Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire

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Le sacrifice V

Summaries of sacrificial rites described in the preceding four issues of *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire*

Résumés des rites sacrificiels décrits dans les quatre numéros précédents de Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire

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S U M M A R I E S O F S A C R I F I C I A L R I T E S
D E S C R I B E D
I N T H E P R E C E D I N G F O U R I S S U E S O F
S Y S T E M E S D E P E N S E E E N A F R I Q U E N O I R E

par Noal Mellott

The touchstone for writing these summaries has been to present substantial information about the rites and acts that have to do -- directly or indirectly (via myths, divination, etc.) -- with sacrifices. Derived interpretations and theorizations have, at best, been suggested. A merely formal presentation of article contents has been zealously avoided. Only articles written in French have been summarized herein.

A language as succinct as possible has been adopted. To this end, the following terms have been systematically used: sacrificer (who brings the sacrifice and, in most cases, is also the beneficiary), sacrificer (who officiates and, usually, immolates the victim), spirit (any immaterial being unless specifically identified as an ancestor, Supreme Being or ghost), and altar (an object upon or next to which sacrifices are made).

Succinctness also governs the typographical presentation. Quotation marks indicate a direct translation, usually from the vernacular but sometimes from French. Since vernacular terms are translated only the first time they appear, summaries of articles by the same author should, advisedly, be read together. The same can be said about P. Jespers and D. Jonckers on the Minyanka. Parentheses, besides their usual functions, set off interpretations. For instance, "three sacks (the primordial placenta)" can be read "three sacks representing or symbolizing the primordial placenta".

Quelques opérations sacrificielles liées aux géomancies bambara et minyanka du Mali

Some Sacrificial Operations Related to Minyanka and Bambara Geomancy (Mali)

Christian BERTAUX and Philippe JESPERs
Cahier V, 1981, pp. 71-98 + 4 photographs

At the start of initiation into *tiendala* divination, the diviner gives a list of the sixteen geomantic figures ("children of the sand" or "of truth") in El Zenati's order (*i.e.*, the first two lines, both written from left to right, have eight and four figures respectively; the third line, from right to left, four) to be learned along with their names as well as their "houses" (spaces where they can be located). The assembly of diviners acknowledges the initiate's status when he offers a white sheep to be immolated on a jar buried inside the oldest diviner's compound. From this point onwards, Bambara and Minyanka rituals differ, particularly as to the initiate's relation to the geomantic figures.

The Bambara initiate bathes in water that is specially prepared with sixteen ficus leaves upon each of which has been drawn one of the figures. Since this "tree of palabers" protects from the sun, the initiate incorporates into his own humidity (water of his afterbirth) the *ja* (double) of the figures. Subject henceforth to certain observances, he must, for example, sit on the hide of the sacrificed sheep, and not on the bare ground, during divinatory sessions. Each year during the assembly's ceremony, he renews the sacrifice, often replacing the sheep by a chicken.

When the Minyanka diviner goes with his initiate into the nearby bush to a citron tree (where the spirits of the founders of geomancy dwell) in order to "open the eyes" of the sixteen figures, he takes along his *kgngbarada* ("mouth of the gourd of the inside"), a triangular piece of calabash on the inside of which have been carved the sixteen figures in El Zenati's order. Through a hole in the lower angle runs a white cotton thread tied to a white cowry shell ("the mouth of the king of the spirits"). The diviner is assisted by a witness from his assembly. Nine operations are performed at the foot of this tree.

First of all, the diviner cleans a space on the ground, works its surface with water and spreads out the divinatory sand. Silently, he touches his talisman as the cowry swings over the sand; this gesture is often repeated during meditative pauses. Secondly, he draws, with his index and middle fingers, the sixteen figures in order. Because of the water, the figures can be located in "houses" and thus obtain a *ja*.

Thirdly, from the assistant, the diviner takes a white rooster offered by the initiate and swings it counterclockwise above the sand. Praying to the founders of geomancy, deceased diviners and the king of the spirits, he offers this rooster as well as a white hen in the assistant's hand. These "chickens that search for the eyes of the sand" transfer the figures from the talisman onto the divinatory sand. Fourthly, the diviner horizontally glides the sacrificial knife next to the chicken's neck and then vertically slits its throat. Starting in the upper right corner, he moves the chicken, which must not touch the sand, above the three lines. Its blood makes an *S* ("road of blood") in the sand and brings down *ni* (soul) into these "children". The cross, a

sign of birth, associates the chickens with the figures inside the talisman; the *S* associates the figures on the sand with a mythical snake.

Fifthly, the diviner erases the sand. A sixth operation explicitly refers to the rite of burying a newborn child's afterbirth, which contains the "words" of its existence. The diviner draws a long, vertical line in the sand. This figure (*talikè*, "master of the house of the children") leads the initiate toward the understanding of divinatory words and signs. In a seventh operation, the diviner practises ordinary divination in order to learn whether the sacrifices have been accepted. He draws four (not necessarily different) figures out of which he almost mathematically establishes a table with sixteen houses, each with a figure (At least one figure appears more than once).

Eightly, he makes a *kngbarada* for his initiate, who may then divine by himself. The materials for this talisman are related to pregnancy and to the world of uncircumcised children, hence also to the spirits of the bush. Finally, the chickens, cooked by young boys, are eaten by the participants.

Le sacrifice consenti à regret, aperçu sur le sacrifice chez les Santal de l'Orissa (Inde)

The Sacrifice Consented with Regret, a Glance at Sacrifices among the Santal in Orissa (India)

Marine CARRIN-BOUEZ

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 135-149

A person manifests his intention to sacrifice by "promising a fowl" which the priest marks by cutting a claw. The day before the sacrifice, unless it is to an evil divinity, the sacrificer must bathe and observe restrictions on food intake and sexual relations. Women may not sacrifice (nor be possessed), for slaughtering and butchering an animal is incompatible with reproduction.

In healing ceremonies, a sick person pays a diviner-priest who contacts the divinities through possession. In a rite that inverts initiation when he was symbolically cut up and then put back together, the diviner draws blood from 55 points on his body, concentrates the illness at a point and then takes it out by biting. He thus captures the evil divinity in an earthen jar that he carries to the forest. His blood, a substitute for human sacrifice, is more effective than that of animals because it satisfies cannibalistic divinities.

Libations and immolations are often made by descendants to their common ancestors or divinities. The elder of the group, usually a local subclan, performs the immolation in an untilled field and recalls the group's settlement on its land. These groups are differentiated by the names of their divinities, the choice of victims, the ways of immolating them, and ritual prescriptions that refer to their respective myths (usually to a ritual fault which, first committed when the clan was founded, has become a norm).

In village sacrifices, the village priest immolates the fowl and goats offered by households. He risks divine wrath for any ritual

error. Each year, he offers his blood to the ancestral divinity of the village chief.

Once the spot on the ground is cleaned, the divinities are invited to come inside a geometric rice flour drawing where they are represented by vermillion points. As a sign that they accept the sacrifice, the victim has to eat some ritual rice. The animal is marked on the forehead and sprinkled with purificatory water. After its immolation, the priest pours its blood from left to right, north to south, upon the space representing the divinity being addressed. The other divinities are also offered some blood. In public sacrifices, the meat is eaten inside the sacred grove; the roasted head, by the priest.

Unlike among Hindus, sacrifices among the Santal derive not from a single model that shapes the entire society but from several models that refer to an ambiguous ideology of sacrifice, which both affirms and denies the existence of divinities.

Le statut de l'animal dans le système sacrificiel des Gourmantché
(Haute-Volta)

The Status of Animals in the Gurma Sacrificial System (Upper Volta)

Michel CARTRY

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 141-175 (First Part)

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 17-58 + 8 photographs (Second Part)

Cahier V, 1981, pp. 195-216 (Third Part)

First Part

The Gurma offer sacrifices to "fetishes" (the 333 *buli*, term designating the spirits as well as their altars) and ancestors. Women may not sacrifice; any circumcised man may. Husbands normally sacrifice for their wives.

The classification of animals as fit or unfit for sacrifice is an essential characteristic of a culture. For the Gurma, four species are fit: chickens (the most frequent victims), goats and sheep (both usually offered by families) and cattle (a few head per year in a village). In compliance with criteria of sex and of procreative status, hens, cocks, rams, he-goats (as well as nulliparous she-goats) and bulls may be immolated if they are not sterile. Victims may exceptionally be, for Berdoiri (mother and father of all *buli*), guinea fowl and, in cases of witchcraft, dogs, cats or wild animals.

What attributes other than domesticity do the preceding four species have in common? Young children are given chickens to raise; and if their flocks grow, they will be able to acquire sheep or goats. These three species are traditionally used to appraise and obtain other goods and to establish customary, particularly matrimonial, bonds. They are assets -- goods bearing a return -- that can be used to buy that supreme sign of wealth, cattle. The reproduction of these four species is controlled less to yield meat or produce than to increase net worth.

In contrast, cats, dogs, donkeys and horses are not a sign of acquired wealth. They are mainly received as gifts, tribute or heritance. Horses, for instance, figure in the founding myth of the Gurma kingdom. Acquired through inheritance, hence a symbol of status by birth, they may not be sold without offending ancestors. Only chiefs and certain aristocrats may own or ride them. These nonsacrificial domestic animals are not replaced when they die; for they are not quantities, and their value does not depend upon their reproductivity.

At first sight, the Gurma sacrificer seems to suffer a loss that goes to pay off a claim by a fetish. In fact however, the victim might belong to a kinsman rather than to the sacrificer. This and other role shifts prove the inadequacy of existing theories of sacrifice, among which the most interesting is G. Bataille's conception of the loss of "living things".

Second Part

Geomancy always precedes a *parli* ("sacrifice") in order to learn whether a sacrifice is necessary and, if so, to identify the *buli* and animal(s). After interrogating the earth, the diviner scrapes the inside of a small piece of calabash with a knife and carves, from right to left, two lines of three to six signs each, unlike the figures used in geomancy. He then "attaches the calabash" by striking its edge with his knife, and gives it to the client.

The top line of this *ko'ye'djanga* ("chicken-piece-of-calabash") refers to the *buli* with established cults. These *buli*, kept by "masters of *parli*" who lend them for sacrifices, are related to certain of the sacrificer's ancestors.

Signs on the bottom line designate animals from among the four sacrificial species. No sign is repeated twice. An animal is immolated if and only if its sign is barred. The first three signs as well as the first barred sign, if there is one, refer to chickens. The first two signs are never barred.

Chickens are depicted by nineteen signs based upon four tokens indicative of color (red, white, black, any color) to which other marks may be added to specify real or imaginary anatomical traits. Each of these signs bears a compound name with "chicken" as root and with affixes pertaining to these traits. The Gurma distinguish between the names of these signs and the ordinary names of chickens. Out of the twelve signs with names different from those used in everyday language, six refer to imaginary fowl.

The four-footed species are represented by the same sign with two variants. The sign of the goat excludes that of any other quadruped. That of a bull is always both barred and preceded by that of a ram.

