

TANGAZA COLLEGE

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THE BIBLE TEACHING ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONE'S ENEMIES AND THE PÖKOT CULTURE

Moderator

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To all the missionaries working among the pastoralist people, especially among the Pökot. This work is an effort to keep them enthusiastic in the fulfilment of a dream: bringing Christ among those peoples where the Spirit has been working for ages!

Epigraph

“**T**he task of the evangeliser is not merely to acknowledge the rich values in a culture and to name them as the work of the Spirit. It is also to help these people to come into living contact with the person of Jesus and his Good News, and with the Christian tradition and traditions which have developed over the centuries. This interaction can bring a wonderful growth and flowering of the values of people’s traditions and cultures. Furthermore, those who are hearing the Good News may come to see some of their original values as ‘seeds of the gospel’ which will come to full fruition when integrated with the truths and values of Christianity.”

D. DORR, *Mission in Today’s World*, 92.

Acknowledgements

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My work could not be possible without the support of some missionaries, namely, those in Barpello Parish, in East Pökot: the community of the Incarnate Word Sisters and Fr. Gerry Foley, the parish priest. The same word of thanks to the communities of the Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Sisters of Amakuriat Parish, the other area where I conducted my research.

My thanks go also to my collaborators Peter Ngati, Musa Aluku, Chelimo, Filemon, Peter Pdhale Tarach and Stephen O. Masaka. They were of great help conducting the interviews in both areas of my research. Translations would not be possible without them.

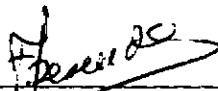
Likewise, I want to thank Fr. Gerry Muller, Sr. Carmel and my moderator for their patience while proof-reading this essay.

Lastly, my word of gratitude to all those I cannot mention here for reasons of space. They know who they are, and they know I keep them in my heart for the encouragement on my vocation as a comboni missionary for the poorest and most abandoned. May God bless you all.

Student's Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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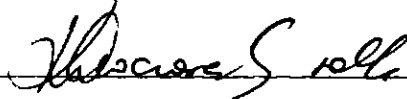


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This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In December 1998, during one of my visits to East Pökot, I found myself in a peculiar situation. In the company of some other missionaries we were returning from Marakwet to Pökot territory. All of a sudden, we faced a group of Pökot warriors fully equipped with guns and arrows. Their aim was to recover some animals stolen a few hours before by the Marakwet. Their faces terrified me. Despite our efforts we were unable to persuade the warriors to abort their deadly mission. This event challenged me. Since then a question has been haunting me: how to bring Christ and his message on love of enemies to the hearts of the Pökot?

This study aims at highlighting possible ways to make a reality among the Pökot Jesus' call to love one's enemies. Many have discouraged me by saying that such a thing would be impossible for the pastoralist Pökot. (I wonder if it is easy for any of us!) I was told that their history and life is inbred with such activities. I think that if God is at work in all peoples of the world through the Spirit (cf. Acts 10:44-45),¹ then Jesus also wills his message to reach the Pökot. Since then, I have visited Pökot land many times, both East and West Pökot, especially the pastoralist area, which remains an area of first evangelisation. In my several visits, I tried to do some research into the ways the Spirit has been at work with the Pökot. I conducted several interviews between June and August 2001, both in East and

¹ Cf. D. DORR, *Mission in Today's World*, (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2000), 91-92. This author adds, "The Spirit is at work among peoples, traditions, and in cultures long before the good news of Jesus reaches them. [...] So when a formal process of evangelisation begins to take place the first task of the evangelisers is to recognise and celebrate this prior work of the Spirit."

West Pökot. Some collaborators of mine, using the Pökot language, made some of these interviews under my guidance. I hoped I could find some ways where the message of Jesus on love of enemies could penetrate and be part of the inculturation process willed by the Second Vatican Council. According to the African Bishops, this process of inculturation would start from an analysis of the good values already lived in the cultures of African people, and in a reformulation of the values which are opposed to the values of the Gospel. This is the method I try to follow in this research.

In chapter I, I begin by looking at the attitudes of the people of the O.T. towards enemies, for it seems to me that the Pökot people have some cultural and social characteristics very similar to those of the biblical Israel. I analyse these characteristics with the emphasis on the attitude of Israel vis-à-vis its enemies, both personal (inside Israel) and external (national enemies).

Chapter II is dedicated to the exegesis of the teaching of Jesus on love of one's enemies as it is recorded in the N.T.. I try to answer the question regarding the identity of the enemies that Jesus speaks about, the meaning of his command to love one's enemy and its implications in concrete situations.

In chapter III, I make a summary of my findings on the attitudes of the Pökot people towards their enemies, both personal (inside the society) and external (their traditional enemies and neighbours). At the end of this chapter, I try to underline the good values that might be useful for the inculturation of the Gospel message on the love of one's enemies among the Pökot people. At the same time, I also draw some conclusions regarding the attitude of the Pökot people which are clearly contrary to Gospel values.

CHAPTER I

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ONE'S ENEMIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the examination of attitudes towards enemies in the O.T.. I shall look first at the history of the people of the O.T., paying special attention to the characteristics and attitudes of Israel which demonstrate enmity in their social, political and historical background. I will examine how these characteristics are evidenced in Israel's strong religious identity and unity.

I will analyse, then, the attitudes towards the enemies evident in that history by dividing the research into two parts. First, I will consider the attitudes towards individual or personal enemies. Next, I will examine the attitudes towards the national or external enemies of Israel. In this presentation, I shall review some texts that will illustrate to us the positive and negative attitudes towards both individual and national enemies. Particularly, I shall try to briefly present texts where the demand of love for the external enemies of the nation can be perceived.

2. The People of the Old Testament History

2.1 *The People of the Old Testament and Enmity in Biblical History*

The people of the O.T. are generally known as the people of Israel. The history of these people dates back to the time of the Patriarchs (1850-1250 B.C.). This period is characterised by a vast migration of clans of herders in the Middle East. Israel is geographically situated between Egypt to the south-west (the Egyptian Empire) and the Fertile Crescent to the East (the Empires of the Persians, Assyrians, and Babylonians). As such, Israel was often the battleground of the surrounding empires. Several historical traditions from this time indicate that these peoples led a nomadic life-style.³

We can speak of Israel as unified people only after 1250 B.C., when Moses led the people out of Egypt. The settlement of the people in the Promised Land occurs around 1130 B.C., but only after the native Canaanites have been driven away from their land by the Israelites. Many scholars now agree that this happened over a long period of time and not necessarily by force. Nevertheless, there may have been some instances of military confrontations.

There was an initial period of decentralised government under the Judges. However, Israel eventually established a monarchy (1120-587 B.C.). The monarchy was established to check disputes with surrounding peoples concerning the possession of the land. This threat hurried the unification of diverse groups

² Cf. R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), 4.

³ Cf. D. SENIOR, *The Catholic Study Bible*, (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), RG 9-10.

within Israel and moved the nations to a more centralised social and military confederation of tribes. This was a period of constant war.

“[...] the era of wars of conquest begins and ends under David. After David, all the wars were defensive wars (...) in the end they were all attempts to resist expansionist policies of the great powers.”⁴

Enmity and suspicion was a rule among the peoples of the Middle East region. This climate of suspicion was evidenced in two ways: *conquering* first; and after *keeping* the land that was conquered. It was a land that God had given to them. God *fought* with them to acquire the land. The land was important for their existence and survival. Only in this context can we understand the many texts that refer to the enemies of Yahweh as to the enemies of the people.

The monarchy was weakened after the division of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians in 722/1 B.C.. The Southern Kingdom, in Judah, fell to the Babylonians in 587/6 B.C.⁵

In 332 B.C. Alexander conquered Palestine. Alexander brought the richness of Greek culture to Israel, but Israel viewed Hellenism with suspicion. By 167 B.C., the Maccabees revolted against the forced hellenisation of their land. After this revolt the Hasmonean kings ruled for about 100 years. They proved to be as corrupted and ruthless as their foreign counterparts. During this period, the Essenes and Pharisaical movements were founded. About 63 B.C., Roman influence in the surrounding kingdoms of Israel put a lot of pressure on Israel itself,

⁴ R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel – Its Life and Institutions*, 250. See *Ibid.*, esp. 251.258ff for further details.

⁵ A group of Israelites was left behind in their land during the deportation, the so called remnant people, but when the returned Israelites started the reconstruction of Israel the remnant group was not allowed to take part in the process for they were considered corrupted. This fact led to sharp divisions between Jews and Samaritans, eventually considered as enemies. This division is present in N.T. times. Jesus refers to this disagreement in his teachings as one of the examples he uses to show love of enemies (see on page 33 2.3 Love of Enemies Exemplified by Jesus Himself).

and finally in 39. B.C. Israel fell under the Roman rule. National independence was lost once again, alongside with the abolition of monarchy. Herod the Great took power and ruled by 'proxies,' that is, through the installation of the Hasmoneans blood relatives. These were generally mistrusted and hated by the Jews. Heavy taxation and other abuses of power were at the order of the day. It will be against this context that we shall analyse in the next chapter Jesus' call to love one's enemies.⁶

2.2 The Cohesive Ethnical Identity of Israel

From the above historical presentation we can see how Israel struggled to maintain its identity under a constant threat. We turn now to the brief presentation of the elements of this identity.

The unity of Israelites is centred in the concept of people of Yahweh. God promised them a land and gathered them together as a nation. Everything in life, even war, was oriented towards the fulfilment of that promise. To achieve this aim people needed to be united in order to counter the threat posed by neighbouring nations.

Three sociological facts represent Israel's basic orientations: the *tribe*⁷,

⁶ Cf. D. SENIOR, *The Catholic Study Bible*, RG 9-RG 12.

⁷ The *tribe* was formed by several families, which, in turn, were subdivided into clans. Each tribe was assigned to a certain portion of land for cultivation and grazing. When boundaries were not well defined, tensions, quarrels and war broke out. We have the example of Abraham and Lot (Gen 13:7); Abimelek and Abraham because of an invasion of Abraham's well (Gen 26:19-22); and Isaac claiming his rights over the wells he dug between Gerar and Beershaba (Gen 26:19-22). The unity of the tribe hinged on the blood relationship of their members: all looked at others as 'brothers' in a wide sense. The Twelve tribes of Israel formed a confederation having a strong feeling of family solidarity, especially united in common concerns such as migrations or wars. This solidarity was expressed in blood ties already present at a very early time in Israel's history and remained intact generation after generation, even after their settlement in Canaan. (There is a Pökot saying similar to this concept: "When you kick one Pökot all become lame.") We also have known of alliances between tribes to fight back enemies (1 Sam 11:7, when Solomon invites

mobility⁸ and the law of blood-vengeance carried out by selected leaders of the community in the name of the community.⁹

3. Attitudes of Israel Towards Its Enemies

The O.T. speaks of two kinds of Israel's enemies: '*enemies of an individual*' and the '*enemies of the nation*.'¹⁰ We shall examine first the attitudes towards personal enemies *within* Israel and later the attitudes towards external enemies of Israel, that is, *national enemies*.

3.1 The Personal Enemies Within Israel

As we indicated above, the aspect of solidarity among the various groups of Jews was very strong in Israel's culture. Nevertheless, it does not mean that quarrels were not present among Israelites. It is mostly in Pentateuch

all the tribes to fight back Nahash the Ammonite.) Nevertheless, there was freedom for each tribe to chose whether to take part in the fight or not; a reproach seemed to exist for those tribes declining fighting (for example Judg 5:2, 9:5-17), but there is no certainty on how sanctions were applied to those tribes. There is a case of Meroz, a town in Nephthali which did not go fighting and was cursed (Judg 5:23). See also Judg 21:5-12 and 1 Sam 11:7 for some of the penalties that could have been imposed. However, the overall rule stood that nobody was obliged to come up to fight. Cf. R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel - Its Life and Institutions*, 6-13. 215-216.]

⁸ Mobility was another basic characteristic of Israel. This is related to the semi-nomadic and nomadic life styles of the people. Israel lived in desert or semi-desert area. On the one hand, the tribe had to be compact; on the other hand the tribe had to be still open to mobility of its members to ensure their own safety, moving in search of water and better pastures to their cattle. Hospitality was, therefore, another reality among the nomadic people. (Due to similar living conditions, the Pökot are also very close to each other. Hospitality towards another member of the community goes to this extreme: a fellow Pökot is allowed to take food found in a manyata even when there is nobody in that homestead.)

⁹ Cf. R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel - Its Life and Institutions*, 4. The clan elders were the in-charge of blood-vengeance, led by the family head, and in times of war elders or chiefs commanded the troops (see Gen 36:40-43 for a list of the chiefs of the clans of Edom and also Judg 8:13ff for an example of the power of these chiefs); any able bodied man could join in an offensive or defensive war. This was the case especially before David, since afterwards there is evidence of a proper army being constituted and organised. The distinction between *war* and *raid* was never very clear, but it seems more or less clear that the Israelites did not practice raiding (robbing of animals from one's neighbour). In any case there are some examples of a kind of raiding in Judg 6:3-6, or even in less clarity in David's expeditions in Negeb (1 Sam 27:8-11). Cf. *Ibid.*, 214. As we shall see in chapter III, raiding activities is the major problem of the Pökot people.

¹⁰ Cf. B. BALOIAN, "Animosity," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament and Theology*, ed. W. VanGemeren, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), vol. 4, 385.

that we find the legislation pertaining to these situations. This law was meant for the People of the Covenant, that is, those chosen by God to be “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” (Exod 19:5-6).

In this Covenant context, is there any command that demands that ‘enemy’ be loved? In the O.T., a command to love others appears in very few texts. There are instead, many texts that tell us how to treat others, particularly fellow Israelites in a positive, tender and fair manner.¹¹ We look now at these kind of texts and later at the negative attitudes towards personal enemies within Covenant people.

3.1.1 *The Sense of Solidarity for the Well-being of the Whole Community*

The emphasis placed on solidarity was a central feature of the family values of Israel. This value was grounded upon the interdependence of the members of the community necessary for their survival and continuity.

“The needs of the household took precedence over those of individual member. [...] the ethics of solidarity shaped a network of understanding and care that moved beyond the immediate compound family to include clans, tribes, and the totality of the ‘children of Israel.’”¹²

Exod 23:4-5 presents us an example of this ethics in a context of enmity within Israel people:

“If you meet your *enemy’s* [italics added] ox or his ass going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the ass of one who hates you lying under its burden you shall refrain from leaving him with it, you shall help him to lift it up.”¹³

Deut 22:1-4¹⁴ is a parallel text to Exod 23:4-5, where the same command is given. The Deuteronomy text has a particular detail: Exodus uses the word *enemy*

¹¹ Cf. P.S. ELS, “אהב (#170)”, in *NIDOTT* IV, 290.

¹² L. G. PERDUE - *al.*, *Families in Ancient Israel*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 1997), 167.

¹³ All biblical quotations in this work are from the RSV translation.

¹⁴ “You shall not see your *brother’s* ox or his sheep go astray, and withhold your help from them; you shall take them back to your brother. And if he is not near you, or if you do not know him, you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall be with you until your brother seeks it

when Deuteronomy uses the word *brother*. In fact, Exod 23:4-5 is the only instance in Pentateuch where a member (brother) of the Covenant community is identified as *enemy*.¹⁵ This norm, found in the Pentateuch, is to be applied to the relationships within the people of the Covenant. The law asks for an act of kindness towards an 'enemy' who is in need. The overriding concern here seems to be the welfare of the Israelite community. One is to consider the property of the adversary as one's own property, showing thus, solidarity with the neighbour in need.¹⁶

3.1.2 "You Shall Love Your Neighbour as Yourself: I Am the LORD"

This command is found in Lev 19:17-18:

"You shall *not hate your brother* in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbour, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall *not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD* [italics added]."

The command enunciated in the title of this section is usually presented as one example in O.T. for 'love of neighbour'. However, it has to be read in the context, namely, within a set of prescriptions concerning only the people of the Covenant. Moreover, the immediate context of vv. 17 and 18a makes us see clearly that neighbour here is understood as 'brother': "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the *sons of your own people*".¹⁷

then you shall restore it to him. And so you shall do with his ass; so you shall do with his garment; so you shall do with any lost thing of your brother's, which he loses and you find; you may not withhold your help. You shall not see your brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way and withhold your help from them; you shall help him to lift them up again."

¹⁵ Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 30.

¹⁶ See further conclusions on the theological value of solidarity for Israelite people in L. G. PERDUE – *al.*, *Families in Ancient Israel*, 237-239, 253-254.

¹⁷ "The term *neighbour* came to include not only a 'brother' or kinsman but also a fellow Israelite and even a resident foreigner, who was to be loved as oneself and thus provided with the support necessary for survival." L. G. PERDUE – *al.*, *Families in Ancient Israel*, 172.

But, the content of these verses does seem to refer to the attitude toward *someone perceived as an enemy* and towards whom one may bear a grudge.¹⁸ In spite of the enmity context in which one might find oneself, the call here seems to be to an attitude of setting free one's heart from hatred and resentment.

An important element in this text is the motive of the command to love which seems to be found in the expression "I the Lord".¹⁹ God has called Israel to be a holy nation precisely because God is holy (cf. Lev 19:2). There is no other reason here presented apart from the fact that God's authority commands such an attitude towards a hostile *brother*.²⁰

The command to "love" someone who can be perceived as an enemy is found only here in the whole of the O.T.²¹ However, both commands in Exod 23:4-5 and in Lev 19:17-18, are applicable only to the members of the Covenant community.²²

¹⁸ Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 31. According to R. NEUDECKER, "And You Shall Love Your Neighbour as Yourself - 'I Am the Lord' (Lev 19:18) in Jewish Interpretation" *Biblica* 73 (1992), 499-503, enemy here means a fellow Jew. However, a proselyte, non-Jew could be included in this commandment making him or her a member of the Covenant community according to Lev 19:33-34.

¹⁹ Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 31.

²⁰ Cf. R. NEUDECKER, *Lev 19,18 in Jewish Interpretation*, 506-508. Both in Matt 5:38 and Luke 6:35-36 texts we find a similar call of Jesus to his addressees on doing good towards one's enemies with the motive of imitation of God. K. Owczarek is of the opinion that this Leviticus text had influence in the redaction of the gospel passage about love of enemies.

