

IL-TORŌBO

PART II

Il-Aramanik

I MUST confess at the outset that the *Aramanik* Dorobo are the people from whom it was hoped to get the most interesting information and from whom I actually succeeded in extracting the least. They were first described to me as being a "clan" of Dorobo who lived at Moipo and who were fishermen¹ by occupation. This I have found to be quite incorrect.

There are *Aramanik* living with the Moipo Masai, but they live as Masai and have almost entirely abandoned Dorobo methods of life. They differ from the *Balaṅga* only inasmuch as they are not Masai, call themselves Dorobo and have a language of their own. This language (for examples of which see the section devoted to numerals and the list of common objects) is quite distinct from that of the *Mósiro*.² I have had personal experience of the fact that a Masai cannot converse with a Dorobo in the tongue of the latter, and that *Mósiro* and *Aramanik* can be quite unintelligible to each other.

An *Aramanik* named Serkala, of Moipo, gave me the following bald account of the origin of the *Aramanik*: "We come from Kigogo,³ from a hole there used to be therein but which has since closed up, near Ol-doinyo-le-Lepisiek. We came south with the Masai a long time ago. Formerly we lived around Moita and Ol-oitip, but have now come down here to Moipo. Others of us went north to the Serenget⁴ plain. We are not Masai, but they are our brothers, and we have married their

¹ Mr. F. J. Bagshawe, in a recent number of the *Journal of the African Society*, mentions that a "fisherman clan" of the Dorobo lives in the Ruvu river valley.

² See *Die Masai*, M. Merker (Berlin, 1910), p. 229 *et seq.* I think the Dorobo dealt with are *Aramanik* for the most part, though *Aramanik* and *Mósiro* may have been confused, to judge by the account given on p. 257.

³ The *Aramanik* name for Kisongo. See p. 132 in *Journal* for January 1928.

women and they ours. Now we live with our cattle like the Masai." This account is far from enlightening, and when Serkala states that the *Aramanik* live as Masai, I fancy he is making too sweeping an assertion. Admittedly, the *Aramanik* of Moipo live as Masai, and so do many *Aramanik* in the central areas of Tanganyika Masailand, but I suggest that the Dorobo living at the north end of Lake Eyasi and those on the Serenget' plain (north-west of the Ngorongoro localities), who live a purely bush life, are also *Aramanik*.¹ Lekite was positive in the assertion that all the Dorobo living as such in the northern areas of the Tanganyika Masai Reserve and, furthermore, all the Dorobo in the Kenya Masai Reserve,² are *Aramanik*. I have had no opportunity of testing the accuracy of this statement. However, I do not think it likely that there can be yet another type of Dorobo unknown to those individuals from whose information the present notes have been compiled. If my assumption be correct, I think it may well be that *Aramanik* and *Balaṅga* (the latter possibly under a different name) constitute the bulk of the Dorobo in Kenya, and that the Dorobo inhabitants of the northern areas of the Tanganyika Masai Reserve are almost all *Aramanik*.

The *Aramanik* at Moipo are not fishermen. They do not eat fish, but they are very partial to the meat and fat of the hippopotamus.³ They do little hunting nowadays and are, both young men and elders, rapidly becoming indistinguishable from the Masai. The *Aramanik* living further north (notably those to the west of the Rift Wall at Sanjan, Salei and Peiáya) live a bush life of hunting and honey-gathering and are not above shooting a Masai ox when the chance presents itself.⁴ They are extremely shy people and I have had little chance of establishing contact with them.

The most remarkable thing about the *Aramanik* is their language. It is guttural in the extreme, and while there would seem to be few of the characteristics of the Masai or *Mósiro*

¹ See p. 131, *loc. cit.* The Dorobo seen by Sir Claud Hollis may, alternatively, have been *Aramanik*.

² About 4000 in number.

³ I have been unable to discover a single individual among the Masai and the Dorobo of all kinds who does not regard the eating of fish as anathema.

⁴ According to unauthenticated statements made by certain Masai.

tongues to be observed in it, certain words would seem to have been borrowed from the Masai. There are certain other words which the *Mósiro* say the *Aramanik* have taken from them. The *Aramanik* say the reverse is the case. For instance, an ox, in the *Aramanik* tongue, is *kirigit*. The *Mósiro* call it *kirigi*.

Numbers of words in the *Aramanik* language have no plural form, and the language as a whole, to the ears of a very inexperienced amateur philologist, would seem to be more primitive than that of the *Mósiro*. Its most pronounced characteristic, perhaps, is the frequent occurrence of a half-sounded *k*—generally at the termination of a word. Again, the *Aramanik* numerals differ from the Masai up to three only. I have gone into this matter at some length, but all my *Aramanik* informants are unanimous in stating that there never were any words for numbers above three until the remainder were borrowed from the Masai. This does not altogether satisfy me.¹

Investigation of the Dorobo living adjacent to the 'I-Oita, Purko and Ol-Oitokitok Masai would, doubtless, be productive of much interesting information. As I have already said, I think they are *Aramanik*, but I have little to advance in support of my theory.

As in the case of the *Il-Mósiro*, some *Aramanik* are stated to have been adopted, in their fathers' time, into various Masai clans—mainly the '*L-Aiser*'.

The Masai smiths (*Il-Kunōno*)² had a dialect of their own which was not generally understood by the Masai. However, it was universally agreed to be a bastard Masai, and the *Kunōno* were never asserted to be anything but Masai. I do not think they can be identified with any of the types of Dorobo we have seen so far.

