supported the feudal structure of the military colonies of conquerors with food and services."[43] I have identified four of these former military colonies

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42. H. Lewis, The Galla Monarchy, (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1965), pp. 1-16.

43. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 18.

in the study area and will be discussing them later in the context of cultural change within an ethnic enclave. Along with the military occupation came the return of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and once again the church leaders waged a campaign against existing animistic systems of belief and ritual, burning temples and destroying sacred groves.[44] Considerably more restraint was exercized toward Muslim Gurage, most probably in recognition of the threat of a "jihad" by all the Muslim groups in southwestern Ethiopia.[45]

The occupying forces also set up a formal hierarchical political system to help administrate the territory. Some attempt was made to integrate elements of the indigenous leadership into this system. For example in Chaha a clan chief and former war leader of the Sabat-bet forces was appointed to the new office of tribal chief, "having the principal function of acting as intermediary between his own people and the Ethiopian authorities, and between them and other Chaha Clan Chiefs."[46] Beneath the clan chiefs came the village headmen who had the direct responsibility of collecting revenue and providing corvé labor for special projects.

Compared with other conquered ethnic groups in Ethiopia, the Gurage appear to have been less drastically affected by their political integration into the expanding Ethiopian Empire. For one thing the Amhara-Tigre

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44. Shack, "The Masqal-Pole: Religious Conflict & Social Change in Gurageland," Africa, Vol. XXXVIII, #4, (1968), pp. 459.

45. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 19-20.

46. Ibid., pp. 24.

found it difficult to exploit the indigenous mode of agricultural production, ensete cultivation, there being no market for ensete produce in the central highlands; the Amhara-Tigre hold that "tef," an indigenous Ethiopian grain, is a superior staple for man. Little effort was made to enforce a change in the staple crop, it being apparent even to the Amhara-Tigre that no other crop could sustain the existing high densities of population, let alone produce an exploitable surplus, under the ecological constraints of the Gurage region. This situation placed the Gurage in a comparative advantage to those conquered groups which practiced grain cultivation or cattle herding, something which the Gurage fully appreciate to this day. The most serious step taken by the occupying authorities was the annexation of the Plains of Atat, the only area considered suitable for the plow cultivation technology of the Amhara-Tigre.

One of the overall benefits of the Amhara-Tigre conquest of the Gurage was the establishment of peace throughout the region, peace at least between different cultural subgroups of Gurage and also between them and the surrounding cultural groups. Evidently there was little peace for the Amhara military colonies, there being a long history of uprisings by the Gurage well after 1889.[47] In the long run the situation imposed by occupation seems to have reinforced what few loose Pan-Gurage institutional subsystems existed prior to the occupation; appropriate examples would include the market system, the rural court

47. Shack, "The Masqal-Pole," pp. 459.

system, and the system of animistic cults. The development of these systems may in turn have paved the way for contemporary Pan-Gurage rural development associations such as the Gurage Road Committee; I will be discussing these propositions more fully later on in this study.

The Italian conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 had a number of direct effects on the situation of the Gurage people. First of all it brought to an end the existing feudal gabbar system and temporarily at least displaced the local Amhara-Tigre power structure. Most important to the Gurage was the issue of land redistribution which the Italians responded to by encouraging the "Native Courts" to work out the settlements; in this way the Italians sought to widen the gap between the established Amhara-Tigre nobility and their various subject peoples.[48]

The Italians also constructed a number of dry-weather roads through the Gurage region, extending south into Kambatta. As Shack points out this was the first experience many rural Gurage had had with wage labor. These roads also helped to facilitate the migration of Gurage people to the Addis Ababa region, to join with the existing urban Gurage enclave.

With the restoration of Ethiopian authority in 1941, the Gurage people once more found themselves under Amhara administration. This

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48. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 26-27.

time, however, the administrative system on the local level was more directly responsible to the central government in Addis Ababa and as was mentioned above the gabbar system was not reinstituted. Officials in Addis Ababa also made efforts to redraw many of the old provincial boundaries, thereby consolidating many of the smaller tribal provinces; for example Gurage and Kambatta became incorporated into greater Shewa. The Shewan authorities also formally approved the transfer of Chaha's administrative capital from the old military colony at Daquna to the town of Emdeber, confirming an earlier Italian decision for relocation.

I have in this chapter presented a summary of the physical, cultural, and historical factors which have combined together to define the present situation in the Gurage cultural region. In the following chapter I intend to develop my analysis of the Gurage cultural landscape within a more explicit systems framework.

CHAPTER III

THE GURAGE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Introduction

The sections in this chapter are arranged in a sequence of scale levels. The interpretation begins at the homestead, proceeds from there to the village level, and continues through the regional to the inter-regional level. Each of these major sections is in turn organized on the basis of systems, with discussion of how various systems are interrelated. Ideally the discussion of a particular system begins with a description of spatial form, a functional interpretation of that form within the larger cultural system, and a description of the process of form evolution and its probable locus of innovation; uniform treatment of all systems in this fashion, however, is precluded by the quality of the available data.

At the regional level I have in some cases condensed a number of evident intermediate levels, instead of strictly adhering to the outline of my methodology. I have elected to do this in order to counter a tendency for the discussion of a system to become repetitious and fragmented, something which would be difficult to avoid if all systems were discussed through a full sequence of levels; this procedure also minimizes the problem that some systems are represented at more levels than others.

The order of system discussion is based on a number of rules: indigenous systems are treated before exogenous ones, more general systems before more specialized ones, physical systems before cultural ones, and overlapping systems are treated consecutively if possible.

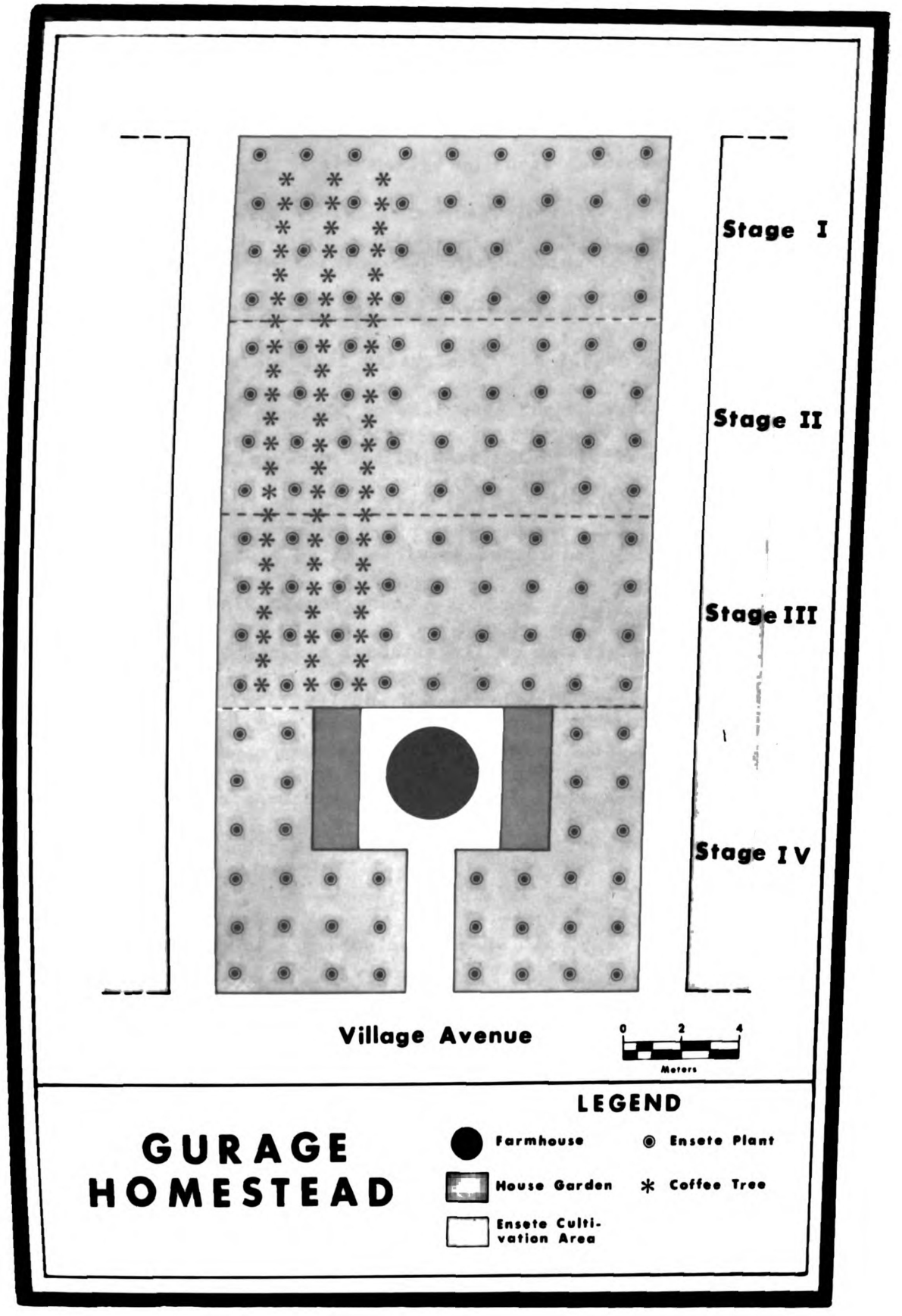
Stage I
Stage II
Stage III
Stage IV
Village Avenue
0 2 4
Meters
GURAGE HOMESTEAD
LEGEND
Farmhouse
Ensete Plant
House Garden
Coffee Tree
Ensete Cultivation Area

Figure 8

The Homestead

The basic cell in the Gurage cultural landscape is the homestead, the nucleus of which is the farmhouse. In this section I plan to describe the spatial pattern of the unit, divide it into functional areas, describe the cycle of activities which takes place in and between each area, and then relate this analysis to the larger cultural system. In this way I hope to explain in what ways the homestead population maintains its own microsystem and to what extent it is dependent on the larger surrounding system. I also intend to provide a process perspective of the homestead as an evolving functional unit, or in systems terms a morphogenic microsystem.

The Gurage homestead lends itself to description in regular geometric terms. First of all the homestead unit is rectangular in shape, the spacing of the ensete plants maintains a uniform pattern, the farmhouse compound is square with a rectangular extension to the main avenue of the village, and the farmhouse itself is circular. The homestead unit can be divided into two general functional areas: the farmhouse compound and the housecrop cultivation area (Fig. 8).

The farmhouse is a well made circular structure with a domed roof. The sidewalls are formed from a ring of eucalyptus posts secured together with ensete rope, plastered together internally with a compound made up of mud, manure, and straw, and then encircled with strips of bamboo. The roof is supported by a center post made from a large eucalyptus tree, with umbrella like sprits extending out from it to help maintain

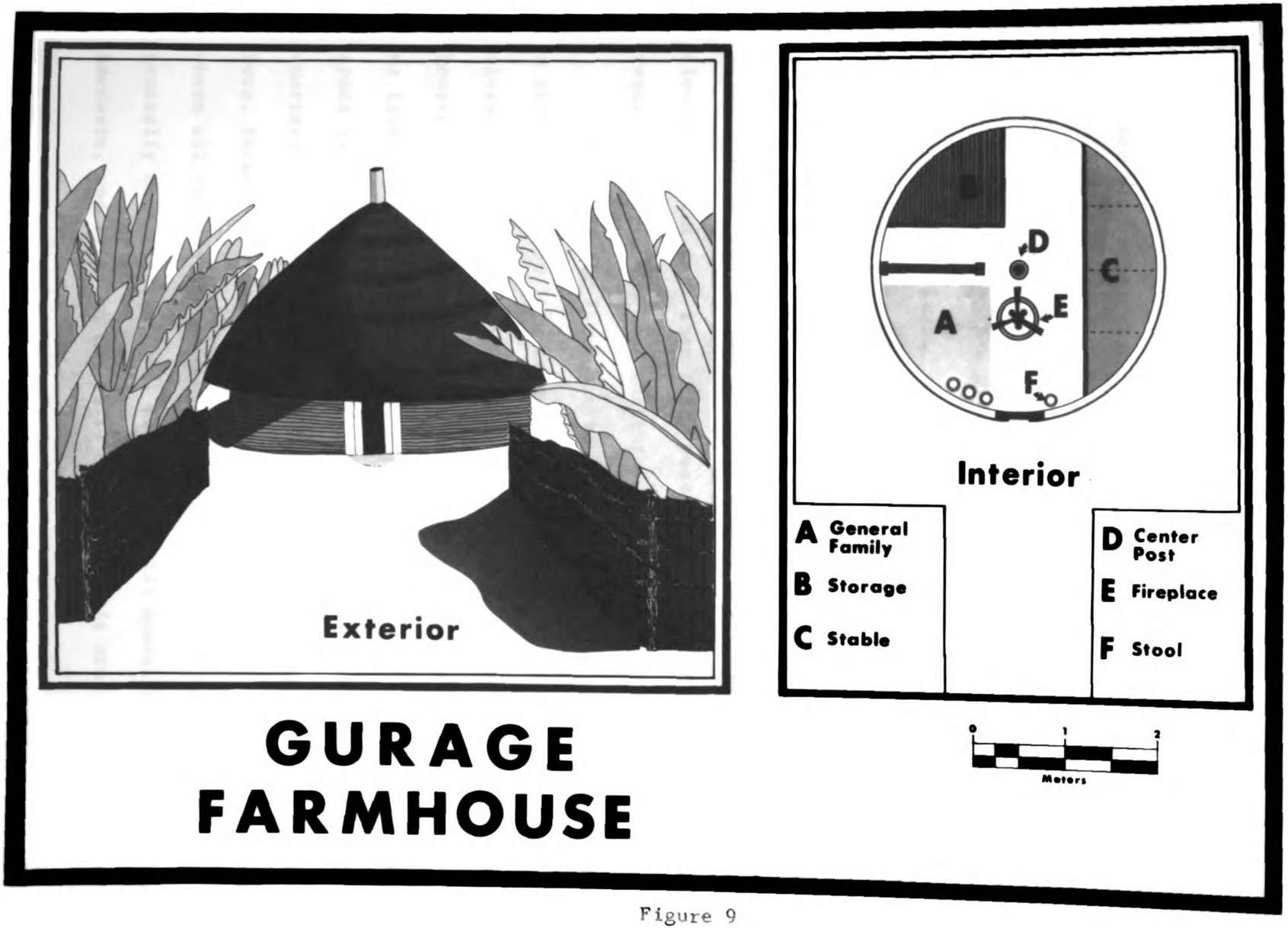
Exterior
Interior
A General Family
B Storage
C Stable
D Center Post
E Fireplace
F Stool
0
1
2
Meters
GURAGE FARMHOUSE

Figure 9

the dome shape. The roof itself is made up of longitudinal and latitudinal eucalyptus saplings secured together with ensete rope and covered over with a spiraling thatch of dried grass. Thick notched beams are fitted together to form the doorway. Farmhouses come in three basic sizes: medium, large, to very large with diameters ranging from four to ten meters. Gurage house construction requires considerable planning on the part of the family involved; sometimes materials are collected over a period of more than three years. In addition the construction itself requires a larger number of people than the homestead population. A number of specialists are brought in for particular parts of the construction. In terms of useful life, Gurage farmhouses have the reputation of lasting more than fifty years with a minimum of care, basically requiring only a new roof thatching every ten of fifteen years (Fig. 9).

Internally the farmhouse is divided into three main areas. There is a storage room for long term use and a partition space for more temporary storage. A good third of the space is taken up by the stable area; a household usually has three or four cattle, a mule or a horse, and smaller livestock such as goats, sheep, and chickens. Another third of the space is used by the household for such multiple functions as sleeping quarters, dining area, and for formal and informal gatherings with neighbors. Between the center post and the front door is a circular fireplace where all the cooking is done for meals and snacks. A line of pottery generally decorates the wall above the social space, with saddle gear, hardware, and ropes on the walls near the stable area. Straw mats are

are spread out over the floor, with extra sleeping mats stacked above the storage room. Household furniture consisting of small tables, mats, and stools is all easily rearranged making it a simple matter to accomodate a range of day to day activities.

