Encounters of Christian and Indigenous Beliefs in Recent History of the Turkana

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Abstract

When missionaries introduce Christian beliefs in a diaspora, they study the local language in order to teach the Christian doctrines, symbols and treatment of the symbols. The primary purpose of this work was to document an early phase of missionary work among the Turkana in the Northwest of Kenya whom I visited in 1979 and 1983. During the current process of analysis and comparison of the symbol structures of the Turkana and the Christian religion incorporating the latest researches a second purpose arose: to motivate for further independent anthropological investigation of religious systems.

My hypothesis is that the Christian religious conception is fundamentally different from the traditional ideas of the Turkana, that not only observable behaviour but the mental constitution is different.

Emanating from an empirical observation of a daily habit of the Turkana, I trace back examining the conceptions of the respective spiritual being and the relation between the goddess and men in order to look beyond the habit and the attitude. I examine the symbolic acts of collection and thanksgiving in the liturgy of the Christian Mass and contrast it with the norm of social action in the traditional culture of the Turkana.

Key words: Africa, Turkana, Religion, Christian Mission, joy, duty, thank, dept of gratitude, reciprocity, altruism

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1   Introduction

1.1   How long have there been Christian Missionaries in Turkana County?

In a historical perspective the beginning of a Christian mission lies back only a short time. During colonial British rule the northwestern part of Kenya was a restricted military area. For about five decades the Turkana from the British colonial side only had contact with military forces or with African traders of surrounding areas. In the year 1956 the first missionaries of the African Inland Mission (AIM) were authorized to set up a station in the southern part of the Turkana district. Requests of the Catholic Church of Kenya were rejected. They would have been interested in maintaining a missionary station at Lodwar or at Lorugumu, but not at Kakuma which is situated in the middle of the great open plain and which seemed to be too far away from any contacts down country. The colonial administration did not share their interests. For the governments of Kenya and Uganda the pastoral nomadic populations living in the dry areas were only a kind of political unrest factor, because they went across the colonial borderlines practicing cattle raids. In the annual reports of the British colonial governments the struggle with those groups is shortly mentioned:

> The Turkana tribe, who inhabit the north eastern area, are now the principal source of disturbance, as they are of truculent disposition and are supplied with rifles by the Abessiniens, who encourage them in predatory forays on the friendly tribes. It will certainly be necessary to punish this people for their re-peated attacks on friendly tribes before peace can be in the Province. (*Colonial reports--annual. No. 831. Uganda. Report for 1913-14:30)*

By "friendly tribes" are meant those tribes with whom the British had entered into protection contracts and to which the livestock which the King's African Rifles had captured on punitive expeditions were redistributed. This kind of redistribution went on for several decades. Then in 1960 due to a long-standing drought when the British administration had to organize famine camps to feed starving people, the District Commissioner at the time asked the Catholic bishop for personal help. In December 1961 two priests started their work in a camp next to Lodwar. From then on the

Catholic mission developed their presence by offering social services in further camps in Turkana County. At Lorugumu, where there was one of the earliest police stations, a missionary base and a primary school were installed and later at Kakuma a hospital. Since 1968 there has been a branch in Lodwar, which is today the Episcopal See of the diocese of Lodwar. (s. Bassols 2012:170–74)

Today there are numerous churches and mission societies active in Turkana County. While in the 70s and 80s baptizing was not the primary task but rather schooling and medical help, nowadays there are mission societies that practice their mission in a broader network.