This calabash list and a chicken egg are always present during a *parli*. If there is no barred sign on the bottom line, the *parli* is a *padipienli*; otherwise, a *padita*.

Take the example of a *padita* in which a chicken is to be immolated at a given fetish's place (or on the road leading there). The sacrificer crouches with the calabash list nearby, his first wife is on her knees, and a child holds the fowl. After pouring water to "wash out the mouths" of the ancestors and *buli*, the sacrificer, to the beat of his knife upon the ground, invokes Otienu (God), the fetish and the related ancestor. He recounts to them the divinatory session. After using an egg for unbarred signs, he takes hold of a chicken as he reads the first barred sign. This chicken does not, however, necessarily have the traits designated by the sign! The sacrificer makes wordplays with the name of its signs. Once the chicken's body has been attributed the traits of the sign, he asks the fetish to convey the message embodied in the chicken. Requesting forgiveness for the knife, he cuts the fowl's throat and moves the body counterclockwise so that the blood flows over the altar as he invites the fetish to eat. He throws the chicken down. If it dies on its back, the *parli* is accepted.

The sacrificer plucks the breast and back feathers and sticks them vertically onto the altar. He then plucks the tail and wing feathers and arranges them horizontally around the altar. The fetish is thus "armed" and given a "territory". The sacrificer takes the calabash list and breaks it up while, speaking and acting faster and faster, he declares it to be the *buli*'s enemy that has to be utterly destroyed. As he sticks the bits onto the fetish, he declares that he is offering "chicks", the same term used to refer to certain geomantic figures. This destruction frees the attached signs so that the fetish can transmit them to Otienu, who does not accept the sacrifice unless he recognizes an original sign therein. If the same *padita* has to be performed several times, the list will be destroyed at the final ceremony.

When they cut up the chicken, the children set aside the spurs, beak and skin of the claws but throw away the gallbladder. The fowl is broiled on a spit along with its liver, gizzard and intestines. Once cooked, these organs are put back inside. The sacrificer takes snips of these organs, the middle claws, a piece from the mouth, and some meat from the back and wings. He holds all these bits as a child pours water over them. He then sticks them onto the altar as he tells the fetish that he is giving him raw meat. These broiled bits correspond to those taken from the "raw" body (meat from the back to the back feathers, liver to gallbladder, etc.). What is poured over or stuck onto the altar ("put into the *buli*'s mouth") represents the animal's vital functions. The chicken has been utterly destroyed -- it is now only a sign. The sacrificer takes a piece of the liver and eats it; he gives some to his wife if the sacrifice is on her behalf.

What is lost through the immolation? Gurma women kneel to bear children so that the blood, likened to sacrificial blood, flows upon the earth. Rather than being a murder, immolation reenacts the midwife's gesture as she cuts the umbilical cord. The victim in childbirth is the placenta, which contains original signs. The hypothesis is advanced that the sacrificial animal, loaded with signs from the calabash list, is a substitute for the placenta.

Third Part

During a *parli*, a chicken egg is always emptied. This act is described

as a murder. The sacrificer, crouching, reads the first sign from the bottom line of the calabash list, asks Otienu pardon for the knife and reminds the earth of its responsibility for having prescribed the sacrifice. With his knife, he opens the shell and throws drops of egg upon the altar as he addresses the fetish by completing the formula "In my hand is..." with the name of the chicken of the unbarred sign. While making wordplays with this name, he stirs inside the shell and throws more drops onto the altar. As he reads the subsequent unbarred signs, he repeats the same operations until the egg is empty. If he comes upon a barred sign, he takes hold of the animal to be immolated. In a *padipienli*, he holds the same egg throughout the ceremony that ends as he sticks bits of the broken up calabash list to the egg on the altar. In a *padita*, a sign is barred, an animal is immolated, and the bits of calabash are stuck onto the altar that has been covered with egg and blood.

Comparisons with other ceremonies clarify the meanings both of this egg rite and of sacrificial death. In the *tampugu* (from "prostration"), the same prayers and wordplays are made from the chicken signs that a diviner has carved on a piece of calabash. Nonetheless, neither an egg nor a physical animal is present, and furthermore, there is no killing and no *parli*.

During a *badu*, necessarily celebrated on "days that Otienu has separated for himself", animals are immolated as in a *padita*, but the egg (and its sacrifice) as well as the calabash list (and the offering via its signs) are missing. A *badu* is a public ceremony that follows the prescriptions not of divination but of a liturgical code. During the firstfruit ceremony for instance, the chief offers the new millet to the village's fetish tree and, after a libation of water mixed with millet flour, sacrifices three white victims: a rooster, ram and bull. Afterward, lineage elders offer new millet to their lineages' fetishes, pour libations and sacrifice white roosters. A liturgy also presides over an eldest daughter's wedding, and divination is not necessary to learn the identities of the *buli* (The "fetish of the doorway" is called upon to transfer procreation from the woman's lineage to her husband's), of the ancestors (all of them) or of the animal (seven chickens provided by the husband's family). *Padita* and *badu* victims do not have the same status. Describing or playing with the names of the latter would wrongly imply that the *buli* have asked for them. How different from a *parli* for which the diviner has to find out what the fetish wants to eat! The sacrificer's relationship to the world and to the genealogical order is not the same in a *parli* as in a *badu*.

Everything that happens originates in the "signs of the beginning" (*kikildiani*) that the Great Mother (or God) has drawn in her womb like the lines on the inside of a calabash. Whatever happens comes from *tagama*, the creative "power" in the world's belly. Rites are effective only if they bring this power down into the world, but this descent depends upon the original signs. Celebrated on "separated" days associated with the time of birth, a *badu* marks the separation of events (which thereafter follow their course) from the signs that have generated them. In the case of a *parli*, there is a request for which *tagama* has to come down; the diviner has to find the attachment between the original signs of the world and the signs of the sacrificer's destiny. In order to make visible the original signs in the world's belly, he scrapes the inside

of the piece of calabash before carving other signs therein. At the end of the *parli*, the *buli* transmit the signs on the broken up piece of calabash to Otienú.

What is killed in the egg? The Gurma affirm that the animals of the unbarred signs are in the egg. Hence, a bull cannot be "sacrificed in the egg" for its sign is always barred. Since sex and procreative status determine fitness for sacrifice, why can nulliparous she-goats be immolated? In this case, what is lost is not merely a head of livestock but all possible offspring. For the Gurma, an egg has the greatest procreative potential. At least two chickens are always sacrificed "in the egg". At least two lineages are necessary for reproduction. What is sacrificed in the egg is what contains offspring.

Le sacrifice chez les Bambara et les Malinke

Sacrifice among the Bambara and Malinke (Mali, Senegal, Guinea)

Youssef CISSE

Cahier V, 1981, pp. 23-60

Sacrifices (*sònni*) are acts by which people purify their hearts (*sòðñ*) and submit (*sòðñ*) to God. They reenact the four sacrifices that God made in the beginning.

Through successive signs, God created the universe into which he placed other signs to represent the circulation of souls and of *nyama* (life-force) between himself and his creatures. He then created a pair of twins, Mouso Koroni and Pemba. One day when God refused to tell what he liked most in creation, Mouso Koroni angrily jumped into the cosmos after pushing her brother. Their umbilical cord snapped just as they landed on earth. They danced obscenely. God uprooted their tree and threw it down. It split into splinters, except its heart (*penpele*). Each splinter became a pair of mixed twin giants who also blasphemed. In a first sacrifice, God made heaven and earth collide. Many giants perished, the survivors became dwarfs.

Unharméd, Mouso Koroni decided to transgress God's three prerogatives. First of all, she had sexual intercourse with her brother. She transgressed a second time by tearing Pemba's foreskin with her teeth and her clitoris with her fingernails. Their lewd acts threatened to destroy the universe. In a second -- the only "true" -- sacrifice, God created a white ram with black shanks, collar and head (except a white star on its forehead), killed it with lightning, and cut it up (an act at the origin of the signs of woman and man). Its blood revived creation. God sent Faro and Bemba, her twin brother, to earth on a gold boat that contained the signs of all living beings. They were to teach seven commandments, the sixth of which was to sacrifice only on altars erected in God's name. Meanwhile, Mouso Koroni, together with the dwarfs, had usurped God's third prerogative: to learn of events to come (by consulting the *penpele*) and to know the secret of plants. To counter them, God let Faro use the heavenly bodies to predict the future.

Old and ugly, Mouso Koroni instigated "flying beings" to look for the secret of eternal youth. As they flew upwards, God let an incandescent piece of the fifth heaven drop upon them. This third sacri-

fice wiped out many species and caused others to shrink. Two fragments of heaven fell onto earth and became the first altars, which Faro entrusted to the smith. Moussou Koroni acted worse than ever. In a deluge, she drowned as did all her children, except the dwarfs who had walled themselves up in a cave. Any living being that touched the prow of Faro's boat was changed into its sign. When the waters began withdrawing at the heliacal rising of Sirius, Faro sowed the signs. God resurrected the ram, and Faro sacrificed it again.

The "true" sacrifice foreshadowed the birth of a new humanity. Resurrection is an essential characteristic of the "true and good" sacrifice.

Le sacrifice selon Hubert et Mauss

Sacrifice according to Hubert and Mauss

Jean-Paul COLLEYN

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 23-42

According to these two members of the Durkheim school of sociology, sacrifice is a process of communication, through the ceremonial destruction of a victim, between the sacred and nonsacred spheres. The sacrificer contracts an exchange -- without giving himself -- in order to receive life-force. Society transfigures the individual throughout this process.

Historically, sacrifice would be a recent development because it presupposes the sacred/nonsacred dichotomy and a conception of pure spirits. Implicit in sacrifice is the idea of immolating a god, an advanced form of sacrifice. The repetition of sacrifices, in particular agricultural ones, led to attributing a recurrent personality to the victim. A myth, that was then created to describe the on-going life of this periodic personality, acted back upon the ritual: the victim became a divinity.

Hubert and Mauss describe sacrifices in three phases. Preliminary rites sanctify the involved persons, places, victims, objects or periods of time. Next, immolation brings the victim into closer touch with the sacred sphere, and energy circulates between the sacred and nonsacred spheres. Finally, what has been sanctified, hence made dangerous, must be desanctified before the return to everyday life. In contrast with initiatory ceremonies during which the first phase is most important because initiates must come into contact with what is sacred, firstfruit (or firstborn) ceremonies emphasize the third phase during which the sacred quality is removed from the harvest (or herd) so that it may be consumed.

This model says little about the divinity at the other end of the circuit. It fails to clarify the distinction between the sacred and nonsacred spheres. Though essential to this model, the notion of oblation, a sanctified offering, does not seem pertinent, for example, to human sacrifices under divine kingships.