*Il-Kitokorda ; Il-Kisangara*³

It is unfortunate that I am able to say little or nothing about these peoples. Whether they are two distinct types of Dorobo

¹ See Merker: *Die Masai*, p. 257. I could discover no *Aramanik* who knew all the numerals here given, but as *Die Masai* was first published in 1904, presumably the list of numerals was obtained at least twenty-five years ago and probably more.

² Mainly drawn from the *Il-Kipuyōni* family of the *Il-Mölelyan* clan (Hollis).

³ The names here given are probably not the true names of these Dorobo.

or whether they are as closely connected as the *Mósiro*, *Médiak* and *Kisankasa*, I am unable to say, as I have had little opportunity of meeting them or of making inquiries about them.

The *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara* live in the country of the Wanguu and Wazigua,¹ and are stated to have lived always with or on the outskirts of these Bantu tribes. On the formation of the Tanganyika Masai Reserve in 1923, the Wanguu and Wazigua inhabiting the Talamai-Gitu-Mtambalo area were moved eastwards. With them went the *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara*. Rumour says that many of them would have preferred to remain in Masailand where honey is plentiful, but their Bantu masters were adamant and insisted on the Dorobo following them. The *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara*, dependent for the necessities of life on the Wanguu and Wazigua (particularly in a bad season when honey and game are scarce) went perforce.

The *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara* spend a considerable amount of time in the bush, honey-gathering. They are entirely ignorant of the Masai language, as a general rule, but know Kinguu and Kizigua and often both. They are stated to have a primitive tongue of their own, but on this point I am unable to speak definitely. It has also been said that some of them speak the *Mósiro* language, and although this may be the case, I am inclined to think that the presence of a few *Mósiro*, who live in scattered settlements just on the Handeni-Masai border and who cultivate small gardens of maize and millet, may have given rise to this belief.

The *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara* Dorobo may be impoverished Wanguu and Wazigua, but I think it more likely that they are Nilotic² in origin. There would seem to be little reason for an agriculturist to turn into a bushman.³ The few *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara* I have seen differ entirely in general physical characteristics from their Bantu neighbours (who do not admit consanguinity with them), and their speaking only Kinguu or

They are the names current among the Masai and the Dorobo in Masailand, but it may be that different names are used in the Handeni country.

¹ To the west of Handeni Station in the Pangani District.

² Perhaps it would be better to say Hamitic.

³ [But is not this the case with the Bakalahari in South Africa, stated on good authority to be impoverished Bechuana?—A. W.]

Kizigua (if this is so) may indicate nothing more than the fact that their own language has been lost. My remarks are only in the nature of pure surmise, because, as I have said before, I have had no opportunity of conversing with or investigating these people.

This, as far as my information extends, concludes the list of types of people living in, or adjacent to, the Tanganyika Masai Reserve and calling themselves "Dorobo." In the Burungi area of the Kondoa District there are a few impoverished Burungi who live a bush life and who are sometimes referred to as "Dorobo" by their fellow-tribesmen. I imagine that they are the same, relatively speaking, as the *Balañga* and have no more real claim to the name Dorobo than have the Burungi themselves.

DOROBO ARMS

(Unless otherwise stated, all native names are in the language of the *Il-Mósiro*.)

The following arms and equipment are commonly carried by the Dorobo in his wanderings through the bush. Many of the articles are in use by the Masai, but with the exception of the sword and throwing-club (which are Masai arms) and the poison (which is manufactured by the Wakamba of Kilosa), the arms are made by the Dorobo themselves. Spears and shields are not used by the true Dorobo, though, as I have said, *Balañga* and *Kinyalañgat* who have abandoned their wanderings and have returned to the bosom of the tribe may, and often do, carry spears.

The bow (*kueanda*), which is always kept strung, is anything from four-and-a-half to five-and-a-half feet long. The length varies with the stature of the owner. There is no notch or other arrangement for affixing the string to the shaft—it is merely securely knotted at either end and never seems to slip. The wood used is that of the *Ol-poróweet* tree and is immensely tough and strong. The shaft of the bow is sometimes coloured brown with the stain produced by the spittle made from chewing a leaf the name of which I have been unable to discover, but more often its pristine whiteness gradually fades to a dull brown

through use and continuous contact with hands and bodies which are frequently anointed with *Ol-karia*.¹

The bowstring (*inee'*) is made from the sinew embedded in the dorsal muscles of an ox, eland, greater kudu or hartebeest. Occasionally it may be manufactured from the tendon of a giraffe's leg.

The quiver (*mootiet*)² is a cylinder of ox-, eland- or kudu-skin about two-and-a-half feet in length and capable of containing from fifteen to thirty arrows. A strap runs down one side and is attached to the removable cap. When this cap is put on, the strap, taut over the wearer's shoulder, keeps it in place. The quiver is the same in all respects as that used by the Masai, and an illustration of it will be found on p. 356 of *The Masai : their Language and Folklore* (Hollis).