1.2   Biographical Access to the Topic

Following an invitation of Father Bernhard Ruhnau, who was a Catholic priest formerly in my home town and then in Turkana County, I undertook a field trip to Turkana County. It was the year 1979, between my fourth and fifth term-time in the study of Ethnology. Looking back from my perspective today, I would say, that I became a witness of early missionary work. Despite the title 'Father', he did not belong to a mission society. His self-conception was that of a pastoral chairman especially for nomads. Therefore he kept stock: cattle, that during my stay was on mountain pastures, and also camels, goats, sheep and donkeys. One of the camels was used for water transport. Father Bernhard talked to me about his experiences in an honest and self-critical way. Subjects were e. g. consequences of the church dogma to monogamous marriage or his attitude towards the *ngimurok*, those persons who are traditional religious experts among the Turkana. Father Bernhard regarded them as predecessors or colleagues in the agency of priesthood. We knew at that time little about their work but that they were highly respected among the Turkana people and that they had an extraordinary connection to *Akuj*[1]. A Christian priest does not have it, notwithstanding his education, ordination and the idea of succession of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless Christian churches claim superiority based on the proclamation of the "Good News"

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1   also written Akuij

arguing that the message of Jesus Christ is of higher value than the local knowledge. Out of the many conversations we had, I kept three aspects deep in my mind, all of which first expressed themselves as linguistic translation problems in the implementation of the liturgy. One day Father Bernhard explained that there is no word in Turkana language (Ngaturkana) for 'thank', no direct translation to say 'thank you'. Instead they have to use a makeshift paraphrase.

Furthermore, during the first years of residence the congregation was called to prayer with the expression „kilipa". That is the imperative form of the verb *akilip,* which in translation means to beg and also to pray. After further studying the language a possibility to build an irregular imperative form was found: „elipa". Now, if someone says "kilipa" it means all of you beg, if he says "elipa" it means all of you pray. But why is a distinction important? Because it has to solve a mismatch which lies in the observation of the Turkana habitus of begging. In those days a metaphor was circulating that they were 'proud beggars', which is a paradox in the scale of Christian ethics. If a Turkana is in need of something, he or she goes straight to someone and asks for it. Once a woman came straight to me requesting the skirt that I was wearing. I refused and tried to argue with some words that I have learned in Ngaturkana and that was very amusing. But it becomes serious when someone is hungry and says "nakinae akimuj", give me food. A beggar in a Christian environment has to make himself small and humble, asking in the manner of a suppliant. The absence of humility was not compatible with the demanded habitus in a Christian environment.

The third memorable aspect concerns the confession of being a sinner, which is an integral part of the Roman Catholic liturgy. On the very same day when we talked about please and thank you, three old men were sitting under the shadow tree waiting for Father Bernhard. He talked several hours with them. In the afternoon he came back and declared that they had a demand to pray for rain. He was willing to do it, but set the condition, that each must confess to being a sinner at the beginning of his speech or prayer. This lead to irritation, but finally they agreed and we held a Mass in

the small school house, the only building at Nanam.

These three encounters are the initial experiences that prompted me to explore the encounter between these two religions in this work. I realized that these three details are related to the complex of sin, guilt, humility and gratitude. They form the core complex of Christian ethics. They are allocated with religious symbols and are raising from elementary emotions to complex feelings when someone learns the meaning and treatment of the symbols with which they are connected. Guilt, humility and gratitude are not symbols themselves, but feelings that are developed when someone learns the "right" use of the symbols.

1.3   Problem and Method

Starting from the point of view that social interaction is a trained behaviour whereby each culture has its particular code of ethics, I am going to support the accuracy of my empirical observations with theoretical argumentation.

My hypothesis is that the Christian religious conception is fundamentally different from the traditional ideas of the Turkana, that not only observable behaviour but the mental constitution is different.

Clifford Geertz includes emotions, respectively feelings, that are a stable base and generate the tenor of daily life in his definition of religion. Therefore it is helpful for the processing of the task. Geertz defines religion as

> (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1993:90)

Each symbol is an element in a complex arrangement of symbols. When learning the religious doctrines and the meaning of the symbols together with the experience of their application human individuals acquire enduring moods and motivations. The symbols are closely linked to conceptions as part of the world view, cosmogony as well as social rules. Those conceptions are taken as facts and the moods and motiva-

tions are taken as promising strategies.