Introduction à de nouvelles recherches sur le sacrifice chez les Dogon
 Introduction to Further Research into Sacrifice among the Dogon (Mali)
 Germaine DIETERLEN
Cahier II, 1976, pp. 43-50

Sacrifice makes *nyama* (life-force) circulate in order to purify and reorganize the universe under a new "word". *Omo* ("living") stands opposite *puru* ("impurity"), which diminishes life-force. All sacrifices reenact the primordial sacrifice and resurrection of Nommo. *Bulo* ("sacrifice") is related to *bulo* ("to be reborn").

The brewing process reproduces all phases of this mythical sacrifice. During firstfruit ceremonies, two concoctions -- the one uncooked (water from a pool where Nommo lives, rice flour, and millet from the priest's field), the other cooked (water and sorghum from which the embryos have been removed) -- are poured upon group altars. Yeast, symbolizing the placenta, is added to what is left over of the second concoction. After fermentation -- the revitalization of both Nommo and of the grain killed by cooking -- libations are poured and beer is drunk. The finality is not to offer firstfruit to a divinity but to protect seed grain by storing its life-force in Nommo's collarbone. The priests distribute this grain at sowing time after *nyama* has been brought back into it through another ceremony.

Réflexions sur la parole, le sacrifice et la mort dans quatre populations de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

Reflections on Language, Sacrifice and Death among Four Populations of West Africa (Dogon, Bambara, Malinke and Fula)

Germaine DIETERLEN
Cahier V, 1981, pp. 61-70

The effectiveness of sacrifice depends upon words. Participants assume no special attitude during libations and immolations but fall silent when elders pray. According to Bambara, Malinke and Dogon myths, God created the world through his word by drawing primordial signs involving the four elements (water, earth, fire and air). Just as these signs evolved so as to represent finished objects, so also words externalize the life in the Creator's womb and, once spoken, go to meet their end.

According to the Bambara, Faro taught people not only how to speak but also that they would die. According to the Dogon, the Third Ancestor received, in a pool, the Nommo's "words" to be transmitted to mankind; however, the Fourth Ancestor learned the language of the spirits of the bush, transgressed, was sacrificed, resurrected, then, after another transgression, died. Likewise for the Malinke, the Third Ancestor received, in a pool, Faro's "words", but the Fourth Ancestor transgressed and died. According to the Fula, the last initiatory lesson given to Silé, the first herder, explained how to kill a lion, burn its carcass and make a talisman that would induce the spirit of the waters to reveal the true name of cattle.

The Dogon Sigui ceremonies, held during seven consecutive years every sixty years, celebrate the revelation of language after which mankind drank beer from millet harvested in the original, collective field.

Operations for making millet into beer correspond to phases in Nommo's sacrifice and resurrection (grinding the grain, to cutting his body up into constellations, etc.).

Le sacrifice comme procès rituel chez les Massa (Tchad)

Sacrifice as a Ritual Process among the Massa (Chad)

Françoise DUMAS-CHAMPION

Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 95-115

The *porra* is an occasional sacrifice whereas a *divinna* establishes an ongoing relationship through a flock that the sacrificer rears for the spirit. A *divinna* also links participants, who will inherit it, through the sacrificial meal. Otherwise, these two sacrifices are identical. Neither necessarily calls for bloodshed. Sacrifices, especially *porra*, "cool" the sacrificer who either comes into touch with a cleansing element (he might dip his right foot -- or she, her left foot -- into the victim's blood) or has his troubles extirpated (a cricket might be swung over his head).

"Cool" animals (e.g., sheep) are offered to "cool" spirits (e.g., Lawna, the Creator); and "hot" (e.g., goats), to "hot" (e.g., Matna, Death). To constitute a sacrificial flock for female spirits, only she-animals are used. To a male spirit, a he-animal is first dedicated and, when sacrificed, replaced by a female that, when immolated, is replaced by a male, etc. The offspring belong to the same spirit's flock as their mother. If a dedicated animal disappears before being immolated, the sacrificer, while waiting to replace it, petitions the spirit for a delay by offering eggs or cereals. As the spirits become more exacting, more valuable animals must be dedicated: at first chickens, then she-goats or else ewes, and ultimately cattle. If inedible animals classified as bitter (like dogs and crickets) are to be "sacrificed", they are simply abandoned lest they should seek vengeance. Located in the blood, bitterness is the essential characteristic of mankind.

A dedicated animal may also be offered in a *twala* that maintains the relationship with the spirit by periodic sacrifices, usually performed at harvest or sowing time. In contrast, a *divinna* always comes out of divination, which determines the identity of the troublesome spirit who must be persuaded to accept an animal in exchange for the sacrificer's life. The nature of objects offered in some *divinna* (e.g., a bead from the sacrificer's belt placed inside a pierced egg that is thrown away in offering) reveals the act of substitution behind the sacrificial act itself.

The first sacrifice in a *twala* series entails killing an animal and making offerings at the spirit's abode. In the case of a *twala* to Mununda (who dwells in water), the sacrificer, usually a woman, takes a ewe from the sacrificial flock, and at the same time, replaces it. Her husband cuts its throat and, orientating its head, lets its blood run onto the ground. After the meat has been boiled, the sacrificer takes a bit from each part of the animal and offers it with millet beer and cereal near a body of water. The hide is offered to Mununda's husband to keep him from being envious. In subsequent sacrifices, bits of meat are simply thrown outside the home since Mununda is now present.

The oldest brother performs sacrifices for younger brothers. Just as an older brother may not take the wife of a deceased younger brother, so also he (and his wife) may not partake of his brothers' (or their wives') sacrificial meals. Likewise, a mother refuses the meat from a sacrifice on behalf of her offspring; and the principal wife, that from one on behalf of cowives. The number of participants at and the etiquette for sacrificial meals vary according to the entreated spirit.

The children inherit their parents' *divinna* at which they were commensal. This inheritance normally runs from the deceased father to the oldest son and from the deceased mother to all daughters. In a *divinna* at marriage however, a daughter gives a hen and an egg to her mother. The latter must immolate the fowl before it has laid. She throws some feathers, along with the egg shell and some cereal, outside the home as she asks the spirit to make her daughter cool and fecund. The daughter does not partake of the meal since this ceremony frees her from the obligation to observe her mother's sacrifices.

Sacrifice et homicide en pays massa (Tchad)

Sacrifice and Homicide in Massaland (Chad)

Françoise DUMAS-CHAMPION

Cahier V, 1981, pp. 175-193

After a homicide, the killer goes into seclusion for three days, uses "bitter" medicines, and eats "bitter" or "dead" foods in order to repel the victim's *tokora* (power of revenge). Both the victim's corpse and the killer are avoided lest this *tokora* should turn against whoever happens upon them.

The victim is buried in a crouching position with his eyes open and his right arm above his head. The index finger, to which his spear blade has been tied, sticks out of the ground. Three days after the homicide, his kinsmen set a *tomkolla*, a straw braiding with ashes from his fireplace and dog dung inside. If his *farana* (community and combat unit) is too weak to wreak revenge, the *tomkolla* is placed at the enemy's border, and at night, the victim's spear blade is stuck into the roof of the killer's home. If the killer is unknown, the *tomkolla* and blade are placed in the bush. If the victim was a kinsman, the *tomkolla* is put outside the camp, and Matna is held responsible for the homicide. Otherwise, the warriors of the victim's *farana* carry the *tomkolla* and spear to battle in the murderer's land.

If the victim was a kinsman, the two related families share the costs of a *tap bam'na* ("the hands brought together"), a sacrifice to be made about three months after the burial. The animal (bull, calf or he-goat) is led from the dead man's house to the place of the *tomkolla*. The animal is cut up with its skin. All parts are cooked, even the horns are dipped into the boiling water. A bit is taken from each part and placed next to the *tomkolla* while the sacrificer prays for reconciliation. The bones must not be broken, an act that would separate the two families. Only their members partake of the meal along with the killer who, returned from exile, must eat the animal's head. After being sprinkled with a special water, participants abandon utensils and

leave without looking backwards. The killer goes into exile for a year.

A *divinna* is performed about a month after any homicide that a killer has committed on his own land. The spot is "hot" and, if a field, must be forsaken. He "redeems his fault" by giving a she-goat to the "chief of lands" who, in his absence, immolates it following the ritual for ceremonies to Nagata (Earth). Meat is distributed among elders of the lineages living on the land. The murderer and his family receive nothing. The chief keeps the internal organs, head and shank. After his wife has boiled them, he takes a bit from each part and offers it to Nagata. The other families may then cook and eat their shares.

A year after the homicide, the killer offers a he-goat that a family elder immolates while praying to keep the victim's *tokora* away. The goat is butchered with its hide. The killer carries the head and hoofs, the spirits' portion, to the place of the *tomkolla*. After coming back, he takes various bits of meat and throws them down in the yard as an offering to Matna. Once a year, he renews this *divinna* by abandoning in the bush two dogs (usually pups, sometimes a straw dog) and an egg in exchange for his own life and that of his offspring.

By immolating only "unbitter" victims that lack *tokora*, the Massa dissociate sacrifice from murder. Sacrifice is a denial of homicide and its consequences.

Aperçu sur les pratiques sacrificielles chez les Mitsogho
A Glance at Sacrificial Practices among the Tsogo (Gabon)
Otto GOLLNHOFFER and Roger SILLANS
Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 167-174

Tsogo sacrifices bring the "camp" of reincarnated human beings into contact with the "native land" of disincarnated ancestors and spirits. Above all else, they reenact myths.

According to the founding myth of the Bwete initiatory society, Dinzona, first wife of Kombe (Sun), had to leave him because of the jealousy of his second wife, Ngonde (Moon). She came down on earth into Motombi, a copal tree that used to be felled at the start of initiation in remembrance of Dinzona's sacrifice. To put Motombi back up and thus bring the initiate back from his symbolic death, two young girls used to be killed.

Human sacrifices had several forms and finalities. After the sacrifice of two virgins, their blood and ashes were rubbed on warriors' bodies in order to make them invisible. If a village dug up a dead person's bones and placed them in the medicine house in order to protect itself from evil or from an epidemic, another person had to take the corpse's place. As a final example, when a respected member of the Bwete died upon the deathday that he had predicted years beforehand, his corpse was buried under Motombi or else stored, after appropriate treatment, in ritual objects.

According to the Ya Mwei initiatory society, women found this water spirit during a fishing expedition. After three of them had been

swallowed by this "Thing", they asked the men to help bring it into the village. During the dry season, Thing died from the heat. The men accused Dikumbu, who had drunk some of its blood, of taking its place. After he initiated some of them, they killed him. This society has three sacrificial references: that of Ya Mwei by Kombe, of Dikumbu by themen, and of initiates swallowed by Thing and then reborn.

Note sur le sacrifice chez les Arabes musulmans

A Note about Sacrifice among Arabian Moslems

Nicole GRANDIN

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 87-114

Although the Koran and Sunna recommend only the sacrifice to God on the tenth of Dhul'hijja, popular Islamic religion practises other sacrifices to God, dead persons, ancestors and spirits. The four major schools of jurisprudence differ about the importance of sacrifices, especially of the following sort: those offered at Mecca at any time as reparation, usually for transgressions (*e.g.*, sexual intercourse) while on pilgrimage; those on the tenth Dhul'hijja made elsewhere than at Mina; and votive sacrifices at any time in any place from which the meat is given to the poor.

