



LOCAL COMMUNITIES AMONG THE BERTI¹⁾

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According to their own tradition, the original home of the Berti is the area of the Tagabo Hills, situated in the northern district of the Darfur Province of the Sudan, about 120 km north of the capital of the Province, El Fasher. This original tribal territory is still settled by a considerable part of the tribe, of which another part lives separately in a vast territory in the eastern part of the Darfur Province, in the region of the small town of Umm Keddada and Taweisha. According to tradition, migration took place of part of the inhabitants from the original territory, in an easterly direction, at the beginning of this century, due to internal warfare between two chiefs and the famine following it. A smaller part of the Berti lives intermingled with members of the For tribe also south of El Fasher.

Originally the Berti spoke their own language, but to-day they are, from the linguistic point of view, fully arabized. In the dry steppes of northern Darfur the Berti are completely sedentary; in the rainy season they cultivate fields in which they grow millet (*Pennisetum typhoideum*), sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*) sesame (*Sesamum indicum*), okra (*Hibiscus esculentus*) and water melons (*Citrulus vulgaris*). Besides hoe cultivation an important part of their economy is animal husbandry. They keep cattle, sheep and goats, as well as donkeys and camels which are used as riding animals and beasts of burden.

Every Berti is from birth a member of several social groups, of which the most important is the clan and the local community. The aim of this article is to consider the mutual relations between

these groups and the social role that they play in Berti society.

The division of the tribe into a number of patrilineal clans is traditionally attributed to the first legendary ruler of the tribe, El Hağ Mohammad Yambar, from whom the Berti trace their history and who in their modest mythology plays the role of a culture hero. According to their notions, El Hağ Mohammad Yambar lived at the time of the Tungur sultan, Shau Dorsid, who, taking into consideration the traditions of other Darfur tribes, ruled in Darfur most probably in the 15th century. El Hağ Mohammad Yambar is said to have divided the tribe into the present-day 99 clans, a number which the Berti insist is accurate, although, in fact, it is probably somewhat higher. A distinguishing mark of every clan is its name. Most clan names are identical with the names of different mountains in the Tagabo Hills, which corresponds to the Berti's idea that individual clans were named by El Hağ Mohammad Yambar after the mountains in which or near which the members of the clan lived. Some clans derive their names from certain legendary events in their past. A further distinguishing mark of individual clans are their ownership brands — *wōsim*, which are, according to tradition, also El Hağ Mohammad Yambar's invention. The members of single clans use these brands to mark domestic animals, especially camels and donkeys, and the various articles of daily use.

Although the consciousness of clan membership is strongly preserved in the Berti community, the number of occasions on which it can manifest its social role is extremely limited. The Berti state in the past clan-endogamy was the rule, every man being obliged to marry within his own clan. A conspicuously larger percentage of endogamous marriages among the oldest living generations of the Berti, as compared with the younger generations, would confirm this assertion and also corroborate the fact that the rule of clan endogamy was still fully operative several generations ago. Nevertheless, it is no longer observed, so that the clans have lost in present-day society their regulating function in the sphere of marriage.

Each clan has its headman. Although after the death of a headman the new headman must be approved by the members of the clan in question the position of headman is practically hereditary in one family of the clan. The clan headman is called *ras*

dia — head of *dia*, a title denoting his main function: the *ras dia* is responsible for collecting the *dia* — a fee that must be paid in case of a murder by the murderer's clan to the murdered man's clan. The *dia* is paid in money and all adult members of the murderer's clan contribute to its payment. The intercessor between the murderer's clan and the murdered man's clan is the *duani Berti*²⁾ — a member of the royal family, at present one of the king's brothers, who takes over all the money collected by the *ras dia* of the murderer's clan and hands it over to the murdered man's next of kin. Besides collecting the *dia*, the *ras dia* settles also disputes between the different villages or families of his clan, when his intervention is asked for, which it commonly is, as it is not considered suitable for individual members of the clan to appeal for the settling of their internal disputes to some outside authority. Also in the case of a dispute between two clans, a settlement is sought preferentially by the headmen of the respective clans.

The Berti have no distinct notion that the members of one clan are descendants of a common ancestor. The members of one clan are, nevertheless, regarded as mutually related because their ancestors in the time of El Hağ Mohammad Yambar were settled in one place and so were, therefore, apparently akin. The conception of mutual relationship of clan members comes out most clearly in the rules of hospitality. The Berti are proud of their hospitality and hospitality stands very high in their scale of values. To refuse hospitality is regarded as the greatest disgrace and the case of gross inhospitality on the part of a family is long remembered with disapprobation and the subject of much gossip. Although most Berti would not have the heart to send their guest away after three days, the Koran restriction of hospitality to three days is theoretically recognized except when it is a matter of the members of one's own clan, to whom hospitality is granted without any such restriction. Although the traveller can expect to be offered hospitality everywhere, a visitor who wants to spend a night in the village or to stay for several days, first asks after the members of his clan, and people when travelling mostly resort to the houses of their clan kinsmen.