Now I may apply Geertz' definition on the distinctive conceptions of *kilipa* and *elipa*. ‚Kilipa' represents the Turkana mood for the activity of begging for something. That means a person who is in need for something asks another person who probably or surely has what is in need "nakinae akimuj" or "nakinae akine na" "give me this goat" or "nakinae ngakopir nugu" "give me these feathers", etc.. ‚Elipa' stands for the Christian mood for praying as well as for begging in humbleness.

When we follow Geertz' definition, the different moods are a consequence of the two different conceptions of the Christian God and of Akuij. The purpose of this treatise is to find hidden differences and consequences in the application of the different conceptions. Which claims are made on and what expectations are to be fulfilled by fellow people? The first step is to summarize what insights we have about the characteristics of *Akuj* in the traditional understanding. Secondly the relationship between *Akuj* and human beings will be regarded in a traditional and in a Christian context. Finally exemplified conclusions will be made and reflected in order to detect links between the abstract concept of cosmology. ideas that build the mental constitution and attitudes and are expressed in a particular behaviour.

2 Conception of the respective God

2.1 The Question of Religiosity of Turkana People

2.1.1 Sources

This section is about building the basis for a comparison between the concepts of *Akuj* and the Christian God. First of all, I will summarize the properties of *Akuj* from five authors in the order of publication of their accounts. These authors are: Gulliver, Best, van der Jagt, Barrett and Lines. There are two books that concentrate investigation explicitly on religion. Van der Jagt and Barrett describe the structures of the Turkana symbol system, rites and sacrifices and the basic assumptions of Turkana religion. In addition, Lines focuses on religious experts. Earlier authors treat single as-

pects or advice fragments of what they have heard. The relevant works start with the ' Preliminary Survey' by anthropologist P. H. Gulliver. According to Gulliver there is a high god. In his holistic monograph, religion occupies only a small space. He takes the name *Akuj* and dubs him ,High God'. *Akuj* is then an anthropomorphic, omnipotent being located in the sky."The High God is in the sky, he is all that is above men's heads". (Gulliver 1963:231–32) That is the base of investigation since the 1970s onward.

2.1.2 How and how often do the Turkana speak about Akuj?

According to Gulliver's assessment that the Turkana think in a practical, not speculative way, I have come to understand that their economic activities are not determined by rituals, but that they make decisions based on rational considerations. Gulliver states that

> One can go for days in their company without encountering any mention of their magico-religious beliefs, most especially since they are involved in no economic activity nor in almost all social relationships. (Gulliver 1963:251)

McCabe confirms this observation with his description of herd movements. Before the head of compound decides to move to another area, he sends a scout to the prospected grazing area. The scout has to control the quality of vegetation and whether there is enough water supply. Thus in this sense empirical observation and rational arguments are dominant in economic activities.

Best made the same experience as Gulliver. During his first field research he did not hear the word *Akuj* used in a curse, oath, promise or any kind of emotional outburst. Only Barrett contradicts Best:

> Indeed, the opposite is more true; for whenever a Turkana thinks that one doubts his words, he immediately resorts to gesticulations and verbal outbursts, viz. *Akuj Apei; kataar Akuj ayong, etc. (One God; may God kill me, etc.)*. (Barrett 1998:15)

We have to put into account that Barrett and Best researched in different regions, geographically and in the field of interests. Best is an anthropologist and turned to-

wards alternative economic livelihood other than livestock as there are fishing and agriculture. Barrett, like van der Jagt and Lines, worked in the missionary field. Researchers evoke statements, remarks or any occasional comments through their well known interests and presence presupposing that people are interested in communication.

Lines did perceive in his interviews that he was introduced in several cases only to practices which were accepted from Christianized Turkana, but not to those which were negatively valued and rejected by Christians.