All sacrifices involve bloodshed. *Dhabiha* ("immolation") derives from the verb "cutting the throat". The victim is called *hady* ("oblation"). In addition to being fat, flawless and preferably white, it must satisfy certain other, particularly age, criteria depending upon its species. In descending order of sacrificial value are camels, cattle, goats and sheep. Group sacrifices call for the more valuable species. After consecrating the animal, for example by hanging a sandal or a leather strap around its neck, the believer may no longer replace or exchange it.

On the tenth Dhul'hijja, pilgrims gather in the valley of Mina near Mecca for immolations. Each one makes his own sacrifice. The significance of the act depends upon the underlying intention. Any sane, unintoxicated believer, regardless of sex, may be the sacrificer, but usually a butcher slaughters the animal whereas the sacrificer holds his hands or sharpens the knife. After its throat is cut (Camels are stabbed in the neck), the victim is laid on its left side. It must not suffer. Pilgrims eat about a third of the meat and give the rest in alms. Left-overs are spread out in the sun.

Just as Mohammed adopted the traditional Arabian sacrifice at Mina on the tenth Dhul'hijja, pilgrims to Mecca commemorate his act or, in compliance with the Koran, replace it by fasts or by alms. There is no identification between participant and victim and no expiation for sins.

Although the Koran and Sunna condemn such observances, Arabians also sacrifice out of custom in order to mark major life phases or to ward off evil. Though lacking ancestor cults, they immolate camels (or horses) during funerals and repeatedly thereafter till the third generation in order to provide the deceased with a mount. Furthermore, sac-

rifices motivated by vows are made, usually on the camp site during tribal gatherings, in order to involve outstanding ancestors in group matters. Besides being offered at the graves of persons endowed with *bara-ka* (power) in order to solicit their help, sacrifices are also made to appease unfriendly spirits who haunt certain places.

Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon

Comments upon the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifices (Mali)

Marcel GRIAULE

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 51-54 (A reprint from 1944)

Dogon sacrifices open a circuit for the flow of *nyama* (life-force). Through prayer, the sacrificer addresses his *nyama* to the supernatural being. That of the victim, through its blood, enters the altar. In response, the supernatural being sends his *nyama* into the altar. The altar's increased energy passes into the victim, hence to the sacrificer who eats the animal liver. Neither creative nor destructive, sacrifice is founded upon the divisibility and transmigration of *nyama* at death.

Marchandage d'âmes entre vivants et morts

Bargaining in Souls by the Living and Dead (Buryat, Siberia)

Roberte HAMAYON

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 151-179

The species of the victim and the color of its coat had to do with the type of ceremony, the beneficiary and the spirit(s). Only she-animals (preferred by the spirits for their milk by-products) with "warm snouts" -- mares and ewes -- could be sacrificed, but many she-goats were too, especially on behalf of persons of low status (like women and children).

After being smoked and given buttermilk (or alcohol) to drink, the victim was laid on its back with its legs tied, two by two. A knife slit its breast open; the aorta was pulled out; and the blood, emptied into a container (it would later be made into sausage). A few bits of meat were thrown into the fire for its spirit. The remainder was boiled and eaten. The bones, whole and unmarked, were cleaned of all meat. Like corpses cremated during funerals, they were incinerated to prevent reincarnation.

The idea of transferring the whole animal (and not just the meat) from the earthly to the supernatural flock was behind the treatment of the hide and of the *huuraj* (head with respiratory system and heart attached). The latter was put on a stake, turned toward the abode of the spirit receiving the animal, and left to birds of prey. The animal could not be marked, for a mark would have kept it from changing owners.

At the beginning of transhumance, the eldest clansman presided over the principal *tajlgan* (from "to court"), a sacrifice that reinforced the clan's cohesion and reasserted its territorial rights. After purifying ritual objects and making aspersions to the ancestors, the all-male party rode off to honor the spirits of the clan's ancestors at their mountain dwelling place. Each patrilineage set out its ritual

objects and made aspersions with prayers and divination before the immolation to the sky god's descendants (associated with mythical ancestors).

The *xereg* ("business") aimed at solving a family problem usually healing a child. After smoking the inside of the family's tent, the shaman made prayers and aspersions in front of the family outside. After the immolation, he went into a trance to find out whether the sacrifice was accepted. He then returned inside the tent and made aspersions with alcohol. The *dolig* ("ransom") resembled the *xereg*, but the sacrificer's life was at stake. The animal (in the past, the victim used to be a family member) was led into the tent and identified with the sick person who spat on it thrice. The *hauraj* was also brought in to be smelled by him and kept till recovery. Both the *dolig* and *xereg* were made to neutralize the troublesome spirits of those who had died "unnaturally"; and the shaman played a major role, particularly by choosing the animal through divination and avoiding ritual faults. Only he could discern a spirit's changing moods and learn whether it accepted the sacrifice. The symbolic killing of the shaman during apprenticeship followed the phases of a sacrifice but reversed the roles -- the spirits were the sacrificers.

Sacrifices contrasted with *ongolxo* (from "boat") ceremonies for consecrating bulls, stallions or he-goats that had never been sheared, ridden or sold. Sacrifice transferred a real (female) animal to the spirit's herd whereas consecration brought a spirit into a real (male) animal in the earthly herd so as to protect people and guarantee fertility. The consecrated animal continued really living a symbolic life on earth whereas the sacrificed animal really died to become symbolically alive. The sacrifice-consecration circuit involved dealings between the living and the dead about the clan's capital in animal and human souls. The attitudes toward and terminology of sacrifice, like those having to do with hospitality, implied an exchange with the obligation to accept a gift and proposed contract.

Les formes sacrificielles dans l'hindouisme populaire

Forms of Sacrifice in Popular Hinduism

Olivier HERRENSCHMIDT

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 115-134

Popular Hinduism attaches importance to the correct performance of complex rituals, especially bloody sacrifices, done without the services of the Brahman caste. Examples come from two castes of fisherpeople, Palli and Vada-Baliya, in the Dravidian region of Andhra Pradesh.

In the upper part of the pantheon is a vegetarian god representing oneness and light. The god of individual salvation, he is worshiped in Brahman-staffed, pan-Hindu temples, in neighborhood temples and at household shrines. In the lower pantheon are carnivorous goddesses representing multiplicity and obscurity. Involved in daily affairs, they socially determine the particular. The two categories of these goddesses both accept sacrifices of domestic male animals of edible species.

The *ammoru* goddesses are worshiped in regional, neighborhood and lineage temples as well as at household shrines. The victim -- cock, ram or he-goat -- is beheaded after being presented for acceptance. Those who offer it eat its meat. Unlike the preceding, the *shakti* are not depicted in images, and there are no permanent sites for their ceremonies. The aim is to keep these dangerous goddesses out of human affairs. They accept the same victims as the *ammoru* in addition to swine (or pigs), chicks and water buffalos (especially young). The way of immolating the animal depends upon its species. Its meat is given to persons not belonging to the group who has made the offering. The ideal sacrifice calls for the impurest victim (the water buffalo) and for assistance from the lowest castes; the widest social representation is thus achieved. Although species fit for untouchables and animals too young for human consumption suit the *shakti* most, substitutes occur: a gourd for a buffalo, an egg for a cock, etc.

Both categories of goddesses accept raw or cooked fruit and vegetables, like those offered to the unique god. The nature of offerings illustrates a fundamental Hindu principle: the pure must avoid the impure, but not the converse. Moreover, an *ammoru* of one social group can be a *shakti* for another.

According to a myth, a primordial *Shakti* engendered the Hindu Trinity who diminished her powers but promised that she would have several *ammoru* forms in order to be fed by sacrifices made by mankind. The *shakti* are the nonhuman past of the *ammoru*.

Pour une nouvelle problématique du sacrifice

For a New Formulation of the Problem of Sacrifice

Luc de HEUSCH

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 7-22

Whether to expiate an original sin, to make up for life-force that has been diminished by transgression, or to pay off a debt to the spirits, sacrifices are always specific to the society in question. Their religious and social finalities vary as much as their forms, meanings and occurrences. Among the Bantu for instance, the immolation of the victim counts less than the ritualized and codified cooking and sharing of its meat.

Griaule's mechanistic theory, though fundamental to West African thought, has to be adapted if it is to account for sacrifices as a means of purification. In the Nilotic region, the animal, usually sacrificed to the Supreme Being, no longer opens a circuit of energy but separates the divinity from the human sufferer. This model does not adequately explain either the meaning of any loss of poultry and livestock or the conditions under which these may be replaced by vegetable or cereal offerings (or even by wild animals).

Le sacrifice dogon ou la violence de Dieu

Dogon's Sacrifice, God's Violence (Mali)

Luc de HEUSCH

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 67-89

The celestial sacrifice of Nommo has a parallel in the first earthly sacrifice of the seventh of eight original ancestors, the Teacher of the Word. Angered because his younger brother, the Word, had come down ahead, the Seventh Ancestor, in the form of a huge snake, stole and hoarded grain. The First Ancestor, the smith, told the others to kill and eat the snake. He himself buried its head. Sacrifice widens exchanges through the sharing of grain and of life-force.

Dogon theology throws light upon the finality of these two sacrifices but leaves in the dark the celestial and earthly violence: Nommo, castrated and sacrificed by Amma for Ogo's transgression; and the Seventh Ancestor, killed by his brothers for his righteous but excessive anger provoked by the Eighth Ancestor. Contrary to Freud's theory of totemic society, the terms of the Oedipus complex are reversed: in heaven, the father castrated and killed his son; and on earth, the oldest brother had a younger brother killed.

Sacrifices restore the unity between the universe (the celestial Nommo cut up into pieces) and society (the Seventh Ancestor beheaded and devoured). Just as the first sacrifice founded the natural order, the second founded the social order. The first brought rain, the second purified the fields, and together, they made farming possible. The progression from the one myth to the other is the progress of humanity: both the ancestors and a -- still inadequate -- moral justification appear in the second.

Descended from the Eighth Ancestor, Lebe, the first man, died. As the smith's forge rang out for the first time, the Seventh Ancestor was resuscitated, half-man and half-snake. He swam to Lebe's grave, swallowed his corpse and vomited it out as the "stones of marital alliance" at the origin of the totemic clans. Order was thus restored; and the generation clash, resolved.

Every year, the Dogon sacrifice a goat on Lebe's altar and explicitly reaffirm the unity of Lebe and Nommo. The "impure" person who eats the goat liver is associated with Lebe. In spite of this major ceremony, the faults of Ogo and of the Eighth Ancestor do not adequately account for the punishments inflicted on the innocent.