A striking feature of the clan organization is the territorial localization of the individual clans. Every village, as will be seen

in more detail later on, is inhabited by the members of one clan, or more precisely, the majority of the inhabitants of a village belong to one clan. Neighbouring local communities designate a village not as a rule by its geographical name, but after the name of the clan inhabiting it. For instance the village Duda is inhabited by the members of the Kashirtu clan. The inhabitants of neighbouring villages rarely speak of it as Hilla Duda (the village of Duda), but as Hilla Kashirtu; in the same way, in Hilla Duda, people speak of the neighbouring village Hasan, inhabited by the members of the clan Basanga, not as Hilla Hasan but Hilla Basanga. And just as the name of the clan is substituted for the real name of the village, the inhabitants of the village are called after the name of the clan living in the village. So the inhabitants of Hilla Duda are usually referred to as Kashirtu, their cattle is spoken of as the cattle of the Kashirtu etc.

Although the Berti themselves identify the notion of the inhabitants of a village with the notion of the clan, the clan cannot be simply equated with the local community. The members of one clan do not all inhabit one village, but they live in several villages, which need not necessarily be adjoining and, in fact, more often are not. It is probable that the clans are locally segmented in the different villages according to their lineages — kinship groups, the members of which trace their descent in the male line, from a common ancestor. All members of the lineage know the genealogic bonds connecting them with this ancestor and each of them can say in what kinship relation he stands to him, the same as he can indicate in what kinship relation he stands to the other members of his lineage, tracing their descent from a common ancestor. It may strike the reader as strange that we should presume the social identification of the inhabitants of a village with the members of a lineage as probable. We base our view upon the structure of the villages inhabited by the members of the royal clan Basanga. Unlike other clans the Basanga are still very conscious of the inner segmentation of their clan into lineages (*h a s r e m w a r r a i*). Every Basanga knows, of what lineage he is a member and which genealogical bond links him to the other members of his lineage and to the ancestor of the lineage, who is always one of the former kings of the Berti, after whom the lineage is also named. Membership of the lineage is

for every Basanga proof of his direct relationship with some king — the ancestor of his lineage — and so acts as a strong spur to his own striving after social prestige. Even the poorest Basanga denote themselves *mulluk* — kings — and they are proud of the fact that it is they who rule the Berti. Among the remaining Berti the lineages have to-day no social function. Many Berti have no idea about the existence of other descent groups except clans and, when questioned, speak about *h a s h e m w a r r a i* as about something that no longer exists, but that may have existed formerly and about which old people might possibly remember something. At most they know the name of the founder of the lineage, without any idea of the genealogic relations connecting them with him and without any idea of who else could designate him as his ancestor.

From what was said about the relation of kin groups to the local communities it is clear that the inhabitants of the village will be related to one another by ties of kinship. See diagrams illustrating kinship ties among the inhabitants of two villages.

Amara Ğadīd (Diagram Nr 1) is a village situated in the region of Ardalla, in the central section of the Tagabo Hills. By its number of inhabitants it is a typical Berti settlement. The village is inhabited by members of the Basanga clan, belonging to the Azrag lineage. Azrag was at one time the chief in the Ardalla region tributary to the king of the Berti tribe at Mellit, and one of his grandsons — Zēnu Abbakar — became the founder of the village Amara Ğadīd. The present headman of the village (*s h ē k h*) is Ādam Dūma Zēnu, the son of the village founder (household No 1), with whom live in the village his two brothers — Mohammad Zēnu (household No 2) and Ismail Zēnu (household No 4). 'Ali Ādam (No 5) and Mohammad Tahir Ādam (No 6) are the sons of Ādam Dūma Zēnu (No 1). The founder of the village Amara Ğadīd came from the village Bātī and, besides his two sons, other members of the Azrag lineage moved to the newly-founded village. So Abbakar 'Osman (household No 13) is the son of the village founder's brother and, together with him in the village lives his son Mohammad Abbakar (household Nr 14). In the same way as Abbakar 'Osman there came to Amara Ğadīd, along with the village founder, other members of the lineage Azrag: Ādam 'Osman Abbakar, also a son of the village founder's