The arrows (*käтик*; sing. *käte*) vary in length according to the size of the owner. They are generally between twenty and thirty inches long. Many kinds of wood are used for the making of the arrow-shaft (*muliandee*). The arrow-head (*siyelda*), which is made from any scraps of iron that can be obtained (since the decline of the *Il-Kunôno*,³ no iron is smelted in Tanganyika Masailand, and swords and spears are made, almost exclusively, by the Chaga and the Wanguu), consists of a single barb. The hole bored in the shaft to receive it is reinforced with sinew (*Mäisie*) from the leg of an ox. This is bound round the aperture, and then the work is smeared with a kind of gum (*ile*) obtained from the *Ngosiandee*⁴ tree. The arrow feathers are those of the vulture (*Ara'chee*) or the long-legged insect-eating bird called *Endera'hi*. The feathers are bound to the shaft with thin gut and the whole (including the nock) is then coated with a sticky paste obtained by chewing a tuber (*sikôitie*). This paste is smeared on and allowed to dry in the sun, when the result is surprisingly strong and well-knit. Dorobo arrows are workmanlike and extremely strong, but they are seldom if ever embellished or ornamented in any way.

The arrow-head is generally (when coated with fresh poison)

¹ See note, p. 138 *loc. cit.*

² Cf. the Masai *Ol-môtian*.

³ See note 2, p. 251.

⁴ Cf. the Masai *Ol-Agoswa* (*Balanites* sp.); Hollis. The same tree.

covered with a strip of soft hide—often that of reedbuck or impala—worked to a state of pliability resembling that of chamois leather. The barb is never coated with poison under any circumstance.

A small supply of fresh poison (*ngwane*¹) is sometimes carried in the heel of the quiver. This poison is a black, sticky mass made by boiling the leaves of a certain tree and is manufactured exclusively by the Wakamba. The Dorobo know nothing about it, hold it in considerable awe, and have never attempted to make poison of their own.¹

In the quiver is also carried a fire-stick (*Ol-kiriañgeti*) and a fire-block (*sasanda*). The Dorobo are experts at making fire and scorn to use matches. A small flat spoon (*kanuléuandee*) for smearing poison on the arrow-heads is also carried—this spoon is made from the same wood as the bow; and a small knife for smoothing and rounding the arrow-shafts. This knife is called *orueta sillé*.² A wooden tube about twelve to eighteen inches long and a quarter of an inch in diameter, not unlike a peashooter, will always be found in a Dorobo quiver. This tube, called *endulee*, is used for drinking from pools which are shallow or which have a dirty, scummy surface. (It is a point of honour with every Dorobo and an unwritten bush law that a man should not stir up the mud in any water at which he drinks.) The *endulee* is also used to induce, by blowing through it, a blaze or clouds of smoke from lighted grass put into a hive to drive the bees away from the honey.

A Dorobo quiver, as we have seen, contains a large number of objects essential to the bush life that the Dorobo leads. It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that it is next to impossible to purchase a furnished one. A Dorobo once told me (I am sure he meant it) that he would not exchange his quiver and its contents for five oxen. The price habitually paid to the parents of a girl taken in marriage is from two to five arrows, and a demand on the parents' part for a full quiver would be regarded as extortionate.

The Dorobo may be seen sometimes with a small axe which

¹ That is, arrow poison. The Dorobo are reputed to have a powerful poison they mix with snuff. When inhaled, it is stated to have a fatal result. I have been unable to obtain a specimen of this poison and doubt its existence.

² Literally, "Small knife."

differs little from that used by the Masai and many Bantu tribes. This axe is, primarily, a tool and not a weapon. They also carry the usual Masai club, which they call *rungu*.¹ This club is used indiscriminately as a throwing or hitting weapon. The Dorobo are excellent shots with it, but are more expert with the bow. The latter weapon they seem to venerate; they are for ever holding archery competitions among themselves, and it is no uncommon sight to see a Dorobo dreamily twanging the taut string of his bow (often little shorter than himself) and deriving obvious pleasure from the sound produced thereby.

A skin bag or bottle, of the usual Masai pattern, is used to bring home honey collected in the bush. The Dorobo carry this, when full (the same remark applies to any other load), by means of a strap of bark or leather round the forehead. The load hangs between the shoulder-blades in the usual Masai fashion.

THE *MOSIRO* AND *ARAMANIK* LANGUAGES

(A comparative list of numerals, words and tenses, with the equivalents in Masai and Nandi.)

The following symbols or marks have been used to assist in the correct pronunciation of the numerals and the short lists of words and tenses given. They have also been used throughout the text. Most of them are used as in Hollis's well-known works on the Masai and Nandi.

The symbol ~ when superimposed denotes that the *ng* occurring in the word has the same sound as the English *singer*. In cases where it does not appear the *g* is hard.

A diaeresis has its usual grammatical significance.

' denotes that the letter beneath it is definitely accented.

~ denotes a long open vowel. *ee* has been used in some words to denote an inimitable, long, drawling sound.

An elevated letter (as in *dalo*) denotes that the letter in question is barely perceptibly sounded.

Where ^ appears over a vowel, it means that the latter has a

¹ This club is almost always made of the wood of a tree called by the Masai *Ol-oirien*. According to the authority quoted in Hollis, this tree is the wild olive (*Olea chrysophylla*). *Ol-oirien* may also mean the heart-wood of a tree (Hollis).

very open but short sound. In the case of *shôdahat*, the ô is so open as almost to sound like the a in the English *father*.

denotes that the vowel beneath it has a short, clipped sound. In *ilè*, the è is pronounced like the a in the English *fat*.

beneath a letter means that it has a slurred sound. *p*, *b*, *v* and *w* in the Masai and *Mósiro* tongues are almost interchangeable.

With regard to the list of numerals given, the similarity between the Nandi, Suk and *Mósiro* words (up to 5) will be apparent at once. The Aramanik *one* and *two* are unlike anything else in the list, unless *kindei* can be said to resemble *akeñge* or *epei*.