In cases where there is more than one house in the compound, each house will generally be a complete multifunctional unit. However, in some of the multihouse compounds of important people there is functional specialization at the house level into a social unit(eating, sleeping, and entertaining), a unit for cooking and other household chores (brewing beer, making dough for ensete bread, and weaving), and a unit for keeping livestock and for general storage.[49]

The housecrop cultivation area is divided into four major sections directly related to the growth stages in the production of the banana like staple Ensete ventricosam; the dimensions of this cultivation area averages out to be 24 by 100 meters. The Gurage system of ensete cultivation is more complex than that of any described for the neighboring ensete cultivating ethnic groups.[50] Although the ensete plant can be harvested for consumption two years after planting, the Gurage have evolved a system of cultivation which harvests the plant at its maximum stage of growth. The Gurage divide the eight year growth period into four two-year stages. A small section of the cultivation area is also

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49. See LeBel for more details about Gurage houses, "On Gurage Architecture," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, Vol. VII, (1969), pp. 21-30.

50. S. Stanley,"Ensete in the Ethiopian Economy," Ethiopian Geographical Journal, Vol. IV, #1, (1966), pp. 30-36.

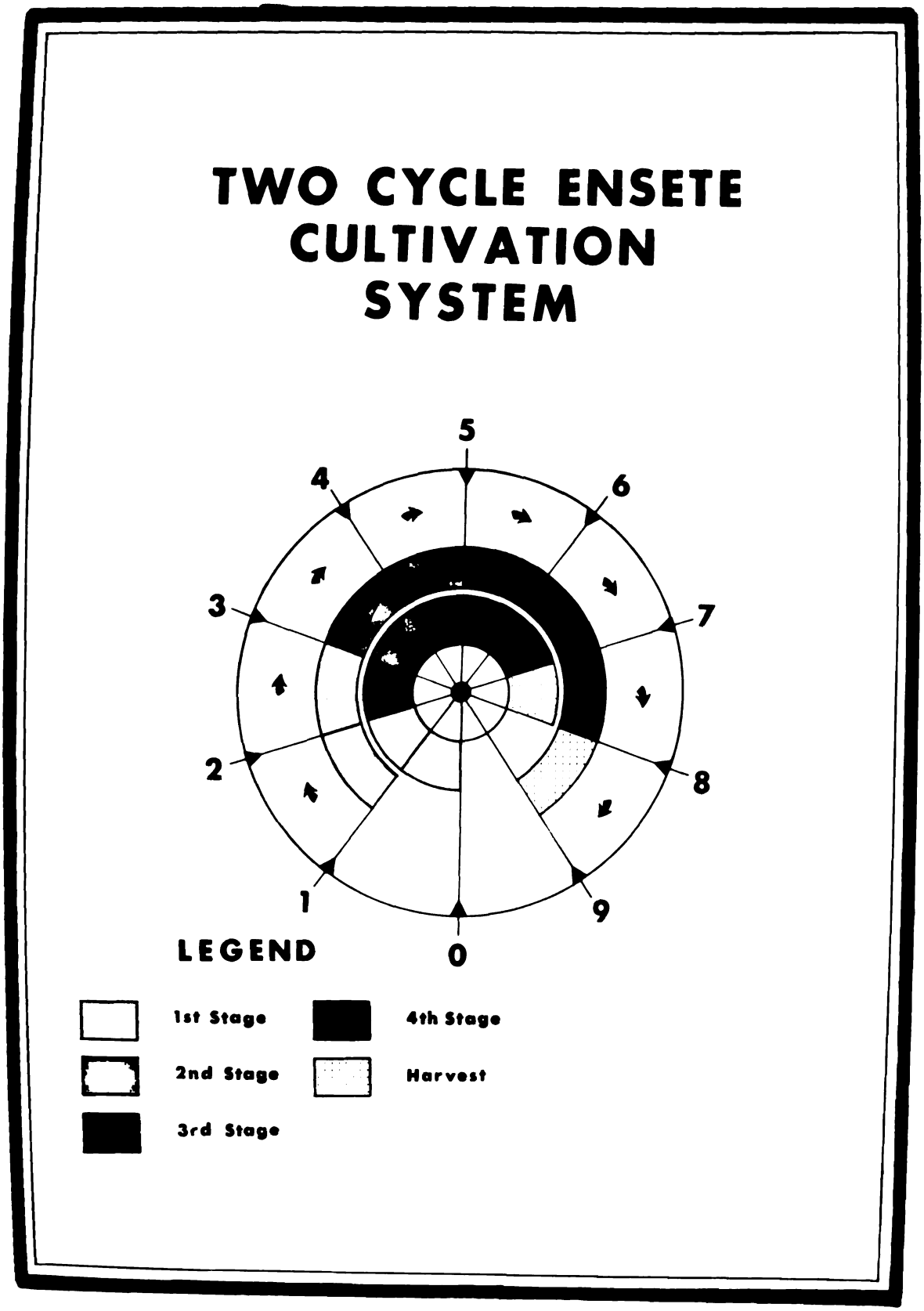
TWO CYCLE ENSETE CULTIVATION SYSTEM
5
4
6
3
7
2
8
1
9
0
LEGEND
1st Stage
2nd Stage
3rd Stage
4th Stage
Harvest

Figure 10

set aside for a nursery stage. The trunk of an ensete plant is buried in a specially prepared pit and within six months the healthiest shoots are transplanted to the Stage I section of the main cultivation area; this transplanting initiates a cycle of further transplanting and rotation between the first three stages. Each time a plant is rotated it is dug up and then lowered into a freshly manured pit that was previously occupied by a more mature plant; in this way soil fertility can be maintained indefinitely. The mature plant is harvested during the last year of the fourth stage. Each growth stage has its name and special section of the cultivation area. Since each stage requires two years of growth, the Gurage have worked out a two cycle system to ensure an adequate supply of maturing ensete each year (Fig. 10).

The basic tool for the cultivation of ensete is a forked digging stick which has been described as an unusual compromise between a single toothed digging stick and a plow. This tool is used like a shovel for digging holes and like a plow for turning over a new cultivation plot.[51]

The labor force for ensete cultivation is made up of all male members of the household from about twelve years up. In general the younger members tend the younger growth stages while the older members tend the more mature stages. Labor requirements include periodic weeding, harvesting from October to December, and planting and transplanting from December through April. For the particularly heavy work of transplanting a

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51. F.J. Simons, "The Forked Digging Stick of the Gurage," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. LXXXIV, #21,(1959), pp. 302-303.

work group is formed from the neighboring homesteads, which takes each homestead in rotation. In this basic way a Gurage household is dependent on a larger circle of people.

After the men have harvested a number of ensete plants, a work group of women takes over the next stage of processing the plant into useful products. Essentially, the plant root is pulverized and the main trunk is also pounded, with the edible portion being scraped away from the fibers; the fibers are later dried and made into rope. The pulverized food substance is wrapped in ensete leaves and deposited into one of a number of storage pits located in the cultivation area; there it undergoes a process of fermentation(which helps break down the remaining fibers) and may be left there for an extended period exceeding two years. The longer it ferments, the more palatible is the final product.

As Shack and others have pointed out the ensete plant is central to the total cultural system. In my general introduction I suggested that the Gurage cultural landscape has evolved to a level of saturation which precludes the more extensive forms of agriculture that can be observed in other regions of Ethiopia. The close knit village settlement pattern (which will be discussed more fully in the next section) takes full advantage of the minimal spatial requirements of ensete cultivation. On a more general cultural level, Gurage conversation is rich with analogies drawn to components and processes within the ensete cultivation system.[52]

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52. For example children tell stories about standing in the rain so that they too might grow straight and tall like the ensete plant.

There seems to be no end to the possible uses for parts of the ensete plant, in addition to its value as a staple food. Among the products which come to mind would be rope, wrappings, plates, mats, fuel, forage for livestock, even as umbrellas in the rains. Parts of the plant are also crucial for many Gurage rituals.

The Gurage also appreciate the security factors in the cultivation of ensete. Plants readily resist drought or deluge as well as extremes of temperature and once the plant is harvested the raw food substance can be preserved for long periods of time. In fact the only known enemy of the ensete plant is a mysterious worm disease which eventually rots out the heart of the plant; this disease seems to be restricted to the frost free zone and some Gurage counter it by procuring healthy shoots from people in the highland areas.

An additional economic advantage to the ensete cultivation system is that it requires a full time labor force for only about half the year. Consequently male members of the household can if they wish leave the homestead to engage in migrant labor in distant urban regions.

In addition to ensete a few other household vegetables are grown in small plots in the vicinity of the farmhouse. Examples would include cabbage, corn, potatos, beans, onions, and hot peppers. In general the women and young girls are responsible for the cultivation, harvesting, and preparation of these crops. Major cash crops such as coffee and chat[53] are grown in rows in the shade of the ensete plants; the men

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53. The leaf of the chat plant is chewed to achieve a state of gentle intoxication, generally grown and used by Muslims only.

assume the major responsibility for the cultivation, harvesting, and marketing of these cash crops. Women assist in the work of cleaning and drying the coffee berries.

In my discussion above I have focused on a number of institutional subsystems within the Gurage cultural system as expressed at the homestead level. The spatial pattern of the basic unit, the carefully designed farmhouse, the work patterns and the division of labor, the neighborhood work groups, all have their function within the total cultural system. In order to gain more than a technical appreciation of these subsystems and spatial patterns, we need to know more explicitly about the institutional subsystems which proscribe the relationships between members of the Gurage household.

The Gurage household is patrilinieally organized, the father being the head of the household group. Major authority, status, and property rights are vested in the male line. Women by contrast are considered temporary members of their lineage group, being withdrawn from that group by marriage; their major rights and duties are from then on related to their role of wife and fit into a general pattern of male domination and the division of labor. The ideal household consists of three generations: the head of the household and his wife, some of his married younger brothers and their families, his own married and unmarried sons, and his grandchildren. As mentioned before a large extended family would be generally divided up among two or three houses in the same compound or among neighboring homesteads.

The homestead itself is the exclusive property of the head of the household. Although communal work groups perform many necessary activities centered in the homestead unit, those neighbors have no direct rights to any property or produce of that unit. All sons are entitled to inherit a share of the homestead, with the eldest son generally receiving the largest portion; exceptions are made for the "ungrateful" eldest son which as Shack brings out can lead to considerable tension between brothers.[54] This "sibling rivalry" appears to be both a function of the formal authoritarian family structure combined with a scarcity of suitable land for cultivation; in essence it would provide a major motivating factor for explaining why increasing numbers of young male Gurage are moving beyond the homestead microsystem.

Many of the ritual institutional subsystems are centered on the homestead unit. These would include births, initiation ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and a number of annual celebrations. In these ceremonies the closest relatives play the most important roles. However, the rest of the villagers are expected to participate on a more informal basis.

The Gurage homestead cell has been in a process of continuous structual change. In systems terms the cell could be described as an evolving adaptive microsystem as opposed to a structure maintaining "traditional" microsystem. To demonstrate this classification I will first review the changes in form, the functional relevance of these

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54. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 116-117.

changes, and their locus of innovation.

As LeBel has pointed out Gurage architecture has changed considerably even within the past sixty years.[55] In former times houses were said to be much smaller, the sidewalls lower, the doorframes oval rather than rectangular, and the internal spatial arrangement was considerably less complex; LeBel and I were able to find a number of these "relic" Gurage farmhouses in our field trips together. In general the changes reflect a concern for more storage space and the accomodation of a larger number of people. I would suggest that the locus of innovation for these structual changes is indigenous to the cultural region rather than being associated with the hinterlands of the emerging Gurage urban centers; however, this suggestion would require further sampling of remote rural areas.

Architectural changes which appear to be definitely associated with the Gurage urban centers would include shuttered windows, plank doors, some nail construction, and cement floors. In addition there has been an increase in the number of fenced compounds, especially in the vicinity of the urban centers or along the new all weather road. In rural villages only clan chiefs and ritual leaders had stockaded compounds; this change might represent a degeneration of corporate neighborhood spirit combined with the incentive to adopt a formally exclusive status symbol.

The use of eucalyptus wood for major construction is itself an innovation that is scarcely older than thirty years. In addition to its use

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55. LeBel, "On Gurage Architecture," pp. 21-27.

as a building material, eucalyptus is important as the major source of fuel, being grown in communally maintained village woodlots. While it is clear that Addis Ababa has been the major diffusion center for eucalyptus in Ethiopia, it is still uncertain in what way the tree diffused into the Gurage region. There are a number of possibilities which come to mind: via the Amhara military colonies, via the Catholic Mission at Emdeber, or via returning migrant laborers; migrant Gurage have been working with eucalyptus plantations in the Addis Ababa region for decades and may well have introduced the tree directly to their home villages. [56]

The cash crop pattern has also undergone basic changes in the last sixty years. Where villages have easy access to an interregional market place(one with connections beyound the cultural region), more and more of the housecrop cultivation area is being devoted to coffee trees, in some homesteads approaching fifty percent.[57] However, this particular cash crop is restricted to the lower elevation zone of the study area. In the highland zone no suitable intensive form of cash cropping has been adopted; some barley and "tef"(an indigenous Ethiopian grain) are grown for the regional marketing system but there is really little land available for such extensive agricultural land use. In this example of the development of coffee as a major cash crop, it

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56 R. Horvath, "Addis Ababa's Eucalyptus Forest," Journal of Ethiopian Studies,Vol.VI,#1, (January, 1968), pp. 13-19.

57. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 66-67.

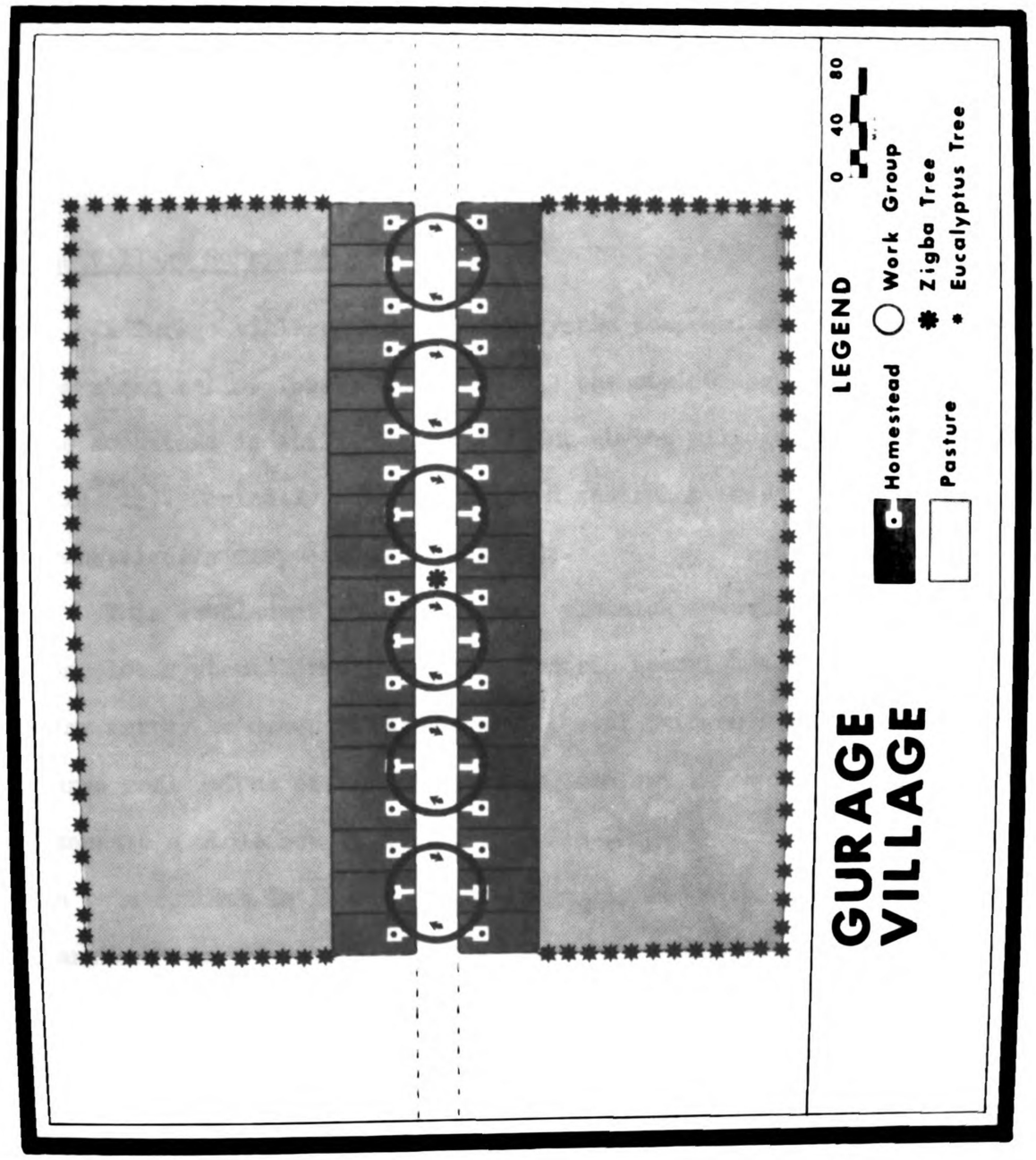
GURAGE
VILLAGE
LEGEND
Homestead
Work Group
Zigba Tree
Eucalyptus Tree
Pasture
0 40 80

Figure 11

seems likely that the locus of change was external to the region and that the crop was encouraged by returning migrant Gurage who were familiar with the demand structure of the national marketing system. As Shack points out cotton was formally the substantial cash crop within the region, now almost completely displaced by coffee.[58]

The Village Subsystem

A Gurage village is a spatial system composed of about thirty six homestead cells. Interestingly enough the strict spatial symmetry of the homestead is still clearly evident at the village level of analysis (Fig. 11). Basically there is a broad central avenue with homesteads symmetrically disposed on either side.