brother, now deceased, whose son Sidik Ādam (household No 16) continues to live at Amara Ğadīd, in one household with his widowed mother, and the deceased Mohammad Ahmad Abbakar and Ğiddo Ahmad Abbakar, the sons of another brother of the village founder, whose own sons are also still living at Amara Ğadīd, as heads of the households Nos 7 and 11. All these men (heads of households Nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 16) are members of the Azrag lineage. In household No 12 lives the widowed mother of one of Ādam Dūma Zēnu's wives, whose husband was also a Basanga. The remaining five heads of households out of a total of sixteen households in Amara Ğadīd are members of other clans. They are, especially, Abdalla Ādam (head of household No 9), who is member of the Samanga clan and married to the daughter of Mohammed Zēnu (No 2) and Ismail Abbakar (head of household No 15), an Arab, married to the daughter of Abbakar 'Osman (No 13). The residence of a married couple among the Berti is normally matri-patrilocal; the bride remains for two years after the marriage in her parents' home, after which time the young couple moves to the husband's father's village. But if the husband is not able to pay the whole bride price demanded, he cannot take away his wife to his own village, but must live with her in her father's village until he has paid the whole bride price, perhaps even permanently. This rule explains the fact that Abdalla Ādam, although a member of another clan, and Ismail Abbakar, actually a member of another tribe, live with their wives at Amara Ğadīd. The same explanation holds for Abdu Rasūl Diko (head of household No 3), who is a member of the Samanga clan. Having married a daughter of the village founder, and being unable to pay the whole bride price, he has remained permanently in the village of his father-in-law. Today his two grown-up sons live with him at Amara Ğadīd: Abdu Rahmān Abdu Rasūl (head of household No 8) and Tāhir Abdu Rasūl (head of household No 10).

We have seen that insofar as the members of other clans live in the village, it is because they have married women from the village, where they remained, as they were not able to pay the stipulated bride price. They are not complete strangers in the village, for they are connected with the village inhabitants by affinal ties. The members of the Basanga clan, who form the core

of the village inhabitants, are of one lineage and as such are mutually related. But even among them, besides consanguineal ties, numerous affinal ties exist, so that the result is an intricate network of kinship relations. As its description would take up too much space, Table No 1 will serve to show all kinship relations existing between individual heads of households at Amara Ġadīd.

Diagram No 2 illustrates the genealogical relations among the inhabitants of Hilla Dūda, a village situated in the Gonja region, below the southern slopes of the northern part of the Tagabo Hills. The village has 105 inhabitants, living in 24 households, and does not exceed in size the typical Berti settlements. It is inhabited by members of the Kashirtu clan. The village is named after its founder, Dūda, whose brother Azrag became its second headman. His son Dēfa succeeded him as headman (household No 1), and is today already very old, the present headman being Dēfa's son 'Īsa, living with his father in the same household. In accordance with the rules of patrilocality, a great number of present-day heads of household live at Dūda, as being the village of their fathers. These include Dēfa's son Mūsa (head of household No 2), Mūsa Yūsif (No 18) Sabīl Mohammad (No 24) in whose household lives also his married son, Mohammad Ādam (Nr 14) and Ādam Abbakar (No 17). The brothers of the two last-mentioned — Abd Rahmān Ādam (No 15) and Idrīs Abbakar (No 16) live at Dūda in one household with their widowed mothers, as do also Ādam Mohammad (No 13) and Abdulai Hamadōn (No 11). The latter married as a widower for the second time, his wife still lives with her parents in the neighbouring village. The sister of Mūsa Yūsif — head of household No 18 — lives by herself as a widow (No 19). Her three husbands died one after another and her son Abdulai Mohammad also lives patrilocally at Dūda, as the head of household No 20. Sālim Yusif (head of household No 21) came to Dūda with his parents as a small boy, at the time the village was founded. To-day he lives as a widower in one household with his widowed daughter and her children. Living together with him at Dūda are his two sons: Ahmad Sālim (household No 22) and Mohammad Sālim (household No 23). Some men moved to Dūda after marriage and remained in this village of their fathers-in-law, owing to their not having paid the whole bride price. Such is Ādam Ismail (household No 6), with whom

his two married sons continue to live at Dūda, Abdulai Ādam (household No 7) and 'Ali Ādam (Nr 8). For the same reason, Mohammad 'Īsa (household No 10) lives matrilocally at Dūda as does also Yahya Addīn who lives in the household (No 15) of his brother's wife.

Besides Khadiġā Yusif, who keeps house alone (No 19), there are other three widows living in independent households: Gasai Amīr (household No 9) — Ādam Ismail's wife's mother (No 6), Mariam Ishāg — Ādam Mohammad mother's mother (No 13) and Tibēna Bakhīt (household No 3). The latter married after her first husband's death, Dēfa Azrag's father (No 1), and after his death continued to live at Dūda, for her own son, living after his marriage in another village, is also deceased. All these three women are now very old and are dependant on the support of their relatives at Dūda.

Of all the male inhabitants of the village only three men are not members of the Kashirtu clan. Mohammad Harūn comes from the For tribe and having married his present wife after her husband's death, moved into her household at Dūda. Omar Īshag of the clan Bōbartu who is married to a woman of the Basanga clan, has lived at Dūda all his life. After his marriage his father moved to Dūda as to his father-in-law's village. The son of Omar Ishag married the daughter of Ādam Ismail (No 6), in whose household he lives.

In the same way as the inhabitants of Amara Ġadīd, those of Dūda, too, are bound to one another by many ties of kinship and affinity. To save space the mutual kinship ties of all married men living with their wives at Dūda are shown on Table No 2.