²¹ Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 32. Generally, the idea that there is nothing like 'Love of Enemies' in the O.T. is accepted by many. On this see *Ibid.*, 23. This author quotes several others who recognise and explicitly say that there is no command as 'love your enemy' in the O.T.: W. KLASSEN, "'Love Your Enemies': Some Reflection on the Current Status of Research," in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, ed. W. M. Swartley, Louisville: StPSc (1992), 28; J. PIPER, *Love Your Enemies: "Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in Early Christian Paraenesis. A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of Its Uses*, MSS.NTS 38, Cambridge 1979, 34-35 and P. LAPIDE, *The Sermon on the Mount, Utopia or Program for Action?*, (New York: Maryknoll, 1986), 91, a Jew author affirming: "the body of Jewish teaching knows no explicit demand of love of one's enemy." Nevertheless, one comes to realise that there are certain references (although indirect) to this commandment later taken up by Jesus. Owczarek calls it "real seeds of the future command on enemy love."

²² "This kind of restriction based on the enemies' religious or national identity seems to be overcome in the Lucan passage, where even those who abuse Christians are to be treated

3.1.3 Conflict Resolution within Israel

We have seen above that the bond between Israelites was very strong. As in any society, there were moments of conflict that erupted among the tribes and clans. In this subsection, we will investigate ways of solving or preventing these conflicts.

The clan elders, operating as local judges, chaired the judicial arena of Israel. They had the power to decide about life and death in the household cases involving the misbehaviour of the young (Deut 21:18-21), and conflicts between tribes.²³

a) Blood-Vengeance

Clan elders regulate the frequency of blood vengeance. The concept of vengeance in the bible as a whole is complex. We are interested here in the particular case of *private vengeance* applicable within Israel. This assumes specific significance in the case of murder. The legal material for this case is found in Num 35:16-34.²⁴

Blood-vengeance consisted in the fact that,

by them with love. Jesus' listeners are told to love their enemies as such, without qualification and this goes beyond any formulation we find in the Old Testament." K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 33.

²³ Cf. L. G. PERDUE - *al.*, *Families in the Ancient Israel*, 174. Among the Pökot the council of the elders -- *kwökwö* - is the judicial court in charge of similar decision making concerning conflict resolution.

²⁴ "If he struck him down with an instrument of iron, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. And if he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. Or if he struck him down with a weapon of wood in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. And if he stabbed him from hatred, or hurled at him, lying in wait, so that he died, or in enmity struck him down with his hand, so that he died, then he who struck the blow shall be put to death; he is a murderer; the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meets him. But if he stabbed him suddenly without enmity, or hurled anything on him without lying in wait, or used a stone, by which a man may die, and without seeing him cast it upon him, so that he died, though he was not his enemy, and did not seek his harm; then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood, in accordance with these ordinances; and the congregation shall rescue the manslayer from the hand of the avenger

“the killing of one clan member was construed by the remaining members not only as a shedding of the group’s blood [...] but as misappropriation of blood which properly belonged to the entire group. The responsibility of the blood avenger was to win back that misappropriated blood by killing the original blood shedder.”²⁵

This concept can be properly understood as an attitude of “revenge.”

The passages that refer to the law of revenge make it clear that the question was not clearcut. The law was, in fact, something ‘positive’ in order to control the relationships between the clans in Israel.²⁶ Deut 19:11-12²⁷ makes clear reference to this idea as practised among the members of the Covenant community. It applies the use of this law to a “man [who] hates his neighbour” and happens to be killed by that adversary.

We can see, then, how important is a case such as murder for the people of Israel. In addition, it highlights the necessity to know the author of such a crime in order to ‘avenge’ the blood of the dead person. Blood-vengeance was so central to the ‘judicial institution’ of Israel that even when a murderer of a dead person was not known, a certain ritual of cleansing from blood-vengeance

of blood. [...] If any one kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses;”

²⁵ S. D. SPERLING, “Blood, Avenger of” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. FREEDMAN, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), vol. 1, 763. On the same page we come to know that it is believed that blood-vengeance was a practice wild spread among the people of the Ancient Near East, and, as Israel went through its process of formation as an united people, biblical legislators were trying to “accommodate [this] existing institution to biblical notions.”

²⁶ Cf. W. T. PITARD, “Vengeance” *ABD* VI, 786. The one in charge of carry out this prescription is the so called ‘redeemer’ (*go’ēl*) and this function is only one of the many he had within the family. See L. G. PERDUE *al.*, *Families in the Ancient Israel*, 192-193 for a detailed presentation of the functions of the Redeemer. We shall see under chapter III (3.1.3 Revenge - Payment for Bloodshed on page 43) that some regulations similar to this of blood-vengeance are found also among the Pökot.

²⁷ “But if any man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and attacks him, and wounds him mortally so that he dies, and the man flees into one of these cities, then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die.”

had to be performed in order to compensate for that person (and his or her family) for the blood poured (Deut 21:1-9).²⁸

As Israel became more organised at the political and judicial levels down the centuries, laws were issued in order to limit and restrain this violent practice of blood-vengeance. One of those measures was the *lex talionis*, which we will now briefly analyse.²⁹

b) *Lex Talionis*³⁰

The *lex talionis* is described as “a law of retaliation by which the guilty party suffers the same harm as that experienced by the injured party.”³¹ The classical biblical reference to this law is found in Exod 21:23-25,

“If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

As the blood-vengeance prescription, *lex talionis* is applied primarily to ordinary situations as shown in Lev 24:19-20, where the victim of an injury is described as *neighbour*,

“When a man causes a disfigurement in his *neighbour* [italics added], as he has done it shall be done to him, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has disfigured a man, he shall be disfigured.”

²⁸ This passage settles an interesting ritual of cleansing from blood-vengeance when someone is found dead and nobody knows the author of the crime. This ceremony is done in order to prevent any malicious outcome to the family of the person killed. Blood-vengeance was supposed to prevent such an outcome. Then, the need to ‘clean’ and ‘compensate’ the person killed and the family respectively. This only shows the seriousness of a murder and the effects that could have in the persons involved in that murder. We shall see in chapter III that the Pökot warriors are supposed to go through a serious cleansing after they have killed an enemy (see 3.2.3 “To Kill an Enemy Turns Your Blood Bad” on page 49), for reasons similar to those described in Deut 21:1-9.

²⁹ Cf. W. T. PITARD, “Vengeance,” *ABD* VI, 786.

³⁰ This law takes special concern for us for it is one of those clearly rejected by Jesus in Matt 5:38-42 (see below chapter II 2.2.3 Love Beyond Reciprocity on page 30).

³¹ H. B. HUFFMON, “Lex Talionis,” *ABD* IV, 321.

This law also assumes special meaning in the case of murder as it is demonstrated in Exod 21:12 (“whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death”) and Lev 24:21a (“and he who kills a man shall be put to death.”)³²

Consequently, revenge was demanded for serious crimes,³³ even if the transgressor was a *neighbour*. Revenge was regulated and limited by the local judicial elders in order to adopt appropriate measures against the culprit. The solidarity and the unity of the Covenant people were safeguarded by these rules.

3.2 *The External Enemies of Israel*

Israel generally regarded its neighbours with hostility. Many O.T. texts evidence this attitude as

“ [oscillating] from physical distance to hate and destruction. The fact that Israel is to be a ‘holy people’, a nation totally different from all other nations, leads, on many occasions, to the justification of violence toward those nations, and toward other ‘non-aligned’ groups and individuals.”³⁴

Strictly speaking, the enemies of Israel were people that by no means were part of the Covenant community.³⁵ Among those peoples, according

³² The justification for this kind of behaviour is found in God himself who is supposed to be the ruler who applies “divine justice by trying to get even with their [Israel’s] enemies.” Cf. K. OW CZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 24. See R. WESTBROOK, “Punishments and Crimes,” *ABD* V, 546-556 for a detailed description of the crimes and respective punishments inflicted to those who committed those crimes.

³³ We have focused on murder, but there were many other crimes that called for the application of these laws on *blood-vengeance* and *lex talionis*, such as theft, negligence for neighbour’s goods, adultery, personal injury, rape, and so on.

³⁴ K. OW CZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 34.

³⁵ Although it is difficult to make up a list of all these enemies of Israel, we present here a collection of those known through some biblical evidence, keeping in mind that at particular times in history, some of these peoples might have allied themselves in order to carry out a particular enterprise. The Amalekites (Exod 17:8-13; 1 Sam 15:4); the Ammonites (1 Sam 11:1-11; David declares war on these because they have insulted his ambassadors [2 Sam 10:1-5]; they are nevertheless put under David’s rule and after David’s death they rebel again and no action is taken by Solomon); the Amorites (Josh 5:1ff); the Aramaeans of Damascus (Josh 11:6-9; 2 Sam 10:18; David again, declaring war on them because they went on helping the Ammonites [2 Sam 10:6-19; cf. 2 Sam 8:3-6]; they were enemies for quite a long time, almost the whole of 9th cent. B.C.; Israel had been defeated more often than victorious in the wars with these people. The Assyrians

to Deut 20:17, were the Hittites, Ammorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Israel felt a strong hatred for these neighbouring tribes.³⁶ Only on few occasions, we find traces of a more kind and charitable attitude towards enemies.³⁷ We shall analyse first some of the negatives attitudes towards Israel's enemies, and later the texts that can be presented as a call to Israel to *do good* to its *national enemies*.

3.2.1 The God Who Orders Israel to Fight the Enemies

There are many passages in O.T. where God is presented as full of anger, threatening revenge and even violent. As a people called to be a "holy nation" under the directives of God, Israel certainly felt 'backed up' by God in its fighting enterprise.³⁸ As a consequence, revenge on one's enemies is justified by the behaviour of Yahweh himself.³⁹ In Num 25:16-18 God orders Moses

(Ezek 23:6,12) a more powerful enemy; the Canaanites - Israelites conquered them and displaced them (Judg 1:28); the Edomites (2 Kgs 8:21; 2 Sam 8:13); the Egyptians - Exodus run away (Exod 12:14); a more often worthless ally than a enemy; the Ephraimites (Judg 7:23-25); the Gibeonites (Josh 9:6,15); the Hittites (Exod 23:23); the Midianites (Judg 6:33 - 7:22); the Philistines (1 Sam 17:2,11; 2 Sam 5:23); the Persians (Neh 2:9); the Greeks (1 Macc 1:17; 6:30f.; 8:6; 2 Macc 11:4; 13:2,15) in the time of the early wars of the Maccabees (later in O.T.); the Chaldeans (2 Kgs 25:10; Lam 2:2,5); the Perizzites (Deut 20:17); the Jebusites (Deut 20:17); the Hivites (Deut 20:17); the Benjaminites, in Gibeah (Judg 20); Moab (2 Kgs 3:4-27), formerly a subject to Israel, these people rebelled against them; no reason apart from this of rebellion is given for the enmity (2 Sam 8:2). This is a survey collected by the author in the work of R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel – Its Life and Institutions*.

³⁶ This is because these peoples had pagan practices to several gods, and from the religious monotheistic point of view this reality was always a threat to Israel (to fall back on idolatry like the pagan nations). Moreover, from a political point of view, some of these peoples were those displaced by Israel in order that they could enter into the Promised Land, and as such remained as enemies. Similarly, much of the hatred found between the Pökot and their enemies can be traced also to identical reasons such as those just mentioned above concerning Israel, particularly from the political point of view of the possession of land (see esp. in chapter III 3.2.5 Hatred Towards Marakwet People on page 52).

³⁷ Cf. K. Owczarek says that these O.T. traces of a more charitable and kind behaviour can "be considered [as] the real seeds of the future command on enemy love" found in Jesus' words in the N.T. Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 23.

³⁸ "The warriors of Israel were upheld by their firm belief that Yahweh fought with them and that he could grant them victory whatever the odds against them (1 Sam 14:6; 17:47). R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel – Its Life and Institutions*, 217.236 for a concrete example described in Josh 2.

³⁹ Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 34. As we shall see under chapter III, the Pökot people once blessed with prayers done by the elders on behalf of God, feel and know that

to “harass the Midianites, and smite them, for they have harassed you with their wives.” In Josh 10:40 we find that survivors of a war were all killed and destroyed just “as the Lord, God of Israel commanded.”⁴⁰ God, the warrior, orders the destruction of Israel’s enemies.

3.2.2 *Victory Over Enemies: Sign of Blessing and State of Obedience to God*

The relationship with enemies contextualised the relationship between God and Israel. Victory in war was both a sign of blessing and of God’s presence with the people as a whole (Deut 23:9-10; 1 Sam 4:3). Victory was also a sign of the presence of God alongside the warriors (Deut 20:1,3-4). Defeat in war was attributed to the infidelity of the people.⁴¹

3.2.3 *Shall Israel Be Kind and Merciful?*

According to the late wisdom literature, kindness is not to be done to the ungodly and sinners.⁴² In fact, kindness and mercy were even considered counterproductive in the circumstances of enmity.

“Do good to the humble, but do not give to the ungodly; hold back his bread, and do not give it to him, lest by means of it he subdue you; for you will receive twice as much evil for all the good which you do to him. For the Most High also hates sinners and will inflict punishment on the ungodly.”⁴³

success in a raid is certain on their side (see esp. in chapter II – 2.1 Some Typical Characteristics of the Pökot People on page 25 and Appendix III for an example of this kind of prayers. Appendix III presents a more detailed description of this ritual).

⁴⁰ See also Deut 20:16-18; Num 21:2-3; 31:1-20; 1 Sam 15:1-19.

⁴¹ Cf. B. BALOIAN, “Animosity,” *NIDOTT* IV, 385. The relatedness of Israel and God through Israel’s enemies can be seen again in the following quotation, “God is obliquely made the object of hatred in reference to his enemies, that is, those who hate him.” A. H. KONDEL, “𐤀𐤍𐤏𐤍 (8533),” *NIDOTT* III, 1258.

⁴² Sirach often identifies enemies as ‘sinners’ and ‘ungodly’ (Cf. 12:4-5.10-14). Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 28, fn. 54. Such identification and behaviour is not applied when the sinner or ungodly is a *neighbour*.

⁴³ Sir 12:5-6; cf. 12:10-12.16. This text seems to contradict Prov 25:21 (see below 3.2.6 Taking Care of an Enemy in Need in the current chapter on page 18).

In Deut 20, we find a fine example of the rules that were to be followed in a war against national enemies:

“if [a nation] makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the LORD your God gives it into your hand you shall put all its males to the sword [...]. Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, *which are not cities of the nations here*. (Deut 20:12-13.15)”

In this description of the rules of war we find that no mercy was shown to these enemies. Peace terms were forwarded to them. When peace terms were accepted, all enemies were made slaves. In case peace terms were not accepted, all male enemies and animals in that city were to be killed. Women and children were made slaves and belongings were taken as booty⁴⁴ (cf. Deut 20:10-14).⁴⁵

3.2.4 The Attitude of Hatred Towards National Enemies

The most common word for hatred in the O.T. is **שׂוֹנֵא**,⁴⁶ which designates in general *hatred towards enemies*. Yet, the direct command to “hate one’s enemies” (cf. Matt 5:43) does not appear in O.T..⁴⁷ However, there are many texts in the O.T. where we can find Israel’s hatred towards its *national enemies*.

⁴⁴ Booty was undoubtedly for the advantage of people, since many conquered towns were pillaged before being burnt (see for example 2 Kgs 14:14; 25:13f); even the dead warriors were robbed of everything of value (see for example 1 Sam 31:8). This was the way many warriors and other people benefited from war, making themselves rich. Among the Pökot, one of the sources of wealth is precisely the cattle obtained in raiding activities (see in chapter III, page 43.2.1 Raiding Animals for Survival and Prestige).

⁴⁵ One of the reasons for such behaviour was the above-mentioned threat of these pagan nations to the monotheism practices of Israel. See fn. 36 above.

⁴⁶ This word in the English version – hate – appears 104 times in the RSV. Generally speaking, this attitude is expressed in different O.T. texts. It can be related to political adversariality (Deut 33:11 — See also Ps 18:40; 44:7.10; 89:23; 2 Sam 22:41 among others). It is a motivation for murder (Num 35:20) or the sort of hatred that results in the destruction of national enemies (Ezek 25:11). Cf. A. H. KONDEL, “**שׂוֹנֵא** (8533),” *NIDOTT III*, 1259.

⁴⁷ Cf. D. SENIOR, CSB, 15 (N.T.). See also O. MICHIEL, “*miséō* [to hate],” in K. G. BROMILEY – G. FRIEDRICH, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament – Abridged in One Volume*, (Devon: The Paternoster Press Ltd, 1985), 598. In spite the fact that Jesus seems to imply that this command is an O.T. prescription, in reality Jesus was quoting the fruit of rabbinical interpretation of the law as it was followed and believed in hid days. Cf. M. A. COPELAND, “The Gospel of Mathew. Acting Like Our Father,” *Executables Online Sermons* (2001) <http://www.ccel.org/contrib/exec_outlines/matt/mt5_43.html>, 10/10/2001, 1-2 an

3.2.5 An Attitude of Non-Retaliatio

We turn now to the brief presentation of two texts from Proverbs. These two texts belong to a wider current of wisdom common in the Ancient Near East. This tradition “can be viewed as an expression of the general human wisdom [in relation to] [...] the question of behaviour vis-à-vis one’s enemies.”⁴⁸

The first text is found in Prov 24:17, “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.” We see here a call to refrain from taking advantage of the fragility of an enemy. This call seems to belong to a type of behaviour common in the Ancient Near East. We might call this the tradition of *non-retaliation*.⁴⁹ This passive attitude does not contribute to the improvement of the weak situation of an enemy in need. The detail of the fragility of the enemy here is important. Otherwise, vengeful act might take place.⁵⁰ In any case, the opinion of K. Owczarek is that “the fact that one forgoes retaliation and even forgives his foes does not necessarily mean that he loves them and wants their well-being.”⁵¹ In other words, there is no action done towards the good of that enemy.

3.2.6 Taking Care of an Enemy in Need

We find a more positive call regarding the well being of an enemy in Prov 25:21: “If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.”⁵² This text seems to

10. “The Sermon on the Mount. Treatment of Enemies (Mt 5:43-48),” *EOS* (2001), <http://www.ccel.org/contrib/exec_outlines/mt_mt_11.html>10/10/2001,1-2.

⁴⁸ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 23.

⁴⁹ Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 23.

⁵⁰ See above 3.1.3 under *Lex Talionis*

⁵¹ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 25.