This settlement pattern bears a pleasing resemblance to the French long lot system. Borrowing some geometric techniques from Bunge, it is an easy matter to demonstrate how such a real pattern could be generated by three reflections of its "fundamental region" which if continued would generate a whole row of homestead cells (Fig. 13).[59] The central avenue in this context is like a mirror image divider with respect to the two parallel rows of homestead cells. Even more interesting is that the main avenue as a mirror not only reflects the external spatial pattern of each row of homesteads but also their internal spatial arrangement, two houses

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58. Ibid., footnote 12, pp. 67.

59. Bunge, pp. 224-225.

on opposite sides of the avenue being the mirror image of one another. Spatial symmetry is less sharply defined in geometric terms beyond the housecrop cultivation zone, although it is still possible to speak broadly of a surrounding ring of pasture and wood lots, which in turn would be bordered on two or three sides by stream valleys.

A land use classification of the settlement unit could divide the area into multifunctional zones. For example the central avenue has its interhomestead transportation function and represents daily intensive use. In addition it represents periodic collective social space for formal and informal village meetings, usually in the shade of a large zigba tree; the village earth shrine, marked by a large stone, is usually found in this zone and is the focal point for monthly and annual celebrations. The main avenue also represents a public route through the village.

The functions of the homestead zone have already been individually described in the previous section. Beyond the aggregate level this zone represents cyclic intensive reciprocal activity among equals, in contrast to Philbrick's "one-step bipolar interconnections" [60] in a commercial society. That is to say heavy work such as was described in the ensete cultivation system is done cooperatively by male work groups formed from kin-related homesteads; similarly this same zone is used by female work groups who process the harvested ensete into its many products. Work groups are usually made up of members of four

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60. Philbrick, pp. 335.

to six households and proceed from one homestead cell to another in rotation, with a number of such groups operating at any one time within the same village. House building would be another such cooperative activity which would be performed from time to time within this zone;[61] it is one of a set of activities which not only depends on the efforts of the extended family group but also on the specialized services of a submerged caste known as the Fuga.[62]

The pasture zone would represent extensive reciprocal activity on a daily basis. Several homesteads will pool their livestock together with the younger boys of these households forming a herding group. The communal grazing land is divided up by thorn hedges and each section is used in a system of rotation; the hedges themselves are repositioned throughout the year to accomodate the changing ecological conditions, in other words to help minimize the overgrazing of the pasture area during the long dry season.

Superimposed over the above zones is a transportation network of paths, paths connecting adjacent homesteads, paths leading from the homesteads to the streams, and paths leading to the wood lots. In addition there are major tracks extending in either direction from the central avenue, eventually connecting the settlement unit with neighboring village units or with specialized central places such as market places or religious centers.

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61. See LeBel for more details, pp. 27-29.

62. See Shack for more background on the Fuga, The Gurage, pp. 8-12.

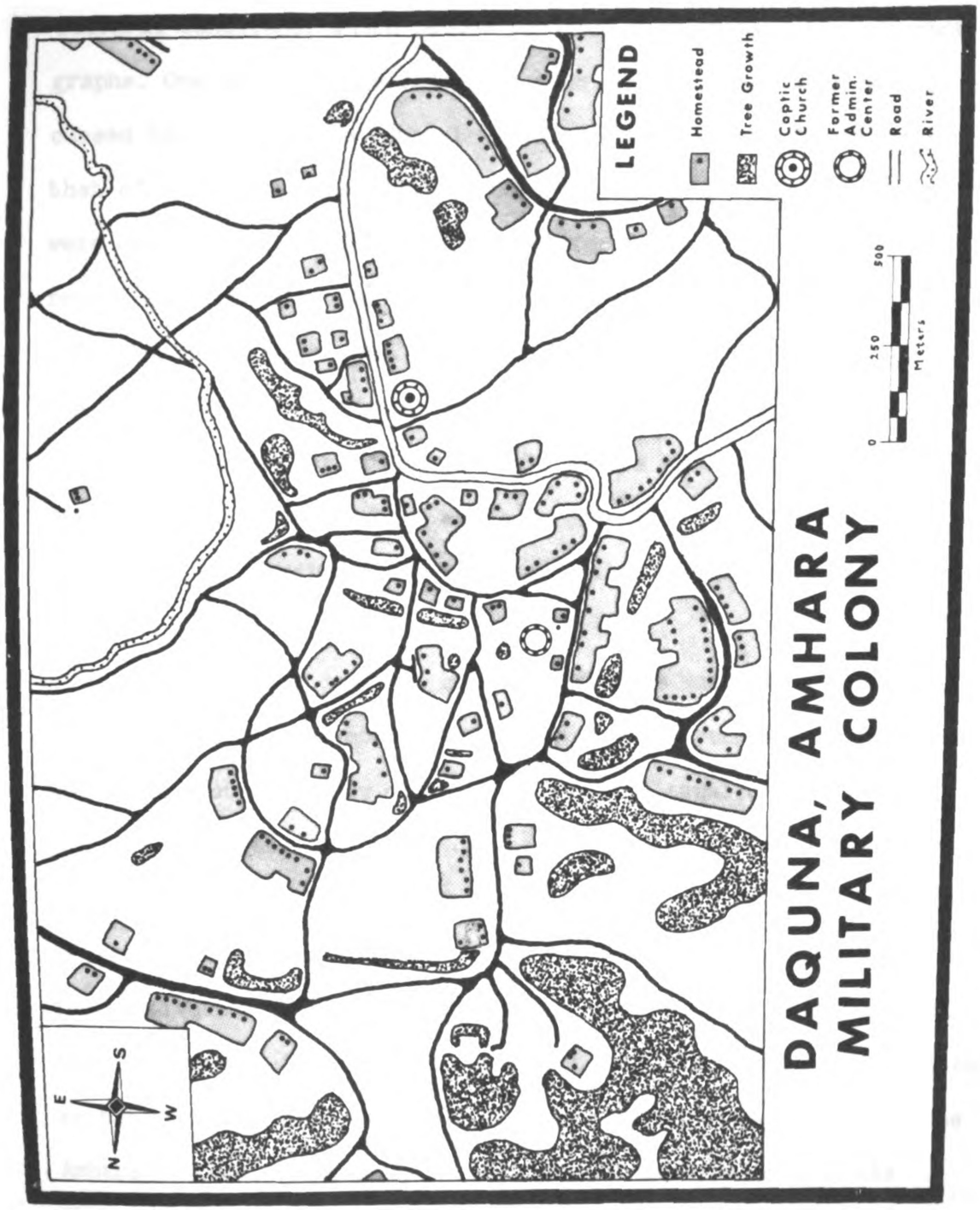
DAQUNA, AMHARA
MILITARY COLONY
LEGEND
Homestead
Tree Growth
Coptic Church
Former Admin. Center
Road
River
0
250
500
Meters
N
S
E
W

Figure 12

Two anomalous settlement patterns are present in the Gurage cultural landscape, which become apparent upon viewing the air photographs. One would be the emerging urban centers which will be discussed later under the general theme of urbanization. The other is that of the old Amhara military colonies. Most of these colonies were established on hilltop positions for strategic purposes and reveal a distinctive radial pattern typical of Amhara military colonies throughout Ethiopia. For example the colony at Daquna(Fig. 12) was ringed by a trench and a stockade fence, included a round Coptic church, and a cluster of Amhara style houses connected by narrow footpaths. Nearby would be a small market place, and further away would be a surrounding zone of villages directly controled by the colony.

These formally dominant cultural enclaves would be especially interesting to survey more intensively since my reconnaissance work indicates that they show definite signs of cultural change towards one more consistent with that of the surrounding cultural system. For example house architecture demonstrates almost complete adoption of Gurage standards. Even more basic has been the mass adoption of the cultivation of ensete in the Gurage fashion, work groups and all; such behavior is the antithesis of the traditional Amhara value system as has been explained by Donald N. Levine in his classic study of the Amhara entitled Wax & Gold.[63] As a logical explanation for this

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63. D. Levine, Wax & Gold, (Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1965), Chap. 3, pp. 55-94.

direction of cultural change, I would suggest that after the abolition of the gabbar system in the 1930's ensete cultivation was the most practical strategy for the remaining Amhara. When the Ethiopian government regained control of the region in 1941, a new system of local government was institutionalized which effectively bypassed the military colony system. In cultural systems terms the role of these colonies changed from that of a morphogenic microsystem with its locus of change internalized to that of one with its locus of change externalized.

At this level of interpretation we need to discuss a number of beyond the village processes in order to help explain the functional relevance of the Gurage settlement unit within a larger system. For example there are geomorphological processes operating in the transitional slope zone which limit the area suitable for settlement to the crests of the long gently sloping spurs; this terrain situation would tend to favor a longitudinal settlement pattern in terms of spatial efficency. In addition the high density of the drainage network(see general map) ensures that these relatively flat settlement sites will be fairly close to a source of water, rarely further than two or three kilometers. Interestingly enough, the longitudinal settlement pattern on a regional level appears largely independent of the major relief zones described: the same general pattern prevails on the upper plateau, in the transitional zone, and on the lower plateau. However, as I've pointed out in the previous section the spatial geometry within the

settlement unit has functional relevance to the total physical and cultural system.

Any formalized settlement system has to accomodate a variety of stress inducing processes. A physical example would be the erosion cycle, which would be a long run process capable of inducing a high degree of stress on the settlement situation and which in some cases in the study area has led to settlement abandonment; I will return to a discussion of this regional problem in the next section.

Population pressure would have to be recognized as another basic long run source of stress within the village. To cope with varying degrees of population pressure, the Gurage cultural system has evolved a set of rules. Up until the 20th century intergroup warfare was commonly employed to deal with the long run ramifications of a densely settled territory; as mentioned in my historical overview Gurage cultural subgroups such as the Chaha and the Ennemor have a long record of intergroup rivalry. If the existing settlement territory were not overcrowded, then a number of less drastic options were open.

In my discussion of land rights at the homestead level I pointed out that all male offspring of the head of a Gurage homestead have the individual right to a portion of the housecrop cultivation area. In addition they are entitled to a communal share of the various zones of village land such as wood lots and pasture. If this system were continued for several generations the housecrop cultivation area would

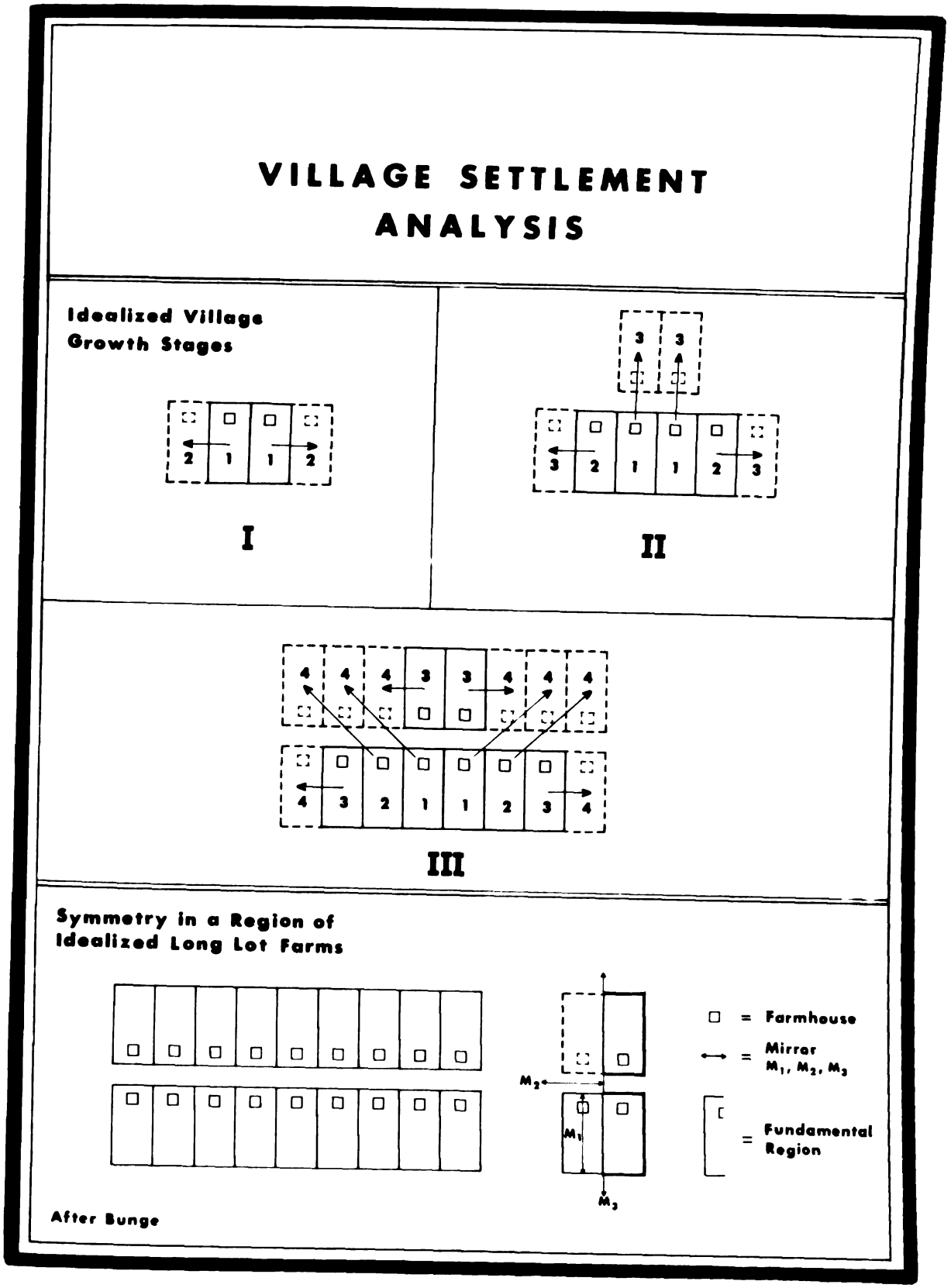
VILLAGE SETTLEMENT ANALYSIS
Idealized Village Growth Stages
I
II
III
Symmetry in a Region of Idealized Long Lot Farms
After Bunge
= Farmhouse
= Mirror M1, M2, M3
= Fundamental Region
M2
M1
M3

Figure 13

necessarily became increasingly fragmented and overcrowded. This type of internally induced pressure on the homestead is aggregated at the village level. The villagers respond to this stress by calling for a special village assembly.

The village assembly would have a number of logical alternatives to discuss. One would be to expand the housecrop cultivation area into the grazing zone; such a decision would require the services of a ritual specialist to sanctify the new homestead land. Once such a decision were taken a new farmhouse might be constructed within an expanded homestead area, extending the ensete cultivation area into a longer rectangle. Alternatively a new homestead cell could be added immediately across the central avenue or at either end of a homestead row, as is represented in the idealized village growth stages in Fig. 13. In some cases a homestead cell would be established in the back of the parent homestead, which in time could lead to the growth of a parallel village.