Even though all or most inhabitants of the village are relative to one another, kinship ties play no leading role in their behaviour to one another. Relations determining the behaviour of village members towards one another are purely those of neighbours. According to the different activities of the village inhabitants, neighbours' relations are closer or more distant. The nearest neighbours regardless of their mutual kinship relations mostly join together for activities in which not all village inhabitants take part. Such a typical activity is the common eating of meat. Meat is a rarity in the menu of the Berti, because domestic animals are not usually killed for meat. If a man is obliged, because of

an injury, to kill a sheep or goat, he invites his nearest neighbours to the meal. More often, however, the neighbours join together to buy a piece of meat in the market, which they again eat together. These small neighbours' groups which consume meat jointly do not vary from time to time, but are permanent, changes arising only as a result of a quarrel among the neighbours.

In the same way as among the male neighbours regular relations exist also among the nearest neighbouring women. A neighbouring woman can be always asked for fire, or a pot, a mortar, or other article can be borrowed from her, which happens to be missing in the household. Some women's tasks, such as the cleaning of grain in the mortar require a number of hands. If there are not enough women in the household, the nearest neighbouring women regularly help each other with this work.

There are activities for which the neighbours' help is counted on. A man who wants, for example, to build a house, lets all the members of his village know about it and asks them for help. His wife provides supplies of food and fermented millet drink (*m e r i s a*) for the fixed day, so that all the neighbours that come to build may have some refreshment. Such an established type of neighbours' help is called *n a f i r*. Those who are working in *n a f i r* do not get any other recompense except food and drink. There are no means of compulsion, but usually nobody evades such labour for a neighbour, as he would run the risk of being refused help by the other when he needs it himself. In the form of *n a f i r* the inhabitants of one village help one another at all labour of a kind that requires a larger labour force (e. g. house-building) or that one man would not be able to complete even with the greatest effort in such short time as is needed for finishing it. A typical example of such a type of labour is, for example, gum-tree tapping or the weeding of fields. All the fields being weeded at the same time and all village inhabitants being fully employed in their own fields during the weeding period, the neighbours help with *n a f i r* only those who for some serious reason would not be able to cope with the weeding of their field, which would gravely threaten the feeding of their families in the next year. During my stay among the Berti the neighbours helped to weed the field of an old woman, whose husband was a cripple and could not work, and of one man whose wife was about to be

confined. In n a f i r, the customary division of labour according to sex is preserved. House-building and the rubber-tree tapping is the business of men, the building of a fence round the house is a woman's task, but both men and women take part in the weeding of the fields.

In some cases mutual solidarity oversteps the boundary of the local community. The inhabitants of every village can make the acquaintance of the members of neighbouring villages at the common well and in the markets that are always common for about a dozen or even more of villages. By such regular contacts friendly ties are formed surpassing the boundaries of one village. If someone's house has been burnt down, he can expect immediate help not only from all the inhabitants of his village without any regard to mutual kinship ties connecting him with them, but also from a whole number of people from neighbouring villages who have heard of his bad luck and are usually not even members of his clan. The neighbours will immediately build for the victim of the disaster a new house of their own materials and everybody brings to the new house such objects of daily use as can be dispensed with in his household. If even grain provisions are lost as a result of the fire, even in this respect the unfortunate man can expect immediate help from his neighbours.

If there is a theft in the village, most often the theft of a camel, all the men of the village gather to pursue the thief (f a z a') on camels, donkeys or even on foot. They divide into two groups. The first group follows the tracks of the thief into the village (d a r b a l a g i b), to ascertain whence the thief came. The second group of pursuers follows the track by which the thief left the village. Also men from the villages through which the group passes in search of the thief join the pursuit. In all the villages through which the pursuers pass, they receive hospitality. If they find the stolen property or apprehend the thief, they blow their horns before each village they pass through as a sign of their success and the inhabitants of the village go and meet the pursuer's procession with drums. Before transporting the caught to the judge he is whipped in each village through which the pursuer's procession passes.

Local communities are the only social groups whose members negotiate with one another vis-à-vis at various activities and

among whom a clear bound of solidarity exists. The local communities are at the same time the units which play a basic role in political, economic and religious life.

The village is the basic unit of the political structure. The lowest link in the hierarchy of political authorities is the village headman (shēkh). He is subordinate to the territorial chief (omda) and through him to the ruler of the tribe (mellik), who is the connecting link with the government authorities. The village headman is a member of the clan inhabiting the village and his function is successive in the patrilineal line in his family. The headman's kinship ties with the inhabitants of his village can change the tone of his relations to them, but they do not alter the basic definition of his position. The activity of the village headman, as the lowest representative of the administrative authority of the Sudan government, is in principle restricted to collecting taxes. The headman has officially no judicial competence, which is reserved only for higher territorial chiefs (omda) and above all to the ruler, but traditionally he settles minor disputes and offences against the customary law in his village. These are, for the most part, quarrels about land or rubber-trees, private disputes between inhabitants of the village, cases of damage caused to crops by cattle etc. Such and similar cases are not settled by the headman alone, but always with a group of men from the village. This village court is altogether informal, in the sense that neither the number nor the composition of the group of men forming the village court is constant. Practically every adult man has the right to express his opinion on any case whatsoever and the composition and number of those who judge different disputes vary from one case to another. The village headman must not necessarily have the decisive say in such a body of men as solves the disputes. He usually has it, however, if he is an elderly man, who has behind him a long life's experience and is generally respected. A young headman has, considering the quite informal character of the procedure, no possibility of forcing through his own decision and usually submits to the decision of experienced older men and of the majority. Although such an informal court of the village headman cannot enforce its decision in any way, the village inhabitants submit, as a rule, to its decision. This may be attributed