Death originated in the same kind of transgression as sacrifice. Two men of the same age-set disputed precedence. Changed into snakes, the one devoured the other. Some young people walked by with a skirt stained red by the primordial incest. When the snake reviled them for exhibiting it, the red fibers absorbed his words, and he dried up (his corpse is at the origin of the mask cults). His enemy then escaped but, because of contact with the corpse, died by contagion. This non-sacrificial death was impure and incurable. Death is an unsuccessful sacrifice; sacrifice exorcises death.

Présentation

Présentation

Luc de HEUSCH

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 7-15

The sacrifice of livestock or poultry cannot be fully explained by the arbitrary economic value of these living, subjected things. The classificatory system of village animals enters into the sacrificial code. The victim cannot be reduced to a living being that has been consecrated in order to open communication with the gods. The cutting up of the carcass and the sharing out of its parts during a ritual meal frequently expresses the distribution of society's "body" among lineages.

Sacrifices often call for divination and the manipulation of mythical signs and images, especially the placenta. When rites associate birth and death, women may not be allowed to participate in the ceremonies because of their childbearing function.

Le sacrifice, le mariage, la mort et la folie chez les Thonga

Sacrifice, Marriage, Death and Insanity among the Thonga (Mozambique, South Africa)

Luc de HEUSCH

Cahier III, 1978, pp. 59-85

In the ceremony that severs the wife-to-be from her family, her brothers guard the village from an attack feigned by the prospective in-laws. A goat, offered by the engaged man, is killed in front of the bride's dwelling. The two families insult each other and throw *psany* (the cud) at each other. While the engaged couple squat on a mat, the woman's father invokes the ancestors, rolls some of the cud into a ball and spits. A strip is cut from the hide of the goat's underside so that a pocket can be made for the astragalus from the right leg. As he avoids looking at her, the father ties this strip around his daughter's waist. The next day, she goes to her husband's place. The *psany* is used to both separate and bless the bride; the astragalus unites the engaged couple and ensures offspring.

If the couple are kin, the ceremony focuses upon their incest. The engaged man presents to the bride's father, in this case his maternal uncle, the goat. While the betrothed couple sit on the mat, they cross legs in order to "kill shame". The liquid from the cud is squeezed out over them. Their heads are passed through a hole in the middle of the goat's hide. They are given the raw liver, the ancestors' portion, to be torn with their teeth and eaten in broad daylight. Family members put some of the cud on the bride's head as they wish her offspring. The couple are associated both with the ancestors and with the victim, specifically its stomach in the realm of uncooked food. The separating power of the *psany* replaces bonds of kinship with those of marriage.

Among the southern Thonga, a few months after a man's death, his kin gather to ritually tear down his house. The "sister's sons" sacrifice and cut up a kid, two chickens and a rooster. The old women dance obscenely. An elder roles some of the cud into a ball, spits and

offers it to the ancestors. Someone begins loudly talking about family quarrels. The sister's sons' wives snatch up the pieces of kid meat reserved for the ancestors of the deceased. Yelling, kinspeople chase them and throw cud at them. A year later when the inheritance is settled, these same nephews seize the beer after a libation on the grave. They claim their uncle's wives. During the immolation of a goat in front of the dead man's house, they insult the sacrificer and take the ancestors' portion. Laughing, the crowd chases them and throws *psanyi* at them.

During this funeral, the sister's son represent the maternal ancestors in a ceremony that stages the breakdown of family ties. When they lay hands on the ancestors' portion, the maternal kinspeople stand up to them in a mock crisis that exposes the ambivalent, aggressive joking relationship that these nephews have had with their maternal uncle. At major family gatherings, these nephews are the sacrificers; they immolate the victim by stabbing it with a spear. The maternal uncle, on the other hand, undertakes rites on their behalf. In a healing ceremony for a sick nephew, he may even go so far as to insult his paternal ancestors while asking them to intervene along with the nephew's ancestors in remembrance of the matrimonial alliance. In turn, these nephews sacrifice for him during his funeral.

The immolation of goats at marriages and funerals expresses the difficulty of alliances between people as well as between humanity and the gods. Among the northern Thonga, the maternal uncle of the deceased squeezes liquid out of the cud over assembled in-laws and nephews, and they all insult the ancestors. The *psanyi* functions as in private sacrifices on the nephews' behalf -- it separates the living from the dead, instead of in-laws from kin.

The strictly coded cooking of the goat meat highlights differences among social and residential groups. Villagers broil their meat and eat it without groundnuts. Kin from outside the village broil theirs and eat it, unsalted, on the way home. The *psanyi*, a raw half digested vegetable food consumed by the animal, emphasizes the opposition and complementarity between lineage members who eat the boiled meat and the sister's sons who not only steal meat but also eat it broiled.

The most intense sacrifice exorcises a spirit and reshapes the personality of the patient, who becomes a member of an initiated group. It follows the prescriptions of divination. Previously possessed persons sing and make music until the spirit in the possessed person reveals its name. The patient's eyes are then "opened" by dipping his head into a basin. A he-goat (for a woman) or a she-goat (for a man) is stabbed at the top of its leg. The patient runs up and sucks its blood. He is pulled away, given medicine, made to vomit, then washed and smeared with ocher. The goat gallbladder is placed on his head; strips cut from its hide are wrapped around him; and the astragalus is tied to his chest. Small bits from the animal's four legs are specially cooked and stuck onto the thorns of an acacia. The patient rips off one of the bits with his teeth and eats it while running eastwards, then rips off another and runs in another direction, etc. The bones of the goat are calcined for the spirits. Its horns and hoofs are hung, as protection, over the doorway of the patient's house.

Marriages and funerals breach the social order and resort to the ancestors whereas possession disturbs the individual's psyche and demands recourse to the "spirits of all lands". The *psanyi* in group ceremonies stands opposite the blood drunk and vomited in this individual rite of passage. Between them lies the raw liver eaten by the incestuous couple. The ceremonies of exorcism and of incestuous marriage associate the participants with the animal world and with the spirits. In healing ceremonies, the alliance between kin and in-laws is consolidated; words and prayers then assume more importance than the animal and its dressing. Funerals pit uncles and "sister's sons" against each other within the limits of the broiled and boiled meat. Mental illness operates with the extremes of raw blood and calcined bones so that possession *by* be transformed into an alliance *with* the spirits.

Contribution à l'étude des autels sacrificiels du Nya chez les Minyan-ka du Mali

A Contribution to the Study of Sacrificial Altars to Nya among the Minyan-ka of Mali

Philippe JESPERS

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 111-139

The 266 *yapèrè* are brought out for the two major Nya sacrifices before sowing time and after harvest. "Nya's horses", possessed persons, carry these altars inside three sacks from the sanctuary in the village to a place, reserved for initiates, in the bush. Backing into this space, they set the sacks down to the east, opposite three large jars.

The same 85 *yapèrè* are in each of these sacks, the "mother sack with the soul of heaven and earth", the "middle sack with the soul of persons and animals" and the "little sack with the soul of all things". The last, however, contains an additional *yapèrè*, Sefè (Second Ancestors). The other ten *yapèrè* are nearby objects such as the ritual staff or knife.

The 86 fundamental signs, emanative from Klè's (God's) mind, are portrayed on a board that, kept in the Nya sanctuary, is turned away from eyesight toward the east. After being made in the bush, a *yapèrè* is brought into touch with its sign on the Nya board and proclaimed with its motto. Fifty of these 86 signs correspond to objects that mythical hunters obtained after fighting bush creatures who kept them, usually in antelopes' placentas. In most cases, a dog, the hunter's companion and an intermediary between village and bush, was killed in the fight.

The first sign on the Nya board is Sefèlè (First Ancestors), a sort of cross with dots on two branches. Its *yapèrè* is a ball of red cotton in which a wart-hog's tusk, a grain of gold dust and a citron root are wrapped. Used to consecrate newborn children, Sefèlè symbolizes the union of Earth (north-south, female) and Sky (east-west, male). The second sign, Sefè, as well as the following three signs are described along with their *yapèrè*, ritual uses and astronomical counterparts.

The sacrificer, "master of the knife", stoops facing the west. With his back toward the sacks, he puts his left hand into the mother sack, takes out Sefêlê and lays it in front of a jar while reciting a prayer under his breath so as not to reveal the names of these ancestors. He sets this sack in front of him and transfers to the jar the other *yapêrê*, one by one in the order of the signs on the board. Sefêlê is placed on top of the others. He empties the middle sack likewise.

Faced with the little sack, the sacrificer transfers Sefê after Sefêlê in accordance with a myth. Sefê, mixed Siamese twins born to Tyêlârê after a twelve-month pregnancy, fled into the woods. Their mother continued giving birth to deformed children, the spirits of the bush. Whereas their parents, Sefêlê, were a quarrelsome pair of prematurely born twins who deceived humanity and were involved in witchcraft, the Sefê mediated between humanity and Klê. The sacrifice reconciling these two generations reversed precedence between them.

The sacrificer cuts the throat of a black hen and of a dog, that Nya members have killed outside by flinging it thrice against the ground. With their help, he moves the dog around the edge of the jar and then toward the center until its blood is drained out without, however, touching Sefê under whose control its ordinary "heavy" blood is changed into sacred "light" blood that conveys Nya's force back into the victim.

Sacrifice reenacts the classification of forces in the universe. The arrangement of the *yapêrê* inside the jars is founded upon a science of numbers, signs and mottos. Each jar contains seven series of *yapêrê*. For instance, the "way to knowledge" (related to divination) includes the *yapêrê* at the bottom of the jar and the last signs on the Nya board.

Contribution à l'étude du sacrifice chez les Minyanka

A Contribution to the Study of Sacrifices among the Minyanka (Mali)

Danielle JONCKERS

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 91-110 + 1 photograph

Kara, the generic term for sacrifice, means "give". Finalities are expressed as a request, a promise to make a sacrifice if the request is granted, or a reparation. More than mere offerings, sacrifices make *nyama* (life-force contained in the blood) circulate.

Within the ritual cycle of established cults to Klê, the ancestors and certain spirits, sacrifices are made upon fixed altars. The influential initiatory lodges make sacrifices upon portable altars, *yapêrê* ("something made"), which are associated with mythical heroes, human or animal, who imparted knowledge to humanity. A *yapêrê* is a collection of objects charged with *nyama*.

Offerings of water (fertility), millet beer (prosperity) and sometimes ashes (purity) are poured upon the ground in front of the sanctuary. A chicken is immolated there. The major Nya sacrifices occur outside the village. Chickens are always immolated after four-legged animals. An augur, usually the movements of a dying chicken, indicates whether the sacrifice is accepted or not. It is refused if, for instance, the fowl falls on its belly without moving. The

yapèrè are then coated with blood in order to "repair" them. The clot-
ted blood testifies to both their age and power. The victim, swung
back and forth across them, absorbs their *nyama* and conveys it to those
persons who receive, according to status, shares of meat during the
ceremonial meal. Individual sacrifices take place right after group
observances.