The Somali, Masai, Latuka and the two Dorobo words for six are all alike, but the *Mósiro* word for *seven* and the *Aramanik* *two* (as stated above) have no resemblance to any others in the several counts. Possibly the former may be a corruption of the Nandi *seven*.

Turning to the list of nouns; only the word for *ox* is the same, or practically so, in *Mósiro* and *Aramanik*. No other corresponding words would appear to have the least resemblance in these tongues (except *asíta* and *ajit*) or in Masai. However, the remarkable similarity between the *Mósiro* and the Nandi list will not fail to be noticed at once.

The names of the game animals, in the *Mósiro* language, would seem to have been borrowed from the Masai in some cases. There will also be observed a certain similarity between *Mósiro* and *Aramanik* in the word for *hartebeest*, and the word for *wildebeest* is obviously the same in all three tongues. The likeness between *Mósiro* and Nandi will here be noted again.

Some of the simpler verbal forms from Masai and Nandi have been taken and the *Mósiro* equivalents inserted. The similarity between the last two is again manifest. It is to be regretted that I am unable to submit examples of the *Aramanik* verbal forms. These are extremely primitive and very difficult to write, and I hesitate to place on record the very hastily-written examples I have, so far, had the opportunity of obtaining.

It may be as well to mention that the *Mósiro* examples given herein were all written down before I had access to

Hollis's book on the Nandi. I have left them just as they were written in the first instance, as it would seem an additional proof (if any be needed) that the *Mósiro* and the Nandi are very closely related. On checking them over with the *Mósiro* and with Hollis's book before me, I am not inclined to think that the *Mósiro* words could more accurately be written by conforming more closely to Hollis's Nandi spelling. The language of the *Mósiro*, though undoubtedly at one time pure Nandi, has become, owing to Masai and other influences, considerably modified, and I think that a *Mósiroi* from Talamai and a Nandi might have some difficulty in understanding each other if brought face to face.

The difficulty of setting down verbal forms which sound extremely alike and which appear to vary only owing to the difference in intonation in individual voices will be readily appreciated by all who have ever attempted the task. In addition, the *Mósiroi* is no respecter of persons, in the sense that " ye want " and " they want " are more or less the same to him. He rarely troubles to be accurate about his verbs (the same remark holds good when he is speaking Kiswahili), merely differentiating between the singular and plural and leaving it to the context to elucidate the precise meaning.

Very few examples are given. It was thought that a longer and more detailed list was outside the scope of a brief and unscientific paper of this nature.

No.	Somali.	Masai.	Latuka.	Nandi.	Turkana.	Suk.	Mósiro.	Aramanik.
1	Kau	Óbo; <i>m.</i> Nabo; <i>f.</i>	Abodi	Akenge	Epei	Okóngá	Akeééngé	Kindéi
2	Laba	Aare; <i>m.</i> Are; <i>f.</i>	Arrega	Aéng or Oéng	Ngare	Oghieéng	Aen ¹	Laam
3	Sadeh	Okunjí; <i>m.</i> Uni; <i>f.</i>	Guniggo	Somok	Ngauri	Somok	Sómok	Samak
4	Afár	Oodgwan; <i>m.</i> Ongwan; <i>f.</i>	Angon	Añgwan	Nómwon	Añgwan	Añgwan	Ongwen
5	Shan	Imyet	Niyet	Mut	Ekan	Mút	Módt	Imyet
6	Leh	Ille	Elle	Illo or Kullo	Ekaní; kapéi	Mut ngó ²	Éla	Ilé
7	Tadobá	Oopishana; <i>m.</i> Naapishana; <i>f.</i>	Attarit	Tisap	Ekaní	Mut ngó	Saal ³	Naapishana
8	Sided	Isyet	Ottógoni	Sisiit	Egáñgaun	Oghieéng	Isyet	Isyet
9	Sagal	Óudo; <i>m.</i> Naudo; <i>f.</i>	Óttongon	Sokol	Ekaní kurawon	Mut ngó	Endorol ⁴	Endorol
10	Toban	Tomon	Taman	Tommon	Tommon	Mut ngó	Taman	Tomon
						Taman		

The Somali, Latuka and Turkana counts given above have been taken from Sir Charles Eliot's introduction to *The Masai: their Language and Folklore* (Hollis). The Nandi and Suk counts have been taken from Hollis and Beech respectively. The *Masiro* and *Aramanik* spelling is my own. The remarkable similarity between the Nandi, Suk and *Mósiro* numerals (up to 5) will be noted.

¹ The final *g* is so faint that I have omitted it altogether.

² Six, seven, eight and nine in Suk are often represented by the Turkana word (Beech).

³ *Sal* is also used by the Masai for nine (p. xv, introduction to Merker's *Die Masai*).

⁴ The Masai also use *Endorol* for nine.