⁵² This text seems to be contradicted by what we have seen above in 3.2.3 *Shall Israel be Kind and Merciful?*, esp. in the quotation given in this section Sir 12:5-6. The reason is that the text from Sir belongs to a later wisdom redaction, which reconsidered Prov 25:21. On the other hand, as I said at the beginning of this sub-section, the author of Prov is attempting to convey in Wisdom

“[...] promote a positive attitude of *doing good to one's enemies*. [...] The saying enjoins one to take care of one's enemy who is in need. This need seems to be of rather extreme character, [...a situation] in which he [the enemy] lacks basic necessities as bread and water [...] and] his survival is at stake.”⁵³

The motivation for such behaviour is found in the following verse 22, “for you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you.” Such statement seems disconcerting.⁵⁴ Whatever meaning is attached to the reasoning of the biblical author, “one thing seems to be sure, namely, that one should treat one's enemy in need according to the requirements of mercy, while leaving the rest to God.”⁵⁵

We find at least one passage in the O.T. where the recommendation of Prov 25:21-22 seems to have been put in practice: 2 Kgs 6:8-23. Elisha shows here a benevolent attitude towards the Syrian warriors, who were Israel's mortal enemies. The Syrians tried to capture Elisha. The prophet, asks God to blind the adversaries in order to bring them into Israel's land but declines the offer of the king to kill them. Instead, food and water is served to them. Such behaviour

literature a wisdom saying that was common among the Ancient Near East cultures. How much this inculcated in Israel's tradition remains still a question, but at least there is a consideration on this issue regarding enemies.

⁵³ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 25.

⁵⁴ Scholars are divided in the meaning of this “coals of fire.” This expression is usually used in O.T. texts to indicate God's punishment of the wicked (Ps 11:6; 18:13-14; 140:11). If this is true, an attitude of benevolence towards the enemy would be sought for a punishment of the enemy and not for his or her goodness. It is argued in W. KLASSEN, “Coals of Fire Coals of Fire: Sign of Repentance or Revenge?” *New Testament Studies* 9 (1963) 337-350; K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 25-26 that this expression refers to an Egyptian ritual of repentance in order to initiate a process of reconciliation between two arguing parties.

⁵⁵ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 26. See further discussion in W. KLASSEN, “Love Your Enemies. The Way to Peace,” *Overtures to Biblical Theology* 15 (Philadelphia, 1984), 36-37; G.M. ZERBE, “Non-Retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts. Ethical Themes in Social Context,” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha. Supplement Series* 13 (Sheffield, 1993), 216-220.249-253.

turns to the advantage of Israel because from this moment Assyria stops raiding Israel.⁵⁶

Both Prov 25:21-22 and 2 Kgs 6:8-23 demonstrate compassion towards an enemy who is weakened and in need, so that the behaviour of the enemy might turn to the advantage of the one who pays good for evil. However, *doing good* to enemies in such cases is limited to the situation when those enemies are in need. Interesting is the fact that there is no evidence in these two texts that such an attitude is advocated not only towards the people of the Covenant community but even to enemies as 2 Kgs 6:8-23 demonstrates.⁵⁷

4. Conclusion

In this chapter we investigated the attitudes towards enemies found in the O.T.. We started with a brief presentation of the O.T. history which demonstrated that the enmity between Israel and its neighbours was common. We also noted that Israel united against its enemies in order to maintain its national identity. Solidarity was, therefore, a strong value in Israel.

Next, we looked at the attitudes of Israel towards its enemies, both personal and external. We discovered that in Pentateuchal regulations the consciousness of unity and solidarity demanded goodness and kindness towards other Israelites.

⁵⁶ "According to this account, the Syrians invade the country and try to capture the prophet Elisha prays that God may strike the aggressors with blindness and then tricks them into coming straight to Samaria. They are now at the mercy of the king of Israel. At his question, whether he should kill the invaders, the king receives from Elisha the following answer: "Do not kill them [...] Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master" (2 Kgs 6:22). The story ends with the report of a great feast prepared for these enemies and of the final result of such unusual behaviour: 'So the bands from Syria stopped raiding Israel's territory' (2Kgs 6:23). The kindness shown to the enemy turned to Israel's advantage. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 27.

⁵⁷ Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 27.

to safeguard the well-being of Israel itself. Exod 23:4-5 demanded the same positive attitude towards the belongings the fellow Israelites. Even if one turned hostile, such an enemy was still considered a 'brother' (cf. Deut 22:1-4) for he or she still belonged to the holy people of God. For the same reason, love of neighbour as it is spelled out in Lev 19:17-18 forbade hatred of a personal enemy. The resolution of internal conflicts operated within this context of love of one's neighbour. Blood-vengeance was a possible alternative in cases of murder. Deut 19:11-12 showed us that this practice was common within Israel. Likewise the rule of *lex Talionis* as seen in Exod 21:23-25 called for retribution of a wrong committed against a neighbour.

The general behaviour towards national enemies in the O.T. was marked by hostility. God commanded the destruction of enemies (Num 25:16-18; Josh 10:40) and victory in a battle was achieved by God's blessing. Victory was a sign of a 'state of grace' and of obedience to God (Deut 23:9-10). When conquering the Promised Land a kind and merciful behaviour was never considered (Deut 20:1-20).

Despite such a negative general picture, we did find some indications of a more positive attitude towards the enemies. Prov 24:17 gave us the first glimpse — one was not to rejoice over the fall of an enemy. Prov 25:21 went further to suggest even the help of an enemy in desperate need. In 2 Kgs 6:8-23, this notion is applied by Elisha towards national enemies of Israel. In any case, the help given is only to the enemy who is in need.

CHAPTER II

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENEMIES IN THE TEACHING AND THE LIFE OF JESUS

1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the brief study of the attitudes towards one's enemies as taught and lived by Jesus. We look at the texts in the synoptic gospels of Matthew and Luke where Jesus addresses his command on love of one's enemies to his disciples and all those who listen to him. First, we will try to explore the meaning of the attitudes vis-à-vis one's enemies as demanded by Jesus. Secondly, we shall look at the life of Jesus himself, trying to examine the way he fulfilled his own teaching with this regard.

2. Love of Enemies in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew

The command of Jesus concerning love of one's enemy is one of the notable demands of Jesus' N.T. ethics.⁵⁸ It is found in the Matthean Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and the Lukan Sermon on the Plain (6:20-49).⁵⁹ The dissimilarities of the two Sermons in structure, theme, and arrangement is well known as well as the absence of a similar material in Mark.⁶⁰ Many scholars attribute these texts to Q source. Some scholars posit two Q sources, one for each gospel writer, that is, Q^{Matt} and Q^{Lk}.⁶¹ It is probable that both evangelists had different intentions and interpretations of Jesus' words concerning the love of enemies. They were independent in their development of similar data.⁶²

The following table compares the two texts of Matt and Luke.⁶³

⁵⁸ Cf. R. A. HORSLEY, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence – Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987), 261. During my field work research among the Pökot I came across many traditional warriors who knew about this demand on love of enemies, according to them, asked by God (*Töröröt* – name for God in Pökot language). This is, in my view, a result of Christian influence.

⁵⁹ Cf. R. BROWN is of the opinion that the classification of the command on love of enemies within an ethical perspective can rather fit the intentions of Matt but not much for Luke. Luke does not have the sentence "You have heard it said... but I say to you" and moreover mentions the 'kingdom' eight times in the Sermon of the Mount. Then there is less eschatological tone in Luke than in Matt in what concerns Love of Enemies. This will influence the interpretation of the words of Jesus in a different manner for both evangelists. Cf. R. E. BROWN, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2000), 239-240.

⁶⁰ Cf. J. LAMBRECHT, *The Sermon on the Mount. Proclamation and Exhortation*, (Wilmington: Delaware, 1985), 35. Speaking about the two other Sermons found in Matt and Luke in this same page the author says, "Almost nothing of the two sermons is found in Mark, and no speech in Mark's Gospel even resembles them." Cf. also K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 98-99.

⁶¹ One of this scholars was H. D. Betz. He says that both evangelists would have received each one different written collection prior to the writing of the gospels. C. CARLSTON disagrees and explains his reasoning in C. CARLSTON, "Betz on the Sermon on the Mount – A Critique," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (January 1988), 47-57. For other scholars who accept the hypothesis of Betz see also J. PIPER, *Love your Enemies*, 50-51. 134-135; I.W. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Granville, Cape Town, 1978), 245.

⁶² Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 101.

⁶³ Based in K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 99-101 and B. H. THROCKMORTON, *Gospel Parallels: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1989), 55-56.

Luke

[6:27] But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
 [6:28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

[6:29] To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;

and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

[6:30] Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again.

[6:31] And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

[6:32] "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

[6:33] And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

[6:34] And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

[6:35] But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

[6:36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Matthew

[5:43] You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.'

[5:44] But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

[5:38] "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

[5:39] But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;

[5:40] and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well;

[5:41] and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

[5:42] Give to him who begs from you,

and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.

[7:12] So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

[5:46] For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

[5:47] And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

[5:45] so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

[5:48] You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

2.1 No Distinction Between Personal and National Enemies

Our presentation of enmity in the O.T. showed a clear difference between the attitudes towards the internal enemies (among the people of the Covenant) and external enemies. In Jesus' words there is no such distinction. The command of Jesus is to be applied in each and every situation wherever the follower of Jesus encounters hostile treatment. Nowhere in the N.T. do we find Jesus advocating a different standard of behaviour towards enemies especially those who differ according to religion, race or social status. This is contrary to what we have seen in the O.T. where kindness and benevolent behaviour depended on the identity and need of the adversary. In both synoptic texts, we realise that every hostile situation (hatred — Luke 6:27b, Matt 5:44; curse — Luke 6:28a;⁶⁴ personal physical attack — Luke 6:28b,29, Matt 5:44b; robbery — Luke 6:29b; Matt 5:40; retaliation — Luke 6:29a, Matt 5:39; forced labour — Matt 5:41), is an opportunity to show kindness and love towards the opponent.

This lack of distinction between the personal and national enemy is further confirmed by the sort of audience addressed by Jesus in Luke's account. According to Luke 6:17-18,

“a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, [...] came to *hear him* and to be *healed* of their diseases.”

Therefore, not only Jews but also Gentiles from outside Palestine have come to hear Jesus. Those 'who hear' Jesus are identified here also as the sick or the healthy (v.18a), those at peace and those disturbed by “unclean spirits” (v.18b). Thus, the command of Jesus on love of enemies (Luke 6:27-36) is to be applied

⁶⁴ See also Matt 5:11 for the context of persecution.

universally, that is, to any enemy and in any circumstance of hostility. Having already read today's scholarship with this regard, K. Owczarek summarises his findings in the following way:

“An increasing number of scholars understand the term ‘enemies’ in its broadest sense. In some cases, they attempt to explore the original sociological context in which Jesus pronounced the command or the one in which the evangelist wrote it down, in order to discover the identity of the enemies towards whom the command was to be practised in the first place. At the same time, however, these exegetes agree that the notion of “the enemies” is subject to a necessary historical evolution and that the term itself can be continually applied to different groups of people. *This point of view favours a universalistic interpretation of the love of enemy command* [italics added], namely, that it applies always and to all kinds of enemies. In addition, some authors point out that the decisive argument in favour of the universality of the command to love one's enemies is the universality of the nature of love itself or rather, the universality of God's love that is given as a model to be followed.”⁶⁵

Another Lucan text that confirms the universalistic view of ‘love of enemies’ is the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). We have seen above⁶⁶ that Jews and Samaritans viewed each other as enemies.⁶⁷ Jesus uses a person that was considered an enemy to the Jews as someone capable of *doing good* towards a person in need, regardless who that person in need may be. In this parable Jesus seems to make the point that what matters is to do good to a person who is in need and not so much to whom one should direct his or her acts of goodness. Then, Jesus goes deeper than the O.T. differentiation on internal and external enemies. What is important is to do good to whoever is in need.⁶⁸

The approach of Matthew seems to be more particular, since Matthew prepares a collection of ethical values important to Jesus. Jesus teaches these values

⁶⁵ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 77.

⁶⁶ See 2.1 The People of the Old Testament and Enmity in Biblical History, in chapter I, page 4.

⁶⁷ On the origin of such hostile relationship see fn. 5 of chapter I, page 5.

⁶⁸ On the meaning of this Parable see K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 174-181.

to the reduced circle of his disciples (cf. Matt 5:1).⁶⁹ Matthew interprets them and applies them to the situation of his community, perhaps under persecution (Matt 10:16-25), with internal conflicts.⁷⁰ Leaving alone the question of Matthew's interpretation, we rather want to emphasise the intention of Jesus himself when proposing this command. In this context, W. D. Davies - D. C. Allison seem to be right when they say,

“[The] primary function [of Matt 5,21-48] is [...] two-fold: to show [...] (i) what sort of attitude and behaviour Jesus requires and (ii) how his demands surpass those of the Torah without contradicting the Torah.”⁷¹

The above quotation puts us in the proper context in which we analyse now the attitudes implied in the command ‘love your enemies’ in both synoptic texts.

2.2 What Did ‘Love Your Enemies’ Mean to Jesus?

It is through the use of the same words in the original Greek “ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν” that both evangelists express the command of Jesus. We assume then, that they were common to the source or sources of Matthew and Luke. The meaning of love (ἀγαπᾶω) here,

“[...] can be described as the charitable love, expressing benevolent love, the love capable of giving and keep on giving without waiting anything in return. It is the total unbiased love. In this type of love it is not important what a person can do to us not even the way he/she might treat us. Always we have the opportunity to love him/her, which does not consist on ‘felling something for that person,’ but rather to

⁶⁹ In Luke Jesus addresses the same Sermon to a great crowd (6:17-18).

⁷⁰ There have been several attempts by scholars to read this command (esp. based on Matt's account) as against the analysis of social and political background in which the evangelist wrote. See for example R. A. HORSLEY, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*, 255-284; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2000) 9-49, 154-157. J. A. OVERMAN, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 90-113; M. E. BORING, “The Gospel of Matthew” in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. L. E. KECK, 195; A. MILAVEC, “The Social Setting of Turning the Other Cheek’ and ‘Love One’s Enemies in the Light of the Didache.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 25 (1995) 3:138.

⁷¹ W. D. DAVIES - D.C. ALISSON, *Matthew I-VII - I*. (Scotland: T & T Clark Ltd, 1988) 508.

do something for that same person. Thus, ‘agape’ love does not consist in the affective but rather the effective: it is the theological love, total love.”⁷²

Such a concept of ‘love’ is surprising when Jesus demands it to be directed towards enemies (ἐχθροὺς). The enemies of our texts seem to be identified with “those who hate you” (Luke 6:27c), “curse you” (Luke 6:28a), “those who abuse you” (Luke 6:28b) and “persecute you” (Matt 5:44).⁷³ What kind of attitude towards these people is demanded by Jesus?

2.2.1 A Positive Action in Favour of the Enemy

After the Beatitudes, Luke puts ‘love of enemies’ as the first demand of Jesus (Luke 6:27-28).⁷⁴ When someone hates you *do good* to him or her, when cursed you *bless*, when abused or persecuted (Matt 5:44) you *pray* for the abuser or persecutor. All these injunctions (to do good, to bless and to pray on behalf of the enemy) reveal that Jesus demands are more than just a passive, non-resistant attitude towards one’s enemies. Instead, all these attitudes are positive actions in favour of one’s enemies.⁷⁵ To the one who hates, one is to make some concrete action that results in benefit of the enemy. A curse is to be answered with a blessing which probably should be understood in a broad sense as ‘doing good.’ It is “doing

⁷² Our translation from A. ALVAREZ, “¿Mandó Jesús Amar a los Enemigos?” *Selecciones de Teología* 141 (1997): 39. “[...] *agapao* expresa el amor de benevolencia, el amor capaz de dar y de mantenerse dando sin esperar nada en retorno. Es el amor totalmente desinteresado. De este verbo se deriva la palabra *agape* (amor de caridad). (...) En este (cuarto) tipo de amor, no importa lo que una persona pueda hacer o hacemos ni la forma como nos trate. Siempre tendremos la posibilidad de *amarle*, que no consiste en *sentir algo* por ella, sino en *hacer algo* por ella. Así pues, el amor de *agape* no consiste en lo afectivo, sino en lo efectivo: es el amor teológico, el amor total.” On the meaning of ἀγαπάω see E. STAUFFER, “agapáo [to love],” in *TDNT – Abridged in One Volume*, ed. Kittel Gerhard Bromiley – Gerhard Friedrich, (Devon: The Paternoster Press Ltd, 1985), 5-10.

⁷³ For Luke enemies could mean an enemy of the people of Israel (Luke 1:71-74) or of Jerusalem (Luke 19:43); a personal enemy (Luke 19:27) or an enemy because associated with the powers of evil (Luke 10:19; cf. Acts 13:10). Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 114.

⁷⁴ This shows the importance and centrality of the theme for Luke. Matt puts the same demand at the end of the section on the antitheses, as also towards the end of the Sermon.

⁷⁵ Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 111-114.

good, showing a friendly attitude, speaking a gracious word.”⁷⁶ In addition, one is supposed to pray *for* one’s own persecutor — not a prayer in order that God may deliver us from the abuser or persecutor,⁷⁷ but a prayer *on their behalf, for* them.

It seems, then, that at least for Luke

“the ‘love’ Jesus commands as the right attitude vis-à-vis ‘enemies’ is to be understood in a very active sense. ‘Doing good’ does not say much about the feelings, but it points to concrete acts of kindness and benevolence. Similar acts are to be performed towards ‘those hating you’.”⁷⁸

Thus, “for the Lucan Jesus, ‘love’ is decisively something that one ‘does.’”⁷⁹

2.2.2 Generosity Under Any Circumstance

Jesus proceeds yet with another striking demand: “To him who strikes you on the cheek,⁸⁰ *offer* the other also” (Luke 6:29a//Matt 5:39b). The ‘action’ words demanded by Jesus and used by both evangelists in these parallel verses are *offer* (Luke – *RSV*) and *turn* (Matt – *RSV*). The Lukan word, especially, does not denote a passive attitude of one’s subjection to violence but demands the person “to take initiative in showing himself totally open to the action of the other, even to the point of being ready to accept further mistreatment.”⁸¹

Another demand concerns one’s coat⁸² (Luke 6:29b//Matt 5:40). The deprivation of this garment could happen in a hostile context of persecution

⁷⁶ C. WESTERMANN, *Blessing in the Bible and in the Life of the Church*, (Philadelphia 1978), 92.

⁷⁷ This characteristic is found in many Psalms.

⁷⁸ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 115.

⁷⁹ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 152.

⁸⁰ In the time of Jesus, this offence constituted a serious violent act.

⁸¹ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 123.

⁸² The cloak served many times not only as clothing by day but also as bedding by night (Ex 22:25-26; Deut 24:10-13.17), and as such it was rather regarded as precious and would never be left unguarded (cf. Acts 7:58; 22:20). K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 123.