> Examples of hidden practices not commonly revealed to outsiders, and especially Western missionaries, include: the use of special sticks, offerings made to ancestors and the use of ritual ochre. (Lines 2014:89)

How much or how little is spoken about religious subjects depends on the knowledge and the relationship of the participants. Moreover subjects often are sensitive and the level of conversation is very specified. It must be emphasized that nearly the whole part of the religious field is occupied by men. Only initiated men participate in particular rites. On the internet I found a video clip[2] where a Turkana woman is saying that she did not hear anything about *Akuj* before she became a member of an agrarian project organized by a mission society. This statement seems at least possibly authentic when we suppose that she renders a general rule, that women are not included fully in religious activities. But on the other hand it is obviously over stressed when a woman says that people did not know anything of God in this land before missionaries came and taught them. In addition there are exceptions. Although the majority of the religious specialists, the *ngimurok*, are male, a woman may become an *amuron*, because the calling is through *Akuij*.

2.2 Approaches to Traditional Comprehension of *Akuj*

2.2.1 Philipp H. Gulliver

Due to Gulliver's knowledge *Akuj* is located above in the sky and owns large herds of

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2   Gene Morden: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-8HHO9gVrQ

all the domestic species that the Turkana received. One does not know for sure whether *Akuj* is male or female. Etymologically the stem, *kuju*, means above. The first letter, A, marks a female gender. Grammatically it is treated like a masculine noun.[3] *Akuj* has great power and influence to human life, but is not always and consequently involved. On principle *Akuj* is benevolent, but is also able to kill a person, e.g. in the case of incest, fratricide or when particular rituals are not carried out. Punishments as well as positive effects are uncertain. *Akuj* does not act always and when he does act it is not always the same way. Gulliver got to know of two concerns which verbally, through prayer, are communicated with *Akuj*: for rain and for a seriously ill person. Gulliver also made the important observation that prayers are spoken from the oldest man who is present according to the standards of the age-set-system. (Gulliver 1963:231–32)

2.2.2　Günter Best

Best maintains like Gulliver the opinion that the Turkana recognize only one single supernatural being, the god *Akuj*. This god is living in the sky and created the Turkana, Dodoth, Toposa, Ik and other ethnic groups to the west of Aturkwen. *Akuj* is understood as anthropomorphic, benevolent but just to human beings and owns countless herd animals in the sky. *Akuj* intervenes spontaneously but not reliably with sanctions into the life of humans. Good things as well as punishment derive from *Akuj*. Also the existence of a dangerous evil spirit named *ekipe*, is known. (Best 1978:158–59)

Best recorded the following statement:

> Akuj kolong asubuni Ngiturkana ka ngibukui luche, nakaneni anguna eminar Ngiturkana, abu inak kechi ngibaren toyareta.
> The High God created the Turkana and all other tribes, but since he especially loves the Turkana, he gave them a lot of cows, goats, camels, sheep and donkeys, so that they always have enough food to eat and milk to drink. (Best 1983:54, T 109)

Firstly, it must be said that this is not a creation myth but only a sample sentence and

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3 I join in doing so, although Barrett assumes missionary influence in preferring the masculine article

it is not translated literally word by word. Best gives us a commented translation of his interpreters. We find some remarkable points in it. *Akuj* is presented as creator, but remains on the local level, *Akuj* created only the Turkana speaking groups of population who are generally known. According to linguistic criteria these are: Karimojong[4], Teso, Jie, Jiye, Dodoth, Turkana, Toposa, Nyangatom.

At first glance this statement seems to be influenced by missionary work because the name 'Akuj' is directly transferred as the 'High God'. It looks like an interim solution. On one hand *Akuj* is similar to the Christian God a creator. On the other hand *Akuj* did not create the whole world or the whole of mankind. An ethnocentric view in the cited statement comes out in the belief that *Akuj* loves the Turkana most of all. It points out the identity of Turkana and stock herding. In the last chapter a second glance interpretation will be presented.