	<i>Masai.*</i>	<i>Nandi.*</i>	<i>Mósiro.</i>	<i>Aramanik.</i>
Goat	En-gine	Ngororiet	Ngararie	Oferit
Sheep	Ol-kerr	Kechiriet	Kejirie	Haau
Ox	Ol-kiteñg	Teta	Kirigi	Kirigit
Hand	Eng-aina	Eut	Eeiu	Mongo
Foot	En-geju	Keldo	Kelda	Yeéh
Nose	En-gume	Serut	Seru'	Etinga
Head	El-lughunya	Metit	Metit	Sogok
Man	Ol-tuñgani	Chiito	Chiich	Kinde
Woman	E-ñgoröyöni	Korket	Karaka	Maito
Child	En-gerai	Lakwet	Lagwe	Úo
Knife	Eng-alem	Chepkeswai	Siléte	Pandeu
Bow	Eng-áuo	Kwanget	Kueanda	Mátu
Arrow	Em-bae	Kötet	Káte	Gare
Sword	Ol-alem	Rotuet	Rótue	Joo
Sun	Eng-olofig	Asista	Asita	Ajit
Moon	Ol-apa	Aruwet	Araäne	Leheuk
Day	En-dáma	Ekonet	Fetinda	Ajóta
Night	En-gewárie	Kembaut	Lañgat	Eramesa
God	Eng-ai	Asis	Tororéta	Oyet

* The Masai and Nandi words given are prefixed by the singular article.

	<i>Masai.</i>	<i>Nandi.</i>	<i>Mósiro.</i>	<i>Aramanik.</i>
Zebra	Ol-oítigö; s.	Sigiriet-ap-tim; s.	Sikirie; s. ¹	Shijio
	Il-oítigöshi; p.	Sigiriök-ap-tim; p.	Sirkon; p.	
Elephant	Ol-tóme; s.	Péliot; s.	Péliandee; s.	Fánaku
	Il-tómia; p.	Pélek; p.	Pélek; p.	
Hartebeest	Ol-kondi; s.		Orobout; s.	Naboru
	Il-kondin; p.		Iroboutisie; p.	
Giraffe	Ol-méut; s.	Ingotiot; s.	Tiangányiet; s.	Giäiesuk
	Il-méuti; p.	Ingotinik; p.	Taanganyo; p.	
Rhinoceros	E-muny; s.	Kipsirichet; s.	Nyiee; s.	Ndovuk ²
	Il-muny; p.	Kipsirichaiik; p.	Nyioosie; p.	
Hippopotamus	Ol-makau; s.	Makasta; s.	Makaita; s.	Dalo ³
	Il-makain; p.	Makasuek; p.	Makai; p.	
Lion	Ol-ñgatuny; s.	Ñgetundo; s.	Ñgetunda; s.	Merok or Majok
	Il-ñgatunyo; p.	Ñgetunyik; p.	Ñgetuinyik; p.	
Buffalo	Ol-osökwan; s.	Soet; s.	Saie ^t ; s.	Shódahat
	Il-osökwan; p.	Soen; p.	Saieeni; p.	
Wildebeest	O-engat; s.		Engaita; s.	Engat ⁴
	I-engatin; p.		Engatin; p.	

¹ Cf. the Masai word for donkey, *O-sikirie*, *I-sirkon*.

² Cf. the Kiswahili *Ndovu*, meaning an elephant.

³ Obviously the same word in the three languages.

In Masai, Nandi, and *Mósiro* there are many alternative names for the animals listed above. Only one example of each has been given in order to save space. The *Aramanik* words given have no plural forms. It will be noted how similar are the methods of forming the plurals in Nandi and *Mósiro*.

In the *Mósiro* tongue the use of the article is vague in the extreme, and it is often a matter of some difficulty to ascertain whether it is being used or not. However, I think it exists and that some individuals use it more or less habitually, but

the word seems to gain nothing from its inclusion or otherwise and it would be difficult to lay down any rule about it.

The *Mósiro*, despite their laxity in the use of their own article (assuming it to exist), are, curiously enough, surprisingly accurate in their use of the Masai article when speaking that language. (See p. xxii of the introduction to *The Suk ; their Language and Folklore* (Beech). See also p. 52 of the text of that work.)

A COMPARISON BETWEEN SOME OF THE SIMPLER VERBAL FORMS IN MASAI, NANDI AND *Mósiro*

	<i>Masai.</i>	<i>Nandi.</i>	<i>Mósiro.</i>
I follow	A-suj nanu	A-'sup-i ane	A-mateén (anet) ¹
Thou followest	I-suj iye	I-'sup-i inye	A-mateé inyet
He follows	E-suj ninye	I-'sup-i inendet	A-mateén anet
We follow	Ki-stúj iyook	Ki-'sup-i achek	Ki-mateén eechek
You follow	I-suj-usuž 'ndae	O-'sup-i okwek	O-mateén aakwek
They follow	E-suj ninje	Isup-i ichek	'mataien eechek
I do not follow	M-a-suj	M-a-'sup-i	M-amateén
Thou followest not	M-i-suj	Me-i-'sup-i	M-amateé
He does not follow	M-e-suj	Me-'sup-i	M-amateé
We do not follow	Mi-ki-suj	Ma-ki-'sup-i	Mi-mateiya
Ye do not follow	M-i-súj-usuju	Mo-o-'sup-i	Amo-mateé
They do not follow	M-e-suj	Me-'sup-i	Mai-mateé
I do not know	M-a-iyölö-u	Maonget	Mangun (anet) ¹
Thou knowest not	M-i-'yölö-u	Minget	Mingun inyet
He does not know	M-e-iyölö-u	Minget inne	Mangun anet
We do not know	Mi-ki-'yölö-u	Mokinget	Makingun eechek
Ye do not know	M-i-'yölö-lo'	Nenyu mwonget	Moongun aakwek
They do not know	M-e-iyölö-u	Menget icerk	Maingun eechek
I followed	A-tu-suj-u-a	Ki-a-'sup	Ara-mateén
Thou followest	I-tu-suj-u-a	Ki-i-'sup	Ara-mateén
He followed	E-tu-suj-u-a	Ki-'sup or Ki-ko-'sup	Ará-ko-mateén
We followed	Ki-tu-suj-u-tuá	Ki-ki-'sup	Ará-ke-mateén
You followed	I-tu-suj-usuju-tuá ²	Ki-o-'sup	Ar'-oo-mateén
They followed	E-tu-suj-u-tuá	Ki-'sup or Ki-ko-'sup	Ara-ke-mateén

¹ May be, and often is, omitted.