to the circumstance that the decision of men judging the dispute not only expresses the general opinion, but also helps to form that opinion by influencing the decision of others, as to whether they are or are not to help one or other of the parties and support their point of view.

The village headman is primarily a distributor of certain rights in the land of his village. Theoretically anyone wanting to found a new field must ask the village headman to demarcate the boundaries. In practice this procedure is observed only where there is lack of land. In villages with plenty of free land it is possible to start cultivating fallow land without first getting formal permission from the headman. The claim to possession of such a piece of land is legalized by its user carrying the tithe (*u s h u r*) to the headman after the first crop. The inhabitants of the village are not bound only to the land in their village. According to the same law as holds in their village, anyone can also found a field in a strange village. If a man marries a girl from a strange village, this girl starts at once to cultivate her field. Should the bride's father have a large field yielding him a sufficient crop, he immediately divides off a part from it for the newly-established family, in the opposite case, the bride cultivates the field founded for her by her husband in her village. As it is a rule that every wife should cultivate her own field, a man, who has more wives, of whom some live in another village, has usually fields both in his own village and in that of his wife. But even those who have no wives from strange villages found fields in them. The Berti prefer two smaller fields to one larger. With regard to the fact that the rains are usually local in this part of Darfur, it is probable that both fields will not be watered at the same time. While one field is still waiting for moisture, it is possible to sow the other field, in which the grain will also ripen sooner. Such a successive sowing of grain is a great advantage especially at weeding time. It is necessary to finish weeding the field in the shortest possible time, so that the rapid growth of weeds may not choke the young grain. It is evident that the greater the distance between the two fields, the greater is the probability that one field will be watered sooner than the other and that explains why a large number of people have their fields in two villages.

The Berti have no clear idea about the ownership of the free, uncultivated land. Such land does not belong either to the ruler, or to the clan, or to the village community, or to its headman, it does not belong to anybody. Only the right to dispose of it lies in the hands of the village headman. We have already mentioned the fact that, where there is sufficiency of free land, his previous permission is not indispensable for its cultivation, but that the right of the new user is legalized by his paying tithe (ushur) to the headman. The payment of this tax was abolished by the Sudanese government, so that the headman has not the right to enforce it, nevertheless all inhabitants of the village give him traditionally the tithe to this day for it is advantageous to live on good terms with him. If a man has a field in a strange village, he pays half the tithe to his headman and the other half to the headman in whose village he has the field.

In the same way as the local community, in the person of its headman, decides about the disposal of land, the local communities have significance also for the other most important activity of the Berti—animal husbandry, for the seasonal migration of cattle takes place always within the framework of one local community. Cattle are kept in the village only during a short period of about three weeks in the rainy season, when the fields are being weeded. Owing to the need for speed in carrying out this task, pointed out above, those who are usually in the pastures with the cattle also work in the fields. Immediately after weeding is completed, cattle, goats and sheep leave for a special camp (f a r i g), to the farther away from the village so as to prevent the destruction of the growing crops. In the period of rains and soon after it the cattle are taken to a w a d i, where there is plenty water for them; in winter, when the wadi dries up, they move to a well, where there is plenty of water and pasture and here they camp again until the next rainy season. During this time each family in the village keeps only several cows or goats for milk. Every local community has a separate camp for their cattle, in which the unmarried grown-up sons and daughters take care of their family's cattle. If the camp is situated at a well far from the village, often young married couples with their children also live in the camp with the cattle, along with the unmarried family members.

In the economy of the Berti a further activity also carried out within the framework of the local community no longer plays such an important role. It is collective hunting by means of throwing-sticks (*safarog*) and dogs, which takes place most often in the rainy period, when there are herds of gazelle and also plenty of smaller game in the Berti area. A hunters' group is always made up of the male inhabitants of one village. The men prepare the captured game in the evening by themselves in the village and eat it together with the old men and younger lads who could not take part in the hunting.

The local communities as such also ensure the supply of water. On every well usually about a dozen of villages depend and the inhabitants of the village draw water and water their animals every third day at the well. This is called *dim a*. Every day the inhabitants of 3 or 4 villages, in a fixed rotation, draw water from the well at the same time. The *rais ad dim a*, appointed by the king, is responsible for keeping order at the well, settles all disputes arising at the well and takes care, amongst other things, that nobody draws water who is not an inhabitant of the villages that have *dim a* on that day.