(cf. Heb 10:34) or during an “ordinary” robbery (cf. Luke 10:30).⁸³ The attitude that Jesus proposes before such situations is of “total surrender and defenselessness, but also of a certain generosity toward the offender.”⁸⁴

Luke 6:30a and its parallel Matt 5:42a further broads the circumstances in which the love command of Jesus is to be applied. Luke stresses the use of the word ‘every one’ and shows that the universal call of Jesus is applied towards *all* persons, enemies included. One is neither supposed to think twice about the real need of the beggar nor the usefulness of the help. This seems to be in the line of the O.T. attitude seen above in Prov 25:21 and Ex 23:4-5 concerning help to an enemy in need.⁸⁵

Luke 6:30b continues to exemplify the kind of generosity demanded by Jesus, “of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again.” Luke 6:30a underlined that generosity is to be given to everybody. Luke 6:30b stresses that generosity touches everything one owns. The call is universal and oriented to ‘every one’ who asks, even the enemy.

2.2.3 Love Beyond Reciprocity

In Luke 6:32-34 and Matt 5:46-47, Jesus further illustrates that the love he calls for is to go beyond the principle of reciprocity. In fact, behaviour based on reciprocity is the behaviour of “sinners,” and, as such, nothing extraordinary.

⁸³ Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 124.

⁸⁴ “Luke uses the tunic to illustrate an attitude of generosity earlier in his Gospel (Luke 3:11) and then once again in Acts 9:39. These examples have no parallels in the N.T.” K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 124-125.

⁸⁵ Cf. K. OWZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 126. Note that the same author remarks on page 128 of the same work: “It was already Saint Augustine who noticed that the text does not say “give everything to one who asks you” or “give to everyone what he or she asks of you” but “to everyone who asks, give”. The accent is on giving and on giving to everyone. Whatever is given needs to be a good thing, but what it is or its amount depends on the one who gives, not on the one who asks.”

To love (Luke 6:32/Matt 5:46), to do good (Luke 6:33), to lend (Luke 6:34) and to salute (Matt 5:47) has to go beyond the behaviour of sinners and gentiles (Matt 5:47b). According to Jesus, sinners expect all those actions to be done in return to them His disciples, instead, are supposed to be generous and kind towards enemies⁸⁶ expecting nothing in return.

2.2.4 An *Heartfelt Love of Enemies*

Attitude demanded by Jesus towards one's enemies is not a matter of law (as we seen in O.T. above), but an attitude that comes from one's heart. This (as seen in the Matthean account. The context in which Jesus teaches love towards enemies in Matthew (see Matt 5:17-20) is an illustration of how Jesus comes to fulfil the law of the O.T., rather than to abolish it.⁸⁶ The fact that one behaves kindly towards enemies does not necessarily mean that he or she loves the enemy. One can *do good* to enemies because he or she has been forced to do so.⁸⁷ According to the Matthean Jesus, righteousness in the fulfilment of the law of the O.T. was not enough. Any benevolent attitude towards enemies demands an inner disposition of heart. Jesus demands, then, a deeper and heartfelt love of enemies, which prompts one to *do good* to an enemy. In a word Jesus demands here a *better righteousness*.⁸⁸ According to Matthew, Jesus requires that, "Jesus'

⁸⁶ Cf. D. J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991) vol. 1, *Sacra Pagina Series*, 85-93. This is best understood when we see the teaching of love of enemies as part of the series of antitheses found in the unit Matt 5:21-48, introduced by Matt 5:17-20, where it is clearly said by Jesus that he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfil it.

⁸⁷ "[...] strict obedience to the commandments of the Torah is not enough, for the Torah does not communicate all the imperatives that must be fulfilled. [...] The letter of the law does not give life. All things lawful may not be helpful. One may refrain from murder and still hate. [...] Hence, in order to attain perfect conformity to God's will (5:48) one must be animated by something that cannot be caustically formulated - things such as 'purity of heart' (5:8) [...]." W. D. DAVIES - D. C. ALISSON, *Matthew I-VII* - I, 508.

⁸⁸ The term *better righteousness* is the interpretation of W. D. DAVIES - D. C. ALISSON, *Matthew I-VII* - I, 509: "[...] while Jesus does not abolish legal norms [...] and himself submits to

followers strive for [...] *unselfish* love of friend and foe alike (5:38-48). In other words, the disciples are to be perfect (5:48)."⁸⁹

2.2.5 *The Ultimate Call: Be Perfect and Merciful as Your Father (Matt 5:45.47-48// Luke 6:36)*

Both evangelists justify the demands of Jesus concerning the love of enemies with the example of God himself, who is perfect and merciful to both evil and good, just and unjust.⁹⁰ The call here is to imitate the example of God. We are to behave like God, our Father (more evident in Luke 6:36).

“Jesus' listeners are told not just to strive to be more loving or more compassionate, but to ‘be compassionate as’ God himself is compassionate. Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find a similar demand. [...] the comparative conjunction καθὼς that is used in verse 36 [in Luke 6] [...] suggests that Jesus wants his listeners to imitate God, to take his attitude of compassion as the model of their own way of being in the world.”⁹¹

Matt 5:45.47-48 and Luke 6:36 exemplify a new moral order that Jesus wills to be practised by his listeners and disciples. In fact, the call of Jesus to show benevolence, mercy, generosity and an attitude of heart towards one's enemies is to be understood ultimately as the call to resemble God. The concrete situations of hostility presented by Jesus in both gospels should not limit love of enemies only to those particular instances. Merciful behaviour is to be applied in every circumstance.

We need to add here that the sole reason both evangelists advocate the love of enemies is that this behaviour imitates God. Loving our enemies means that we are sons (and daughters!) of the ‘Father’ or the ‘Most High’. Jesus does not say

legal observances, he does demand more [than the commands of the O.T.]. And this more is the ‘better righteousness’ announced by 5:20 and delineated in 5:21-48.”

⁸⁹ W. D. DAVIES · D. C. ALISSON, *Matthew I-VII* - I, 508.

⁹⁰ Luke is more surprising when it is said that God is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. There is no reference to the “good” and “just” like in Matt.

⁹¹ K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 166-167.

that we should love our enemies in order to turn their hostile behaviour into our benefit nor as an example to the nations how God behaves through his sons and daughters. This demand is not to serve as a moral code or a strategy in order to achieve peace in the world.⁹² As such, the command seems to be more profound than the normal “moral order” of justice.⁹³ At this point one is called to be merciful and perfect like God, and one’s faith in Jesus words and example are the sole instrument to make this call possible in daily life.

2.3 Love of Enemies Exemplified by Jesus Himself

Jesus himself demonstrates the love of enemies with his own life. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-35) Jesus mentions a Samaritan (who was considered an enemy by the Jews), as the one doing good to his neighbour — though a few verses earlier the Samaritans rejected Jesus (cf. Luke 9:51-56).⁹⁴ The passion narratives provide us with the best example on love of enemies as practised by Jesus. Here we are told of the way Jesus behaves towards Judas Iscariot, the one that he knew was going to betray him. At the Last Supper, Jesus says that he offers his life for “you”⁹⁵ (Luke 22:19-20). Judas Iscariot was one of present at that moment, and Jesus offers his life also for him. Jesus also

⁹² Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 168-170.

⁹³ “On the one hand, the whole Christian life can be considered a miracle – a fruit of God’s sustaining grace. On the other hand, however, it seems that the love of enemies is such a miracle in a very special way. Given its «irrationality» from the point of view of the «natural moral order», it very effectively demonstrates supernatural roots and goals of Christian behaviour.” Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 170.

⁹⁴ For a complete study of the meaning of this parable see 2. Jesus and the Samaritans in K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 174-187.

⁹⁵ This is a significant change from Mark 14:24, where Jesus says that his blood is for the ransom of ‘many’. Cf. K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 192.

cures the ear of the guard who came to arrest him (Luke 22:50-51). Finally, Jesus prays for his persecutors (Luke 23:34) “for they know not what they do.”⁹⁶

3. Conclusion

In this chapter we analysed the teachings and the life of Jesus concerning the love of enemies. We discovered that only Matthew and Luke have such teachings presented in a more consistent and organised manner. We saw that Jesus does not distinguish between personal and external enemies. Jesus does not discriminate nor dictate the circumstances where the love of enemy should be applied. Teaching of Jesus demands the following things. First of all, love of enemies means to ‘do good’ to those enemies, identified as those who hate you, curse you and abuse you. Love is to be shown in a concrete, positive manner in favour of the enemy. Furthermore, love has to be so generous as to show openness to any hostile action directed to us by an enemy. Finally, love has to go behind any reciprocity practised among people (Luke 6:32-34). This kind of behaviour is different from that of sinners who act in a reciprocal manner. This attitude originates in one’s heart and should not result from external legal pressure (that of O.T. on love of neighbour alone). Ultimately, the attitude towards one’s enemy is justified by the attitude of God who is perfect and merciful to all.

⁹⁶ There is a serious concern of several scholars who say that this v., being unique to Luke, was not pronounced by Jesus (this v. is missing in a number of early manuscripts!). Nevertheless, Owczarek presents a number of considerations based in tradition that confirm to us that we can rely on these words as pronounced by Jesus on the cross. See specifically 6.3 Jesus’ Prayers for His Persecutors on K. OWCZAREK, *Sons of the Most High*, 204-213.

This kind of love demanded by Jesus is not simply a nice idea. This is rather a consistent and a concrete attitude of generosity and kindness towards one's enemies. The events of Jesus' passion and his prayer on the cross, invoking God's forgiveness for his persecutors, were the best examples of such attitude.

CHAPTER III

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ONE'S ENEMIES IN THE PÖKOT CULTURE

1. Introduction

In this chapter we are interested in analysing the attitudes of the Pökot towards their enemies, both *internal* and *external*. We start with a presentation of the Pökot people regarding their raiding activities. This will include a short look at their relationship with cattle and their raiding activities, with historical roots. We shall see also how the Pökot value a strong ethnical identity which is for them a way of survival. They inhabit a threatening environment but also aim at a harmonious relationship with God, nature and one another.

We shall look, then, at the way the Pökot people solve conflicts among themselves and later at the way they behave towards their traditional enemies. For the reasons forwarded *in loco*, we shall give special consideration to the relationships between Pökot and Marakwet. Since all the activities of the Pökot (including raiding) are oriented towards harmonious life, we will give special attention to the way the Pökot celebrate and seal pacts of peace with their enemies.

At the end of this chapter, we will consider briefly the possible applications of our research. Inculturation of the words of Jesus on love of enemies among the Pökot needs to be personal, according to us, on two different levels. All the attitudes of the Pökot that need to be strengthened and are close to the Gospel values. On the other hand, the attitudes opposed to those values and need to be overcome.

2. The Pökot Pastoralist People

Cattle rustling is one of the chief sources of enmity between the Pökot people and their neighbours. However, it would be unfair to say that this characteristic applies to both groups of the Pökot, namely, pastoralists and agriculturists. Our interest rests with the pastoralist people where I conducted my fieldwork research.⁹⁷

2.1 Some Typical Characteristics of the Pökot People⁹⁸

Conflicts between Pökot and other pastoralist people exist from the early period of formation of the Pökot people, whose roots are found among the Nilo-Hamitic people. Traditionally, the cause of these conflicts has been cattle. Pastoralist people like Maasai, Samburu, and more recently Turkana and Karimojong, have been the traditional enemies of the Pökot. Cattle is the centre of Pökot life. Animals for the Pökot constitute their almost only source of survival

⁹⁷ "There are two groups of *West Pökot*. people with the same origin, united in language and traditions although they have developed two different styles of life and social organisations. They are so-called 'hill Pökot' or agricultural Pökot, who inhabit the uplands of *West Pökot*., and the 'plain Pökot', pastoralists, who inhabit the low, dry areas of the District." R. ARMADA, *Mission Among the Pastoralists of West-Pökot*, (B. A. Thesis, Tangaza College – Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, 2001), 2. Cf. also J. Visser, *Pökoot Religion*, (Oegstgeest: Hendrik Kraemer Instituut, 1989), 6-8. See Appendix I at the end of this research paper for the geographical sites of our research.

⁹⁸ Please, refer to Appendix II at the end of this research paper for a more complete presentation of the Pökot people. We provide here a summary of that study.

in an arid and semiarid environment. Cattle gives them milk and is used in many rituals and ceremonies of healing and cleansing (especially goats). The location of a household depends on the proximity of water and pasture for the animals. Warriors take bulls as their 'talisman,' to which they give praise in dances. This cultural entertainment serves also to express praise for the warriors by recalling and singing about their audacity in the raids where those bulls were got. Dowry is also paid with cattle and the more animals a man has, the more wives he can marry, a practice which shows how rich an individual is.

In order to get animals, the Pökot carry out raids to their neighbours. There are two kinds of raids: *lük* and *setat*. *Lük* is the traditional form of raid⁹⁹ and in its preparation elders, prophets and warriors of various clans are involved. Elders must bless the warriors¹⁰⁰ if the raid is to be successful. Before this blessing, the prophet gives instructions that are followed strictly. Among those instructions, the prophet tells the rules and whether or not enemy warriors are to be killed. Traditionally women and children are not supposed to be killed, a custom that unfortunately is changing nowadays. Raids demand from the Pökot a strong and cohesive unity. Every adult, man or woman has a role to play in time of a raid. Women, even though considered as socially less important in the community, put around their belly a belt of beads called '*lakatia*'. This is supposed to protect their sons. In fact, they are supposed to use them all the time for they never know when their sons will be gone for a raid or will be faced with a difficult situation

⁹⁹ The meaning of this word is 'the group that has gone.'

¹⁰⁰ The blessing of the warriors is called *kiyiltagh*. See Appendix III, at the end of this research work, for an example of this kind of prayer.

in life. Their belief in this protection is very strong. Women also praise the warriors on their return from a raid for they have come in 'peace.'¹⁰¹

Setat is a more recent phenomenon of raids due to the proliferation of guns in the area.¹⁰² Interestingly enough *luk* is not considered stealing. The Pökot consider only *setat* as robbery, also known as *chori* in *East Pökot*. In this type of raid a few warriors get together and go into enemy land to steal animals that they will use for their wealth. There are no traditional rituals to be followed here, not even the blessing of the elders so important in *luk*, a fact that is a source of distress to those old rulers of the Pökot society.

A special reference needs to be made here concerning the Pökot in Baringo District and their more recent enemies: the Marakwet.¹⁰³ Enmity between the two groups started no earlier than in 1992. It seems that the problem here is different and far more complex than that of cattle rustling.¹⁰⁴ During my several visits to the area,

¹⁰¹ Interestingly enough, to return safe and sound is said to return in peace ('*kalya*').

¹⁰² Cf. J. LIND N. SHEIKH, "Armaments, Environments-Small Arms and the Control of Natural Resources," *ACTSEC*, vol.1, 3 (October 2001), 1-4. See also on this issue M. GAITHO, "Arming the Pökot Was Folly; Now Disarm Them," *The Daily Nation*, (March 27 2001), 7; *Id.*, "Stop these Merchants of Terror," *The Weekly Review* (12 March 1999) <<http://www.africaonline.co.ke/weeklyreview/990312/editorial.html>>, 7/1/2002; M. NDURU, "Politics-Kenya: Refugees Ordered to Hand Over Weapons" *WNIPS* 2 (June 1998) <http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/june98/16_15_059.html>, 15/12/2001; International Action Network on Small Arms, "Government Calls on People in Northwest to Stop Gun Trafficking" *IANSAN* 1 (May 2001) <http://www.iansa.org/news/2001/may_01/stop_traffic.html>, 7/1/2002.

¹⁰³ Kalenjii group situated on the Elgeyo Escarpment neighbouring *East Pökot* by West. Their main economical activity is agriculture. Though Marakwets herd some animals, they were not much interested in cattle, since their main economical activity is not dependent on the animals.

¹⁰⁴ After the terrible attack that Pökot conducted in Marakwet on March 12th, 2001 that left around 50 people killed (the worst in their short inimical history), the Kenyan Human Rights Commission produced a report where it is claimed that ethnic violence between these two groups is in fact state sponsored and encouraged for political reasons. Cf. Kenyan Human Rights Commission, *Raiding Democracy: The Slaughter of the Marakwet in Kerio Valley*, (Nairobi: Kenyan Human Rights Commission, 2001). Also in an e-mail addressed to me by Sr. Maria Elena G. Galván (a missionary who worked among the *East Pökot* people for about nine years), she says: "[...] with the Marakwets, in stead, it is true hatred what they feel towards each other. With them [Marakwets] there is no element of 'tribal pride' or 'to be valiant' but hatred inflamed against them; this shows a very bad feeling, almost diabolic, I would say. On the contrary [fighting] with traditional enemies is like a kind of game." M. E. G. GALVÁN, "Re: Enmity Among the Pökot," Email to the author

I could perceive an attitude of hatred which is different from that towards other 'traditional' enemies, where enmity is based mostly on a kind of 'game' played with the animals.¹⁰⁵

2.2 Goal of the Pökot People: Harmonious Life or 'Pöghisyö'

Like everything in Pökot life, both raiding and rustling are oriented towards the harmonious life or 'pöghisyö.' Interestingly enough, this word has connotations of peace, (expressed in the word 'kalya'), stability and the right order of things. 'Pöghisyö,' which is the common greeting in *West Pökot*., is many times expressed in the saying 'kalya ompö kor,' (peace in the country). This expression

"really means 'the good land,' where fruits, grass and harvest are coming forth, where animals are multiplying [italics added], where flowers are blossoming and where bees are producing honey."¹⁰⁶

Peace depends upon the blessing of God (*Töröröt*) and God's greatest blessing is cattle. We are not surprised then, that acquiring cattle through raids is another sign of harmonious relationship with the supernatural. The herd is the source of wealth and prestige that enables the Pökot to maintain a harmonious and socially organised life.¹⁰⁷ Ceremonies and rituals are carried out to achieve

November 15th 2001, 4. The political manipulation of the situation is also confirmed by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, based in Eldoret, bordering *West Pökot*.: "It is no longer a question of seasonal cattle raids between Pökot, Marakwet and Turkana with minimal casualties. This traditional cultural habit has been politicised and commercialised by influential people in the Government. [...] the government knows the perpetrators but is reluctant to act. CHRD claims that stolen livestock is ferried by lorries at night from a hideout in Baringo District to the Dagoretti slaughterhouse in Nairobi. It is a charge that has been made many times by politicians and human rights groups." W. CHEBUSIRI, "Government Abates Insecurity in the North Rift," *ETWeb* 10 (November 2000) <<http://www.kenyanews.com/eXpression/november2000/et010.htm>>, 15/11/2001, 1.