Furthermore, Best remarks on the relationship between *Akuj* and the Turkana that he did not notice any action, which could be interpreted as a thanksgiving and he notes briefly that rain is considered to be a benevolent gesture of *Akuj* and requires no gratitude or feast. (Best 1978:157–58)

2.2.3 Van derJagt

Van der Jagt did field research in the southern part of Turkana County between 1979 and 1980 and two short restudies in 1982 and 1986. The title of his publication 'Symbolic structures in Turkana religion' is a reference to the theory of symbols of Clifford Geertz, which he uses in this publication. He examines the meaning of symbols in verbal utterances as well as in ritual actions. Van der Jagt speaks with reference to Geertz of experience-near and experience-distant concepts. The first is in the mind of people and used in their local language to articulate their feelings, observations and imaginings. These concepts are culture specific while experience-distant concepts use a world or trade language which is known across cultures. The latter are independent from a specific cultural context. "The student of religion must bring the basic experi-

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4   also can be spelled Karamojong or Karomojong

ence-near concepts of the people he is working with to light and relate them to expe-rienced-distant concepts." (Jagt 1989:15) Of particular interest in the present study is what van der Jagt brought to light about the verbal symbol 'akuj'.

The symbolic term 'akuj' is used in different situations and has to be interpreted within the context to be understood correctly. The first out of eighteen examples is: "*Akuj* made (*akisub*) the world." This short statement might lead us to recognize *Akuj* as creator god as before. Only van der Jagt retranslates into the context of the local culture and comments: "The word *akuj* refers here to a being, who is seen by the Turkana as the source of life and the most senior of all the supernatural beings." (Jagt 1989:16)

Van der Jagt asks, what's the difference between the personal creator god of the Judeo-Christian concept and the source being of the Turkana concept. He ascertains that in Turkana genesis there is no creation myth. The natural environment and hu-man beings are not created in a willful act. Instead, *Akuj* makes life and growth possi-ble. This is a continuous and recycling process. "When someone dies they say «Akuj has eaten him»." (Jagt 1989:27)

Akuj is not the almighty god, who is exclusively worshiped. Turkana direct rituals also to ancestors, *ngikaram,* and other unspecific spirits called *ngipean*. The theological concept of the Turkana is not exclusive but inclusive concludes van der Jagt and adds, that in a ritual when the term *Akuj* is used, all spiritual beings of the supernatural world – that means also *ngikaram a*nd *ngipean* – are addressed. (Jagt 1989:28)

Another of his eighteen examples describes the life giving ability of *Akuj* in a symbolic action. The white foam, that is formed at the surface of fast flowing water, here in a riverbed that was dry for a long time and is flooded after heavy rains in the moun-tains, this foam is called *akuj lakwan (*white *akuj)*. The Turkana take it with their hands and moisten their face, head and chest. "It gives life (*akiyar*)." (Jagt 1989:16)

Van der Jagt builds a structure, – he denotes it as binary – with the two terms *Akuj* and *ekipe* on top. Since the colonial era there have been different interpretations of

these two terms. They are two gods, or they are two halves of one god, or *ekipe* is subordinated to *Akuj*. The latter is understood by van der Jagt. *Ekipe* serves *Akuj* like a son serves his father. The following list shows the base structure he worked out:

Akuij	Ekipe
Source of life	Cause of death
Sky (openess)	Rainbow (closing up)
Earth (source)	Earth (prison)
What comes out of earth	What goes in the earth
Open	Closed
Light	Dark
Cool	Hot
Wet	Dry
Soft	Hard

(Jagt 1989:69)

As a result of his analysis of symbols, he classifies the religion of the Turkana, not as a theo-centered but as a life-centered religion, whereby *Akuj* is a source-being and creation of life is a continuous process.