Finally the local communities are the only groups that play a role in ritual. The Berti are Moslems and an outstanding religious rite is that of sacrifice to the god — *karāma*. *Karāma* is performed not only on all Moslem holidays, but also on many other occasions during the year. The reason for the sacrifice is any misfortune which is a sign that the god is angry with the people and must be propitiated by a sacrifice; sacrifice is necessary to call down rain, to assure a good crop, to avert catastrophe and disease etc. Sacrifice is made by killing an animal, most often a young bull, but also sheep or goat. The local community, whose members participate with equal shares in the purchase of the sacrificial animal, is always the group that takes part in the sacrifice. Every adult male can carry out the killing and the flesh of the sacrificial animal is commonly eaten by all the inhabitants of the village taking part in the sacrifice.

The members of the Tawatir clan collect the blood of sacrificially killed animals for the *karāma* rite in a large vessel made from a gourd, often over a period of several years. Then they bury the full vessel, together with a wolf's head, in a pit

in the middle of the village. This ceremony is intended to ensure good rains, to protect the village against wild beasts and thieves and ensure an increase of population and herds. Although this practice is limited to the Tawatir clan, it is not the clan as a whole that takes part or participates in this practice, but again only the local community, i. e. the members of one village inhabited by the Tawatir clan.

Local communities, in which not kinship ties, but territorial bonds are decisive, are the most important social groups in the Berti tribe. Among their members strict solidarity is maintained and they are the units that play a basic role in the economy, political organization and in religious ritual. Kinship groups—the clans and the lineages—except for the restricted role they play in the setting of blood-feuds, are not actually of any real social importance. This article in which we have studied the mutual relations of social groups of this two-fold type and their social role, aims to throw light on the process of the rise of neighbours' communities instead of the former lineage communities.

Notes:

1) The article is the result of ethnographical field-work among the Berti tribe in the Darfur Province of the Sudan Republic, which I was able to carry out for, and at the expense of, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in 1961.

2) Duani is a large earthen vessel for water.

Kinship ties in the village Amara Ġadīd

Table No. 1.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|----|---|--|--|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---|----------------------|---|
| 1 | | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>walad</i> So | <i>walad</i> So | <i>nasīb</i> DaHu <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | <i>nasīb</i> DaHu <i>walad</i> SiSo | BrDaHu | <i>walad</i> SiSo | <i>walad</i> SiSo <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | ' <i>amma</i> WiMo | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo |
| 2 | <i>akhu</i> Br | | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>walad</i> BrSo | <i>walad</i> BrSo <i>nasīb</i> DaHu | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo BrDaHu | <i>walad</i> SiSo BrDaHu | <i>nasīb</i> DaHu | <i>walad</i> SiSo | <i>walad</i> SiSo <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | BrWiMo | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo |
| 3 | <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | | <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | <i>nasīb</i> DaHu WiBrSo | WiBrSo | WiBrDaHu | <i>walad</i> So | WiBrDaHu | <i>walad</i> So | WiSiSo | WiBrWiMo | WiFaBrSo | | | |
| 4 | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | | <i>walad</i> BrSo | <i>walad</i> BrSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo BrDaHu | <i>walad</i> SiSo BrDaHu | BrDaHu | <i>walad</i> SiSo | <i>walad</i> SiSo <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | BrWiMo | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo |
| 5 | <i>abba</i> Fa | ' <i>amm</i> FaBr | ' <i>amm</i> WiFa ' <i>amm</i> Fasihū | ' <i>amm</i> FaBr | | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>akhu</i> FaSiSo <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) FaBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> FaSiSo | <i>akhu</i> FaSiSo | <i>habōba</i> FaWiMo | FaFaBrSo | | | |
| 6 | <i>abba</i> Fa | ' <i>amm</i> FaBr ' <i>amm</i> WiBr | ' <i>amm</i> FaSiHu | ' <i>amm</i> FaBr | <i>akhu</i> Br | | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>akhu</i> FaSiSo <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) FaBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> FaSiSo | <i>akhu</i> FaSiSo | <i>habōba</i> FaWiMo | FaFaBrSo | | | |
| 7 | ' <i>amm</i> WiFa FaFaBrSo | WiFaBr FaFaBrSo | WiFaSi FaFaBrSo | WiFaBr FaFaBrSo | <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | | WiFaSiSo WiFaDaHu | | WiFaSiSo | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo WiFaSiSo | WiFaWiMo | FaFaBrSo | | | |
| 8 | ' <i>amm</i> WiFa <i>khāl</i> MoBr | <i>khāl</i> MoBr WiFaBr | <i>abba</i> Fa WiFaSiHu | <i>khāl</i> Br WiFaBr | <i>akhu</i> MoBrSo <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | <i>akhu</i> MoBrSo <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) WiSiHu MoBrDaHu | | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) MoBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>akhu</i> MoSiSo WiBrSiSo | WiMoMo | MoFaBrSo | | | |
| 9 | WiFaBr | ' <i>amm</i> WiFa | WiFaSiHu | WiFaBr | WiFaBrSo | WiFaBrSo | | WiFaSiSo | | WiFaSiSo | WiFaSiSo | | | | | |
| 10 | <i>khāl</i> MoBr | <i>khāl</i> MoBr | <i>abba</i> Fa | <i>khāl</i> MoBr | <i>akhu</i> M. BrSo | <i>akhu</i> MoBrSo | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) MoBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> Br | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) MoBrDaHu | | <i>akhu</i> MoSiSo | MoBrWiMo | MoFaBrSo | | | |
| 11 | <i>khāl</i> MoBr FaFaBrSo | <i>khāl</i> MoBr FaFaBrSo | <i>khāl</i> MoSiHu | <i>khāl</i> MoBr FaFaBrSo | <i>akhu</i> MoBrSo | <i>akhu</i> MoBrSo | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo <i>nasīb</i> MoBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> MoSiSo <i>nasīb</i> MoBrDaHu | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) MoBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> MoSiSo | | MoBrWiMo | MoFaBrSo | | | |
| 12 | <i>nasīb</i> DaHu | DaHuBr | DaHuSiHu | DaHuBr | DaHuWiSo | DaHuWiSo | | DaDaHu DaHuSiSo | | DaHuSiSo | DaHuSiSo | | | | | |
| 13 | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo | <i>akku</i> FaBrSo | <i>nasīb</i> (<i>akhu</i>) FaBrDaHu | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | <i>walad</i> F. BrSoSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrDaSo | | <i>walad</i> FaBrDaSo | <i>walad</i> FaBrSoSo | | | <i>walad</i> So | <i>nasīb</i> DaHu | <i>walad</i> BrSo <i>nasīb</i> DaHu |
| 14 | FaFaBrSo | FaFaBrSo | | FaFaBrSo | | | | | | | | | <i>abba</i> Fa | | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu | <i>nasīb</i> SiHu <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | ' <i>amm</i> WiFa | <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | | WiFaBrSo WiSiHu |
| 16 | FaFaBrSo | FaFaBrSo | | FaFaBrSo | | | | | | | | | ' <i>amm</i> FaBr ' <i>amm</i> WiFa | <i>akhu</i> FaBrSo <i>nasīb</i> WiBr | WiSiHu | |