Where scarcity of land precludes some form of nucleated growth within the village territory, a group of younger families would have to make use of their kinship connections above the village level; for example they might relocate in a more distant area of their clan territory, establishing an entirely new village. However, in present day Chaha there seems to be very few areas of agriculturally suitable land for such resettlement schemes, with the possible exception of the Atat Plains.[64]

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64. Resettlement of the Atat Plains would necessitate a political settlement with the present Crown Prince, Asfa Wasan, who controls the area.

As I have suggested previously, labor migration, both seasonal as well as semi-permanent, has provided a new option for reducing population stress within the village. When village members do migrate to the urban centers on a seasonal basis, the village assumes the responsibility of looking after their familes, with the closest relatives having a larger share of the responsibility; this would be another example of how the corporate nature of the village is expressed.

At this point it should be evident that the village as a functional unit cannot be fully understood without outlining more clearly its corporate nature.[65] For example I have already discussed the communal land use zones within the village territory. The Gurage themselves express the corporate solidarity of the village group as an explicit ideology known as "wanaka" which Shack interprets to mean a system of reciprocal relationships between those who are spatially close and socially essential.[66] Such an ideology is demonstrated quite clearly in practice by the various work groups discussed above. It is demonstrated on another level by the communal control of such important village resources as grazing land, wood lots, and streams; it's important to note that communal control over such resources sometimes directly involves two or more clan related villages. The most frequent and most informal example of wanaka would be the rotation from house to house of the morning or afternoon "coffee break," usually involving five to

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65. I am using "corporate group" in the sense that Radcliffe-Brown has defined it: Radcliffe-Brown & Forde, (ed.), African Systems of Kinship & Marriage, (Oxford, 1950), pp. 41.

66. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 46

six neighboring homesteads. Such an institution provides continuous face to face contact and discussion between neighbors in a relaxing social situation.

In terms of kinship structure the Gurage village is a collective of related patrilocal households. Village exogamy is reported to exist "even when two village families have no known genealogical or fictional relation,"[67] a situation which could easily occur in some of the larger older villages. This practice leads to a necessary interdependence between nearby villages belonging to different clan groups. Expressed in systems terms this would mean the two way flow of young females between reciprocal sets of villages, as they move to the homesteads of their future husbands. The series of marriage feasts and associated ceremonies also alternate between a village pair, being focused respectively on the homesteads of the two families involved; they are inclusive events in terms of involving the entire village population in addition to representatives of the other village group.

On a political level the corporate nature of the village finds expression in the council of elders and the village headman, who deal with such questions as disputes between households; economic decisions concerning land use, work groups, or the marketing of cash crops; and in the past village defence. The council of elders includes all the village household heads. In functional terms it administrates decisions which have been arrived at by discussion between all adult males in

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67. Ibid., pp. 92.

the village.

The office of village headman is usually inherited from father to senior son but must be confirmed by the village elders. He has the formal role of presiding over village assemblies but his exercise of power depends heavily upon his success at maintaining the collective respect of the village. He also has the formal role of representing the village in various systems which operate above the village level. In recent years the village headman has received "a salary commensurate with the tax revenue appropriated from his district"[68] by the central government; this places the headman in an extremely delicate political situation.

Any adult male can call for a village assembly(a female may only do so through a male representative) and if he is disatisfied with the decision arrived at he has the option of going beyond the village to higher levels of authority; he could make use of the Gurage rural court system or he could appeal to the nearest government district court.

The indigenous system of religion also finds expression at the village level in terms of monthly gatherings("Mabar") at the village earth shrine and in many other annual celebrations spread out over the year. For many of these ceremonies the services of ritual specialists from outside the village are required. The animistic cult system is extremely important to the Gurage social system, representing as it does one of the few strongly centralized and Pan-Gurage institutional systems; a

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68. Ibid., pp. 141.

major exception would be the Muher Gurage who have maintained a Coptic religious system for several hundred years.

The Regional Systems

This section will include a discussion and summary of the remaining levels within the spatial hierarchy of the Gurage regional system. In my previous discussion I have alluded several times to the existence of several overlapping central place hierarchical systems. Most of these central place systems have had their lowest order central place represented beyond the village unit, at either the clan or sub-clan level. The regional expression of these systems assumes three basic patterns: a development over the complete study area, development within a definite subregion, development as isolated nodal micro-regions. Examples of the first type would include the indigenous jural-political system, the second type would be represented by the Muslim area, and the third type would be best represented by the Coptic churches. As in my previous sections I will also attempt to give a process perspective of the evolution of these various systems.

The Regional Settlement System

Turning to the general map of the study area, we can see that the strict spatial symmetry of the settlement unit is far less evident at the regional level of interpretation. This should not be surprising considering that we are no longer dealing with the relatively homogeneous

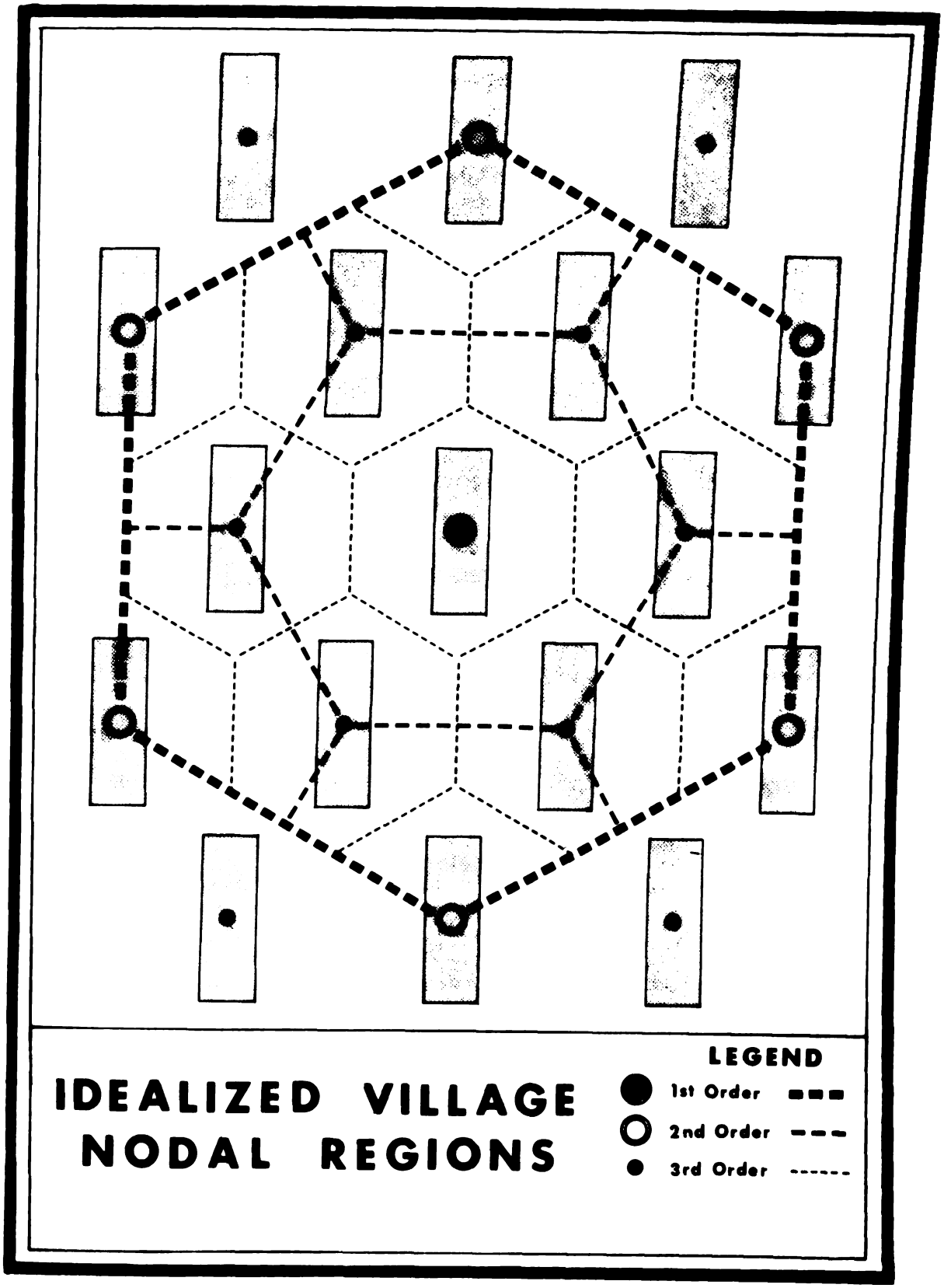
IDEALIZED VILLAGE
NODAL REGIONS
LEGEND
1st Order
2nd Order
3rd Order

Figure 14

relief conditions of that microspatial system. If we were, then, we might logically expect to find a theoretical pattern similar to that in Fig. 14; there are areas outside of Chaha where the existence of such uniform spatial patterns might be a testable proposition, such as on the Gumer Plateau or the Ennemor Plains.

It's still remarkable to me to observe the degree of spatial organization which is apparent beyond the village unit(see general map of the study area). A causal look at the settlement-transportation pattern suggests a well planned suburban zone, with avenue after avenue of symmetrically disposed housing units. One might also conclude that a modern network of roads, main thoroughfares and feeder roads, had been planned by some outside consulting firm. Chaha, though, is most definitely a traditional rural region, the cultural landscape for the most part the product of indigenous processes. The village and transportation pattern so reminiscent of stringline settlements is in no way determined by urban influence, unlike the numerous stringline settlements encountered along major Ethiopian roads.

As mentioned in the previous section erosion can induce a high degree of stress on the regional settlement pattern, as well as on the individual village. Regional patterns of erosion would be related to relief characteristics, frequency and intensity of rainfall, soil and rock type, and the Gurage land use system. The first three considerations are familar physical factors which by themselves would combine together to naturally erode much of the study area at a fairly rapid

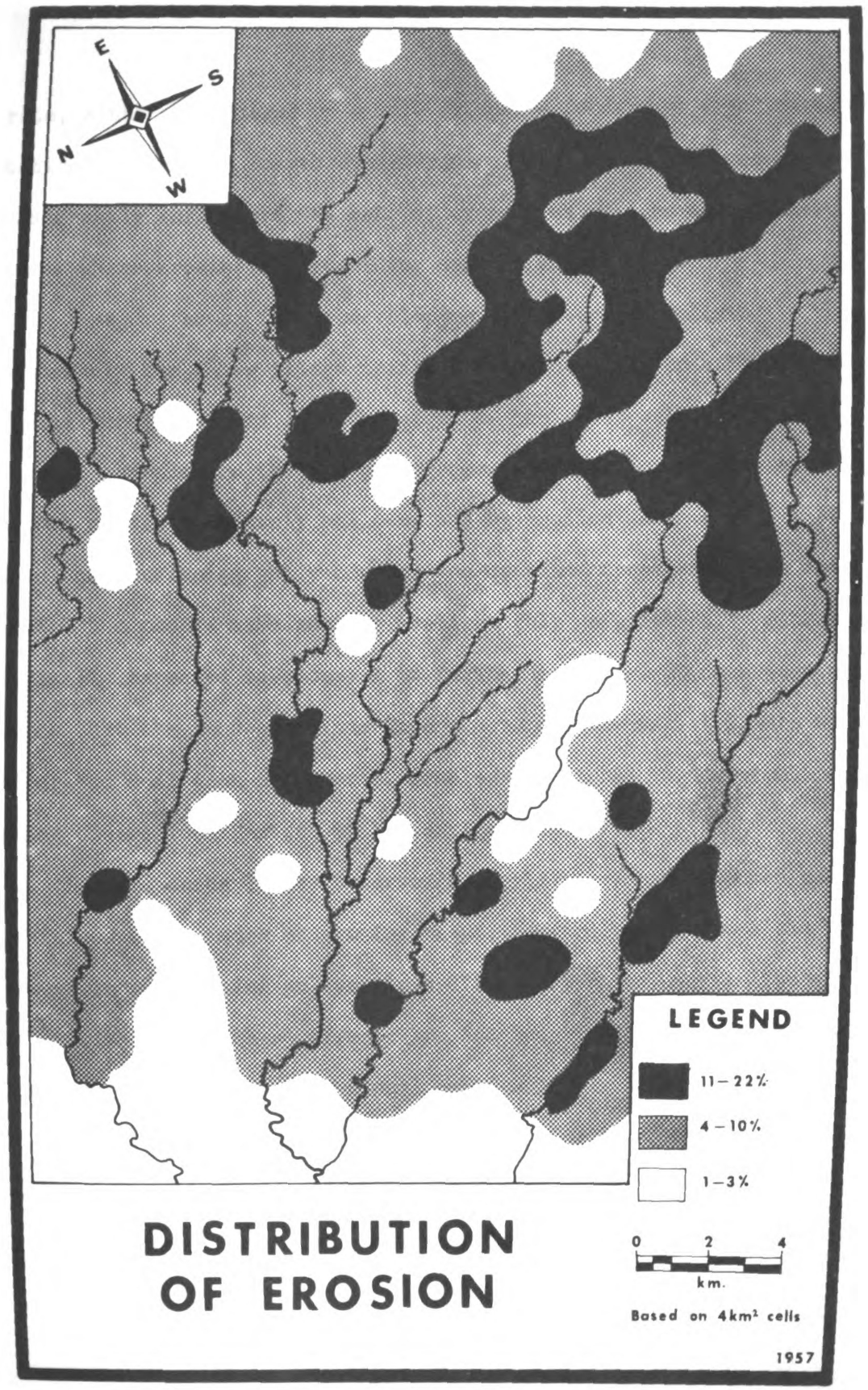
E
S
N
W
LEGEND
11 – 22%
4 – 10%
1 – 3%
DISTRIBUTION
OF EROSION
0
2
4
km.
Based on 4km² cells
1957

Figure 15

rate, although hindered by a more extensive forest and riverine vegetation growth. The fourth consideration, the Gurage land use system, has greatly influenced the rate of erosion as well as the specific areas where erosion is proceeding most rapidly.

A major factor in the development of intensive gullying is unmistakably the intervillage transportation network, specifically the trails leading up and down the sides of the river valleys. There are several examples on the air photographs where the crest of a spur has become almost completely hollowed out by erosion along a well used trail. When the developing gully becomes too deep and treacherous for use as a trail, the people make another trail roughly parallel to it with the logically expected development of further gullying. It does seem curious to me that the land-conscious Gurage have not demonstrated more of an effort to deal with the general problem of encroaching erosion, considering the regional extent of the damage (Fig. 15).

In some cases I have observed that villagers have planted eucalyptus trees on the edge of grazing areas, constructed barriers and planted trees within existing gullys, in a direct effort to counter the effects of erosion. While these efforts are too localized to have much effect on the developing regional erosional patterns, they do demonstrate that the basic technology is known by the villagers. However, there may well be socio-political complications involved which make it difficult to mobilize the large intervillage work groups needed to deal with the problem.

The Transportation Network

At the intervillage level the transportation network assumes major importance both in terms of its spatial pattern and its socio-economic implications. As a matter of fact within the study area there are two transportation networks. There is the indigenous regional one for such traffic as people on foot, mule and horse riders, loaded donkeys, and herds of cattle and sheep. The more modern one consists of a small number of motor roads converging on the town of Wolkite on the Jimma Road, carrying such traffic as lorries, buses, cars, as well as traditional traffic. It will be noticed from the relief map (Fig. 6) that communications are most easily developed in a north-south direction, along the axis of spurs rather than at right angles to the stream valleys.

The indigenous transportation network has solved the technical problem of communications across the river valleys by constructing split plank and log bridges at strategic locations. These bridges are concrete examples of intervillage, interclan, and even higher levels of intergroup cooperation. In terms of intergroup communications they are functionally indispensible, especially during the rainy season. However, bridges are of no help in the plateau zones of the study area. There as Shack has observed, the pattern of regional communications is greatly disrupted during the rainy season:[69]

> Internal travel is then virtually suspended, and movement between villages is reduced to the minimum as the open grass plains, saturated with water several inches deep, prohibit long distance travel.