¹⁰⁵ In fact, I came to learn a game of Karimojong origin called *köchi* played among the Pökot, where you 'play' your cows, represented by small stones. The aim is to be able to 'steal' the more 'animals' (small stones) you can from the 'enemy' (adversary!) by distributing your animals through the forty holes on the ground disposed into four lines. Two lines are your land, and the other two the land of the enemy. J. LOMILO, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by the author, no tape recording, 14 July 2001, Lengorok - *West Pökot*.

¹⁰⁶ J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. D. PATTERSON, "The Pökot of Western Kenya 1910-1963: The Response of a Conservative People to a Colonial Rule," *Syracuse Occasional Paper* 53 (1969):32.

peace and counteract the hazards of the environment. In this way, the Pökot enhance the powers that bring life and at the same time protect themselves from those who provoke harm. Through these ceremonies the Pökot control and safeguard their relationships with one another, nature and the supernatural. Peace in the country is their ultimate goal. People search, hope and fight with everything at their disposal to maintain this state of peace. It is in this context that we analyse the Pökot people relationships with their internal and external enemies.

3. Attitudes Towards Enemies

Enmity within the Pökot culture is different from enmity expressed towards their traditional enemies. The rise of conflicts within the Pökot environment is always seen in connection with the power of evil. This evil power has to be fought by rituals and ceremonies to re-establish the harmony of daily life. Harmony is the goal of Pökot society. Conversely, hostility towards the external traditional enemies is looked upon from a totally different perspective.

3.1 Attitudes Towards Personal "Enemies" Within the Pökot Culture

Practically, we cannot speak of enemies among the Pökot themselves. For the Pökot, enemies are only those who are not Pökot, the outsiders.

When problems arise among the Pökot, the cause is attributed to the evil. "Evil is a force that destabilises life and society. It is the opposite of peace or *pöghisyö*."¹⁰⁸ This disturbance of life and society manifests itself in illness, death, pain and disasters in the lives of people and animals. In order to solve these

¹⁰⁸ J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 107.

problems special reconciliation rituals are conducted so that the effects of evil may be neutralised and the stability of the society may be restored.

Among the Pökot there are numerous types of reconciliation rituals.¹⁰⁹ This variety of reconciliation celebrations demonstrates the importance of the fraternal and harmonious life willed by the Pökot. We are concerned here with those rituals that restore peace and enhance good relationships among the members of their society.

3.1.1 A Common Effort to Counteract Evil

The first thing we can observe in Pökot reconciliation rituals is the number of reconciliation agents. Practically it is the whole local community that fights the consequences brought about by evil.

When restoring peace in the homestead (a ritual called '*Pöghisyö*'), the head of the house gathers the whole members of the polygamous household. For four days the homestead remains closed and nobody is allowed to enter or to go out. During these days, both in the morning and in the evening, the head of the family sprinkles white clay upon all the members of the house, including animals. Seclusion thwarts the external evil brought about by people or animals. The white clay is a symbol of '*pöghisyö*', that is, peace, purity and protection. If this ritual fails to bring the desired '*pöghisyö*' in the homestead, further rituals are to be taken, this time involving the whole local neighbourhood and the sacrifice of an animal.

¹⁰⁹ There are rituals of reconciliation between persons, clans, families, nature and personal possessions.

3.1.2 *Forgiveness and Reconciliation Only After Punishment*

The case of an insult directed to an elder by a younger man is taken very seriously among the Pökot for an act against the authority of an elder is considered a serious offence. If the abuser refuses to undergo punishment, the elder curses (*chipöt*) the abuser with words of evil and destruction. The abuser may fall sick or even die in a raid. To redress the situation, the abuser must endure humiliation and punishment in the ritual of 'Amat.' This offence, committed against the elders is considered to be an offence committed by the whole age set of the abuser. Thus, the abuser and his age set mates must bring gifts of tobacco, beer and an ox to be accepted by the elders assembled in 'kirket' (the council of all the elders). Meanwhile, the members of the abuser's age set lose their right to seat in 'kirket' with the other elders. Later, the elders may remove the words of curse spoken by the abused elder. At the same time a 'clean' elder¹¹⁰ puts a mixture of white clay and milk on the offenders' heads and chests, signs of purity and cleanness from the offence. In this ritual, cursing and blessing are associated with the expulsion and the acceptance in the council of the elders respectively. The curse is only removed after punishment has been imposed upon the abusers.

3.1.3 *Revenge - Payment for Bloodshed*

When a Pökot kills another Pökot voluntary or involuntary, the clan of the deceased calls for the payment for bloodshed. This payment for bloodshed is called 'laapay', that is, the "clan members of the victim go immediately to the homestead of the murderer and snatch all they can, especially livestock."¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ 'Clean' in the sense that he has not lost any of his offspring.
¹¹¹ J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 141.

There is not, however, capital punishment of the murderer, rather the expropriation of belongings is considered a retribution for the death. There is a positive consideration for the killer. 'If he is killed,' they think, 'what will his children eat? Who will benefit from it?' they say. During my research, I came to understand that the atonement for the slaughtered man may continue for as much as 20 years within which, the animals of the whole clan can be taken up to 8 times, from one generation to another.¹¹² The council of the local elders (*kwökwö*), who meet immediately after the transgression has taken place, agrees upon the duration of the 'laapay.' Forgiveness, nevertheless, is not yet granted. Both clans need to reach a settlement and restore 'pöghisyö.' In order that harmony is renewed and forgiveness is considered, a ritual called 'kwöröto köwö' is to be performed. This is the ritual of reconciliation as such, and it 'calls off the laapay,' that is, the punishment.¹¹³ In this meeting both clans — that of the murderer and that of the victim — are present, as well as the accused murderer. An ox is killed and the upper part of the right front leg is broken in two.¹¹⁴ These two parts are given to both the murderer and the clan members of the victim. After this, a short blessing is pronounced by the elders where the fundamental idea is that 'now all it's finished.'

¹¹² Cf. R. KAPROM, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Musa Aluku, no tape recording, 25 July 2001, Tilingwö (Kollowa - *East Pökot*) — an elder of the community.

¹¹³ Cf. FILEMON, "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 29 July 2001 and 4 August 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*) — Young Health Worker in the Catholic Dispensary of Barpello.

¹¹⁴ Breaking of the bone is done always in any ceremony which involves a killing of an animal and symbolises the end of everything and also a curse to the wrong doers. Cf. NAITALE, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 21 June 2001, Amakuriat (*West Pökot*) — elder-former warrior. This breaking of the bone is also used in the establishment of peace with other non-Pökot in the ceremony of *Mis* (see below 3.2.6 'Peace' With the Enemies: A Self-centred Interest). Here it symbolises that the cursing words pronounced while breaking the bone will fall on the person that will break the peace agreement. LOGIRAPUS, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 16 June 2001, Amakuriat (*West Pökot*) — elder.

This creates reconciliation between the clans and all enmity is now forgotten. The person's family is compensated and harmonious relationships are again restored.¹¹⁵

3.1.4 Cursing: A Means to Know the Truth

A curse is pronounced when the council of the elders cannot ascertain the truthfulness of an accusation through ordinary means. This occurs when the accused party denies the charges or the guilty party is not known. In this case, there is the need of '*Muma*.' The Pökot believe that this ritual is very powerful and can bring disastrous consequences to the ones proved lying. When an accusation is unproven (or) falsified, for example in cases of adultery, robbery or murder, a curse is spoken by the elders towards the ones falsifying the accusation. Both parties are involved in the matter and are present at the meeting place of the council of elders.¹¹⁶ Both parties have to swear under the power of curse that they are not lying in the matter. In due time (weeks, months or even years) something will happen to the one lying. Death or serious illness of people or animals is a proof of guilt. Once the guilty party has been found, a fine (usually in animals) is fixed to compensate the false charge and '*pöghisyö*' has to be restored. This is done in order to 'cut off' the disastrous effects of '*Muma*' upon the family of the guilty party. This ritual is conducted by the elders with words directed to all the 'four winds' in order to clean the air of all evil pronounced in the curse.

¹¹⁵ According to J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 142, '*laapay*' can also be conducted when a sudden and strange death of a young wife occurs. The husband might be the cause of the death in order to do not fulfil his duties concerning bride price, thus, provoking damage to the in-laws, who can call '*laapay*' in '*kwökwo*.' The same stands also for cases of 'lasting disposition through assault.'

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 143, gives us the terrifying picture of the place: "In the middle of the meeting place the elders erect an apparatus, the constituents of which range from a couple of spears to the following paraphernalia: the head of a hyena decorated with red colours, the bone of a vulture, the horn of a rhino and a bow with red and green colours. A goat is provided by the accuser and its chyme is sprinkled upon the spectators in order to give protection against the powerful act."

The one who is judged innocent performs an act of goodness towards the guilty, that is, washes the culprit and the whole family with milk as a form of blessing, thus the peace is restored.

3.1.5 No Resentment After Rituals Have Been Performed

One of the most striking features of these rituals is a complete reconciliation among opposing parties. There is no place for any resentment, for the fine of the guilty party has already compensated the victims. I witnessed and heard of many cases of Pökot people who had serious problems among themselves and who, after undergoing reconciliation and re-acceptance rituals, continued living with each other in a perfect harmony. This positive attitude among the Pökot constitutes a real challenge for the missionaries working in the field.¹¹⁷

3.2 Attitudes Towards the External Enemies of the Pökot

We turn now to the presentation of some of the characteristics of the behaviour of the Pökot towards their traditional enemies. In *West Pökot*, Karimojong (already in Uganda territory) and Turkana are the traditional enemies of the Pökot. The conflict between these two groups has a long history. In fact, the long tradition is one of the reasons cited by informants as the cause of enmity. Other informants advanced illiteracy of both peoples as a motive.¹¹⁸ Still others accuse the neighbouring tribes of killing Pökot people and bloodshed

¹¹⁷ Cf. M. E. G. GALVÁN, "Re: Enmity Among the Pökot," Email to the author, November 15th, 2001, 2. Many times the missionaries are challenged by this very positive behaviour of the Pökot, regarding daily problems that arise between a Pökot and a missionary, and the quick 'healing' that a Pökot can have after things are settled. In many occasions, the missionary is not as quick as the Pökot in complete reconciliation and solving of a problem.

¹¹⁸ Interestingly enough, in one of the interviews carried out in *West Pökot*, illiteracy was appointed as the cause of enmity. The thought of the informant is that if both tribes were educated (school) they would know that they are not supposed to call enemies to each other. LOMONYANG, S., "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 14 June 2001, Lomoriebul (*West Pökot*). former warrior.

has to be revenged. However, whatever they may say, the main cause of conflict is cattle. The three ethnic groups have very similar ways of life, especially Pökot and Karimojong. To steal cattle for survival is something that is already in their blood and in their traditions.

In *East Pökot* we come to find more or less the same reasons for enmity. The traditional enemy are the Turkana. However, when we consider the conflict between the Pökot and the Marakwet, we face a complete different reality.

As said above,¹¹⁹ these two communities were at relative peace up to 1992, when Kenya held the first elections. Kenyan Human Rights studies attribute the breakdown of good relationship between these two groups to state sponsored violence.¹²⁰ Nowadays, the prevalent attitude among these two communities is that of hatred. It is instigated by political reasons.

3.2.1 *Raiding Animals for Survival and Prestige*

The tradition of raiding animals has two basic aims: first, to secure basic needs of life (nutrition) and second, to have many animals for payment of dowry for many wives (a sign of richness of a Pökot man¹²¹), the sacrifice of animals for religious cleansing purposes and the gain of prestige for having killed an enemy. However, contrary to the common belief, there is no clear attitude of enemy hatred

¹¹⁹ Please see 2.1 Some Typical Characteristics of the Pökot People in the current chapter and a detailed presentation in Appendix II.

¹²⁰ See Kenyan Human Rights Commission, *Raiding Democracy – The Slaughter of the Marakwet in Kerio Valley*.

¹²¹ The more animals one has the more respect he enjoys in the community. In an interview conducted by one of my collaborators, Peter Ngati, an elder of the community and former warrior had this to say concerning this question: “The cows are sweet and that is why we go for a raid to look for them. To have many cows to pay dowry for your girlfriend and also to be rich and gain a title in society. But these cows are not stolen because when you still you take something small in fear and you will hide it. This is raiding (not considered stealing!) because you do not hide the cattle but you wait to face the one whom might claim that the cows belong to him. And let him prove it

behind these actions. In fact, in none of my interviews has an informant answered that hatred was the cause of the enmity between Pökot and their traditional enemies. There is, nevertheless, an attitude of survival and a desire to gain public prestige at the expense of enemies. The Pökot deprive their enemies of cattle in order that Pökot themselves may live a better life and respond to the needs of their harsh environment. At the same time, raiding increases one's wealth at a very low cost.

A demonstration of one's courage do play here an important role. Bravery shows other members that one can fight and bring cattle to the homestead. It is the most courageous act a Pökot man can perform. All in all, we could say that raiding animals is directed to that life of '*Pöghisyö*,' as understood by the Pökot.

3.2.2 *Killing an Enemy: Prestige and Healing Powers*

Killing an enemy is, however, something very serious. It needs to be underlined here that the killing of an enemy in a raid is not what is sought in the first place. This action depends upon the directives given by the prophet at the gathering of the warriors before they depart for a raid. The enemy that can be killed must be a warrior because, traditionally, women and children are not supposed to be killed. As such, women and children are not considered enemies in the strict sense of the word. The Pökot understand them as 'belongings' of the 'real enemy,' that is, of the warriors. Normally, killing is not allowed in a raid. If that happens, the consequences of evil will 'possess' the killer.¹²²

When the killing of enemy warriors is demanded or at least made possible by the directives of the prophet, the killer is honoured by society but only after

by challenging you." NATTALE, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 21 June 2001, Amakuriat *West Pökot*.

¹²² Please refer to 3.2.3 "To Kill an Enemy Turns Your Blood Bad in the current chapter.

a long and serious period of personal purification. 'He gets marks (made in the arm¹²³)' for the killing of an enemy and receives 'special (healing) powers as a 'kölölyon'.¹²⁴ These healing powers are of great importance. They benefit the 'weaker' categories of people, such as pregnant mothers, young babies and children who fall into serious diseases.

3.2.3 "To Kill an Enemy Turns Your Blood Bad"

We have said above¹²⁵ that the killing of a fellow Pökot man has very serious consequences. The same applies when we consider the killing of an enemy. Slaying an enemy invites their revenge by all available means, especially through curses. The individual and the community need protection from this imminent danger. Before a warrior receives prestige and healing powers, the warrior needs to be purified from the 'evil' that entered him by killing an enemy. This is done through a ritual "necessary to counter the negative effects of the killing and to enable him to use the positive, healing, powers associated with it."¹²⁶

This ritual is rather complicated and lengthy which demonstrates the seriousness of the offence. The first stage is seclusion in the bush for about one month (measured by the appearance of the new moon). During this time, the warrior can not interact with any person or even cattle. It is believed that the evil powers in

¹²³ Nowadays, these marks on the arm of warriors have been the cause of arrest by the police force during the 'operations' of the government in both *East* and *West Pökot*. These marks identify the warriors as killers and those participating in the raids, fact that has led many warriors to let go such tradition of making marks for killing an enemy.

¹²⁴ Cf. J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 198. 'Kololyon' is a warrior who receives 'marks' after having killed an enemy. Interestingly enough the word to describe an impure person is 'kölölin' from 'kölöl,' verb that signifies 'to be impure because of doing something bad.' T. HERREROS, *The Learner's English-Pökot – Pökot-English Dictionary*. (Nairobi: New People Media Center, 1992), 66.

¹²⁵ Please refer to 3.1.3 Revenge – Payment for Bloodshed in this chapter.

¹²⁶ J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 198.

him can harm those in contact with him. As a sign of purification and protection against curses, another 'kölölyon' smears the warrior in seclusion with the chyme of a white goat killed for the event.¹²⁷ Once the new moon appears it is time for 'mwata' (washing), the first step towards normalisation of life of the warrior. This is done through the spiting of a mixture of local beer and herbs done both by the officiant (another 'kölölyon') and the warrior leaving seclusion. He is washed with this mixture and is empowered and cleansed. The warrior can now enter the homestead where another ritual takes place to declare that the evil is finished and will no longer threaten the home.¹²⁸ Some signs of protection from the first stage of seclusion remain attached to the body of the warrior until the final stage completes the normalisation of the life of the warrior. This ritual takes place some months after and is called 'Dya.'¹²⁹ This ritual is performed in order that the warrior can take part in the next raid. Only now a complete normalisation of the life of the warrior is achieved. A fourth ritual includes cutting marks on the upper part of the chest and arm of the warrior. This rite promotes the warrior to the status of 'kölölyon,' that is, the one with healing powers. Interestingly enough, all the

¹²⁷ During the period of seclusion in the bush, a barren woman or an old woman that does not bear children any longer can feed the warrior, but never come into contact with him for that will cause her harm. The food is left at distance and later collected by the warrior. There are also many types of food that he is not supposed to take, such as milk, 'ugali', meet of cow among others. Cf. NAITALE, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 21 June 2001, Amakuriai (*West Pökot*). — elder/former warrior.

¹²⁸ This ritual resembles another ritual called 'Parapra', conducted among two Pökot families just before the birth of the first child of a woman (8th month of pregnancy). 'Parapra' is done in order to clean any possible conflicts that may be there between the two families, and make the birth and growth of the child in peace and without any problems.

¹²⁹ This name is common in both places of my research, that is, *West Pökot* and *East Pökot*. I have interviewed some warriors and elders that have gone through this ritual after they killing an enemy. J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 199, calls this ritual 'Eghpadia'. This ritual resembles that of 'Sapana,' the ritual of passage where the initiated Pökot man acquires the full status of adulthood after circumcision, that is, 'Työs' (nowadays not practised in some places of Pökot land because some years back the enemies attacked the camp of the *Työs* and killed most of them!).

elements of this ritual can be found among one of the enemies of the Pökot – the Karimojong.¹³⁰

It is evident that the Pökot have some concern for the consequences of killing an enemy. We saw that they do not wish the annihilation of their enemies. If the death of an enemy comes during a raid, the killer remains with ‘evil’ in him, “because we believe that when you kill somebody your blood is bad [...] with curses from the killed enemy. So one has to be purified.”¹³¹ However, it seems that the reason for the four-stage ritual is to protect oneself from the hatred of the enemy in the form of curses. It is not a response to guilt. There is a sense of ‘something bad’ when an enemy is killed. At the same time, the fact that a warrior is honoured and receives special healing powers demonstrates that killing an enemy is something every Pökot man desires.