2.2.4 Anthony Joseph Barrett

Anthony Barrett lived all together sixteen years in Turkana County. There he worked as a Catholic priest, member of the Irish St. Patrick's Mission in the diocese of Lodwar. As such I met him when I stayed at Kaekerongole[5] in 1979. On Saturday afternoons he came regularly from Lorugumu to Kaekerongole, to celebrate Mass in a small parish. The Liturgy followed the Roman-Catholic Ritus, the shaping of the songs and acts of speech were accommodated to the local culture. Songs were performed alternately between precentor and chorus (all gathered people). Singing and lecture were in Turkana language or Kiswahili and singing was always accompanied by handclap-

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5   also written Kekerongole

ping, bells and drumming on a plastic container. Also dance was an integrated part of the Mass. During the Mass which I attended it was an elderly woman who stood up first, and with a totally serious face, she danced to the pale where the cross was hanging. She touched it with her bracelet, a tail of a giraffe, and then she danced to the opposite side where Toni Barrett sat beside the altar to wag with the tail around his face and chest.

The extent to which traditional performance styles were allowed and practiced in a Mass depended on the missionary priest. Anthony Barrett says of himself, he was the product of the second Vatican Council. At the end of the 1960s he became a missionary with the attitude to start with learning from the people, he wished to comprehend their world. Later he went to Chicago and received his doctorate in anthropology. "Sacrifice and Prophecy in Turkana Cosmology" is his main work. Therein he describes his position retrospectively:

> Hence, I tried to enter every aspect of their world, i. e., their languages, rites and rituals, their myths, stories, songs and dances. My approach created anxiety among some of my confrères and a few members of the hierarchy. I found myself in a 'no-win' situation, with some of those on the theological side fearing my position to 'neo-paganism' and those of a philosophical bent contending that I could not be objective. Neither position was acceptable to me, as I was not afraid of 'neo-paganism nor the problem of objectivity; I thought I could enter and comprehend their world through close observation of their social behaviour and an analysis of their conceptual categories, quotidian social interaction, and interpersonal relations. (Barrett 1998:15–16)

Barrett answers the question 'who is *Akuj*?' summarized as follows:

Akuj is big and important. *Akuj* is the "owner" of all things that are in the world: people, animals, grass, rain, health, - everything. *Akuj* is cool and good. Humans, things or spirits can cause *Akuj to* become heated, which means angry. This happens e. g., when someone violates clan rules, commits adultery or theft among Turkana. Also animals can heat up *Akuj* by doing something contrary to their nature. A nightbird e. g. that appears during light daytime has something dangerous and is called *ekipe*. *Akuj* disciplines wrongdoer through evil spirits.

> *Akuj* "gives" (*ainakin*) life and health, rain and grass, cattle and people; but *Akuj* "permits" sickness, drought and death. (Barrett 1998:80)

Barrett's stated goal is to comprehend which meaning sacrifice has for the Turkana. The binary symbol structure that we got to know from van der Jagt is also present in Barrett's description but with a main emphasis on cool and hot. Regarding the ritual action of sacrifice *Akuj* is seen under the aspect of ownership of everything that is in the world.

When people are hot, heat is extreme, water is scarce, animals give only drops of milk, children are crying, then, if particular conditions are fulfilled, a sacrifice could bring the cooling relief which people are longing for. *Akuj* likes the smell of roasted meat and comes near when the initiated men perform the rite under the shadow tree and people in the neighbourhood avoid quarrelling while waiting for the dance is in turn.

> When the relationship between Akuj and the people is made cool through prophetic sacrifice, rain falls on the land. When Akuj is 'made happy' (akitalakar) and 'smoked ' (akipurikin) by prophetic sacrifice, he causes the land to be cool by 'sending down rain' (atiaun akiru). (Barrett 1998:110)

2.2.5 Kevin Paul Lines

In his dissertation Lines treats the role of the n*gimurok* and their relation to Christianized Turkana. It is based on about eight years of country experience in missionary work and a short intensive field research, where he conducted 50 interviews in 2011 within 3 months. He wants to fill a gap in literature and provide a clear understanding of who the n*gimurok* are, their roles, their rituals, and their tasks in traditional culture. He is highly motivated to contrast his work with denunciations and demonizations deriving from colonial time, when *ngimurok* were important in leading war against the British, as well as in recent time. Western missionaries and Turkana church leaders teach that n*gimurok* are dangerous, that they receive their power from evil or Satan and that they in any case must be avoided. Lines is a convinced Christian. From his theological position he assumes that the indigenous religion of Turkana is already

monotheistic and regards *Akuj* as the creator god in the Christian sense. „Akuj cre-
ated the world."(Lines 2014:68)