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69. Ibid., pp. 32.

Since 1968 the above situation has been somewhat mitigated by the construction of an all-weather road from Wolkite into the highlands of Gumer but the regional generalization still holds true.

As mentioned in Chapter II, the history of the modern transportation network begins with the construction of several motor roads by the Italians in the 1936-41 period. All roads began at Wolkite and then split off in three directions at the settlement of Atat on the Megecha River(about 10km off the general map). One road led to the market-administration center at Agannah in Ezha, another to the Muslim center at Yabrite, and the third through the market-administration town of Emdeber and on up into the Gumer highlands; sections of old paving stone and bridge foundations are direct evidence of the routes of the Italian roads. In terms of travel time these roads were a great improvement over the existing interregional network of caravan routes. It is evident from the general map that these roads took full advantage of the existing settlement-transportation pattern; frequently the broad central avenues of villages along a spur line up in such a way that intervillage connections can be made quite efficently. However, after WW II like much of the Italian road network in Ethiopia, these motor tracks fell into disrepair, eventually becoming of marginal use only in the dry season; in systems terms the network degenerated after its locus of external innovation and energy was cut off.

The next period of renewed work on the modern transportation network began in 1966 with the formation of the Gurage Road Committee. The

membership of this committee represents a cross section of both the rural and urbanized Gurage leadership; the urban members perform the function of communicating information and funds back to their rural counterparts, make the necessary contacts with the various ministries in Addis Ababa to secure technical advice and equipment, and return themselves periodically to help oversee ongoing projects. This Pan-Gurage committee is now in the process of completing an all-weather road which largely follows the route of the old Italian road through Emdeber on south to the administrative center of Hosanna in Kambatta. In addition the old Italian roads to Agannah and Yabrite are being refurbished. There is also a new road which branches off from the Emdeber road a little before reaching the Gotam River, built with church funds, which leads to the Catholic mission at Maganassi; there was a plan in 1968 to extend this road from Maganassi to the Aftur Market and from there to Yabrite, something which could be done with a minimum of grading and the construction of one small bridge.

In terms of network development, we have an interesting example within the study area of a new transportation network in the process of superimposing itself over a well developed indigenous one.[70] However, it is beyond the scope of my field data to offer any general speculation about the route substitutions which will take place between the existing central places.

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70. In the terms of Taaffe, Morrill, and Gould the motor routes would be in phase two while the indigenous network would be in phase four. Taaffe et al, "Transport Expansion in Underdeveloped Countries: a Comparative Analysis," Geog. Review, Vol. LIII, (1963), pp. 503-529.

The Jural-Political Systems

A discussion of the jural-political systems present in the study area necessitates the recognition of two largely discrete systems: an indigenous evolving one and that supported externally by the central government. The indigenous system can be described as a hierarchically structured nodal system; within this system the clan district has functioned as a major intermediary level between the village and higher regional levels.[71] The exogenous system has its highest order central place in the town of Emdeber, with lower order central places established in each of the other six houses of the Sabat-bet; it too can be described as a hierarchically structured nodal system. At the village level the two systems overlap somewhat with the village headman acting in a dual rule, as was mentioned in a previous section; however, the range of jural-political activity is far wider for the indigenous system than that of the central government (Fig. 5).

Within the indigenous jural-political system the clan district appears to have been the model for all higher levels of regional organization. Clearly the clan district is something more than a uniform unit of village aggregation. First of all while the formal structure of Gurage clans is basically similar, there can be a considerable range of varience between clans in terms of political status, ritual status, total number of lineages and members, as well as the spatial extent and shape.

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71. For a graphical representation of the relation between a clan district and the village and regional levels, see Fig. 3.

In Chaha alone, Shack has recorded the names of fifteen clans, all of which demonstrate the above differences qualitatively; however, considerably more field work must be done in order to reliably characterize each of these component clans.

The clan chief is spatially located within a particular village, the only difference between his homestead and those of his neighbors being the presence of a fenced double compound with a number of large houses inside; usually there will be a large zigba tree in the avenue in front of his compound. Like all Gurage, with the exception of ritual dignitaries, the clan chief will share in the work of the village agricultural system. In formal terms clan leadership is vested within a particular lineage group, is hereditary in the senior male line, is confirmed by a ritual dignitary, and is further ligitimatized by a "myth of chieftainship with a permanent line of descent and succession."[72]

At the clan district level the chief and his administrative assistants represent a centralized component within an aggregate of semiautonomous subsystems; these are represented by smaller lineage segments and at an even lower microlevel by the village assemblies. The locus of authority appears to be largely retained within the smaller units of the clan political system, rather than being vested in the structurally centralized component. Decision making would be delegated from the smaller units to the more centralized components on a case basis, generally in the form of a petition. For example a land dispute between two

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72. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 149.

villages might be settled at a joint village assembly or it could be sent to a district assembly presided over by the clan chief and a number of elected judges; elders from each village would have the responsibility of presenting the two sides of the case. In the event that the clan court's decision was considered unsatisfactory, the case could then be appealed to the highest level regional court known as "Yajoka;" only rarely would a case be appealed to the government courts.

In terms of political evolution jural-political authority in Chaha appears to have been in the process of becoming concentrated within a single clan group known as the Mogamana. Before the Gurage were defeated by Menelik's forces, this particular clan had assumed military dominance over other Chaha clans and was incorporating the other neighboring Gurage cultural subgroups into the beginnings of a centralized state. As Shack has suggested the aggregate structure and interrelationships of this "state" bear a striking resemblance to the process model of a "segmentary state" described by A. Southall;[73] in brief this model represents a transitional stage between a spatial aggregate of completely autonomous clan chieftains and a fully centralized state.

In addition to their political dominance over many of their neighbors, the Chaha Gurage successfully persuaded the chief religious dignitaries to relocate their main temples within Chaha, thus spatially consolidating established centers of ritual power.[74]

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73. A. Southall, Alur Society, (W. Heffer, Cambridge, 1956).

74. Shack,"On Gurage Judicial Structure & African Political Theory," Jour. of Ethiopian Studies, Vol. V, (1967), pp. 99-100.

It was also in this period that the Chaha group established the regional level court known as the Yajoka, elevating their own highest rural court to Pan-Gurage status. However, high level rural courts are still maintained in at least two of the other houses of the Sabat-bet, in Gumer and Ezha (Fig. 5), and their exact relationship with the Yajoka has not been ascertained.

Field evidence indicates a considerable degree of association between the traditional cult systems and the Yajoka. For example the Yajoka convenes at a central place which is in close spatial proximity to the compound of the ritual representative of Waq(the sky god) at Yabaze; in fact when cases are appealed to the Yajoka, litigants direct their appeal explicitly to Waq. In addition all three ritual leaders make a point of being present whenever the court convenes. The court itself is presided over by a Muslim religious leader who also has strong associations with the Boza(the thunder god) cult; judgeships to the Yajoka are hereditary offices which are for the most part occupied by members of the Mogamana clan of Chaha. Besides representing a court of law, the Yajoka represents an assembly for legislating new law while at the same time reinforcing "the cultural values of the society within the framework of Gurage religion and moral order."[75]

After comparing the political form of the Gurage "state" with the model advanced by Southall, Shack summarized the following characteristics:[76]

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75. Ibid., pp. 96.

76. Ibid., pp. 100.

1. Territorial sovereignty of the "sabat-bet", and of clans: the largest territorial-political tribal segment was retained, and encroachment on territorial rights of individual clans, or the tribal grouping, was resisted by joint military action of combined clans, though neither all clans of the same tribe, nor all tribes, were politically bound to join in defence.

2. Centralized government was approximated only by the Chaha Gurage who also provided the structure of leadership in judicial affairs, and were the principal contestants in joint actions of warfare against external aggressors. Religious leaders ritually supported the central administration, which exercised only marginal control over smaller clan segments.

3. Specialized administrative staff at the centre took the form of hereditary judicial officers and representatives of deities, and were repeated at lower levels of clan segmentation in the offices of dana and ritual agents located in every clan district.

4. Monopoly of the use of force was delegated to the central authority in exercising judicial duties, but the resort to self-help was not entirely removed as an element of force from clan segments.

5. Smaller lineage segments upon which clans are built retained local authority heads, administrative staff, and traditional political relations between various segments. They provided a political and administrative model for the central authority.

6. The possibility of local authorities changing allegiance from one clan chief to another existed but was largely prevented because the kinship system tied them to the land.

In addition to the present indigenous evolving jural-political system, there is that of the central government. The district governor himself is appointed from Addis Ababa and in formal bureaucratic terms would be immediately responsible to the governor of Butajira, one of the sub-provincial capitals of Shewa Province; in actuality communications between Emdeber and Butajira are neglible due to the lack of a connecting road.

The district governor in Emdeber recognizes the chief of the Mogamana clan as the official representative for all clans in Chaha. To further

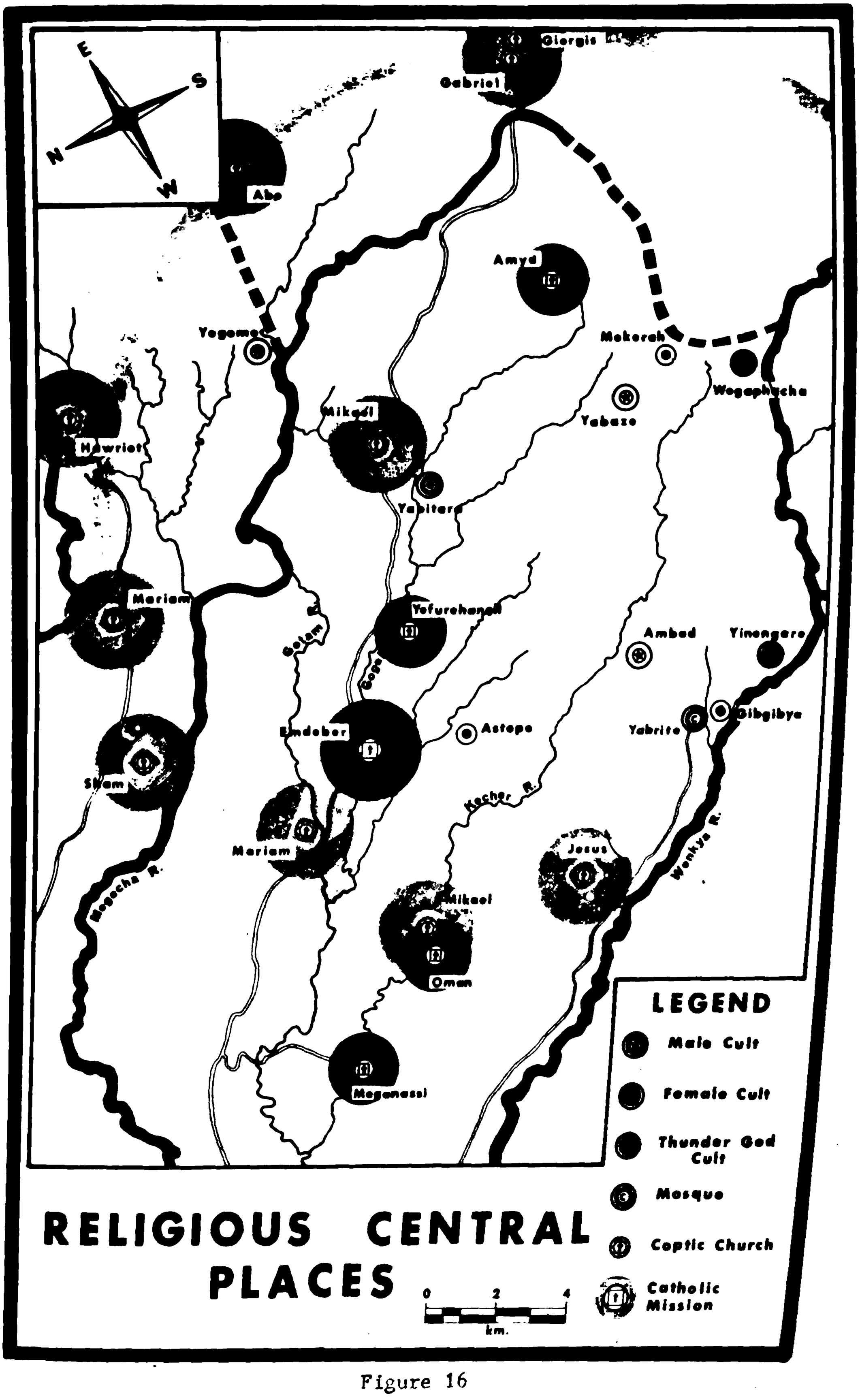
E
S
N
W
Giorgis
Gabriel
Abo
Mokerch
Yabaze
Mikael
Astepo
Yabrite
Gibgibye
Ambad
Mariam
Endeber
Mariam
Jesus
Mikael
Oman
Meganessi
Kacher R.
Wonkye R.
LEGEND
Male Cult
Female Cult
Thunder God Cult
Mosque
Coptic Church
Catholic Mission
RELIGIOUS CENTRAL PLACES
0 2 4
km.

Figure 16

assist in the implementation of central government policy a number of other clan chiefs are appointed as subdistrict governors, and as was mentioned previously the village headman is recognized as the lowest link in this administrative hierarchy. Such a dual role for Gurage leaders might seem to mitigate against the further evolution of a more centralized indigenous political system. However, most of the Gurage leaders seem to have successfully maintained the confidence of their constituents. The continued growth in power of the Yajoka system would seem to be a conspicuous case in point.

The Religious Systems

There are a number of religious systems spatially organized within the study area. These would include the three animistic cults, Islam, Ethiopian Orthodox(Coptic), and the Catholic Mission (Fig. 15).

The Gurage cult system is organized around three deities who are known as Waq, Damwamwit, and Boza. According to the Gurage these deities were created by an otiose type god called Yegzar:[77]

> According to the conceptual hierarchy by which Gurage have ordered their major deities and lesser spirits, Yegzar appears to have withdrawn some time in the dim past in favour of more active tribal deities and clan spirits around whom important ritual cults now centre.

In contrast to the jural-political system, the cults represent strongly centralized hierarchical systems with their locus of authority lying above the clan district; this centralized system is thought to predate

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77. Shack, "The Masqal-Pole," pp. 460.

the proposed emergence of a segmentary state by several hundred years. In addition all Gurage cults have ritual agents spatially allocated on a clan or subclan district basis.

The Waq cult is a major religious institutional system for the Gurage. The deity himself is described as the sky god and is associated with strength and courage. The more important ritual agents of Waq are organized on a clan basis and are centrally located in specific villages. Such a village generally has a temple within a sacred grove located at one end of the central avenue, with ritual stakes marking off zones in front of the temple. The homestead of the ritual custodian is found nearby and may be recognized by its fenced double compound which encloses several large houses.

The head of one of the maximal lineage segments occupies this office of ritual custodian; although the office is a hereditary one the prospective ritual dignitarie must be confirmed by other leaders of the cult. Members of the congregation come individually or in groups to this man intermittently throughout the year for consultation. The existence of this level of office seems somewhat of an anomaly with respect to the two other cults, neither of which has a sacred grove and ritual custodian at the clan district level. I would suggest that this level of office might be a relic persisting from the time when each clan had its own personal Waq. This deduction is also supported by Shack's comment that sometime in the mid-nineteenth century the Mogamana clan Waq was elevated to Pan-Gurage status.[78]

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78. Ibid., see footnote, pp. 461.

Each ritual custodian has various assistants who are reported to be organized on a subclan basis; these would be Fuga women, generally closely related to the male Fuga ritual assistants of the Damwamwit cult.[79] Their principal functions include conducting rituals at the smaller shrines found throughout their districts, usually identified with the territory of lineage segments; in addition they diagnose ritual illnesses and proscribe cures, cast spells and remove them, and distribute ritual parapharnalia.[80] The ritual assistants are also responsible for leading groups of the congregation to the clan district sacred grove for annual celebrations. At the annual Chest festival the clan ritual leader and his assistants lead the congregation to the regional central place near Yabaze.