The negative present of the Nandi verb "to know" as conjugated above is taken from Sir Charles Eliot's introduction to Sir Claud Hollis's *Masai Language and Folklore*. The spelling of the other Masai and Nandi tenses is derived from Hollis's works on the Masai and Nandi. The examples of tenses in *Mósiro* given above (especially those without the pronouns) are submitted with diffidence. As I have said elsewhere, the *Mósiroi* is not a respecter of persons, and verbs seem to depend largely for their meaning on the context and on the conjoint pronoun. Very few *Mósiro* have any idea at all of conjugating a verb. The effort to reduce the *Mósiro* tenses to some form of lucidity entailed more work than I should have believed possible. The results are submitted for what they may be worth—I cannot vouch for their accuracy.

² Or I-tu-suj-u-tuá?

SOME *Mōsiro* FOLK-TALES, FOLK-LORE AND SUPERSTITIONS

"*Epiite dimda kitio*"¹

Thus answered a *Mōsiroi* Dorobo whom I rallied on his silence and attitude of strained attention during a halt by the wayside when on safari in the remoter areas of the Tanganyika Masai Reserve.

The bush and what can be wrested from it—wood for his bow and arrows, honey for his wife and children and for barter, the bark of the *Ol-mukutan*² tree, fibre for plaiting into his hair, and last (but most important of all) the skins and the meat of game animals—these things bound the horizon of the Dorobo. It is therefore not to be wondered at that such folk-lore tales as exist among the Dorobo at the present time are chiefly concerned with animals and animal life. Similarly, the paramount interest in life of the Masai is apparent from a study of the extant folk-tales of that tribe, which deal, to a great extent, with cattle and other domestic stock. The tales one hears told to-day are, in all probability, but a few of the more easily-remembered of a host of stories now forgotten for all time.

The following examples have been selected from a large number of stories told by the *Mōsiro* themselves and admitted by the Masai to be Dorobo in origin.

The Dikdik and the Elephant.—The dikdik, when out walking in the bush one day, chanced to fall over a piece of elephant-dung in his path. This made him very angry and he said: "Thus am I incommoded by the dung of the elephant! I am so small that I cannot hope to inconvenience him in like manner, but I will arrange for all the members of my tribe to come and make use of one place, and thus in time the heap may grow big enough to trip a passing elephant." This is the reason why piles of dikdik-dung, showing that many of these animals have used the same place, are often seen in the middle of a bush path. (A story very like this is told by certain Coastal tribes.)

The Tortoise, the Hare and the Hyena.—These three made an agreement to rob a rich snake. The latter had cattle and

¹ "I am listening to something in the bush." Cf. the Masai *En-dim*, bush.

² *Albizia anthelmintica*, according to the authority quoted in Hollis. It is used as a remedy for worms and to produce a large appetite. It is highly prized by the Masai and is scarce in the Kitēto localities.

donkeys. The tortoise was selected, after much discussion, as the one to kill the snake, because the snake did not fear him (for his bones were outside his body) and would be likely to be off his guard in consequence. Neither did the tortoise (whose bones were outside his body) fear the snake. While the tortoise and the snake were fighting, the hyæna made off with the cattle and the hare took the donkeys. The hyæna, being greedy, ate all the cattle and then stuck their tails upright in a muddy place. He then ran to the hare, crying : " See ! all my cattle have fallen into this swamp and only their tails can now be seen ! Woe is me ! " The hare, however, refused to allow himself to be deceived by the hyæna or to part with any of his donkeys, and went off to live with them. He has now ceased to herd them, and they have become the striped donkeys¹ one sees on the plains. The tortoise at length succeeded in killing the snake after a long battle, and looked round only to discover that he had been cheated and deserted by his companions. To this day he has been unable to catch them, as he is such a slow walker, but he has not given up the pursuit and still goes through the bush, calling to them always : " Koo ! Koo ! " (the distinctive and bell-like note of the tortoise that natives say is so often heard).

*The Sun and the Moon.*²—The sun and the moon quarrelled. The reason for this was because the moon wanted to appear in the daytime. The sun refused to agree, and they fought. The moon was worsted and was also badly wounded, a big piece being knocked out of it. This is why it is not round like the sun and why it goes low down in the sky nearly always and is only seen at night. It wishes to avoid the sun, of which it is afraid. When the sun disappears from view at night, it awaits a favourable opportunity and then, when it is cloudy, rushes across the sky to the east again (so fast that no man can see it). It then rests until it is time to begin work on the following morning.

The Dikdik and the Eland.—Of those whose meat is tender, the eland is the largest animal and the dikdik is the smallest.

¹ Zebra.

² No sex for the moon is here given. See Hollis : *Masai Language and Folklore*, pp. 273, 274. Orde-Browne : *Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 217, 218.

This makes the latter feel jealous. He hates the eland on account of his superiority in size and strength, and to show that he is every bit as good as the eland, he has grown a long tuft of hair on his forehead, just the same as an eland bull. The eland has a habit of rubbing his forehead in his urine.¹ This causes the tuft on his forehead to grow strong and thick. The dikdik follows this custom also, partly to increase the growth of his frontal tuft and partly in order to prove that anything an eland can do, he can do as well.