Sacrifices start up costly processes of production, distribu-
tion and consumption. A family or lineage obtains sacrificial animals
by hiring out teams of its young men or by having them till its own
fields. During ceremonies, these teams broil the meat and repair the
sanctuary while the women prepare beer and food. Through their work,
these two groups acknowledge the elder men's authority. Since most
sacrifices take place towards the end of the dry season when stocks are
low, groups become economic equals by using up their surpluses.

The *yapèrè* are a coagulation of social relationships. The rela-
tionship of elders with these objects, which represent the ancestors,
is like that of women and young men with the elders. A cycle is set
up: the elders cannot reward the young men unless the *yapèrè* create
conditions, such as rainfall, favorable to the reproduction of society.
The *yapèrè* are also a means for remembering medicinal formulas that on-
ly the elders can interpret. The elders' submission to the ancestors
is mainly an attitude, for very little is actually given to the *yapèrè*.

Nowadays many young men refuse to participate in ceremonies. Al-
though they tend to disregard the authority of collateral lineage eld-
ers, the new extended families reproduce a similar hierarchy. As a re-
sult of lineage splitting, individual *yapèrè* and witchcraft are prolif-
erating.

*Questions à propos du sacrifice chez les Dyola de Basse-Casamance (Séné-
gal)*

Questions about Sacrifices among the Dyola of Basse-Casamance, Senegal
Odile JOURNET

Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 77-94

Sacrifices make life-force (*yal*) circulate on behalf of sacrificers. Hu-
man existence is a movement, facilitated by offerings, from a darkworld
still tainted with death towards a brighter one, all the way till the
memorial sacrifices that open the way for dead people into the world of
ancestors. Offerings are "bright" conveyors of life-force in contrast
with "dark" substances that convey death-force. Offerings include rice
flour or grains and libations of palm wine or water.

Raised only for sacrifice, cattle have to be immolated during
funeral ceremonies both at the time of death and during later memorial
services. One or more bulls, oxen or heifers are sacrificed during
circumcision, consecration to the priesthood, initiation to royal spir-
its, and drought (black bulls to the rain spirit) or as compensation
(in murder cases). Next in value, she-goats are not offered, except
to royal spirits, because their meat causes sterility. Demanded by
royal spirits as well as the spirits of circumcision and of matern-
ity, swine often replace cattle. Chickens, usually stunned to death,

are offered along with other species. They are required for funerals, and white ones are immolated on the ancestors' altars. Apart from sacrifices, none of these species is slaughtered.

Spirits (*ukin*) need to be regularly fed, for their very existence and power depend upon their relationships with people. Regardless of where the altar is located, most operations in a sacrifice are performed by the spirit's "servant" in its sanctuary. The effectiveness of the ceremony depends upon this sacrificer's explanation of the sacrificer's request to the spirit, who then transmits it to Emitay (God). Certain spirits make the reply known to their priest/esses through divination or dreams.

The animal is completely drained of its blood, which goes to the spirits or ancestors. Only a little of it need touch the altar. The meat may be buried or abandoned (to a personal spirit or certain royal spirits), thrown into the fire (a red cock during circumcision), or eaten by the priest alone (during sacrifices on behalf of private persons), by all those initiated to the spirit (during circumcision) or by everyone present. The jaw, skull and shinbones are exhibited in the sanctuary, but the horns of cattle are given back to the owner to be kept for display during his funeral.

During funerals, paternal uncles, brothers and sons render services to maternal uncles. The sister's sons of the deceased lead an ox to the house of the person who offered it, usually the dead man's brother, son or husband. They cut its hamstrings or shoot it with arrows. Its meat may not be eaten by father, mother or spouse.

The dialectic between life- and death-forces and the symbolism of blood make comparisons possible with other bloodletting events, such as circumcision. A house that has been stained by blood lost during childbirth must be burned. Menstrual blood can be likened to a repeated sacrifice. During menstruation, women may be present but may not assist at sacrifices.

Women are associated with humidity in ceremonies for the germination of rice and for protection from evil water spirits. In fact, all female spirits have some power over rainfall. During a special ceremony to Emitay that women may organize in case of severe drought, libations of water, instead of immolations, are made. To what extent are sacrifices shortcircuited by women's ceremonies without bloodshed?

Sacrifices renew ties between families, households, neighborhoods and villages. This "potlatch" -- for animals in abundance are killed -- affirms as it denies economic inequality through the redistribution and dispersion of accumulated wealth, particularly cattle.

Introduction à une étude du sacrifice chez les Bobo de Haute Volta
 Introduction to a Study of Sacrifices among the Bobo of Upper Volta
 Guy Le Moal
 Cahier V, 1981, pp. 99-125 + 2 photographs

For each sacrificial species, the victim is selected, depending on the spirit, according to traits such as sex, color and kind of coat. A sacrifice always calls for at least one chicken (occasionally replaced by a guinea fowl). If a quadruped has been promised, another chicken is killed before it; and a third (or more), afterwards. The second chicken and the quadruped make up the sacrificer's debt. Only a *sapro* (lineage head with priestly functions) may normally raise or kill sheep, the only species that is reserved exclusively for sacrifices. The first ram born from the first ewe in a flock has to be immolated on the ancestors' *borè* altar. Although anyone may raise goats, the first male born in a flock has to be immolated on the ancestors' *saprè* altar. Bulls, dogs (usually male), black cats and certain wild animals may sometimes be sacrificed.

Crouching at the spirit's altar, the sacrificer tells his reasons for coming, makes his request, then both promises and fully describes the victim(s). His words are usually repeated by the priest, his *sapro* or his *koronate* ("master of pardon" with whom he has a joking relationship). By pouring ashes, said to be the ancestors' *koronate*, onto the altar, he seals a contract. Just as the *koronate*'s arbitration is binding in intralineage quarrels, the entreated spirit cannot escape from the obligation to reply, even if negatively. A personal sacrifice of this sort takes place only if the request is granted.

At that time, the sacrificer organizes preparations. Accompanied as before, he goes to the altar on the sixth and eighth days of brewing to tell the spirit about the underway operations. When the malt has boiled for the first time, he pours millet beer onto the altar. Two days later, the sacrifice begins as the sacrificer recalls what was said when ashes were poured, his words being repeated as previously. A libation of ashes is made on the altar as a reminder of the contract. This dry liquid also helps maintain an equilibrium whenever the sacrificial process starts transferring forces. Libations of "water" and then of beer are made to "clean the spirit's mouth". Three kinds of "water" may be poured: pure water (only at *borè* altars, the liquid that oozes from *sèkèlè* (salted millet dough, the first food that Wuro, God, gave to humanity) and *fogo zo* (a mixture of water with millet or sorghum flour). Unlike the last that is used exclusively for libations, *sèkèlè* is prepared as food for the more expensive and better attended ceremonies during which white sheep are immolated and eaten.

Libations are poured to the right of and onto the altar while the sacrificer holds a chicken and repeats what was said when ashes were poured. He then cuts its beak commissures. As soon as some blood has dribbled out onto the altar (or ground), he plucks feathers from its back with his right hand and from its tail with his left (fur is cut from the forehead and tail of a quadruped). After sticking them onto the blood, he cuts its throat and lets it bleed out over the feathers. Regardless of the species, the victim is normally immolated in this way, but in some cases, it may be killed differently (for in-

stance, by being strangled or stunned to death for Dwo, a spirit who abhors liquids and refuses all libations except ashes). The chicken is thrown down. If it dies on its back, the sacrifice is accepted; otherwise, refused. The tense, feverish mood yields to a noisy festivity. If *sèkèlè* was already required for libation, the sacrificer now takes some of this dough and mixes it with water that he pours over the altar. He also lays a piece of it on the altar. The last chicken is immolated, and libations of millet beer are made. Nothing more -- and no meat -- is offered to the spirit.

The distribution of beer and, even more, of meat reveals the hierarchies within the multilineage community system. Those who partake of this meal are involved in the sacrificial act and exposed to its consequences (if, for example, a ritual error has been made or the sacrificer does not live up to his contract).

Les sacrifices faits aux ancêtres chez les Bangwa

Sacrifices Made to the Ancestors among the Bangwa (Cameroon)

Charles-Henri PRADELLES DE LATOUR DEJEAN

Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 131-138

The Bangwa call upon the ancestors to consolidate the cohesion of agnatic offspring during a yearly ceremony, to assure the fertility of women before marriage, and to ward off misfortune.

When misfortune befalls someone, he can consult a diviner to find out what the ancestors want. An ancestor is a dead person whose skull, one year after death, has been powdered with kaolin and placed in a large earthen jar inside the compound of the heir (a son for male but a daughter for female ancestors). The sacrificial animal should be of the same sex as the entreated ancestor. The meat of the rooster or goat offered to "good" ancestors is broiled (a way of cooking reserved for the ancestors) inside the compartment where their jars are kept. The lineage head, who may partake of this meat, pleads with them, takes dirt near the jars and draws a line on the sacrificer's chest. The rooster offered to those ancestors who have experienced "bad" deaths (such as accidents) is torn apart and left, raw and uneaten, on their jars along the wall outside this compartment.

Two-thirds of sacrifices under study were made to maternal grandfathers' ancestors, for ancestors through marriage are more implicated in misfortunes than those through descent. In contrast with the father-son relationship, the maternal grandfather neither gives anything to nor expects anything from his grandson. These two relationships provide the model for a person's relations with his ancestors. Unlike the founders of the father's lineage, the ancestors of the mother's father will be forgotten by the fourth generation (since the matrilineal group extends only across three generations and three lineages). Whenever a man brings a sacrifice for paternal ancestors, his father -- the sacrificer -- takes the place of the founding ancestor. For a sacrifice to maternal ancestors, his mother's father -- the sacrificer -- is an intermediary who invokes ancestors whose relationship with the sacrificer is "mortal". This situation symbolically reestablishes the

marriage contract between his father's and mother's lineages. The effectiveness of a sacrifice has to do with the social order based upon marriage and kinship.

Sacrifice et transfert des âmes chez les Songhay du Niger

Sacrifice and the Transfer of Souls among the Songhai (Niger)

Jean ROUCH

Cahier II, 1976, pp. 55-66

Griaule's model of sacrifice is methodically applied to three filmed Songhai sacrifices (See Summary of Griaule's article).

On a sacred mountain, men and boys cut the throat of a white bullock and let its blood flow upon a rock. The carcass was cut up, broiled and eaten. The left-overs were buried under the rock. The boys ran back to the village while the men stayed on the mountain. The circuit was closed: both the villagers and the mountain were better off afterwards.

In an annual ceremony for opening the rainy season, the priests immolated a white ram to a rainbow snake (represented by a forked tree). Grouped with dancers around this tree, they cut the victim's throat, sprinkled its blood on the branches and ate the meat. Griaule's model holds under condition that there can be several actors. Here, two circuits were opened between the spirits and the possessed dancers, on one hand, and the priests, on the other.