On the regional level the highest ritual representative is known as Yogaphacha. She and her husband, Damma, reside at Yabaze and preside over the sacred temple located in the nearby forest of Wagaphacha. The ritual office is vacated on the death of Damma and is filled when the eldest son of Wagaphacha selects a special wife from the Mazakwar clan. Yogaphacha has the responsibility of presiding over the annual Chest festival for all male Gurage as well as making appeals to Waq in behalf of individuals throughout the year.

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79. The Fuga live in dispersed homesteads throughout the study area and their main interaction with the larger Gurage cultural system is on the ritual and economic level; Shack characterizes them as a "submerged caste."

80. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 184.

The Damwamwit cult for Gurage women is the focus for such concerns as fertility, ritual sickness, and general social well being. In structure it is somewhat analogous to that described above for Gurage men. Male Fuga ritual assistants called Chief Mweyats are territorally organized at the subclan level rather than the clan level and apparently there are no intermediate level central places with their sacred groves and ritual custodians.

The functions of each Chief Mweyat include the initiation rites of female age groups, consultation with members from time to time, and leading the various age groups in annual celebrations within their districts. They also have the responsibility of leading their groups to the regional central place at Yabitare for the annual festival in honor of the deity Damwamwit.

Damwamwit's ritual representative at the regional level is known as Yawaydamam. His main function is to intercede directly with the deity when suitably petitioned; as mentioned before he also has the chief ritual responsibility for conducting the installation of new clan chiefs. His office is a hereditary one, with additional moral and physical qualifications. Like most of the ritual leaders his day to day activities are highly proscribed as a protection from possible ritual pollution; such precautions are typical for much of Africa for what have been characterized as "divine kings."[81]

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81. For a discussion of ritual and kingship in Africa, see L. Mair, Primitive Government, (Penguin Books Ltd., Baltimore, 1962), pp. 214-233.

Within the last twenty years Yawaydamam has established an additional central place at Moquera, which is also in the general vicinity of Yabaze. The functional relevance of this new central place is a matter of conjecture at this point beyond the obvious spatial convergence of two discrete but interdependent ritual systems.

The Boza cult is centered around the thunder god who is said to represent "an intermediary deity, to whom the high god(Yegzar) handed down the responsibility for regulating the social and moral conduct of the Gurage in everyday affairs."[82] The Boza cult is one of the few Gurage institutional systems in which both men and women have important group roles at the same ceremony. Like the Damwamwit cult, this one is territorially organized on the subclan district. The ritual assistants known as the Maga administrate ritual protection to clients against the loss of property through theft, arson or lightning; such protection is symbolized by the erection of a cross which is usually located in the farmhouse compound.[83] As Shack points out "ritual protection can function two ways, it can protect the homestead but it could also wreak vengence against an enemy."[84] The ritual assistants also have the responsibility of leading their congregations to the regional central place at Yinengara for the annual Nepwar festival in honor of Boza.

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82. Shack,"The Masqual-Pole," pp. 460.

83. Shack,"On Gurage Judicial Structure & African Political Theory," pp. 95.

84. Shack, The Gurage, footnote, pp. 191.

The Boza cult leader at the regional level is known as Gwetakweya, having the ritual authority to exact tribute from all Gurage. Gwetakweya's office is a hereditary one much like those described above. The special rules surrounding his person in day to day activities are also analogous. The Nepwar festival mirrors the polarity of sexual roles evident in much of Gurage culture. For example the men gather in village groups at the sacred grove and temple at Yinengara while the women gather in similar groups at the nearby temple and sacred grove at Gibgibya; at a certain point in the ceremony at Yinengara, groups of women approach in chorus from their temple.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the Boza cult is reported to have relocated its central shrine from Ennemor to Yinengara in Chaha; this move would be additional spatial evidence of the consolidation of ritual and political power within an emerging Chaha dominated state. Another aspect of development within this cult will be expanded upon in my discussion of Islam.

As a religious system Islam has its major center to the south but there is a long history of interaction within the study area. Unlike the indigenous cults, Islam does not appear to have ritual agents at the clan district level, at least within the boundaries of the study area; however, in a field trip through strongly Muslim Ennemor a number of small mosques were observed which do probably represent some intermediate level of central places. It does seem likely that various lineage elders would perform all necessary functions at an intermediate level in a heavily Muslim

clan district.

The particular Muslim sect of southern Chaha has its regional center at Yabrite. There the leader, Shaikh Sayyid Budella, presides over a large mosque. Annual celebrations such as the Mulid festival attract pilgrims to Yabrite from as far away as Arusi and Jimma, which attests to the ritual leader's reputation as a living prophet. The fact that the Shaikh also formally presides over the Yajoka attests to his Pan-Gurage importance. The Shaikh is also strongly identified with the Boza cult; about seven generations ago the Boza cult leader converted to Islam with the younger brother assuming his ritual office as Gwetakweya. Thus many followers of the Boza cult also pay their respects to the Shaikh on formal occasions.

As mentioned in my general introduction, Islam also has had its regional politcal role as a kind of territorial refuge from direct Amhara administrative harassment. The Italians tried to take advantage of this political situation during their occupation; Muslim centers like Yabrite were encouraged to expand their congregations at the expense of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. At one point the Muslims were seriously considering the establishment of a mosque at Emdeber. Even today the central government recognizes the Shaikh as the formal administrative representative of the Yabrite area.

Like the Islamic system the Ethiopian Orthodox system has a long history of interaction within the Gurage cultural region with its strongest indigenous base in Muher. However, the major source of energy for the expansion of the system has always been from the central highlands to the

north, manifested in the form of invading armies.

The Ethiopian Orthodox religious system has also functioned as an integral part of the administrative central place system of the Amhara military colonies. In general these colonies were set up within cultural subregions but for large and important groups such as the Chaha more than one colony was established. It may be noted that a number of churches are spatially separate from these military colonies(Fig. 16). These were deliberately established near pre-existing nodes such as market places or within sacred groves formally occupied by animistic temples. Some of the churches are also quite new, two having been constructed within the last ten years; this may indicate a renewed interest on the part of the State Church and the central government in the expansion of their system.

In Fig. 16 it will be noticed that the regional pattern of Orthodox churches proscibes an arc from the Jesus Church at Doro Gabiya,to Ezha, up to Gumer, and around to Zarazigba in Ennemor(off the map); within this arc the animistic cults are dominant. The exception to this pattern is the military colony at Daquna which could be explained in terms of its former status as regional administration center.

In general the observances of Christian ritual are spatially confined to those villages within the immediate vicinity of a church; this is what I have described before as an isolated nodal microregion. In general the priests and their assistants perform analogous roles to those of the ritual agents of the animistic cults:[85]

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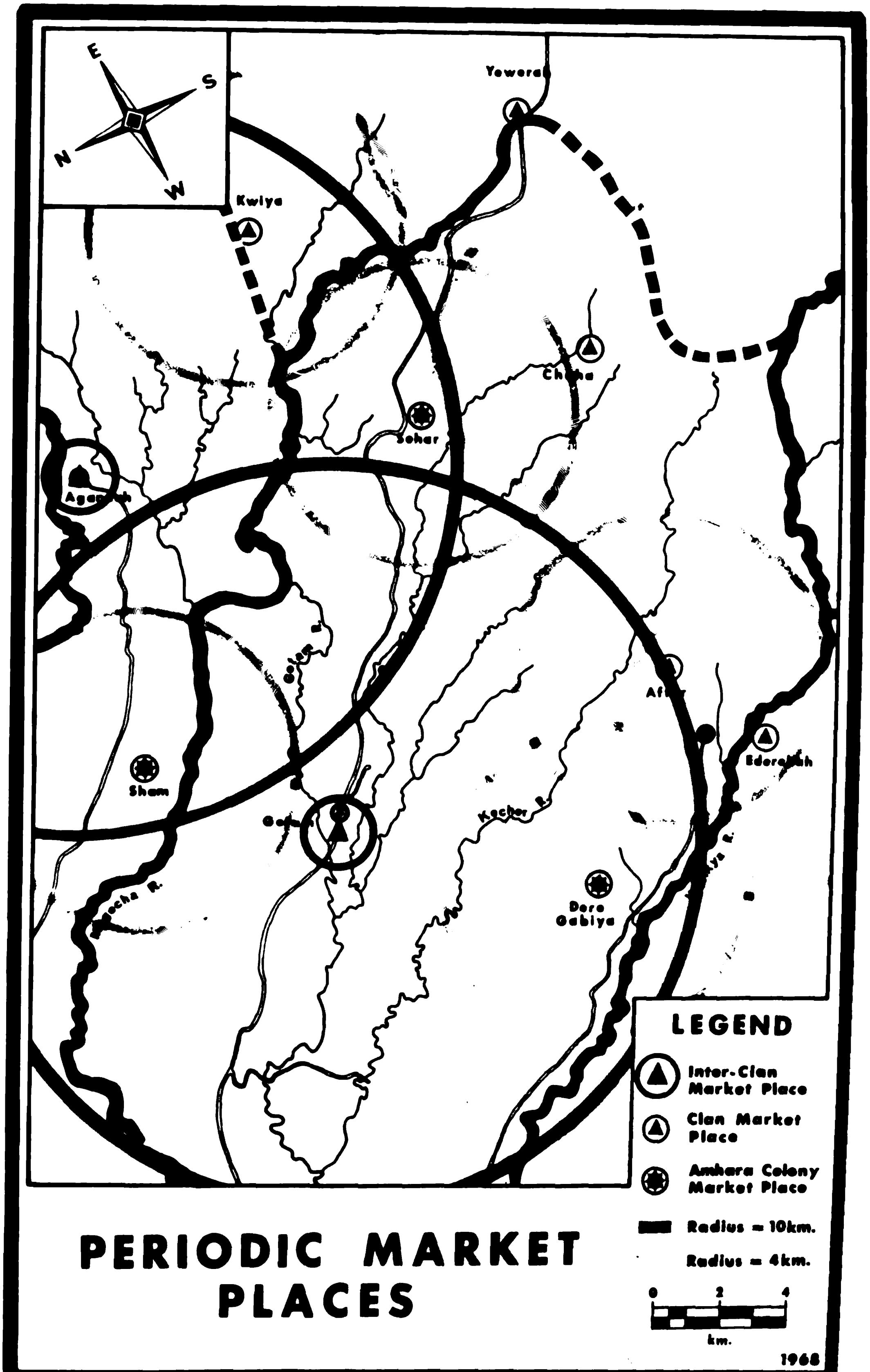
85. Ibid., pp. 175.

> The priest...expects to receive food and money for providing a family with spiritual blessings, annointing the sick, hearing confessionals at times of life crises, removing evil curses, leading the family in recitation of the psalter, and in general, ritually cleansing the household.

The Gurage Catholic Mission is the latest in the sequence of religious systems to diffuse into the study area. Its history goes back to the establishment of the Emdeber Mission by French-Canadian Jesuit priests led by Pére Bernard in the early 1930's. The Italians further developed the mission during the occupation period and now the mission is part of the Catholic diocese of Ethiopia. Abba François Marcos, a Gurage, has been head of the Emdeber Mission for the last two decades. Under the direction of Abba François a number of new district missions have been established along the principal axis of Chaha, roughly parallel to the Gogeb River(Fig. 16). The missions offer religious services, schooling on the primary level, and some medical treatment. The newest mission at Meganassi also functions as an agricultural demonstration station, having been established in 1968.

In summary there are a number of overlapping religious systems in different stages of evolution in the study area. As I have pointed out two systems, the Ethiopian Orthodox and Islam, diffused into the study area from different directions and have a long history of interaction within the region, interaction with each other as well as with the indigenous animistic cults; this has produced some structual uniformities. The Catholic Mission has had considerably less influence on the other



E
S
N
W
Kwiya
Soher
Sham
Kachar R.
Dara
Gabiya
LEGEND
Inter-Clan
Market Place
Clan Market
Place
Amhara Colony
Market Place
Radius = 10km.
Radius = 4km.
0 2 4
km.
1968
PERIODIC MARKET
PLACES

Figure 17

systems in spite of its slow but steady growth in membership.

I would like to stress that although religious distinctions are important to individual Gurage, their participation in major religious celebrations is not exclusively determined by their particular religion. For example on a Coptic saint's day, an Islamic celebration, or an animistic cult festival, there would be considerable overlap between congregations. Within a clan district or even within a village, there is frequently a mixture of congregations. This mixture does not seem to strain unduely the corporate village spirit, or at least that seems to be the dominant situation today.

The Periodic Marketing System

The periodic marketing system is another example of a regional spatial system. However, it has always had its interregional connections, meaning its commercial interaction with markets beyond the cultural region. In my analysis this second consideration should be kept in mind as I try to trace the evolution of the indigenous marketing system as it becomes more economically integrated into a national marketing system. In this way I hope to treat the rural market place as an evolving adaptive microspatial system (Fig. 17).

A market place can be characterized by its intensive nature, as a central place where a wide variety of economic and social activities are concentrated in a limited area. Within the study area market places are set up on an interclan level, a regional level, and an interregional level. In addition there is a special set of market places which is directly

associated with the old Amhara military colonies(Fig. 16). The establishment of a market place calls for formal agreements between all members of the trading population, with one group being chiefly responsible for the overseeing of market place activities.

Each clan market place is generally located in a large field and meets twice a week, a main market day for interclan trading and a minor market day for more localized trading. For example the Aftur market place meets on Saturday and Thursday respectively. In general several of the smaller interclan market places form a marketing cycle with one of the major regional market places such as the Gotam market place at Emdeber. However, there will always be some degree of overlap with neighboring marketing cycles in a "chain mail" fashion. Therefore it is likely that some proportion of one market place's population will attend other market places on other days of the cycle.[86] There would also be a group of itinerant traders, mainly Gurage, who specialize in marketing activities on a full time basis, at least for long periods of the year. They would follow the market cycle until they had sold their goods and then they'd restock at one of the interregional market places, shipping off their purchases by relatives to other trading partners in Addis Ababa.

The spatial organization within the market place is the formal responsibility of the clan chief, his council of elders, and the local village headman. Each class of goods and services has its specific location in the market area. Formal divisions of labor are also reflected

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86. As Shack points out the market day itself is a common reference for dating activities throughout the week, as well as on a more general level of when people last met one another and might expect to meet again.

within some sections. For example Gurage men are generally in charge of selling cash crops, livestock, woven cloth, and exotic items from the central market at Addis Ababa. Gurage women are in charge of selling vegetables, spices, dairy products, fruits, basketwork and pottery. Young children specialize in small scale transactions and performing errands. Members of the Fuga group specialize in the manufacture and sale of hardware and woodcrafts.

The market day begins in the early morning with the butchering of a few cattle for the meat sellers. Later in the morning the first serious marketing takes place with the sale of cash crops to itinerant traders. Women at the same time would be mainly engaged in small scale marketing of housecrops, spices, and craft goods. By midafternoon beer drinking and socializing becomes of increasing importance, with a few people still shopping around for last minute bargains. By the late afternoon the market place is deserted except for scavengers.

The dominant attitude during many of the smaller transactions can be seen as maximizing the social aspects of trading as well as trying to make as good a deal as possible. In many cases goods are especially prepared for market trade but people do not seem overly concerned about a quick turnover; thus a woman might make a large batch of pottery and then sell it in small lots over a period of several weeks. The exception to this behavior would be those individuals who had a pressing "target need" in mind; a target need is defined as a commodity or service which must be secured by some definite date. Migrant labor would be a common alternative to trading in order to meet large target needs.

The Gurage itinerant traders are largely responsible for bringing in a variety of exotic goods. In former times this class of goods included items like salt and raw cotton. Now the last has expanded to include glass tumblers, soap, tin cans, empty bottles, kerosene, jewellery, second hand Western style clothes, and a host of smaller miscellaneous items. The indigenous craftsmen have adopted a number of small innovations to help them to compete with the incoming products. For example some of the Fuga woodcarvers are using imported watercolors to decorate their work; others are beginning to use Western style tools and hardware items such as nails and wire. Glass tumblers seem to have replaced their pottery and horn competitors; however, pottery kettles and water jugs still hold an economic edge over their competitors. The latest class of exotic items to emerge in the area includes various pharmaceutics such as linaments, aspirin, and penicillin.

There is also evidence of subregional specialization with groups being functionally integrated with other groups via the regional marketing system. Obvious examples would be groups stratified into the two climatic zones, with Chaha Gurage supplying Gumer Gurage with coffee, tobacco, and chat in return for tef, barley, healthy ensete shoots, and livestock.