*The Wart-Hog and the Lion.*²—(About four miles south-east of Kibaya there is a curious cave in a bank beside the river bed. The floods of years have washed away the earth from beneath a flat, granite-like rock outcrop which forms the bank in one place, and the cavity thus made (at no point more than three or three-and-a-half feet from floor to ceiling) has often been used in the past as an *Ol-pul*³ by the Masai. While taking shelter in this cave one day during a downpour of rain, a Dorobo told me the following tale.)

“A wart-hog once came here to rest. Finding the place warm and comfortable, he lay down and was speedily fast asleep. He awoke to find that a lion had entered the cave and was advancing on him with the intent to kill him, for wart-hogs and lions are deadly enemies. The wart-hog brought all his wits to bear on the matter of making his escape, for he greatly feared the lion, who was very big and strong. Suddenly an idea came to his mind, and standing on his hind-legs, he pretended to support the roof of the cave with his tusks, calling out meantime in a frightened voice: ‘Lion, lion, come and help me to hold up the roof, as it is falling and we shall both be killed!’ The lion, deceived, hastened to the spot and

¹ This fact has, I understand, been authenticated. I have never seen eland performing the act, but an examination of the frontal tuft of a mature bull eland will lead one to believe in the assertion. Cf. *The Journal of a Disappointed Man* (W. N. P. Barbellion), p. 191: “The common Eland is known to micturate on the tuft of hair on the crown of its head, and it does this habitually, when lying down, by bending its head around and down—apparently because of the aroma, perhaps of sexual importance during mating time, as it is a habit of the male alone.”

² Cf. Æsop; Hollis: *Masai Language and Folklore*, pp. 196–198.

³ Slaughter-house. The place in the woods where the Masai warriors go to eat meat.

supported the roof with his fore-paws, for he had no tusks. Whereupon the wart-hog said: ' You are stronger than me. Hold up the roof with all your might while I run out for some timber to prop it up.' The lion, flattered, agreed, and the wart-hog ran out and quickly made his escape."

(History does not relate how long the lion remained holding up the roof before he realised that he had been duped by the cunning wart-hog. This story is very popular and is always received with roars of laughter.)¹

The Dorobo plays the part of buffoon or low comedian in many Masai folk-tales.² The Dorobo themselves are well aware of this and regard it as a huge joke. A tale told by a Masai in which a Dorobo figures in an absurd light generally elicits hearty applause from the Dorobo present. I select the following example.

The Dorobo and the Cow.—The Dorobo is an impatient man. Once he was given a cow, and some days afterwards this cow was crossed by a bull. The Dorobo waited a month. Then he waited another month. He tried to milk the cow, but no milk would come. He thereupon said: "What sort of a cow is this? It will not give birth; it has no milk; it is altogether unsatisfactory." He then went away to sleep, saying: "Perhaps it will have given birth by the time it is morning." In the morning, all was as it had been before and the efforts of the Dorobo to milk the cow met with no more success. The Dorobo, who was determined at least to obtain milk, thereupon seized his knife and split up the cow's udder (for all Dorobo are impatient men), but no milk came, and his knife penetrating too deeply, the intestines of the cow fell out and it died. The Dorobo was very surprised and said: "This is a bad kind of cow and I do not understand it." He then proceeded to eat the meat until it was all finished.

I was surprised to discover so little resemblance between *Mósiro* folk-lore and folk-tales and those of the Nandi as given in Sir Claud Hollis's book. There is more affinity between the *Mósiro* and the Masai in this respect. This may perhaps be explained by the comparatively long period the *Mósiro* must

¹ [Some Bantu tribes tell it of the Hare.—A. W.]

² For further examples of this see Hollis.

have lived in the country of the Kitēto Masai, since they are stated to have been the precursors of the Masai in this part of the world.

I was unable to elicit any folk-tales from the *Aramanik*, who say that they know no stories or legends except those they have learned from the Masai. It is possible that further efforts in this direction might meet with better success. The *Aramanik* are not as friendly or as ready to discuss their own affairs as are the cheerful, happy-go-lucky *Mósiro*.

Many Masai superstitions and superstitious practices are to be found among the Dorobo. There are, however, certain customs and observances of a superstitious nature practised only by the Dorobo. Of the following three examples, the last two given are in this category.

The *Mósiro* will not kill a python. They say it is a hunter of meat, as are they themselves. Furthermore, if it be killed, the ground where it dies and where its blood is split is ever afterwards fatal to cattle grazing there.¹ No explanation is given of this, and it would seem worthy of note that the Dorobo are exceptionally quick and skilful killers of all other snakes.

When following a native path or a road, if a Dorobo comes to the place where the track of a snake crosses the path, he will never step over it without first kicking up the sand or earth in order to break the continuity of the snake's track. This is done in order to avert evil, and is stated to be the only efficacious way of ensuring that the snake in question will not eventually kill the man who has crossed its path.²

If a Dorobo has been robbed and if the thief cannot be found, the following procedure is sometimes resorted to. The man who has suffered the loss heats his sword in the fire until it is red and then, plunging it into the earth, he says: "The thief shall die to-morrow." This is regarded as a very bad practice and is seldom indulged in, as the injured party, no matter how much he may have lost, knows that he will become extremely unpopular as a result of his action.