The totally different finality of the third sacrifice was to steal a soul (and not life-force) from God. After an Islamic funeral, a second burial with sacrifice attempted to confine a dead warrior's soul in a box. After speaking to the four directions in order to bring back the wandering soul, the magician cut the throat of a white ram. He licked the knife thrice, drank some of its blood four times, then poured the rest into a hide box containing cow milk. He stepped back and forth, once, over the carcass. As he talked to it, it moved. The warrior's corpse was carried to a thicket. After drinking the mixture in the box, the magician offered the box to the four directions, shut it and gave it to the warriors. If fed with blood, it can become an altar. Apparently, the animal soul has replaced the human one before God. Here the circuit was broken by deception. There was no exchange, but an altar was created.

Griaule's model needs a second circuit for the circulation of souls that occurs in the third and also implicitly in the second of these sacrifices. In the first one too, the boys' return to the village closed the circuit of life-forces, but the men who stayed on the mountain were part of this second circuit.

Le sacrifice et son étude du point de vue néoplatonicien
 Sacrifice and Its Study from the Neoplatonic Point of View
 Albert de SURGY
Cahier II, 1976, pp. 205-230

The disciples of Plato and Pythagoras did not merely speculate from the outside upon Egyptian and Near Eastern religions. The Neoplatonists advocated a method based upon an experience of the object of knowledge. This experience would change the observer. Besides symbols such as twins and the primordial egg, Neoplatonic and West African (in particular Ewe, Togo) thought hold many ideas in common.

A sacrifice involves a set of entities: what happens in one link of the divine chain of beings has repercussions elsewhere. Cults to lesser divinities prepare the way to the worship of higher ones and, ultimately, of the Supreme Being pure of all becoming. The Neoplatonists insisted upon the necessity of bringing to light this hierarchy.

Neither do the gods need sacrifice nor does the Supreme Being need worship. Spirits (incorporeal beings subject to the vicissitudes of destiny) do however need vehicles -- sacrificial animals or possessed persons -- in order to come in touch with humanity. A sacrifice prepares an appropriate receptacle (altar, victim, person) for a god to whom it addresses a message. The effectiveness of a properly executed ceremony depends upon the gods who, by essence, cannot hold back from indwelling their chosen material symbols. "Fetishes" are complex signs that attract and codify a divinity's powers through classes of material elements. Manipulating a fetish summons the god to be present. A religious system cannot be understood apart from the signs and symbols through which worshippers contact the gods.

Les cérémonies de purification des mauvais projets prénataux chez les Mwaba-Gurma du Nord-Togo
 Ceremonies for Purifying Bad Prenatal Projects among the Moba-Gurma of Northern Togo
 Albert de SURGY
Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 9-75

Before leaving Yêdong, the underground dwelling of Yêdu (God, Sun), a person chooses the "words" for his life. Constituted as a pair of mixed twins, he is endowed with a *miql* (breath, life-force) and appointed a *mâdaâ*, a forefather with the same *miql*. Under the latter's authority, he is led to the earth's surface from the east, through the bush and into the womb (and later back to Yêdong at death).

Certain sacrifices have to do with the individual's prenatal constitution of his own identity. Since the worst prenatal project is to impair fertility, a woman engaged for marriage is purified of her "bitter words" by a "sacrifice to the Red God". From dawn till noon, the original but now unconscious project emerges from potentiality in the east up to the threshold of the house; and from noon till dusk, it returns westward to the state of fulfilled "words".

When the head of the husband's family, after divination, decides

on such a ceremony, he makes as many boy-girl couples as possible participate. Just before dawn a diviner (not the one who prescribed the ceremony) goes to pray a little way east of the family's compound. After sunrise, the subjects come and sit, facing the east, in a line. The diviner kneads some dirt so as to represent the *Yēmōn* (Red God) of each subject and then makes the latter spit upon it (three times if a boy, four if a girl). In front of the party, he lays down a horn filled with earth representing his *mīql*, various small objects representing the subjects' *mīql*, and twig brooms for sweeping the bad projects off the subjects so that the twin bush spirits carry them westwards. After his prayers, the waterer (a woman) makes a libation. Each subject pours some water over his *yēmōn*. A libation of millet beer with flour in it is then made. After making each subject hold the chicken to be sacrificed on his *yēmōn*, the diviner takes all the chickens in his hands and swings them over the subjects' heads as he says, "I absorb the bitter word...". Immolations occur in the following order: a black chick (that has never eaten and is not to be eaten), a small insect, chickens (or their feathers), a dog and a guinea fowl. The *yēmōn* are dressed with the feathers. Part of the subjects have their heads shaved after the diviner anoints them with his horn dipped into water containing kola nuts and a millet stalk. The waterer mixes the animal livers with millet dough and sauce. The subjects put some of this mixture on their red gods, pray and eat the remainder. Other sacrifices are performed at various places to the east (See below). After eating, cooked, a wing of each fowl and a bit of the dog, the subjects go back to the house for a while, the time of their existence.

In the afternoon, the diviner and some elders dig, to the west of the compound, a small hole and construct, in it, a *yēdong* with sticks, straw and leaves. On top, they put a cylindrical clod (the sun) and a small earthen figure of a man on horseback. Sitting around this construction, the subjects are tied together in mixed couples. The diviner cuts their "bitter words" and throws the ties onto the *yēdong*. Libations both of millet beer and of floured water are made. The diviner takes the chickens and, after swinging them over the head of each subject, cuts their throats and lets the blood drain out onto the *yēdong*. After the immolation of a guinea fowl, a goat is lifted up toward the sun, the subjects spit upon it, and its throat is cut. The final victim is a white chicken. After the subjects have touched the earthen figure, the diviner pours over it a mixture of water with beer dregs (misfortune). A libation of millet beer (good fortune) is then made. The subjects drink some of the beer. The remaining ones have their heads shaved. Offerings (to the *yēdong*) and the sacrificial meal occur as in the morning. The diviner puts the uncooked goat head with the hide attached on the head of the engaged woman. She leads a procession, singing, counterclockwise around the *yēdong*. At the diviner's signal, everyone stomps, with left foot, the *yēdong* down into the hole. The contents of the hole are piled onto a piece of broken pottery that the woman throws westwards. The pottery is crushed. The goat hide is taken back to the house. Sacrifices at various places to the west are made (See below). Before returning home, subjects wash and dress for festivities. The diviner anoints each with a mixture containing shea-butter on the left toe, left temple and left wrist.

There are up to five east-west pairs of places for sacrifices outside the house. Four of them correspond to the four generations of

deceased forefathers (as well as their altars within the compound); and the fifth, to the mythical generation of the clan's founder. At some of these places chosen by divination, the diviner, with prayers and libations of water, offers, after the engaged woman has spit upon it, a small object (such as a shell or pod) filled with dirt (her *migl*). He sweeps her body with a twig broom that he leaves behind with feathers. Since a "four-legged" animal is necessary to complete a sacrifice, the feathers are offered -- at least in words -- with a small animal or insect. Rites for the fifth east-west pair call for digging and burying. The journey from the east begins at a termite mound where the diviner digs a hole and places a special calabash. Declaring that he is taking bitter words out of the woman's mouth, he chops it up and then invites her and the waterer to spit on the pieces. The subject buries them in the mound. The journey ends in the west at a garbage heap where the diviner, after digging a hole, asks the subject to use her left hand to fill it up to bury misfortune and then dig it open to unearth good fortune.

The foregoing ceremony is often, later in the wife's life, completed by a simpler variant held within her family since the "bitter words" are associated with her *migl* or else have been conceived by her ancestors. In both cases, a family elder initiated to divination officiates.

Les libations et le rôle de la présentatrice d'eau enfarinée dans le sacrifice mwaba-gurma (Nord-Togo)

Libations and the Role of the Woman Who Prepares Floured Water in Moba-Gurma Sacrifices (Northern Togo)

Albert de SURGY

Cahier V, 1981, pp. 127-154

Moba-Gurma sacrifices are inseparable from the divination that prescribes them. The divinatory message is generated out of a division into three sets of the eight divinatory strings: the two in the middle (the individual's "word" reflected in his "water") arbitrate the quarrel between the three on the right (feminine representatives of procreation and of heat under the control of the masculine sun) and the three on the left (masculine representatives of differentiation and of the fresh water provided by the feminine moon).

Sacrifices never force spirits to intervene but rather pay off debts incurred for their interventions, whether requested or not. A sacrifice begins whenever the intervening spirit murders one of the six guards posted by Sun around Yêdong. Only a diviner can know whether this first immolation has happened. Since the celestial guard is represented by the number "six", a chicken and a four-legged animal (or equivalent) have to be offered in a second immolation. Moreover, there are six types of sacrificial chickens. Once the guard has been overcome and the way cleared, what is desired has to come into being: water must be poured.

The "words" in Yêdong are reflected in "water" that, heated by Sun, changes into vapor which breathes through the "mouth" of the earth onto the threshold of the visible world where it condenses, thus gene-

rating phenomena. Similarly, there are three kinds of libations. The commonest term for religious acts means "pouring water". A libation is a religious act in itself. Cooling as it flows back to its source, pure -- masculine -- water is poured during prayers. Impressed with the reflection of words within Yêdong, water with suspended millet flour in it is poured only during sacrifices with bloodshed. Water having undergone the action of fire, millet beer is poured before immolations and is drunk by participants during the sacrificial meal.

This "water" contains the reflections (and "words") of that portion of the sky above it when it evaporates. There are as many of these portions, hence as many categories of *miql*, as there are positions of the full moon in the sky, hence varieties of fetched water. Represented as a calabash, the moon waxes to be filled with water containing souls of the same *miql* and then wanes to be emptied onto one of the guard posts, "mouths" of Yêdong. Each category of *miql* is also related to the rising sun's position at the beginning of the lunar cycle and, furthermore, associated with a vertebra of a mythical python. The pouring of water in libation corresponds to the killing of this python, the third immolation enacted in Moba-Gurma sacrifices.

The lunar cycle also accounts for the waterer's role during sacrifices with bloodshed. Of the same *miql* as the sacrificer, she holds the calabashes for libations and flours the water. Just as the sacrifice of animals countervails the removal of the guards, libations are poured in exchange for life-giving water from the celestial source.

*Réflexions sur le sacrifice dans la religion traditionnelle des Bamoun
(Cameroun)*

Reflections upon Sacrifices in the Traditional Bamun Religion (Cameroon)
Claude TARDITS

Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 117-129

The last traditional king, who died in 1933, drew up a new religion that, though inspired by Islam, erected sacrifice as a pillar of the faith. Sacrifices have since disappeared because of the spread of Christianity and Islam.

At the turn of the century, Bamun society resembled a huge kin group made up of patrilineages. At the base of the territorial organization, these lineages were genealogically and socially situated in relation to the royal dynasty through the kings' sons (or servants) who had successively been sent out to colonize lands ever further from the capital. Since lineage splitting was impossible, these agnatic bonds (uterine bonds in the case of lineages founded by servants) were perpetuated in the relationships between lineage chiefs and kings. Sacrifices could be performed only by these political authorities.