In addition there is some specialization along craft lines with Chaha having a high reputation for pottery and with the Fuga monopolizing woodcarving, blacksmithing, and tanning. In terms of basic foodstuff, all groups are fairly self-sufficent with the exception of the Fuga; for ritual reasons the Fuga are not permitted to cultivate ensete.

Historically an interregional marketing system has existed in southwestern Ethiopia for several hundred years, regional market centers being connected by long caravan routes. Regional market centers existed in the small Muslim kingdoms to the south, which were oriented toward Harar and the Somali coast, while other trade routes led toward the central highlands. The main interregional trade is reported to have focused on slaves, ivory, woven cloth, salt, coffee, cotton, chat, and cattle.[87]

During the nineteenth century the Gurage had adopted universal standards of value such as "salt, brass and copper beads, and occasionally cloth."[88] However, extensive bartering still persisted between craftgoods and foodstuffs, and also for livestock. Ethiopian hard currency is now fully acceptable in all market places in the study area but there are still problems in using paper money in transactions, especially with larger denominations. No doubt there would be some correlation between the remontness of a market place and the people's reluctance to accept exotic currency; this could be another proposition to be worked on in some future diffusion study.

The large regional market places such as Emdeber, Agannah, and Yegazaye in Ennemor also function directly with the national marketing system. For example the Gotam Market at Emdeber functions as a collecting center for cash crops coming in from the smaller interclan market places; it also functions as a redistribution center between the national marketing system and the smaller Gurage market places. Some of the larger Gurage interregional market places have acquired a somewhat specialized reputation such

87. R. Pankhurst,"The Trade of S. & W. Ethiopia & the Indian Ocean Ports in the 19th & early 20th Centuries,"Jour. of Ethiopian Studies,Vol.III,#2 (1965), pp. 37-74.

88. Shack, The Gurage, pp. 70.

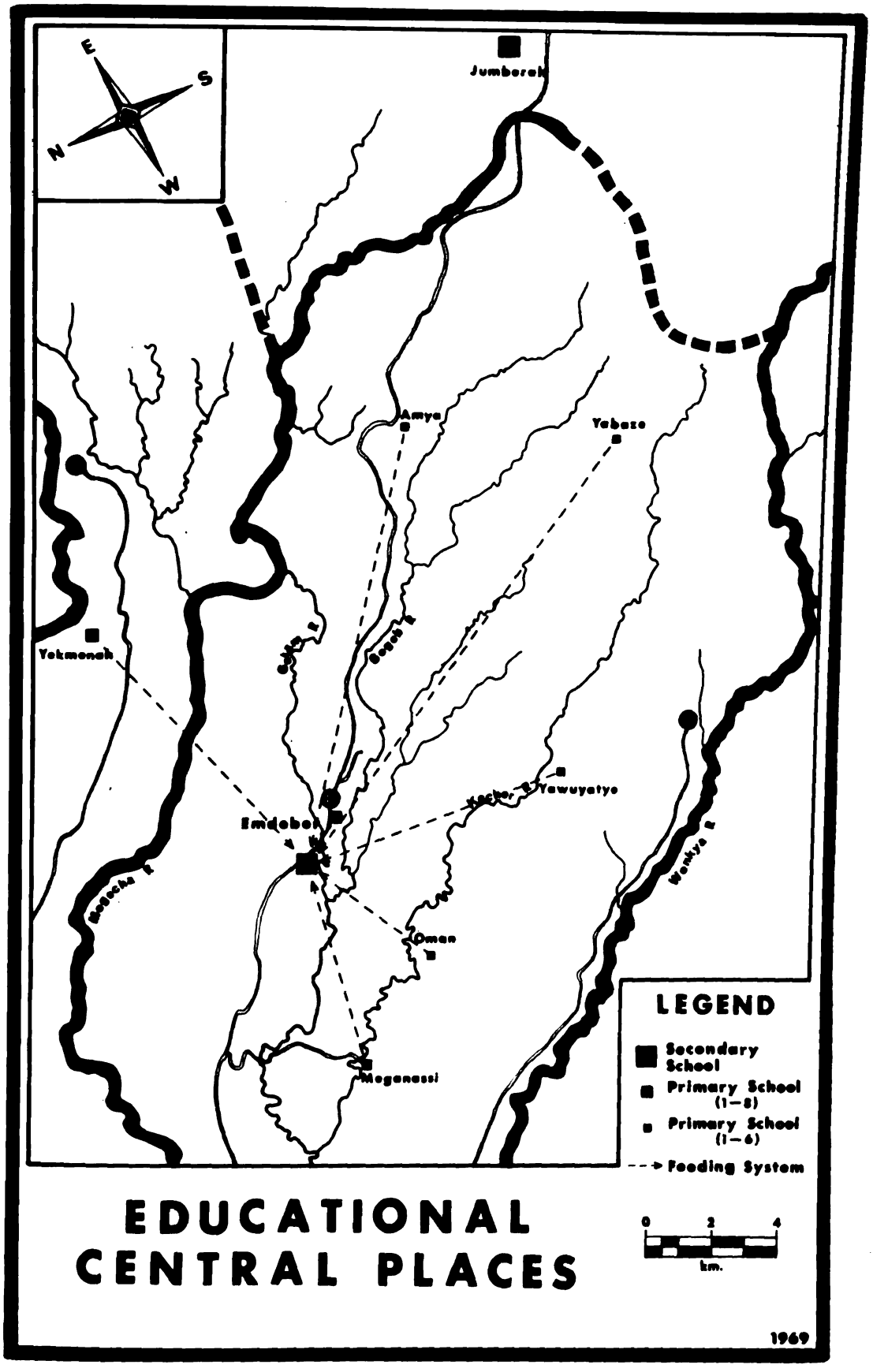
as the Bole horse market in Gumer and the Kabul cattle market in Gyeto, both of which have a full range of marketing activities beyond horses and cattle.

The marketing of cattle would be a good example of how the redistribution system functions within the region. First of all only a very limited number of Gurage cattle are involved in market place transactions; most such cattle exchanges are done within the clan district on the basis of kinship reciprocity and bypass the market place. However, large herds of zebu cattle are driven into the region from as far away as Arusi and Sidamo to be sold for meat. The exact routes followed, the number of cattle involved, the nature of the trading agreements between different ethnic groups, and the profit involved are all questions for future research. Still, the major routes are said to converge on Kabul Market and then branch out again to the other major Gurage market places.

Some evidence can be seen in the study area of a reallocation of some of the factors of production. In this reallocation the market places have also functioned as communication nodes for the demands of the national marketing system. For example many of the farmers in Chaha have increased the proportion of their housecrop cultivation area devoted to cash crops, concentrating on coffee and chat; in this sense the Gurage marketing system performs a feeder service to the National Coffee Board, with the Gurage in control of all phases of the marketing including the final transaction at Addis Ababa. Other farmers are beginning to ship out ensete fibers in large quanities for eventual sale to rope factories in Addis Ababa.

Let me summarize some of the evident changes or developments which characterize the present state of the Gurage market place. First of all there has been an increase in number and in economic importance of the itinerant trading group, especially among those who have direct trading connections with kin in Addis Ababa. There has been a general acceptance of the national currency both as a standard of value and an all-purpose means of exchange. There has been a substantial increase in the sale and export of regional cash crops, especially within the immediate hinterland of the large interregional market places such as in Emdeber. Also there has been a corresponding increase in the variety of exotic goods and services available in the market place, motor transportation being the most outstanding among the exotic services.

I would suggest that in the Gurage cultural region, the changes which can be observed are the product of both external influence and an internal response. External influence includes direct action by the central government in the form of tax collection in hard currency to less direct action such as the establishment of the National Coffee Board. External influence on another level would also include the increasing numbers of Gurage who through labor migration and itinerant trading have become familar with urban values and roles. Internal response is based within the rural homeland and would be characterized on a general level by the development of cash crop production at the homestead level. The Gurage Road Committee is itself an outstanding example of joint rural-urban planning and funding for increased regional and interregional


E
S
N
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Jumbereh
Amya
Yebaze
Yakmenah
Emdeber
Yawuyatye
Oman
Meganessi
LEGEND
Secondary School
Primary School (1–8)
Primary School (1–6)
Feeding System
0
2
4
km.
EDUCATIONAL CENTRAL PLACES
1969

Figure 18

marketing activity; not only are the road committee members concerned with the construction of an all-weather road network but they are also interested in transportation services, adding to their small fleet of land-rovers, buses, and lorries.

The School System

The regional school system is a functioning unit within the Ethiopian national system. Within the study area the system is centralized at Emdeber, with surrounding primary schools feeding students into a larger comprehensive secondary school (Fig. 18). Of the total number of school age children in the study area, only a small percentage would be currently enrolled in school, probably less than ten percent; this would mean less than 5500 children out of a total estimated school age population of 55,000.[89]

In the past the Coptic Church provided the only formal education in the study area. This basic instruction included reading and writing the ancient Geez script, and memorizing church ritual. Some students were probably sent to the ancient Christian monastary in Muher. Muslims on their part probably sent a few of their sons to the Koranic schools in Jimma and Harar. In the 1930's the Catholic Mission began providing basic Western style education on a small scale at Emdeber; their most promising students were sent to church schools in Asmara and Addis Ababa.

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89. These figures are based on the assumption that about 24% of the total population would fall within a school age range from six to twenty, a percentage that Ginzberg has used for a manpower study for all of Ethiopia: E. Ginzberg, A Manpower Strategy for Ethiopia,(AID, Addis Ababa, 1966), pp. 23-24.

In the 1950's the first government schools were established in the study area, one in each of the territorial units of the Sabat-bet. By the late 1960's the system had expanded considerably. For example a new comprehensive secondary school was constructed at Emdeber, the primary school at Jumborah in Gumer had been expanded into a secondary school, and about six new primary schools were established. Most of the new primary schools were financed and constructed by the Gurage themselves, with the Ministry of Education providing salaries for teachers and some basic school supplies. One of the larger primary schools was financed and staffed by the Gurage Catholic Mission at Maganassi.

The voluntary construction of new primary schools, plus the additions to existing schools, would seem to indicate an increased interest on the part of village elders in the importance of formal education for their children. There are definite economic advantages to graduates of the formal education system which would help to explain this increase in interest, substantial advantages when compared with the per capita income from cash crops and migrant labor; for those students who successfully graduate from college the financial returns are nothing less than spectacular as may be seen in the following table:[90]

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90. There are no estimates on the average income from small businesses and itinerant trading, in which the range of income would be quite large. Average per capita income does not take into consideration the value of agricultural products produced and consumed by the rural family. For additional discussion see Ginzberg, pp. 46-47.

Wages & Salaries by Skill Level - 1965

Level	Monthly Rate
Graduates with B.A. Degree	$180
Graduates with Secondary Diploma	80
Skilled factory worker	26
Unskilled factory worker	16
General urban laborer	12
Agricultural migrant laborer	10
Average national per capita income	5

Source: Ginzberg

Table II

Job opportunities for secondary school graduates range from teaching positions in primary schools to clerking in the government ministries and corporations. The urban-rural Gurage kinship network would help to place graduates in similar clerking positions in private small business firms throughout Addis Ababa.

Still, in the late 1960's it was uncommon for more than one son from a homestead to be sent to school, and even less common for a daughter. Conservative misgivings on the part of older Gurage toward the socialization processes going on in the schools is quite strong, their attitude being that many young Gurage will cease to maintain their obligations within the cultural system. In the case of girls, the evident discrimination further reflects the subordinate status of females in the cultural system. In addition discrimination within the larger society makes it highly improbable that a girl with only an academic training would be able to find a job, that is other than prostitution. About the only rationale for sending a girl to school would be the hope of making her a

more suitable match for the small but growing group of Western educated Gurage.

There is little evidence that the regional education system has made an effort to directly focus on situations within the cultural region. Instead, the vast majority of classes are narrowly academic, with major emphasis on the preparation for national exams.[91] The school system at the local level could be a good base for some kind of case method class work in such subjects as health, economics, and agriculture, not to mention geography; this might help to promote mutual understanding and respect between students and the rest of Gurage society.

In summary, the regional education system has developed mainly in the last decade and is almost wholly exotic in approach as well as content. In general it functions to cycle young educated Gurage out of the region to the larger urban centers. Whatever feedback exists would have to be attributed to the strength of the cultural system rather than to the objectives of the formal education system. Even the formal academic objectives are poorly implemented in such provincial schools due to the nineteenth century attitude of the foreign and indigenous teaching staff, and the lack of many basic teaching materials and facilities. One productive approach to confronting the problems of the regional school system would be to establish a school board composed of a cross section of the rural and urban leadership groups, analogous to the composition of the Gurage Road Committee.

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91. In 1968 at Emdeber the only program directed at the rural population was an adult literacy class in the evenings.

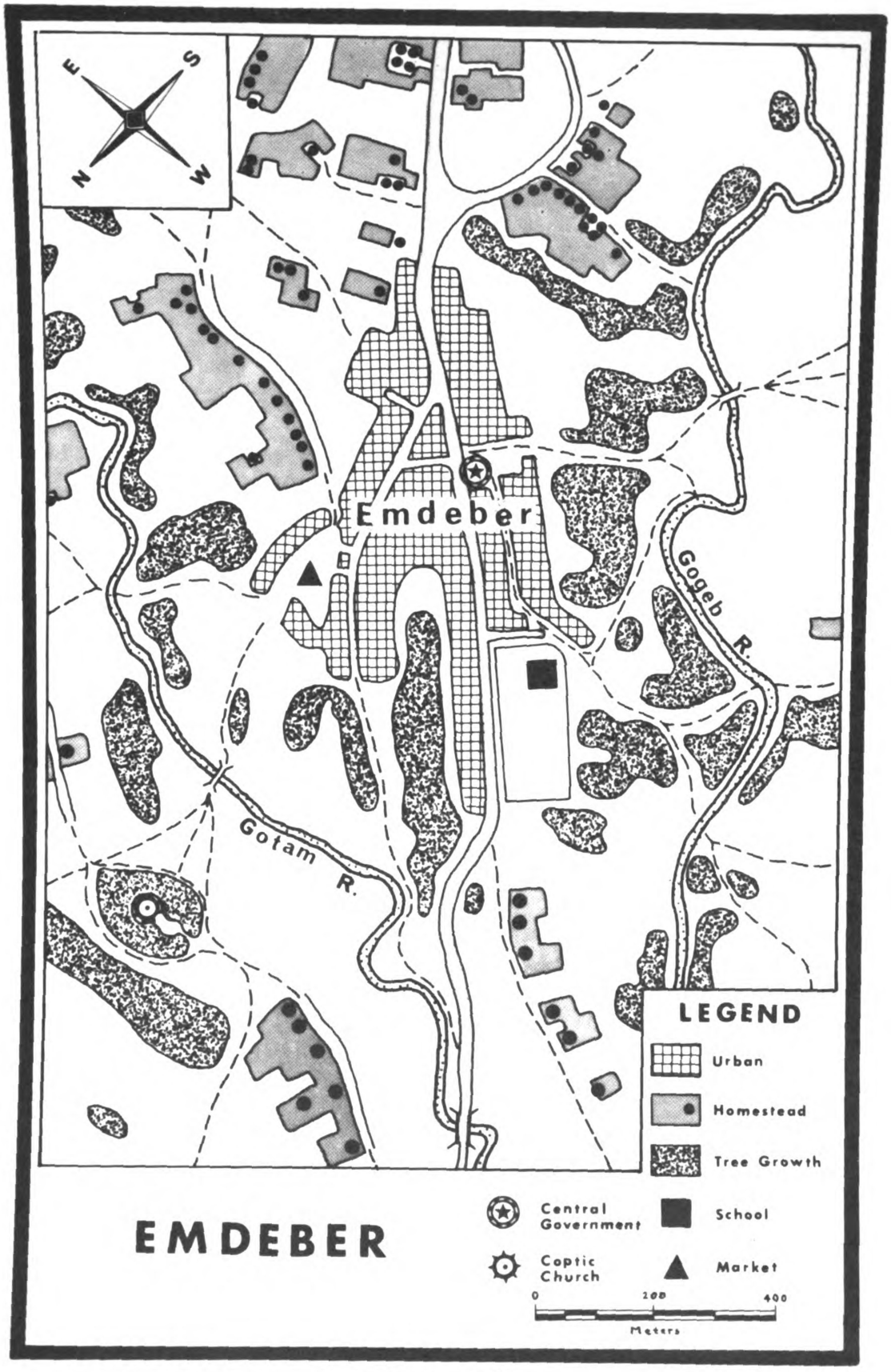
E
S
N
W
Emdeber
Gogeb R.
Gotam R.
LEGEND
Urban
Homestead
Tree Growth
Central Government
School
Coptic Church
Market
0
200
400
Meters
EMDEBER

Figure 19

The Emerging Urban Centers

There are three nodal microregions in the study area which could be characterized as emerging urban centers. The most conspicuous one would be Emdeber followed by the smaller centers of Agannah and Yabrite. Within the general cultural landscape these centers could be distinguished from the surrounding rural settlements on the basis of the increasing proportion of rectangular, corrugated iron roofed, housing units along their central avenue; there would also be a corresponding decrease in the size of ensete cultivation area around each unit, decreasing to zero around many houses in Emdeber. A number of larger buildings might be evident, functionally specialized for administrative, commercial, and religious activities.