It seems likely that in a few years' time there will be no *Balaṅga* and no *Kinyalaṅgat* Dorobo. As I have said elsewhere, it is now almost impossible to find *Balaṅga* or *Kinya-*

¹ See Hollis: *The Nandi*, p. 80.

² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

lañgat who lead a life of hunting. These people (being Masai and 'I-Oikop, if my conclusions are not erroneous) are pastoralists at heart, and nearly all the elders have their own small herds of cattle to-day. As for the younger generations, they are now Masai and 'I-Oikop respectively to all outward seeming.

The *Aramanik* (in the Moipo area) are also rapidly becoming Masai, and my failure to glean more information about them may be attributed to this cause. My opportunities for investigating the *Aramanik* of the northern areas (O-subuko L'oltatwa¹ and round the northern end of Eyasi lake) have been extremely limited, but it would seem that they are far less susceptible to Masai influence than are their brethren at Moipo and Lo'-sokonoi. The *Aramanik* present a definite problem, and I think it will be agreed that their possession of a distinct language and the very meagre information about them contained in this paper warrant further investigation with the promise of interesting results. It may be that their identity will be obvious to some people. I am not prepared to put forward any theory as to their origin and how they came to occupy the areas they live in to-day, but I am convinced that they are not Masai, as are the *Balañga*.

The *Kitokorda* and *Kisangara* Dorobo (if these be their true names) might also repay investigation. They certainly differ from the other types of Dorobo dealt with here.

Among the *Mósiro* Masai influence waxes yearly, and in time they, too, will cease to exist as a separate people. The comparatively high prices the Masai are willing to pay for *Mósiro* women; the fact that the Masai are always ready to employ the younger *Mósiro* men as herds; the stricter enforcement by Government of the Game Laws; all these factors contribute to the abandonment of bush life by the *Mósiro*, who are lazy but far from uncivilisable.

I believe the *Mósiro* to have been very closely allied to the Nandi at one time, if they were not pure Nandi.² The evidence of language would seem to be indisputable, but it is a more

¹ Ngorongoro localities. These Dorobo are entirely distinct from the *Kangeju*, written about by Mr. F. J. Bagshawe (see note 1, p. 249).

² See Hollis: *The Nandi*, p. 2.

difficult matter to explain how the *Mósiro* of Talamai penetrated so far south—assuming them to have been Nandi originally. In addition to the other points of resemblance between the *Mósiro* and the Nandi that may have been noted throughout this paper, it may be of interest to state that the *Mósiro* possess and use a four-stringed lyre¹ of much the same shape and construction as that illustrated on p. 39 of Sir Claud Hollis's work on the Nandi. The *Mósiro* are skilful performers on this lyre, which is quite foreign to the Masai. The other Nandi musical instruments (with the exception of the war-horn) are not known to the *Mósiro*, as far as I have been able to discover.

I have said elsewhere that the bulk of the Kenya Dorobo would seem (according to the statements made by the Dorobo from whom the present information has been derived) to be *Aramanik* and *Balaṅga*. This was with reference to the Dorobo living among the Kenya Masai and was not intended to include such Dorobo as there may be among the Nandi to-day.

On one occasion I was lured to walk over twenty miles by the promise of being shown some "rock-paintings" alleged to have been made by the *Mósiro* or other Dorobo and to be extremely ancient. My informant assured me that no man could remember the time when they had been done and that the cave in which they were was regarded with great reverence throughout the countryside. I went, only to discover that the place was a disused *Ol-pul* and that the paintings (most of them were of Masai shields, but some were of a character bordering on the lascivious) had obviously been made by Dorobo or Masai Muran within the last five years or so.² Some were even fresher. Charcoal, red ochre, lime and wood-ash were the mediums used.

To the casual observer (particularly one new to Africa) the Dorobo, Masai, Kwavi, Gogo and even the Arusha warrior when in panoply might all seem to belong to the same tribe. To the habituated eye there would be many differences readily

¹ *Kipokandet* (Nandi); *Hoombi* (*Mósiro*).

² When the Masai Muran go into *Ol-pul*, they are often accompanied by one or more Dorobo, generally *Mósiro*. The duties of the latter are to plait the Masai warriors' hair, cook and make themselves generally useful. Their reward is as much meat as they can consume.

apparent, but the outstanding dissimilitude, curiously enough, would seem to me to be the variations in the several manners of speaking Kiswahili. The pronunciation of the Kwavi, once heard, is never forgotten. It is nasal and unmelodious, with invariable pauses after such words as "but" and "and." The Dorobo method is characteristically lazy. Syllables to which the full value could quite easily be given are slurred over for no apparent reason. *Kutapika* commonly becomes *Kuta'i'a*. *Faru* is often rendered *Fao*—but this may be due to Wanguu influence.¹ The Kiswahili-speaking Masai is more correct and enterprising. He often acquires curious words and expressions, and by virtue of his volubility and his employment of peculiar constructions cannot be mistaken. The Arusha speaks like the Kwavi, but without the pervasive nasal quality.

It is hard to differentiate on paper, but in conversation with representatives of the tribes mentioned the average European ear will not fail to detect the differences after a little experience.

Note.—I regret very much that owing to my inability to read German I have not been able to refer fully to Merker's well-known work² on the Masai, which contains much useful and interesting matter concerning the Dorobo.

R. A. J. MAGUIRE.

¹ [*Fau* is sometimes heard in Kenya Colony. It is a well-known tendency in Kiswahili—somewhat exaggerated by the Akamba—to drop intervocalic consonants, especially *l* and *r*.—A. W.]

² Merker: *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1910).