Kinship terms by which individual household heads indicate the other household heads in the village are to be read horizontally, kinship terms by which the household heads are indicated by the others, should be read vertically in the columns.

The relationship terminology is that actually used for expressing the kinship ties shown in the table. Among individual members of the village there exist, however, even more complicated kinship ties, which are equally recognised, which are expressed in case of need, in descriptive fashion, these being given in the table only in the form of abbreviations of kinship terms without their Arabic equivalents.

Kinship ties in the village Dūda

Table No. 2

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6a | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 15a | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24a | |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------|----------|------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | | walad So | FaWi | BrDaHu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | abba Fa | | FaFaWi | FaBrDaHu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | walad HuWiSo | atanai HuWiSoSo | | HuSoDaHu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | WiFaEr | WiFaBrSo | WiFaFaWi | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | SoWiFa | walad So | SoWiBr | SoWiBr | SoWiMoMo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | DaHuFa | | | nasib DaHu | walad So | walad So | 'amma WiMo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6a | | | | abba Fa | 'amm WiFa | | | nasib WiBr | nasib WiBr | WiMoMo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | SiHuFa | abba Fa | nasib (akhu) SiHu | | | akhu Br | habōba MoMo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | SiHuFa | abba Fa | nasib (akhu) SiHu | | akhu Br | | habōba MoMo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | DaHuFa | nasib DaHu | DaDaHu | atanai DaSo | atanai DaSo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | nasib WiBr | | WiBrWiBr | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | | nasib (akhu) SiHu | | WiMoMo | nasib WiBr | WiMoSiSo | WiMoSiSo WiBrWiBr | | WiMoEr | WiMoBr | WiFaWi | WiFaWi | WiFaWiSo | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | DaDaHu | | | | | atanai DaSo | atanai DaSo | atanai DaSo | DaDaHu | walad HuWiSo | walad HuWiSo | | | DaHuWi | DaHuWiSo | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | | | SiHuSi | nasib SiHu | habōba