3.2.4 Raiding: to Pay Back and to Recover Animals

At the end of the presentation of the main characteristics of the Pökot people,¹³² we saw that raiding could be understood also as a form of a ‘game’ played with the animal. To participate in a raid, due to the ‘tradition,’ aims at the recovery of stolen animals. There is an attitude of urgency in paying back an attack of the enemy: “Anytime they [the enemies] come to raid us is the time we go to raid them too! [...] it depends on who starts first! We revenge the attack!”¹³³ To raid is

¹³⁰ Cf. B. NOVELLI, *Aspects of Karimojong Ethnosociology*, (Comboni Missionaries: Verona, 1988), 99-101. On page 99, the author adds that for the Karimojong “to kill a man [enemy] is a duty rather than pleasure.” And again on page 101, “raiding is not only not seen as an evil, but rather as the best way of being a true member of the Karimojong society.”

¹³¹ NAHIALE, “Enmity in West Pökot,” interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 21 June 2001, Amakuriai (*West Pökot.*) — elder/former warrior.

¹³² Please refer to 2.1 Some Characteristics of the Pökot People in the current chapter as well as Appendix II.

¹³³ LOMONYANG, S., “Enmity in West Pökot,” interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 14 June 2001, Amakuriai (*West Pökot.*) — former warrior.

not always a result of retaliation. The success of some might encourage others to raid as well.

“If the first group go for a raid and come back successfully, others will also go and it will keep on like that, until God will be annoyed and throw them [those going for raid] to the enemies to be killed. It is when we will stop for a while. We perform some rituals to please the ancestors and God to grant us permission for other raids in the future.”¹³⁴

The Pökot see the success of the initial raids as a blessing from ‘*Yim*,’¹³⁵ and thus, it is the favourable time to recover animals stolen in previous raids. When the time is not favourable, the Pökot know that sooner or later the gods will help them to their advantage. In any case, they know also that Turkana and Karimojong will keep their animals alive and this knowledge gives the Pökot a certain security that they will not lose their animals. The recovery is just a matter of time.¹³⁶

3.2.5 Hatred Towards Marakwet People

The case of the conflict between Marakwet and Pökot is of totally different origin and deserves some consideration here. The prevailing attitude I encountered in my interviews in *East Pökot* demonstrates a departure from the behaviour shown towards the traditional enemies of the Pökot.

There are a number of facts that contributed to the rise of hostility in the *East Pökot* area after 1992. Jealousy might have been one of the initial problems. “We [the Pökot] did not want to see the Marakwet having cows because

¹³⁴ NAITALE, “Enmity in West Pökot,” interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 21 June 2001, Amakuriat (*West Pökot*) - elder/former warrior.

¹³⁵ *Yim* is the sky, equated with the Above. ‘*Yim*’ is invoked also at the blessing of warriors (called ‘*Kiyiltagh*’) performed by the elders before they set out for a raid. Cf. CHELIMO, “Enmity in East Pökot,” interviewed by the author, tape recording, 29 July 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*); FILEMON, “Enmity in East Pökot,” interviewed by the author, tape recording, 29 July 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*) - both informants are young health workers in Barpello Dispensary.

¹³⁶ Mind you that with Marakwet, as we shall see below (3.2.5 Hatred Towards Marakwet People), the situation is different, for the Marakwet are accused by the Pökot of East of selling or even killing the animals stolen for various purposes, among those, food. This is unthinkable and

they were farmers since long ago. When they started to have cattle and goats that's when enmity started."¹³⁷ Another informant formulated it this way: "[Marakwet] are our enemies because we do not listen to each other, because of the language¹³⁸, hatred and because they kill us in the raid."¹³⁹ According to the DO of the area, the situation turned worst because of the proliferation of guns in the place.¹⁴⁰ In times of peace between the two communities, the Pökot went into Marakwet lands in order to sell milk and honey and acquire vegetables and fruits. In this interaction many Pökot, especially women, were killed when quarrelling began. The hot temper of Marakwets as well as the drunkenness of some is seen as the cause of such acts. These quarrels were also an opportunity for the Marakwet to 'test' their firearms. After a number of people were killed in this way, the Pökot could not be patient any longer. They organised raids in order to 'teach them a lesson.' Lastly, it is argued that political interests are at the root of the problem: traditional practices of the Pökot (raiding) have been encouraged in order to punish Marakwet for their disloyalty to the ruling party in the country, when opposition gained many votes in the area in the 1992 elections.¹⁴¹ In March 2001, the Pökot killed many

unacceptable for a Pökot. "Cattle, especially cows, are like money in the bank for a Pökot!" used to say Fr. Gerry Folly, the parish priest of Barpello Catholic Parish.

¹³⁷ LOMARIWA, R., "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 5 August 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*) - elder/former warrior.

¹³⁸ Though Pökot and Marakwet languages are very identical (Nilotic group).

¹³⁹ KAPROM, R., "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by Musa Aluku, no tape recording, 25 July 2001, Tilingwö (*East Pökot* - border with Marakwet).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. MUIUA, B.M., "Pökot and Marakwet Interaction," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 2 August 2001, Kolowa DO's Office (*East Pökot* border with Marakwet) - D.O. of Kolowa Division.

¹⁴¹ Cf. KAMBA, J., "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 29 July 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*) - educated business man working in the area for the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of Eldoret Diocese. This is the same basic accusation of the Kenyan Human Rights Commission, *Raiding Democracy - The Slaughter of the Marakwet in Keria Valley*.

Marakwet, including women and children, burned houses and stole goods.¹⁴² This carnage is justified by the Pökot as an act of ‘teaching a lesson’ to Marakwet for their stubbornness. It aimed at ‘putting back Marakwet to where they belong,’ — they said, that is, to the position of the underdog. The Pökot always felt superior to the Marakwet.

As we can see the problem here is rather complex and involves more than just an evaluation of the traditional practices of the Pökot. Nevertheless, the hatred towards enemies is expressed here in a clearer form than in the case of the Pökot attitudes towards traditional enemies.

3.2.6 ‘Peace’ With the Enemies: A Self-centred Interest

As we stated above,¹⁴³ the harmonious life is the aim of the whole of Pökot life. This goal of the Pökot is achieved also through the ritual of ‘*Mis*,’ which means literally ‘truce,’ concession, or ‘give and take.’¹⁴⁴ This is exactly what happens in this ritual. Pökot and an enemy community seek some time for peaceful relationships and interaction, eventually because of the animals. Both communities refrain from attacking one another and concede grazing land to each other, with the guarantee that the cattle will not be attacked and stolen. This ritual takes the form of ‘*Muma*’¹⁴⁵ (see above 3.1.4), that is, oath taking. The elders of both communities assemble at the border and after spears, bullets and other fighting weapons from

¹⁴²On this issue see several articles published in *Daily Nation Newspaper* 13th March 2001 and subsequent days.

¹⁴³ Please refer to 2.2 Goal of Pökot People --- Harmonious Life or ‘*Pöghisyö*’ in the current chapter.

¹⁴⁴When in the form of verb, *Mis* means also ‘to erase.’ Cf. T. HERREROS, *The Learner’s English-Pökot/Pökot-English Dictionary*, 100. This ritual is common to Pökot and their enemies. In Karimojong it is called *ekisil*. Cf. Logirapus, “Enmity in West Pökot,” interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 16 June 2001, Amakuriat (*West Pökot*.) – elder.

¹⁴⁵ Please refer to 3.1.4 Cursing – A Means to Know the Truth under the current chapter.

both sides are buried, the elders curse those who will break this agreement. For the curse to take effect all present have to share a meal and the blood of two bulls¹⁴⁶ brought by each community. This seals the pact and erases the hostility of the past.

However, the experience of many missionaries and anthropologists who have witnessed this ritual says that this peace does not last long. I witnessed the breaking of this ritual back in December 1998, in one of my visits to Barpello (*East Pökot*).¹⁴⁷ A few weeks earlier 'Mis' was celebrated between Pökot and Marakwet and both communities were interacting in the market when Marakwet stole some animals near Kerio River. One of the reasons for failure was the manner in which these celebrations were promoted. Most of the promoters of peace are foreigners: either church leaders or government officials. In any case, the Pökot do not understand peace as a permanent reality. For the Pökot, peace is just a period of time where the society can reorganise from recent loss in people and animals. The injured party calls 'Mis' when things turn bad. This difficult time is usually called 'the pain of the spear.'

"The pain of the spear in any of us [Pökot or Karimojong] results normally into peace agreement. Then, the cattle can have the place to graze. When there is no grass around, the cows get thin, hence we have to call for peace and the cows become satisfied and produce even more young ones!"¹⁴⁸

It becomes clear that the main interest in getting peace is the benefit of one's cattle, and any effort from outsiders in bringing other conception of peace into the

¹⁴⁶ From my research it seems that bulls are the animals required for this ritual. However, in December 1998 this ceremony took place between the Pökot and the Marakwet and the sacrificial animals brought were two black goats.

¹⁴⁷ Already J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 145, experienced this same problem already in May 1975, where few weeks after 'Mis' have been celebrated between Pökot and Turkana, the latter raided *East Pökot*

¹⁴⁸ LOGIRAPUS, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Peter Ngati, tape recording, 16 June 2001, Amakuriat (*West Pökot*). - elder.

traditional rituals is just useless. An act of goodness towards the enemy is never considered. What is really at stake here is the achievement of relative peace for one's benefit and survival.

4. Evangelising in Pökot Land – Some Possible Pastoral Applications of this Study

Evangelisation in Pökot land has always faced a great difficulty due to the strong opposition of the people towards everything that is considered external to their traditions.¹⁴⁹ Any attempt of evangelisation will always be seen alien if it does not go through inculturation of the Gospel, which has to start from the positive consideration of rich values already at work in the Pökot culture. These good values are of great help in the work of evangelisation.¹⁵⁰ At the same time, we need to make an evaluation of cultural practices that go against the values of the gospel.¹⁵¹ One of those counter-values is inter-tribal division, which needs to be addressed and healed.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ The first contact *West Pökot* had with the Gospel was in 1931, through the Anglican 'Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society.' Cf. T. DIEZ, *Pastoralists in Dire Straits. Survival Strategies and External Interventions in a Semi-arid Region at the Kenya/Uganda Border: Western Pökot, 1900-1986*. (Amsterdam: Nederlandse Geografische Studies 49, 1987), 204. However, it took them over twenty five years to produce the first converts. Cf. K. D. PATTERSON, "The Pökot of Western Kenya 1910-1963: The Response of a Conservative People to a Colonial Rule," *SOP* 53 (1969):30. See also H. K. SCHNEIDER, "Pökot Resistance to Change," in *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*, ed. W.R. BASCOM - M. J. HERSKOVITS, (Chicago, 1959), 144-167.

¹⁵⁰ Already the II Vatican Council recognised that these good values are to be actualised in modern evangelisation as a means to achieve peace and justice in the world, "Peace is the fruit of that *right order of things with which the divine founder has invested human society and which must be actualised by man thirsting for an ever more perfect reign of justice.* [italics added]." II Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*. #78.

¹⁵¹ Cf. J. PAUL II, *The Church in Africa*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1995), 36-37. "I put before you today a challenge – a challenge to reject a way of living which does not correspond to the best of your traditions, and your Christian faith. [...] Today I urge you to *look inside yourselves. Look to the riches of your own traditions, look to the faith* which we are celebrating [...]. Here you will find Christ who will lead you to the truth." These words, part of the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, were addressed by Pope John Paul II during a homily given in Lilongwe, Malawi on 6th May 1989, at the conclusion of the sixth Pastoral Visit to Africa.

¹⁵² Cf. J. PAUL II, *The Church in Africa*, 37. "Another challenge identified by the Synodal Fathers concerns the various forms of division which need to be *healed* [italics added] through honest dialogue. It has been rightly noted that, within the borders left behind by colonial powers,

4.1 The Pökot and the People of the Old Testament

Many missionaries think that the pastoralist Pökot are, in fact, very similar to the people of the O.T. regarding their customs and culture.¹⁵³ In this study, I presented several similarities between the two people: their history of hostility, their dependence on raiding activities for their survival, as well as the value of life oriented towards the well-being of the whole community – the ultimate goal of both peoples. During my several visits to Pökot land, I felt that O.T. stories were very much understood by the people.¹⁵⁴ However, syncretism of the two realities is not the solution, for inculturation goes much beyond syncretism. All the similarities between these two peoples, seem to indicate that Pökot people are at the same level of the O.T. people. In fact, in the light of the history of salvation in the O.T., the Pökot have to discover their own history of salvation, willed by God (*Töröröt*).¹⁵⁵ In this way, they are not starting from a ‘*tabula rasa*’, but from the ‘salvific events’ God has been working among them. In my opinion, the issue is not to judge cultural aspects of the Pökot as good or bad. The point is to cast light on the history of salvation of the Pökot (at the light of the one of Israel), and let the Pökot discover that the ‘Spirit’ of God has led them down the centuries

the co-existence of ethnic groups with different traditions, languages, and even religions often meets obstacles arising from serious mutual hostility. “*Tribal oppositions* at times endanger if not peace, at least the pursuit of the common good of society [...]. This is why the Church in Africa feels challenged by the specific responsibility of *healing* [italics added] these divisions.”

¹⁵³ J. VISSER dedicates a whole section of one of his books on the analysis of characteristics of the Pökot people and the people of the O.T., pointing from that perspective, possible methods of working out the preaching of the Gospel and Pökot traditional religion. Cf. J. VISSER, *Towards a Missionary Approach Among the Pökot*, (Zandijk: The Netherlands, 1982), 52-97.

¹⁵⁴ There are in fact many “pokotised” biblical stories, where various biblical and Pökot elements seem just the same. Some Pökot after listening to some of the stories in the O.T. even exclaim: “We are exactly like those people you tell about!” See some examples in J. VISSER, *Towards a Missionary Approach Among the Pökot*, 54-57.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. PAUL H., *The Church in Africa*, 24. “God’s salvific plan for Africa is at the origin of the growth of the Church on the African Continent.”

to a fulfilment, to life. When this sense of salvation history is understood, then the command of Jesus on love of enemies will challenge the Pökot as it challenged the Israelites.¹⁵⁶ Only then, the Pökot will be in a better position than any outsider (missionary) to understand the confrontation between Jesus' command and their customs.¹⁵⁷

4.2 Attitudes to be Strengthened

In chapter II we saw that for the Pökot to kill an enemy is 'something bad.' In fact, the killer needs purification and seclusion in order to restore his status within the society. To kill someone, even an enemy, is seen as evil. At the same time, however, to kill an enemy brings also a prestige to the killer, who is given special healing powers. Nevertheless, I think that this sense of having done something wrong can be explored in order to convey the message of sin and its opposite, namely, Jesus' teaching on love of enemies, that can be translated in *doing good* to anyone, to a fellow Pökot or even to an external enemy.

We saw that within the Pökot culture resentment is absent after the performance of the proper ritual of reconciliation and re-acceptance in the community has been performed. The call of Jesus on being "merciful as your Father in heaven" implies that we are to be merciful at *all times* and maybe not only after proper 'justice' (or ritual!) is performed. Nevertheless, a complete forgiveness (even if only after rituals are performed) is something that the Pökot are well

¹⁵⁶ J. VISSER says that "Jesus, when preached isolated from the Old Testament and even more from God the Father, becomes a superbeing, who takes the place of God. He is put on top of the whole traditional religion or He becomes extremely spiritual. After sometime, therefore, I left this approach and started with the beginning of the bible: the creation." J. VISSER, *Towards a Missionary Approach Among the Pokot*, 67-68.

¹⁵⁷ D. DORR, *Mission in Today's World*, 94, puts it this way: "The good news affects people's 'thought-patterns,' 'values,' 'standards of judgement,' 'incentives to action' and 'models of

acquainted with. Therefore, this strong value of the Pökot has to be taken into account when we preach about the call of Jesus to be merciful as our Father in heaven.

We saw also, how the Pökot aim to a harmonious and peaceful life, expressed in *Pöghysiö*. Even when the people greet each other, they wish that everything may go well in the family.¹⁵⁸ In this greeting the people express a wish of completeness, wholeness, health, and good life that goes beyond a mere absence of war. Ultimately, Pökot *Pöghysiö* is a gift from God. We saw in chapter II that Jesus calls his listeners to be like God, *perfect*. I think that the whole idea of harmony and completeness of life willed by the Pökot, can be used in order to convey this call of Jesus.¹⁵⁹ However, in the greeting of the Pökot, the wishing of well-being ends with the boundary of culture, that is, external enemies are not considered. In fact, this is one of the basic attitudes that need to be overcome.

4.3 Attitudes to be Overcome

At the beginning of chapter II we underlined that Jesus made no distinction between personal and external enemies. This was a challenge to the Jews and it is also a challenge to the Pökot. God (*Töroröt*) is the Father of all, “kind to the *ungrateful* and the *selfish*” (Luke 6:35). “He makes his sun rise on the *evil* and on the *good*, and sends rain on the *just* and on the *unjust*” (Matt 5:45). Ultimately,

human living. Just as Jesus took flesh in a particular place and time, so the good news has to become ‘embodied’ or incarnated in the different cultures within which people live.”

¹⁵⁸ The greeting among the Israelites was similar: שלום (shalom). For the concept of the word שלום (shalom) in the O.T. see P. HEALEY, “Peace,” in *ABD* V, 206-207.

¹⁵⁹ We have to remark, however, that the fullness of life that Jesus brings when he says “I came, that they may have *life*, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10), goes much beyond that harmonious life the Pökot value so much. Pökot think of their ‘physical’ life of good pastures, good relationships with others, nature and God. The life Jesus brings surpasses the ‘physical’ order but, at the same time, it does not neglect it.

God blesses the external enemy as much as he blesses the Pökot. This message needs to be emphasised.

Among the Pökot, cursing is used as a very powerful tool against their enemies. A curse is performed in order to know a truth, a means to counteract curses of the enemy and a way to prevent those who will break a peace agreement (*Mis*). This attitude, according to Jesus' command, is to be counteracted by prayer (cf. Luke 6:28 and Matt 5:44). In fact, when blessings are given they are as powerful as the curses. This demonstrates the power that the *word* has for the Pökot and can be to the benefit or disadvantage of the receivers of that *word*. A change of behaviour regarding the power of prayer against evil (curse) may be communicated through a proper catechises of the converted Pökot.