After the maize harvest whenever tribute was sent to the palace, fowl, goats, sheep and cattle were immolated in lineage cemeteries as well as in the sanctuary where the skulls of the king's ancestors were kept. Similar sacrifices took place during the dry season. Sacrificial ceremonies could also be carried out after heavy rainfall, after divination or before war.

Nature et fonction du sacrifice chez les BèRi du Tchad et du Soudan
 Nature and Function of Sacrifices among the Zaghawa (Chad and Sudan)
 Marie-José TUBIANA
Cahier IV, 1979, pp. 139-166 + 6 photographs

The Zaghawa used to sacrifice when choosing tribal chiefs and clan headmen. After tribal sacrifices were abandoned, usually because of Islam, pressure was brought to bear on headmen to forsake clannish rites.

The ceremonial procedures of tribal sacrifices situated each tribe and its royal clan in the political order, particularly in relation to autochthonous clans and to the sultan of Wadday who appointed the Kigé and Dirong chiefs (whereas tribal notables chose the Kobé and Kabka sultans). As a preliminary, a gray heifer (Kobé) or gray bull (Kabka) was immolated in the chief's village; and the hide, used to cover the royal copper drums. Other sacrifices and vegetable offerings were made on his ancestor's grave. Among the Kigé, Dirong and probably the Bideyat Bilia, a member of an autochthonous clan made a purificatory sacrifice; the chief, back from a religious retreat, rode over the animal and then was placed thrice in the saddle. The smiths received the victim's impure meat and hide. The skins of these tribes' wooden drums were replaced only after the major sacrifice.

For this sacrifice at the end of the dry season (and once every three years), the chief had to go up on the first tribal ancestor's mountain in order to be endorsed as rainmaker and ruler by the ancestor who, in the form of a snake, came to lick the blood and eat the meat of the victim, a pregnant camel (Kobé, Kabka) or a cow (the three other tribes).

The Kobé's sacrificial camel was secretly led by a member of the autochthonous clan to the mountain while the official procession was making its way, headed by this clan's headman and accompanied by the sultan's uterine nephews, who carried the drums. At a fixed place on the mountainside, the camel, with its head orientated, was laid over a flat stone. The sultan, along with three sister's sons, took hold of a spear and stabbed it in the neck. The other three tribes killed their victims in like manner. Their ceremonies also closely involved those who held power (originally invaders or usurpers) with those who were already living in the land (represented by the chief's uterine nephews).

As the blood drained out, short prayers were made for rain and prosperity to iRu (God) or to the ancestor's spirit of the mountain. Among the Kobé, one of the sister's sons hid under a cloth, cut open the camel's stomach, extracted the foetus and wrapped it up from sight in a cloth. The same sequence occurred among the Kabka and Bideyat Bilia who also offered pregnant victims. The chief and these nephews dipped their feet and hands into the blood before burning it up.

The ambiguity of the original matrimonial alliance between a for-eigner and an autochthon was also represented by the way the victim was cut up and its meat distributed. Among the Kobé, the two autochthonous clans received the camel's hind shanks: the clan that had administrative duties shared its meat with married members of the royal clan; the one having military duties, with the unmarried members. The sister's

sons received the liver, heart, part of the ribs and some of the hump. Among all tribes, participants ate their portion, either grilled or else boiled in water from the first rain. Left-overs were taken back to the village or abandoned for the "sons of the mountain" (vultures and jackals).

Some of the cud was left on the altar or thrown around the site. The Kobé offered four ribs and part of the hump on a nearby stone pile. The Kigé and Bideyat Bilia stuck small bits chosen so as to represent the entire animal on spits and placed these in a hole under a rock. In addition to these bits, the Dirong left the raw heart on the mountain-side and threw the bones into the ancestor-snake's hole. The Kobé and Kabka threw the foetus with its afterbirth into a hole; the Bideyat Bilia left it for the "sons of the mountain". All tribes offered millet grains, flour and butter.

Held yearly just before the rainy season, clannish sacrifices resembled tribal ones. On the clan's sacred mountain or at its sacred tree, the clan headman, usually assisted by his sister's sons, cut the throat of a fat, unblemished goat or sheep (usually female, often pregnant). Offerings included: the blood that flowed out onto the altar or ground; the cud left on the flat stone or dabbed on the tree trunk as testimony to the sacrifice; and small bits of meat that, chosen so as to represent the entire victim, were either scattered (raw) or offered (barely broiled and unsalted) at nearby spots. All or part of the hide was hung up as evidence of the ceremony. Libations of milk or unctions of butter were made around the tree or on the altar. Millet, in various forms, and fruit were offered.

Sacrifices by individuals still occur. The sacrificer goes to his clan's sacred mountain, or tree, to make a request. When it is fulfilled, the promised sacrifice is made. The victim, preferably a fat black sheep in good shape, is laid on its left side with its head orientated. The sacrificer passes a knife thrice over its neck before cutting its throat "in Allah's name". He lets the blood flow over the altar while offering the animal in prayer. Its legs are broken; its hide is taken off by insufflation; its head, severed; its stomach, opened; and the cud, placed on the altar. The legs and insides (except the large intestine which is thrown away) are laid out on the hide. The ribs are broken. Vegetables and bits of barely grilled meat are offered. The skin of the head is left as evidence. The liver, rumen and lungs are cut up into small bits that are washed, slightly boiled and seasoned. The ribs are salted and broiled. Passer-bys may be invited to this meal. Left-overs are taken home.

Malheurs de l'homme et mise à mort rituelle de l'animal domestique dans la société kabiye

The Misfortunes of Mankind and the Ritual Killing of Domestic Animals in Kabiye Society (Togo)

Raymond VERDIER

Cahier V, 1981, pp. 155-173

All misfortunes and troubles result from witchcraft or transgressions. Sicknesses and accidental deaths indicate that guardian spirits, such

as the *atgtuna* (ancestors "of the underground") and the *akqlma* (who protect the clan and community territory from outside enemies) are "waging war" against individuals and that their "hearts have to be cooled" by sacrifice. These spirits are offered what has been produced under their protection, hence domestic species (including dogs but excepting pigs, cats, horses and ducks). With few exceptions, wild animals belong to the *alewa*, wild spirits that preside over witchcraft or, if tamed, over divination. Either a ceremonial code or divination makes known a spirit's choice of victim (its species, sex and color). Men may be sacrificers. The sacrificer to the *atgtuna* must be head of a household with their altar; that to the *akqlma*, head of a lineage.

Esq (God) does not demand victims. The *jojo*, his chosen representative, is responsible for rainfall, peace and unity within the community territory, which he may not leave. Since he may never act violently, he does not sacrifice. Only he may officiate at the holy grove of the clan's foundation. During major hunting and farming ceremonies, he goes there to invoke the *akqlma* who intercede with Esq. By pouring libations, he "brings coolness" into the land.

Sacrifices always open with prayers and libations of millet beer on the altar. Before cutting a chicken's throat, the sacrificer plucks its back and tail feathers and places them on the altar where he will let the blood flow. To see if the spirit is appeased, he throws the fowl down: it must die with its legs in the air. Once the chicken has been immolated, a sheep or goat may be offered. The sacrificer lays it between his legs, shuts its muzzle and cuts its throat. Instead of its blood, the cud is spread out over the altar. Uncooked meat balls (of paunch and neck tied up with intestine) are sent to family elders. A shoulder and shank are given to the maternal uncle. A shank goes to the nephew; a shoulder, to the sacrificer's parents; the brain, to the children; and the thorax, to the diviner. The head, ribs and back are sent to relatives of the household with the *atgtuna*'s altar. The blood, liver, lungs, pancreas, kidneys and chicken meat are cooked. The sacrificer prays, dips bits of this cooked meat into a sauce and puts them onto the altar. He throws some down both nearby for "those who are with him" and over his shoulder for the "enemies outside". Participants are invited to eat the boiled meat and millet.

The immolation of the victim, the distribution of its meat and the sacrificial meal bring together the invisible and visible worlds of living beings; but this unity is continually threatened through people's faults and the spirits' temper. Within the community, sacrifice bounds a space wherein a man takes his first wife and worships, in a group, the *akqlma*. Outside this space, death, as in hunting or war, is a murder that cries out for vengeance.

Conception et déroulement du sacrifice chez Les Mofu (Cameroun du Nord)

Conception and Phases of Sacrifice among the Mofu (North Cameroon)

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The Mofu refer to sacrifices as *meteuley* ("offering") and *kuley*, a term that also designates the ancestors and their altars. The nature of the

spirit (ancestors, spirits of possession or of the mountain, etc.) is related to the form of the sacrifice. For instance, Bi Erlam (the "Chief Above") has no altar but receives a yearly collective sacrifice.

The most frequent sacrifices are made to the ancestors after divination. Every male household head honors seven deceased foreparents at their altars (in the compound or field). The diviner usually prescribes preliminary rites (for example, to purify the household by killing a lizard). Thereafter, major participants must not be tainted by impurity, *madama*. Since this concept covers not only sexual intercourse but sexuality in general, menstruating women may not prepare the sacrificial meal. The ancestors also abhor food offered by someone who has just attended a funeral, for they do not wish to be reminded of death.

Since the effectiveness of the ceremony depends upon its being perfectly executed, at least three persons, besides the sacrificer, must be present: the *ndo kuley* (the family's official sacrificer, a clansman of the same age-set as the household head), the *baba* (an elderly clansman) and the household head's son (neither the youngest nor the oldest) who skins or plucks the victim, carries things to and fro and serves beer to persons outside.

The ceremony opens with a long prayer as the *baba* informs the ancestor of the reason for the sacrifice and asks that it be accepted. The reply is made known through augury of the victim (for example, whether or not the victim shakes itself when water is thrown onto it). Silence reigns as the victim (chicken, sheep, goat or bull) of any size or age is immolated. If a sheep, goat or bull, it is muzzled and stabbed in the neck. Participants' foreheads as well as the ancestor's pottery are anointed with blood. Older participants eat a mixture of the blood with millet flour. Like the way the victim is killed, the way it is skinned proves that it is not being butchered but undergoing ritual treatment. The paunch is examined, and the cud is left lying on the altar as evidence of the ceremony. Millet beer libations are made. Along with millet flour balls, bits of cooked meat (chosen according to the ancestor being entreated) are laid upon the altar. The men broil some meat on the spot; the rest is given to a woman (the sacrificer's daughter, mother or first wife) to be carefully prepared in an unsalted sauce. Offerings and libations are made while the sacrificer, then the elder and finally each participant pray aloud in order both to make requests and to invite the ancestors to eat: the latter are receiving their share, now they have obligations. The participants partake of the ceremonial meal while the ancestors, hovering around the altar, consume their portion. The sacrificer then takes a bit off the portion lying on the altar, throws it on the ground, and distributes the rest of this portion to members of the clan.

Sacrifice is a factor of cohesion at all levels of Mofu society. The particularity of their sacrifices make the Mofu conscious of their identity as an ethnic group. In Mofu sacrifices, offerings are made to spirits. Part of the offerings are destroyed as participants pray to these spirits