The working definition of an urban center decided upon by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Office is also fairly broad and is similarly based on differences between traditional rural settlements and these "other" central places:[92]

> A town is an area in which (1) the buildings and houses are contiguously aligned, i.e., side by side in rows; and there are (2) at least one public bar in which alcoholic beverages are sold; (3) at least one hotel, i.e., a house in which a stranger can pay for a bed for a night; (4) at least one permanent shop selling different kinds of goods; and (5) at least one weekly market.

The town of Emdeber could be used as a kind of prototype for characterizing the emerging urban centers in the study area. In Fig. 19 I

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92. "Towns in Ethiopia," Statistical Bulletin, Vol. I, #1,(Central Statistical Office, Addis Ababa, 1968), pp. ii.

have sketched in the built-up area of Emdeber as it existed in 1968. The table below summarizes some of the demographic and housing statistics from an earlier survey by the Central Statistical Office.

Emdeber Statistics

Demographic

Total population = 890 Sample = 10%

Born in town	51%
Residing less than one year	15%
Residing from one to four years	14%
Residing for more than four years	20%
Gurage speakers	61%
Amharic speakers	37%
Galla speakers	2%
Ethiopian Orthodox	91%
Muslim	9%

Housing

Total number of buildings = 290

Traditional & thatch	30%
Rectangular & corrugated iron	70%
Residential-part time business	92%
Business establishment	8%

Source: C.S.O., 1966

Table III

In addition there was a government administration building, a police station, a school of two thousand students, and church buildings belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and to the Gurage Catholic Mission. We can see from the above table that Emdeber was still a rather small urban center in 1966; as a matter of fact Emdeber had a smaller population than a number of traditional rural villages. However, unlike the rural village a

large proportion of the population is exogenous, the percentage of Amharic speakers is higher,[93] the percentage of non-traditional houses is higher, and there is a number of full time commercial establishments.

As should be obvious from my previous discussion many of the centralized activities and services provided in places like Emdeber are also provided in the rural market places and to a lessor extent within the individual villages. However, only in the urban center are these activities and services provided on a full time basis, and only in the emerging urban centers do we find a rapid annual increase in the number of exotic commercial and service oriented establishments. For example between 1968 and 1969 the government had established a telecommunications-post office building, a modest health clinic, and a large comprehensive secondary school. Gurage businessmen had themselves established four large "inns" which provided alcoholic beaverages, meals, and sleeping quarters; these establishments are oriented toward servicing commercial travelers and various urban residents such as small businessmen, government administration staff, and teachers. An electrical generator was set up and as was mentioned before the Gurage Road Committee began providing public transportation service to Addis Ababa. A good many of the changes mentioned were related to the construction of all-weather connections between Emdeber and the Jimma Road, and between Emdeber and the interior.

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93. Statistics such as the percentage of Amharic speakers are supposed to represent households where Amharic is ordinarily used; this high percentage for Emdeber strikes me as highly unlikely but at a minimum indicates that those being interviewed can speak Amharic.

My reconnaissance surveys of Agannah and Yabrite indicate that they represent an earlier stage in the evolution of an urban center when compared with Emdeber. Agannah is still little more than a large rural market place with a few full time establishments which manage to subsist in between market days. Yabrite is still largely a Muslim religious center with a small weekly market; however, there are a number of full time establishments, electrical service, and a large proportion of non-traditional houses. Both of these centers have dry-weather road connections with the main Gurage road and their immediate hinterlands support some of the highest population densities in the study area, in excess of 300 per square kilometer(Fig. 7).

The locus of innovation in terms of information, goods, and funding for these evolving urban centers is based beyond the traditional cultural region, largely within the urban Gurage group in Addis Ababa. Of course these centers are also supported by the indigenous systems such as the periodic marketing systems and the kinship system which together facilitate social and economic interaction between the rural and urban groups. The central government as an external agency maintains administrative units at each place and also provides limited social and educational services; such support is basically a response to the initiative demonstrated by the urban and rural Gurage leadership who has planned, funded, and supervised the major regional development projects. Because the regional development projects involve interaction with groups and system beyond the traditional cultural region, it is necessary to expand our discussion to the interregional level.

Interregional Interaction

In order to gain some perspective on the urban end of the Gurage urban-rural interaction network, I plan to summarize the social situation of the Gurage in the Addis Ababa region; I find it useful to speak of an Addis Ababa "region" because there are two major Gurage groups, one which lives and works in the built-up area of the city, the other which lives in the surrounding rural hinterland and produces vegetables for the city market.

In 1952 as much as 17% of Addis Ababa's population was classified as Gurage, a large proportion being of second generation standing. With respect to the socialization of Gurage into the larger urban society, it is the Amhara dominated socio-cultural system which provides:[94]

> a framework for the assimulation of diverse tribal groups into a hierarchical status arrangement, with a rank order of low status occupational roles ascribed to tribal groups farthest removed in ethnic and cultural terms from the norms of the upper-status wealthy and prestigious landed aristocracy.

The urban Gurage occupy a socio-economic niche which takes advantage of the traditional Amhara distain for commercial activities; as Shack has observed "the Gurage provide essential technical and semi-skilled craft services and supply non-industrial market goods for all strata of the urban society."[95] The intense participation of Gurage in urban economic activities has led to effective displacement of Arab, Indian, and other

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94. W. Shack, "Urban Tribalism, Urbanization, & the Cultural Process in Ethiopia," Symposium paper, #26, (Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research held at Moscow, 1964), pp. 4.

95. Shack, "The Masqal-Pole," pp. 13.

foreign groups from much of the Addis Ababa central market area; the latter still maintain control of the import-export trade as well as much of the modern central business district.

The trade flow to Addis Ababa from the rural homeland begins with the collection of cash crops by itinerant traders at the market places, followed by transportation in Gurage buses and lorries to the Addis Ababa central market, and the transfer of goods to Gurage house to house peddlers. The Gurage also operate small general stores throughout Addis Ababa as well as a number of other small businesses, most of which operate within the framework of the cultural system:[96]

> In both rural and urban areas Gurage relationships based on kinship and clanship have an economic coefficient: rural kinship behavior is a model of economic behavior in land activities; urban kinship behavior is a model of economic behavior in labour undertakings.

The rural Gurage enclaves surrounding Addis Ababa reflect both of the above statements. These settlements take care of Addis Ababa's horticulture needs, commercially specialized to the production of exotic vegetables. The settlements are composed of migrant Gurage who collectively rent the land from the surrounding Amhara and Galla. The history of these settlements can be traced back for more than three decades and it would seem probably that they will continue to grow in number and economic importance.[97] However, even these Gurage maintain the basic settlement pattern and continue to grow

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96. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

97. R. Horvath, "Around Addis Ababa," Unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, (U.C.L.A., California, 1966), pp. 90-94.

ensete around their farmhouses. Their villages would make interesting case studies for exploring the process of cultural change within a spatially isolated cultural enclave. The fact that these commercially oriented Gurage still maintain their ensete cultivation system supports Shack's major thesis that the plant is central to the whole cultural system. Therefore the existence of this subsistence agricultural system cannot be taken solely as the index for accessing the degree of commercialization over the cultural landscape in the traditional cultural region.

One of the most outstanding aspects of the urban Gurage group is the degree to which it supports the regional rural development projects in the homeland. For example it has been reported that as much as one month's earnings is sent back for such projects as road construction, a donation from Gurage engaged in a wide range of activities from day laborers to generals in the army. Most likely one incentive for the massive funneling of funds back to the rural homeland stems from the realization on the part of urban Gurage of their political vulnerability in the urban situation. With upward mobility largely discouraged, the Gurage should be left with few illusions about their ability to effectively resist politically backed economic exploitation of their enterprises. In this sense it is interesting to observe the evolution of the rural kinship system within the urban situation, an evolving institutional system which provides an alternative strategy to assimulation.

As suggested above the urban associations themselves are similar in structure to their rural counterparts. However, their range of functions

has been expanded to accomodate some of the particular problems of the urban environment. Many of these associations have expanded their membership so as to include all Gurage, although clan and other lineage distinctions are still important. But even more interesting are the special project associations whose membership has been expanded to include other ethnic groups for certain large scale interregional undertakings:[98]

> The Gurage mahebar remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the mahebar form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented mahebar concerned solely with building a road from Alem Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage.

In 1968 the above project was completed and another equally ambitious project was initiated as I've mentioned through the center of the Gurage cultural region to Kambatta. It is important to remember that before pax Aethiopica the Gurage were traditional enemies with all of the surrounding ethnic groups, in addition to their own intergroup warfare. Again, it would prove extremely interesting to study one of these project oriented associations in more detail, as an alternative institution to those generated by exotic nation-building extension units.

There are a number of other systems that I've already discussed in the study area whose highest order central place would be located at Addis

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98. Levine, see footnote, pp. 279.

Ababa at the interregional level. These would include the Ethiopian Orthodox religious system, the educational system, and the national jural-political system. However, I do not plan to carry my discussion further than merely identifying that the locus of power for these systems is external to the Gurage cultural region.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of the Gurage cultural landscape has been organized around a methodology which assumes that a finite portion of the earth's surface such as a cultural landscape can be most readily approached and understood in terms of the physical forms present, their functional relevance within the larger cultural system, and the processes which have generated the forms over time. Several other assumptions are of key importance: that a cultural landscape can be hierarchically classified into various sets of spatial subregions and that a particular form or pattern is best explained at its spatial level of manifestation, that a cultural landscape can be best explained in terms of an evolving adaptive spatial system rather than a homeostatic one, that an inductive approach beginning with the most general local level patterns would be most appropriate for my discussion.

In retrospect I find that the methodological approach is most strictly followed in the sections dealing with the homestead and the village. The forms and patterns present are readily described in geometric terms and can be classified into a limited number of categories; at the same time it should be pointed out that little attention has been focused on patterns of variation such as are evident in the older, more overcrowded villages. The functional explanation also assumes a high degree of uniformity throughout the study area, an assumption which is supported by field notes on the agricultural system but which could be considered questionable for broader cultural generalizations on the basis on linguistics research on the development of Gurage dialects. The process approach

was especially effective in the treatment of changes in architecture and cash crop farming. Of course I'm not suggesting that the discussion in these sections is as complete as it could be with further fieldwork, but that I would anticipate few problems in a more rigorous treatment.

At higher levels of organization it was much more difficult to treat each system uniformly in terms of form, function, and process. Part of the difficulty can be attributed to the variance in the quality of the available data from system to system. This problem is particularly relevant to my discussion of the periodic marketing system. It was a fairly simple task to identify larger and more important centers such as the one at Emdeber but considerably more difficult to characterize other market places within the system except in a rather tentative and incomplete fashion. Considerably more fieldwork would be required just to answer basic questions such as the size and shape of the market hinterland, interregional connections, and the characteristics of trading populations. Specific processes such as the diffusion of the use of paper currency and the sale of exotic goods are discussed but are not spatially defined.

Other systems at the regional level are discussed more fully, and follow more closely the general outline of the methodology. For example the discussion of the jural-political system begins with a description of the spatial properties of the clan district, followed by its functional relationship to higher and lower levels of power. In this example the treatment in terms of an evolving adaptive system seems must promising. I was fortunate enough to have enough background information so that I

could trace the growth of the system(in terms of space as well as institutions) and identify the probable source of the model, as well as to assess the relative effect of the internal and external forces on the development of the system. This section is also a good example of ordering the discussion so that there can be maximum overlap between sections; the subsequent discussion of the evolution of the animistic cult system is clearly related to the evolution of the jural-political system, most clearly in terms of explaining the significance of the transfer of several highest order central places to Chaha.

In the treatment of the indigenous cult systems, I encountered another type of problem related to the structuring of the discussion. Although the Waq cult is fully manifested as an institutional subsystem at the clan level, there appears to be no analogous unit for the other two cults at the same level. Strictly following the methodology, one could logically postpone their discussion until a section at the interclan level. On the other hand it also makes sense to discuss the three cults in sequence as overlapping systems since the basic model for the Waq cult is closely followed by the other two, since two of the cults are complements of one another, and since their history of evolution within the region is so closely interrelated. Using a summary treatment at the general regional level made it easier to deal with this type of problem.

The old Amhara military colonies were also a special type of problem. First of all their functional role has changed radically through time from dominant administrative nodes to isolated apolitical enclaves. In terms of

the methodology the system changed from one which was a center of innovation(in reality a subcenter for Addis Ababa) to one which was adapting to the surrounding indigenous one. Still, from the available sources it is not at all clear how the military colonies interacted with their surrounding hinterlands, and how this interaction changed through time. There is also an assumption of uniformity of interaction for the set of military colonies which might not be supported by new field research; one might expect considerable degree of difference between interaction in Christian regions of Muher, Muslim regions of Ennemor, and the strongly animistic regions.

Spatial analysis above the village level was for the most part precluded by the lack of field data, not to mention the lack of a well controled base map. Still, as a reconnaissance effort, this study does provide some insight into the evolution of the cultural landscape which could be the basis for further studies and more sophisticated research techniques. For example, considerable more work could be done on the indigenous transportation system, the central place systems, and patterns of village growth. Another promising research topic would be the development and economic impact of the modern transportation network. For much of this work it would be necessary to expand the study area so that its boundaries coincided more closely with those of the present cultural region. One interesting research project would have to do with the definition of the boundaries of the cultural region, expressed in terms of comparative spatial analysis of the surrounding cultural landscape with that of the Gurage.

In spite of the reconnaissance nature of much of the research data, I believe that the present work demonstrates quite well the usefulness of the methodology outlined above. Unlike many of the methodologies adopted by cultural geographers, the present composite one is comprehensive enough to accomodate a variety of field situations. Not only are field situations defined in familar form and functional terms but they are also explained from the perspective of process, systems, culture, regions, and scale. I would think that many cultural geographers would find the methodology useful for conceptionalizing approaches to field research, as well as for analyzing their data and communicating their results to other people. An additional advantage of the present work is that it has synthesized its methodology in general enough terms so as to facilitate understanding by researchers in other disciplines.

APPENDIX A

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The quantitative information in this study consists of five variables. Four of these are areal variables such as the proportion of housecrop cultivation, tree growth, pasture, and erosion while the fifth is a point variable, the number of houses. The information was determined directly from a set of aerial photographs; photo overlays were squared off into $\frac{1}{4}km^2$ cells and the data collected and itemized for each cell. In order to minimize personal bias in the analysis of the distribution of variables selected, a standard computor program[99] was adopted to determine the cell size which best approximated a normal distribution for each variable; this was accomplished by having the computor construct histograms for a range of aggregated cell sizes beginning with the $\frac{1}{4}km^2$ cell. For example the distribution of houses(from which the population density map was derived) best approximated a normal distribution when a cell size of $4km^2$ was used. The photo overlays were then fitted onto the base map, overlapping cells were omitted, and isolines were drawn on the basis of standard deviation units. Again it should be stressed that the resulting maps are of reconniassance quality, the base map being drafting from an uncontroled mosaic of aerial photographs.

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99. "Dap 1,"CISSR Program 193, Computor Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1970.

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