We also saw that the Pökot establish 'peace' with their enemies because of self-interest. This temporary 'peace' serves their need to live *Pöghisyö* - a harmonious life with health and pasture for the cattle. This has nothing to do with an attitude towards the enemies. This behaviour contrasts with the demand of Jesus of a generous attitude directed towards *everyone* (Luke 6:30) and concerning *everything* one owns (Matt 5:42).

Lastly, we saw that the Pökot have an attitude of "paying back" or "revenge" the attacks of an enemy. According to Jesus, this is something that characterises the conduct of sinners (Luke 6:32-34 and Matt 5:46-47). The Pökot should be made to understand that they are called to resemble *Töröröt*, to be *sons and daughters* of that God who wishes for them a more complete and harmonious life of *Pöghisyö*, that is Life that only Jesus brings.

Conclusion

This chapter contains three main sections: a brief presentation of the Pökot people, the attitudes of the Pökot towards *internal* and *external* enemies and possible applications of this study. We have seen that history of the Pökot is marked by hostile confrontations with their pastoralist neighbours. The case of the Marakwet — an agrarian people — deserved a special explanation. Since the Marakwet are not pastoralists, we pointed out that political reasons and state-sponsored violence seem to lie at the root of the hostile behaviour between the two groups.

Among the pastoralist Pökot the cattle plays an enormous role. All their lives are centred around herding and keeping the animals. Housing, marriage and culture all have to do with the animals. It is almost natural, then, that raiding activity is at the order of the day. We saw that there are two major types of raids: *lük* — the traditional form of raid — and *setat* — a more recent phenomenon among warriors where traditions of the elders are not respected. Only *setat* is considered ‘stealing’ from enemies. In the case of *lük*, we saw how the elders and the prophet play an important role giving the blessing and announcing the ‘rules’ of the ‘game’, that is among others, whether to kill or not to kill enemies. These instructions are to be strictly followed, if the warriors are to succeed in their ventures. Stealing (*setat*), instead, is becoming more and more common because of the proliferation of guns in the area.

A traditional raid (*lūk*) requires a strong cohesive ethnical identity so that every person may do what is necessary for the success of the raid.¹⁶⁰ Raiding, in its own way, contributes to the achievement of the goal of Pökot people: ‘*Pöghisyö*’ or harmonious and peaceful life, with plenty of animals and grazing land. Peaceful and harmonious life is a blessing of ‘*Töroröt*’ (God). ‘*Pöghisyö*’ regulates the relationships among the Pökot people and any disturbance among the Pökot is seen as a violation of this standard. Rituals have to be performed in order to re-establish harmony.

It was at this point that we turned to the second part of our presentation, that is, to the attitudes towards the enemies. We analysed first the resolution of problems within the Pökot community. Due to the cohesiveness of the Pökot people we stated that a fellow Pökot could not be considered as enemy. Instead, the rise of conflicts is attributed to ‘evil’, which must be disarmed through the purification and cleansing of a person or of a group of people (family, clans or age sets). Cleansing and purification, is necessary for the harmony of the community life. We saw how peace is restored in a homestead through the ritual of ‘*Pöghisyö*’. In the cases of the abuse of an elder or the murder of a fellow Pökot, forgiveness and reconciliation come only after the exchange of animals as atonement for guilt. In these cases, responsibility of the infraction is put upon the age set of the abuser and the whole clan of the murderer respectively. Punishment re-establishes the loss of dignity (in the case of abuse of the elder) or the loss of life (in the case of murder). We saw how the threat of a curse could help in finding the truth in difficult cases through the

¹⁶⁰ Even if it remains a paradox, outsiders, such as missionaries, do not publicly know the time of a raid. There is a great secrecy and code language from which Pökot can realise that a raid is about to be lunched, but that remains strange for non-Pökot people.

ritual of '*Muma*', where suspects are under the threat of a curse and if found guilty they suffer the consequences of their infraction. Once a confession is made, and the rituals are performed, there is a strong conviction that 'evil' is gone and the person or group of persons are recovered to '*Pöghisyö*'. In this way, relationships can again be possible and no resentment remains between the conflicting parties.

The traditional enemies of the Pökot are the Turkana and the Karimojong. The Marakwet, a recent enemy of the Pökot, have a rather different status because of the political circumstances behind the enmity between these two people. Raiding animals, a very strong cultural practice among the Pökot, have two main purposes. First, raiding supplies the basic nutritious and religious daily needs in a harsh environment. Secondly it is a way of getting prestige in front of the community, which encourages such an activity. The killing of an enemy is dealt with in a careful manner. It may provide for the prestige of a warrior and make him a special person with healing powers. However, we saw how a warrior that kills an enemy has to go through a very hard and long cleansing process in order to achieve those healing powers. This cleansing process may be seen, at first, as a positive concern for the life of an enemy, but when we look more closely into the matter we realise that, this long ritual has the purpose of counteracting the curses of the dead enemy that fall upon the killer. Therefore, it is rather an act of protection and not so much a positive action towards the enemy. The fact remains that killing another person (even an enemy) is a very serious matter and can bring many disadvantages if not handled properly.

The concept of the raid is close to the idea of a 'game' between Pökot and their enemies. The attitude of revenge is present there, but the revenge is not

a question of feelings. Rather, it is considered as a need to recover one's animals, knowing that sooner or later they will be stolen again and recovered again. A different kind of relationship is observed between the Pökot and the Marakwet. There is great hatred between these two communities. This was demonstrated in a recent episode where Pökot killed about fifty Marakwet, including the old people, men and women with children, and burnt their houses. Before 1992 there was no evidence of conflict. Many believe that traditional raiding practices were politicised among the Pökot.

We pointed out that the relationship with the enemies is not only based on raids. That is why we analysed the ritual of '*Mis*,' which deals with the peace agreements with the enemies. At the same time we underlined that for the Pökot, the concept of peace means the absence of hostility in order to graze cattle in non-Pökot areas during the dry season. The Pökot and their enemies know that raids will eventually begin again, but it is a risk they have to take in order to keep their animals alive using other people's land.

At the end of the chapter we considered some possible applications of Jesus' teaching on the love of enemy in the Pökot culture. We started by looking the concern expressed by the Church in Africa regarding the situations of hostility, which are very strong. We pointed out that in order to inculturate the Gospel, we need to strengthen the good values already found in the local culture. At the same time, we underlined the need to evaluate and reject values that are contrary to the gospel of Jesus. We said that the Pökot people have many characteristics similar to those of the biblical Israelites. Once the Pökot realise that they have been prepared by God like Israel was prepared for the reception of Jesus and his values, they will

be also ready to inculcate the command of Jesus on the love of one's enemies. The Pökot are already prepared for this passage through the sense of evil linked to the killing of an enemy, through the value of forgiveness and lack of resentment after the cleansing rituals have been performed, and through the concept of *Pöghisyö*, that is very close to Jesus' ideal to be *perfect* as God the Father is perfect.

We saw then that curse and blessing are very powerful tools in the Pökot culture, as expressed in the words spoken by the elders. Cursing, however, does not need to produce a counter-curse; it can be neutralised by the power of prayer as Jesus taught. The Pökot still need to discover this kind of power. Evangelisation may play here a major role. Jesus also calls for an attitude of generosity in all circumstances and directed to all, a condition that is still lacking in the 'peace agreements' between the Pökot and their enemies. Lastly, the practice of revenging an attack of an enemy needs to be overcome by the conviction that all the people are the sons and daughters of the same God who is good to everyone.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In chapter I, I analysed the attitudes of Israel towards its enemies, both personal (within Israel) and external (national enemies). I made a brief presentation of socio-cultural elements that characterised Israel's strong unity as a people. This unity was threatened many times by other nations not considered as part of the Covenant community. I concluded that within Israel, the Pentateuch demanded a 'carrying' attitude towards enemies because in this case they were all brothers and sisters. This call was given in Lev 19:17-18 which demanded 'love of neighbour.' Love of neighbour was expressed towards the people of the Covenant community, including their belongings such as animals. However, in cases of murder and adultery, the laws of blood-vengeance and *lex talionis* demanded 'revenge.'

On the contrary, the attitude of Israel towards national enemies was one of hostile treatment and destruction. However, later wisdom literature demanded a more positive attitude towards enemies, at least when the enemy was weakened or in a situation of need.

In chapter II, I presented the attitudes towards enemies as taught and practised by Jesus. First of all I noticed that Jesus demands love of enemy regardless of the identity of that enemy. Love for an enemy is to be shown to *everybody* (Luke 6:30), be it a personal or an external enemy. Moreover, this kind of love is to be applied under any situation of hostility. Here Jesus goes beyond O.T.

recommendations. Jesus demands love shown *in actions* towards whoever turns hostile against an individual. Simply put, Jesus demands an attitude of ‘doing good’ towards an enemy. This implies that any action taken by a victim of hostility results in the benefit of the aggressor. This kind of love goes beyond reciprocity. Jesus demands that his listeners and followers abandon the standard reciprocal behaviour of human beings. Jesus calls ‘sinners’ those engaged in reciprocal acts of goodness. For Israel, the fulfilment of the law operated within the concept of reciprocity: a Jew was made righteous according to his or her fulfilment of the law. In Matthew’s account, Jesus seems to call to a ‘better righteousness.’ This call is materialised in *good actions* towards those who are hostile. Thus, such benevolent attitude results not in a status of righteousness but in a status of *son of God*, for God is perfect and merciful to all, both ungrateful and selfish, good and evil. According to Jesus, the only motivations for which a person may ‘do good’ for enemies are the behaviour of God and the status to which one is elevated. Jesus himself practised his teachings on the love of one’s enemies what is especially visible during his passion.

The last chapter of this research presented the attitudes of the Pökot people towards their enemies, both personal (within the society) and external (Turkana, Karimojong and Marakwet). It is followed by a brief consideration on the possible applications of the findings of this research. First, a comparison has been drawn between Israel and the Pökot people. We have seen that both peoples have similar characteristics regarding society and culture. These socio-cultural similarities place the Pökot in a good position to understand the radical demand of Jesus on love of one’s enemies. In fact, many outside missionaries working in Pökot land may lack this stance because many of their native cultures differ greatly from those of

pastoralist peoples like the Pökot and Israel. I identify then, a need to help the Pökot to read their history at the light of Israel's salvation history. This will give them a sense of orientation in history. This will also show them that God is leading them towards a goal - the fulfilment of something good wished by God (*Töroröt*) for them.

We also saw that when a conflict emerges within Pökot society there is a need to restore harmony of life and relationships. This is done through the performance of diverse rituals. I believe that this value of the Pökot needs to be further explored and studied for it seems to be a *seed* of the Spirit at work in their midst. As such, it needs further evaluation in order to be enriched by the values of the Gospel. The harmony as it is perceived by the Pökot appears to be rather limited because of its orientation towards the well-being of the Pökot society alone. The teaching of Jesus on love of enemies is not limited by the identity of the enemy whom one is called to love. Rather, it is an attitude of 'doing good' to *any* person who turns hostile. The Pökot need to include 'doing good' to their external enemies into their concept of harmonious life and relationships. For the Pökot, goodness of life is a gift from God. Yet, according to the teaching of Jesus, this is a gift to *everyone*, ungrateful and selfish, good and evil alike. Therefore, the indiscriminate behaviour of God and Jesus needs to be emphasised among the Pökot people. Ultimately, the call of Jesus is to be *perfect* (Matt 5:48), and to share a life of resemblance to God. Only then, complete harmony and goodness of life is achieved, the life that Jesus came to bring to all.

I also referred to the power of a *word* proclaimed by an elder. This power could be expressed either in a curse or in a blessing. Jesus teaches his listeners to

answer a curse with a prayer. This prayer is to be on behalf of the one cursing. This prayer is nothing other than a heartfelt attitude expressed in words on behalf of an enemy. Jesus believed in the power of prayer as a means to 'do good' to an enemy. I consider that this awareness of the power of the *word* can be another *seed* of the Spirit, especially after one emphasises the power of blessing words directed not only to a fellow Pökot but also to an enemy. Cursing words, on the other hand, need to be discouraged according to Jesus' teaching.

I also pointed out that among the Pökot forgiveness is complete once rituals are performed. Relationships are restored and harmonious life is achieved. There is no resentment left. This is a great value that demonstrates unity among the Pökot. Moreover, it demonstrates the capacity of forgiveness of a Pökot towards a fellow Pökot.¹⁶¹ It is another *seed* of the Gospel among the Pökot and at the same time a great tool to be used in inculturation and evangelisation. On the other hand, I underlined the need to overcome the limitation of tribe in the application of this tool in evangelisation. In fact, any situation of hostility should be an opportunity to show *mercy* (Luke 6:36) and *do good* to any sort of enemy (Luke 6:27).

This challenge is particularly difficult when we come to consider the hatred that is deliberately promoted between the Pökot and Marakwet. We considered several facts indicating that this situation goes beyond traditional raiding activities. It may even be promoted by political interests. I perceived that a possible approach

¹⁶¹ I emphasise here what J. PAUL II has said in his message for the World Day of Peace of 2002, "I would reaffirm that forgiveness inhabits people's hearts before it becomes a social reality. [...] Forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil. [Forgiveness] has its perfect exemplar in the forgiveness of Christ, who on the Cross prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34)." J. PAUL II, "No Peace Without Justice, No Justice Without Forgiveness - Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 1 January 2002,"

to this situation may start with the consideration of the value of complete forgiveness with no resentment as experienced by the Pökot themselves. They should also be able to recognise the fact that before 1992 they were not at hostile attitude towards each other and that inter tribal interaction was quiet strong. In fact, both peoples resemble each other in some cultural aspects, among others, in language. During my last visit to the area I witnessed an act of *doing good* towards the enemy. In one of the peace meetings carried out by the local administration (with people from both ethnic groups), some Marakwet offered some bags of cassava to be given to the Pökot children in primary education.¹⁶² In the individual interventions and speeches of the day, I saw that the Marakwet were still very resentful over the killing of about fifty people in early March 2001. Nevertheless, they *did good* to the Pökot people. Forgiveness might not be complete yet, but there was here a sign of hope, a sign of goodness towards an enemy, a sign that demonstrates that it is possible to *do good* to one's enemies. The challenge, however, remains for each one of us – do we believe it possible?

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace_en.htm>, 3/1/2002.

¹⁶²This meeting took place on 31st July 2001 at Chepturu (close to the border of *East Pökot* and Marakwet). Peace rallies are one of the activities that local administration is trying to carry out in the area, in order to bring both societies together for interaction. It has been successful so far.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.C.	<i>Annus Christus</i> (After Christ)
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ACTSEC'	<i>African Centre for Technology Studies Eco-Conflicts</i>
al.	<i>alii</i> – other persons
B.C.	Before Christ
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
cent.	Century
cf.	<i>confer</i> compare
chapter	chapter
CSB	<i>Catholic Study Bible</i>
ed.	edited by
EOS	<i>Executable Online Sermons</i>
csp.	especially
ETWeb	<i>Expression Today on the Web</i>
fn.	footnote
IANSANSA	<i>International Action Network on Small Arms</i>
Ibid.	<i>Ibidem</i> in the aforementioned place
Id.	<i>idem</i> , "the same"
JRAI	<i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i>
MSS.NTS	Monograph Series. Society for New Testament Studies
NIBC'	<i>New International Biblical Commentary</i>
NIDOTT	<i>New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology</i>
N.T.	New Testament
O.T.	Old Testament
RSV	<i>Revised Standard Version</i>
SOP	<i>Syracuse Occasional Paper</i>
StPSc	<i>Studies in Peace and Scripture</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
vol.	Volume
WN IPS	<i>World News – InterPress Service</i>
DO	District Officer

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Appendix II: The Pökot People

1. *The Pökot People and Their History*

The pastoralist Pökot have their roots in the Nilo-Hamitic people. These were nomadic people always in search for land.¹⁶³ The pastoralist ethnical group from which the Pökot emerged,¹⁶⁴ had always interacted with other pastoralist groups. Conflictive situations were always present. During the early 19th cent., the pastoralist Pökot lost most of their cattle to Massai and Nandi raiding parties.¹⁶⁵ Because "a pacho without cattle is a dead one,"¹⁶⁶ around 1860, the Pökot acquired a large number of cattle from the Samburu.¹⁶⁷ This acquisition was followed by a tense period with the Samburu who threatened vengeance. Turkana¹⁶⁸ were also expanding towards south, inside Pökot territory. During this time also the Karimojong¹⁶⁹ menaced Pökot cattle wealth.¹⁷⁰ Towards the end of 19th cent., Pökot expanded their territory due to calamities affecting the Maasai and Karimojong. "This is the time when the Pökot adopted many Karimojong customs."¹⁷¹

At the beginning of the 20th cent., the expansion continued. This was a time of great peaceful interaction with Turkanas and Karimojong.¹⁷² The period up to 1960 as well. Consequently, the Pökot, intensified their pastoral ways of life. From the 60's onwards Karimojong and Turkana warriors initiated several rustling attacks provoking an increase of violence in the area, especially during the 80's.¹⁷³

163 There are various theories on the origin and history of the pastoralist Pökot. G. WERI - D. A. WILSON, *East Africa Through a Thousand Years*, (London: Evans Brothers, 1984), 42-47 say that the origin of the pastoralist Pökot can be traced to a 'Proto-Kalenjin' group of pastoralists that came from an area near the Sudan-Ethiopia border to the surroundings of Mount Elgon around AD 1000. W. R. OCHIENG', *An Outline History of the Rift Valley, Kenya, up to A.D. 1900*, (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1975), 27.55 says that the settlement around the same area of Mount Elgon was before 500 A.D.. D. R. TULLY, *Human Ecology and Political Process: The Context of Market Incorporation in West Pökot District, Kenya*, (Washington: Washington University, 1985), 55 suggests that the Proto-Kalenjin had moved to the western highlands of Kenya by the time of Christ and that between 900 and 1100 A.D. a northern Kalenjin, Pökot or proto-Pökot speaking group, had occupied the Cherangani Hills (North-west of Kenya) and the Uasin Gishu plateau (Baringo District - *East Pökot*) occupied by the Massai.

164 According to linguistic evidence, it is suggested that the Pökot came into existence as a people about 1200 A.D.. J. VISSER, *Towards a Missionary Approach Among the Pökot*, (Zandijk: The Netherlands, 1982), 4

165 Cf. K.R. DUNDAS, "Notes on the Tribes Inhabiting the Baringo District, East Africa Protectorate." *JRAI* 40 (1910): 49-72. See also T. DIETZ, *Pastoralists in Dire Straits*, 7-28.

166 *Pachon* is a Pökot man. Cf. J. VISSER, *Pökot Religion*, 15-19. The expression is owned to this author.