MoMo | | | akhu MoSiSo | akhu MoSiSo nasib WiBr | MoSiDaHu WiSiHu | akhu MoFaWiSo | akhu MoFaWiSo | khāl FaWiBr | umm FaWi | akhu FaWiSo | | nasib FaWiDaHu | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | | | | SiHuSiHu | habōba MoMo | akhu MoSiSo nasib SiHu | | | akhu Br | nasib SiHu | habōba MoFaWi | khāl MoFaWiSo | nasib (akhu) FaBrDaHu | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | SiHuSiHu | habōba MoMo | akhu MoSiSo nasib SiHu | akhu Br | | | nasib SiHu | habōba MoFaWi | khāl MoFaWiSo | nasib (akhu) FaBrDaHu | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15a | | | | | | | | | | WiMoMo | WiMoSiSo WiSiHu | akhu FaBrSo nasib WiBr | akhu FaBrSo nasib WiBr | | | WiMoHuWi | WiMoMoSo | nasib SiHu | SiHuSi | SiHuSiSo | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | | | | FaDaDaHu | umm FaWi | walad FaDaSo | walad FaDaSo | walad FaDaSo | FaDaDaHu | | | | akhu Br | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | | | | FaDaDaHu | umm FaWi | walad FaDaSo | walad FaDaSo | walad FaDaSo | FaDaDaHu | akhu Br | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | | | | SiHuDaHu | | | | | WiFaBrSo | WiSiHu | nasib WiBr | | | | | akhu Si | walad SiSo | SiDaHuFa | SiDaHu | SiDaHuBr | | SiDaDaHu | | |
| 19 | | | | | | | | | HuDaHuSi | nasib HuDaHu | HuWiMo | walad HuSo | | | BrWiSiHu | BrWiBr | | | akhu Br | | walad So | DaHuFa | nasib DaHu | DaHuBr | DaDaHuFa DaHuSiHu | DaDaHu | | |
| 20 | | | | | | | | | | nasib MoHuDaHu | MoHuWiMo | akhu MoHuSo | | | | MoBrWiBr | | | | khāl MoBr | umm Mo | SiHuFa | nasib SiHu | SiHuBr | SiDaHuFa SiHuSiHu | SiDaHu | | |
| 21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | SoWiBrMo | SoWiBr | | walad So | walad So | nasib DaHu | atanai DaSo | |
| 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | WiBrMoBr | WiBrMo | nasib WiBr | abba Fa | | akhu Br | nasib SiHu | walad SiSo nasib DaHu |
| 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | BrWiBrMo | BrWiBr | abba Fa | akhu Br | | nasib SiHu | walad SiSo BrDaHu |
| 24 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | WiBrWiBr | 'amm WiFa | nasib WiBr SoWiFa | nasib WiBr | | walad So |
| 24a | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | WiMoMoBr | WiMoMo | | | khāl MoBr 'amm WiFa | khāl MoBr | abba Fa |

Explanations see Table No 1.

Diagram № 1. Genealogical relations among the inhabitants of the village Amara Gadid

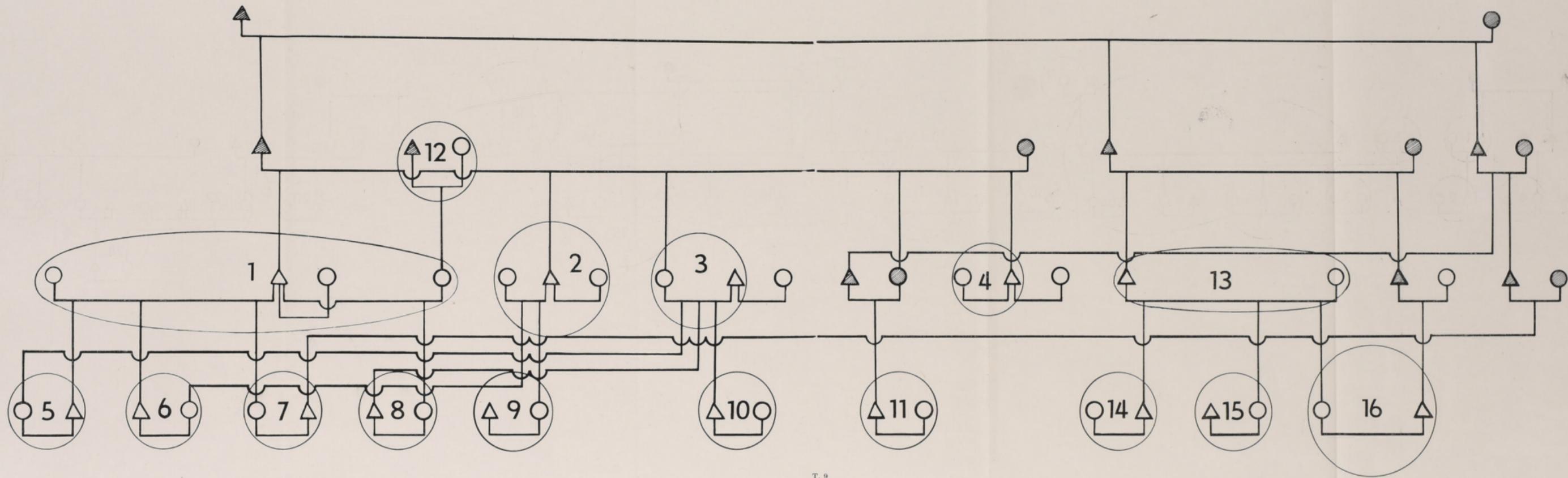


Diagram № 2. Genealogical relations among the inhabitants of the village Döda