167 They were living in today's *East Pökot* area.

168 Another nomadic people who remains an enemy of the Pökot up to today. Please see Appendix I for the location of the research areas.

169 Nomadic people living in today's East Uganda, bordering with *West Pökot*. by West. These people are very similar to the Pökot in traditions and way of living, up to the extent that many dances and religious practices are common to both groups. Nevertheless, they are enemies.

170 Cf. T. DIETZ, *Pastoralists in Dire Straits*, 28.

171 R. ARMADA, *Mission Among the Pastoralists of West Pökot*, 4.

172 The fact of the existence of many women from enemy areas in Pökot land (Karimojong and Turkana- *West Pökot*. - and Marakwet - *East Pökot*) is still a result of intermarriages that started at this time and since then up to today. Intermarriages take place in this time of peace.

173 Cf. T. DIETZ, *Pastoralists in Dire Straits*, 29-30.

A special reference needs to be made here to the British colonial rule established in Kenya from 1888 onwards. The policy of the British up to 1968 on imposing definitive tribal borders to control stock and human movement increased the isolation of pastoralist people.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, it increased Pökot resistance to anything new or different that could come from outside Pökot world, a characteristic still present today in the Pökot people.

Concerning the Pökot in Baringo District, the threat at the beginning of the 20th cent. seemed to be similar to the one in the West: by North and East the Turkana and by South the Maasai. The Marakwet¹⁷⁵ people were never a threat up to 1992, when concerns about grazing land became a problem. Pökot crossed into Marakwet land in search of good pastures and Marakwet started to see that as an invasion of their land. It seems that the problem here is different and far more complex than that of cattle rustling.¹⁷⁶ During my several visits to the area, I sensed an attitude of hatred which is different from that toward's other 'traditional' enemies, where enmity is based mostly in a kind of 'game' played with the animals.¹⁷⁷

2. Life Revolves Around Cattle

Cattle is of major importance in raiding activities. The whole of Pökot life revolves around cattle. These include cows, goats, sheep and camels. Among these, cows are the most valuable. Acquiring cattle is the ultimate reason for raiding. Cattle (goats especially) are used also in the majority of the traditional religious practices, either in blessing, curing or cleansing rituals. Animals are the identity of men and his descendants, in the form of 'talisman' of the clans. Bulls are the identity of the warriors (*ngorokoi*); these select

¹⁷⁴ Cf. T. DIETZ, *Pastoralists in Dire Straits*, 52.

¹⁷⁵ Kalenjin group situated on the Elgeyo Escarpment neighbouring *East Pökot* by West. Their main economical activity is agriculture. Though Marakwets herd some animals, they were not much interested in cattle, since their main economical activity was not dependent on the animals.

¹⁷⁶ After the terrible attack that Pökot conducted to Marakwet on March 12th, 2001 that left around 50 people killed (the worst in their short inimical history), the Kenyan Human Rights Commission produced a report where it is claimed that ethnic violence between these two groups is in fact state sponsored and encouraged for political reasons. Cf. Kenyan Human Rights Commission, *Raiding Democracy The Slaughter of the Marakwet in Kerio Valley*, (Nairobi: Kenyan Human Rights Commission, 2001). Also in an e-mail addressed to me by Sr. M. E. G. GALVÁN (a missionary who worked among the *East Pökot* people for about nine years), she says: "[...] with the Marakwets, in stead, it is true hatred what they feel towards each other. With them [Marakwets] there is no element of 'tribal pride' or 'to be valiant' but hatred inflamed against them; this shows a very bad feeling, almost diabolic, I would say. On the contrary [fighting] with traditional enemies is like a kind of game." M. E. G. GALVÁN, "Re: Enmity Among the Pökot," email to the author, November 15th, 2001. The political manipulation of the situation is also confirmed by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, based in Eldoret, bordering *West Pökot*: "It is no longer a question of seasonal cattle raids between Pökot, Marakwet and Turkana with minimal casualties. This traditional cultural habit has been politicised and commercialised by influential people in the Government. [...] the government knows the perpetrators but is reluctant to act. CHRD claims that stolen livestock is ferried by lorries at night from a hideout in Baringo District to the Dagoretti slaughterhouse in Nairobi. It is a charge that has been made many times by politicians and human rights groups." W. CHEBI SIRI, "Government Abates Insecurity in the North Rift," *ETWeb* 10 (November 2000) <<http://www.kenyanews.com/eXpression/november2000/ei010.htm>>, 15/11/2001, 1.

¹⁷⁷ In fact, I came to learn a game of Karimojong origin called *köchi* played among the Pökot, where you "play" your cows, represented by small stones. The aim is to be able to 'steal' the more 'animals' (small stones) you can from the 'enemy' (adversary!) by distributing your animals through the forty holes on the ground disposed into four lines. Two lines are your land, and the other two the land of the enemy. Cf. J. LOMILO, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by the author, no tape recording, 14 July 2001, Lengorok - *West Pökot* — catholic catechist of Kituti - *West Pökot*.

a special bull among those he owns and sings and dances *Adongo*.¹⁷⁸ The *Adongo* is typical among the dances of Pökot people performed in gatherings and feasts. Animal skins provide the clothing for the people and the house. The place where a house is built depends on the existence of water and nearby pastures. Water and pastures are the two basic needs provided for the animals. All the members of the family are in charge of taking care of the animals. Warriors take care of the cows; girls before their circumcision take the calves around. The boys look after the goats and sheep. The young children (3 — 7 years old) who remain at home take care of the new born goats and sheep. Finally, the old women always have a few animals upon which they shower much love.¹⁷⁹ After much observation about nutritional habits condition of the Pökot, J. Visser point that getting cattle to pasture land is in fact a need for the survival of the pastoralist Pökot. From cattle, they get milk and blood so vital in their daily diet.¹⁸⁰

Lastly, oral tradition revolves around daily life events where animals are at the centre of attention. It is educational entertainment for the young and even the old.

3. Raiding Activities

Among the Pökot there are two kinds of raids: *lük* and *setat*. The traditional form of raid is the *lük*.¹⁸¹ This is organised by a large group of warriors. Retaliatory reasons or the need to acquire cattle are among the reasons to call for a *lük*. Another important reason suggested by informants during my research was the fact that tradition was a central concern. After the retur of the spies sent ahead in search of possible targets, an assembly of the elders (*pöy*) is convened in order to decide the strategies of the raid and bless the warriors (*kiyiltagh*). One of the traditional prophets (*werkoyon*) set the instructions and rules to be followed in the raid, if the group is to succeed. These instructions concern whether or not to kill enemies, capturing girls or taking only livestock.¹⁸² These instructions are strictly followed, especially if the prophet says that no enemy is to be killed, because if so, that fact can put the success of the raid in question. These instructions later became important in the later stories about the raids. If the elders give the consent, it follows a blessing invoking the above gods to protect the warriors and make the enemy fail in their attempts of defending

¹⁷⁸ Dances of the boys calling on the name of their bulls. Girls jump together at a certain distance. Mainly, these are songs of praise to the bulls; some other songs are about raids and others on the way they got those bulls. They sing on the memories they got in those raids. The young children learn and listen to these songs. This dance is like boasting to the girls by the songs of one's bulls in order to captivate the girls to come and dance (jumping) with them. Many of the bulls acquired in the raids are praised and this encourages the children and other young people to go and have it sung by themselves. Pökot told me that this dance is of Karimojong origin.

¹⁷⁹ It is not easy that a Pökot kills an animal for feeding purposes alone. As strange as it may appear, meat is eaten mostly at celebrations or rituals. Only for very special reasons a Pökot can kill an animal own by any Pökot.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 19-31. Such closeness with their cattle makes some missionaries even think that this relationship with the cattle is very 'personal' with all the dimensions one might think of in personal relationships. They know their animals by name not by number; they are even capable of spending the whole night looking for a lost animal and if any young shepherd loses one of his animals it is better for him not to come home until he finds it.

¹⁸¹ The meaning of this word is 'the group that has gone.'

¹⁸² "The foreteller's advice is essential since he or she has 'seen' and can give exact directions as to the route to follow and about which things to do or not to leave. It is for him to say whether or not enemies need to be killed." J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 22.

their cattle.¹⁸³ There are also some cleansing rituals to be followed by the warriors. The uncleanness of a warrior is usually associated with conflicts and problems among two or more of those warriors.¹⁸⁴ This kind of raid is organised at most two or three times a year, depending on the areas and the intensity of the conflicts.

A less traditional type of raid is *setat*. Interestingly enough, only this kind of raid is considered 'stealing.'¹⁸⁵ In *East Pökot* it is also called *chori*.¹⁸⁶ Recently, the number of this kind of raids has been increasing because of the easy access to guns.¹⁸⁷ Here some young warriors simply decide by themselves to revenge a recent attack of the enemy or take advantage of an opportunity to obtain animals. No traditional procedures are normally followed in this type of raid. The local elders rebuke younger generations who are unwilling to follow traditional rules.¹⁸⁸

4. A Cohesive Ethnical Identity

As we have just seen above, raiding is a practice that requires a strong ethnical unity. In my research, I had the opportunity to inquire of several people about their contributions on a raid. They all have their share when a raid is organised. The main agents are, of course, the warriors. They are the ones who take the initiative. They call the elders to bless them. The elders are to give them the authorisation to go into enemy territory and bring back animals. Women are not forgotten in the process either. They do not participate in the proper raid,¹⁸⁹ but in several of my interviews women were mentioned as those encouraging

¹⁸³ This blessing is done a litany style, where one of the most respected elders led the prayers and the group of the other elders present responds. See Appendix III an example of this kind of prayers.

¹⁸⁴ A case of having shared the same woman by two of the warriors is one of the cases where reconciliation between them has to be settled before they can depart. Another case is when there is a quarrel between two of the warriors. See on this 2.1.4 Cursing: A Means to Know the Truth, in chapter III.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. DORCAS, A., "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by the author and Peter Ngati, tape recording, 15 June 2001, AIC Kameris Primary School (Kituti-West Pökot.). I found some confusion and different use of the words *luk* and *setat* between West and *East Pökot*. Sometimes they were identified both as *luk*. Nevertheless, the word for raid in a small dictionary prepared in *West Pökot*, by T. HERREROS, *The Learner's English-Pökot/Pökot-English Dictionary* is *setat*.

¹⁸⁶ Verb that means to steal; to rob; *chorsyö* - noun of *chori* - stealing. Cf. T. HERREROS, *The Learner's English-Pökot/Pökot-English Dictionary*, 22.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. J. LIND N. SHIEKH, "Armaments, Environments - Small Arms and the Control of Natural Resources." *ACTSEC* vol. 1, 3 (October 2001), 1-4. See also on this issue M. GATHO, "Arming the Pökot Was Folly; Now Disarm Them," *The Daily Nation* March 27, 2001, 7; M. NDURU, "Politics-Kenya: Refugees Ordered to Hand Over Weapons" *WNIPS* 2 (June 1998) <http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/june98/16_15_059.html>, 15/12/2001; ID., "Stop these Merchants of Terror," *The Weekly Review* (12 March 1999) <<http://www.africaonline.co.ke/weeklyreview/990312/editorial.html>>, 7/1/2002; International Action Network on Small Arms, "Government Calls on People in Northwest to Stop Gun Trafficking" *IANSAN* 1 (May 2001) <http://www.iansa.org/news/2001/may_01/stop_traffic.html>, 7/1/2002.

¹⁸⁸ In *East Pökot* this problem is blamed on the current age set generation '*kablalach*.' The age sets are cyclical and repeat themselves after a considerable number of years. The previous '*kablalach*' generation is said to have behaved in the same way regarding traditions of the Pökot.

¹⁸⁹ The cause of the non participation of women in raids is the following: according to oral tradition, in late 19th cent. a prophetess called Cheposait took part in a raid. That raid is said to have been a total disaster where many Pökot were killed, including her as the first to fall. Since then women cannot go raiding. R. KAPROM, "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by Musa Aluku, no tape recording, 25 July 2001, Tilingwö (*East Pökot*).

husbands and sons to go raiding.¹⁹⁰ It is believed by both sexes that men should have the courage to steal cattle by raiding the enemy and to be able to defend cattle against the raids of the enemy.¹⁹¹ Mothers also make a special contribution. Perhaps the most striking contribution of all is that of wearing around the belly a belt of beads called '*lakatia*.' This is the amulet that ties sons to the womb of their mother, even when they are grown up. This is the sign that they are protected and no evil can touch them. The '*lakatia*' is to be worn by mothers at a variety of times but especially when sons and even husbands go raiding. Sons believe that nothing will happen to them for they know they are protected by the *lakatia* that their mothers are wearing.¹⁹² Women are also supposed to prepare food that the warriors will carry on their journey, which can take several days or weeks. On their return, the warriors will find milk kept for them by their mothers and wives. There are also some other ways of blessing the warriors while they are away for a raid.¹⁹³ Women are again present at the return of the warriors, showing their happiness for the 'peaceful'¹⁹⁴ return of their sons and husbands. They ululate and anoint the warriors with animal fat. They sing and dance for praise and honour of their warriors.

The blessing given by the elders, *Kiyiltagh* (see above 3. Raiding Activities and Appendix III), is another element that brings unity and strength among the warriors. They know that they cannot fail in their attempts for the whole Pökot are united with them in regard to the success of their aims.

¹⁹⁰ For example R. LOMARIWA, "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 5 August 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*.) - elder/former warrior. The informant said that a mother can give better food to the sons that have gone for one or more raids in order to encourage the others to do the same. They even say something of the kind to those who have not gone for a raid: "Ah! Take this one [little food and not well prepared]! Who are you to be given food? I give you this because you cannot even to go and bring a cow!" J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 28 confirms this when he says: "Women are said to tease and urge men. 'What kind of people are you? We like food. Have we to go and fetch cattle?'"

¹⁹¹ Cf. J. VISSER, *Pökoot Religion*, 21.

¹⁹² For example, R. LOMARIWA, "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 5 August 2001, Barpello (*East Pökot*.) - elder/former warrior. The informant had this to say: "For the women when your son or your husband have gone for a raid you are supposed to tie your *lakatia*, you are supposed to sleep with your clothing and you are not supposed to use any sharp thing, knife, needle, even if you need to repair your cloth you are not supposed to do it because you are not allowed to handle the sharp things. Moreover, those women of long ago, who were putting on the skin, they were supposed to tie one side of the skin. When the one gone has come, when she hears the sound of the voice of the son, she is supposed to untie it immediately. All this is done so as to try to protect the child." This is the strongest believe of a Pökot man concerning his protection from bad spirits. According to me, any pastoral attempt to tackle the issue of enmity of the Pökot has to deal with this aspect.

¹⁹³ Before the son or husband goes out for a raid, the woman takes some hair from the warrior and ties it with some skin of antelope and a local herb to be put on the roof of the house. This is said to bless the warrior. She sleeps with her clothes and the clothes of the warrior serve as pillow of the elder of the house. Cf. L. AKUDUKORI, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Stephen Masaka, no tape recording, 30 June 2001, Lokitaleuyan (*West Pökot*) - herdsman/warrior; G. L. KEGELA, "Enmity in West Pökot," interviewed by Stephen Masaka, no tape recording, 30 June 2001, Kimpur (*West Pökot*.) - christian with primary education.

¹⁹⁴ Interestingly enough, to return safe and sound is said to return in peace ('*kalya*')!

Appendix III: The Blessing of the Warriors – *Kiyiltagh*

1. Example of a Blessing in East Pökot¹⁹⁵

<u>Clean elder</u>	<u>Akirket (group of elders)</u>
Kölan - I say	Kölan
Mönechu petöy - You children going	Mönechu petöy
Tilil - clean/holy	Tilil
Arengwö - your way	Arengwö
Nyö petöy - your going	Nyö petöy
Kokai - for ever	Kokai
Ape - go	Ape
Anyörri - and find	Anyurri
Rangan - raided animals ¹⁹⁶	Rangan
Amulishö - come back	Amulishö
Nyo tilil - and clean/holy	Nyo tilil
Puryö - no (negative chase/curse)	Puryö
Sumion - dirty	Sumion
Nyo nyoru - that they can find	Nyo nyoru
Monechoni - those children	Monechoni
Onyuru - go and find	Onyuru
Mangengwo - name of tree substance ¹⁹⁷	Mangengwo
Apu - and bring	Apu
Opchu - bring to	Opchu
Pöy - the elders	Pöy
Tilil - clean/holy	Tilil
Arengwö - your way	Arengwö
Opchĩ pöy - and bring to the elders	Pöy
Kolan otokomi moswokin nyongolono monechu inach	Inach
(I say if there is someone has bad plans, get away)	(Get away)
Inach - get away	Inach
Iwö - go (the bad person)	Iwö
Kokai - for ever	Kokai
Kwilun - let your bone of the leg break (curse)	Kwilun
Kapepcha - let your right wing to break (curse referring to a wing of bird!)	Kapepcha
Sörö - thanks	Sörö
Sörö - thanks	Sörö
Sörö - thanks	Sörö

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Filemon, "Enmity in East Pökot," interviewed by the author, tape recording, 29 July 2001 and 4 August 2001, Barpello *E.Pök.*

¹⁹⁶ *Rangan* is the name of all the animals they are going to raid.

¹⁹⁷ A name of a tree substance that warriors get on the way for a raid. In other words the elders wish them and order them to go and do your things well.

2. Example of a Blessing in West Pökot¹⁹⁸

Go peacefully
Yim help our children (Yim is the sky, equated with the Above)
 And hear
 Get what you want (Get = get animals)
 That the enemy may be blinded
 Get!
 I am in the fronthouse (Ready to go)
 I could go to my battle,
 Mind the eagle (the eagle, as well as the hyena, eats the dead bodies)
 Mind the hyena, our children
 Eye, eye, my son (The eyes, hands and shields should help one another)
 Hand hand, help me my friend
 Shield shield my friend
 Tomorrow comes, the eagle comes
 I will go very early to the
 House of someone. I am a man
 Of Mtelo (Sekerr location)
 Pooh so useless, if we leave
 One another to the birds.
 I will not leave you my friend
 I am with you, your rib, my friend
 I say ooh *kiwalngöt* (praise of the Chepösera subclan)
 Warriors warriors oh my friend
 Let us go tomorrow to
 The house of the small ticks (Turkana)
 Let us protect one another
 Ooh my friend

¹⁹⁸ Cf. J. VISSER, *Pokoot Religion*, 23-23. In explanatory notes, the author says that this prayer is led by one clean elder plus the council of the elders (*akirket*) who answer in litany form to the prayer of the clean elder. The original words in Pökot language are given in the same work on page 262.

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