In addition he is sure that the Christian God and *Akuj* are one and the same god. This
point of view is shared explicitly by one of his interview partners:

> I hear them [the church leaders] say these things, that people should not visit
> the ngimurok', they even say the ngimurok are of the evil spirits (ngipean); they
> say these things because they believe that the traditions (etal) of the ngimurok
> do not go along with the traditions o f the church; but I believe that that God,
> the God they worship, is the one that also created me. Even me, I entreat (ak-
> ilip) the same God, these same entreaties that God gave my father and my
> grandfather long ago. Even when I entreat my father instead of God it is the
> same as God because God is the same God of my fathers long ago. (2.13a)
> (Lines 2014:224)

Lines supports the point of the idea of the sameness of the Christian and the generic
god because he wants to reconcile the recently planted[6] churches with the represen-
tatives of traditional culture. Lines gives a systematic overview and new insights into
the work of the *ngimurok*. He observed the execution of rites and displays some of
his field material. Since his evidence about the role as mediator and the principle
techniques are conform with earlier sources but more in detail and above all it is im-
portant that he indicates the conflict in the encounter of the two religious systems.

2.3   The Christian Concept of God

This short outline serves to extract the basic structure of the Christian concept of god
that missionaries should have acknowledged and have in their minds. Internal devia-
tions among the multiple past reformation Christian churches cannot be treated here.
The Christian God is a trinity consisting of God Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit. It
is highlighted that it is one god. God Father has created the world and the first cou-
ple, from whom the whole mankind has descended. The Creator God made the world
in a willful act and is reminded by believers to have given the gift of life. Therefore
God expects devotion and thankfulness. The aspect of humbleness is enforced and
expanded through the Jesus complex. This refers to the execution of Jesus of

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6   this expression belongs to the mission strategy „to plant a church"

Nazareth ~2000 years ago and is the central event of Christendom. Men have guilt on the death of the Son of God and they blame themselves. That Jesus was not a normal human being was not recognized before he – so his first followers testify –resurrected three days after his crucifixion. In Christian interpretation the execution becomes an expiatory sacrifice through which the sins of men were taken away. That means the situation is turned around 180 degrees, God Father victimized his divine son, he permitted the martyrdom. This was the foundation of a new religion or a new branch of religion of the Jewish predecessor. The core of Christian belief is that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ sinful humans are reconciled to God and thereby are offered salvation and the prospect of eternal life. During collective worship believers are engaged to think about their guilt and reflect on their sins. That is how the aspect of humbleness comes into the action. The relation of Christians to their god is basically stamped by humbleness. When communicating with God, that is when praying, they should do it in a humble, devote, reverent manner.

3   The Relation of Men to God

3.1   Relation to Akuj in a Traditional Frame

3.1.1 Speech, Prayer, Petition to Akuj

The quality of the relationship between human beings and the recognized spiritual being finds its expression when they turn any action on the same. A deity with whom it is not possible to communicate makes no sense. Communication can be practiced verbally or non verbally in actions, simple or complex actions like a sacrifice.

The next step is to depict examples of communication to *Akuj* and comment on and interpret speech patterns. But those examples are rare. We are in the happy situation that Barrett shares some of his recorded prayers with us. Also Mirzeler has given us a comprehensive description of an event in Uganda with Jie and Turkana.

Mirzeler collected stories between 1995 and 2013 mainly among the Jie in Uganda. In 1996 he witnessed a conflict and peace treaty between Jie and Turkana, about which

he reports in detail. A group of Turkana came with their cattle herds on the plateau of the Uganda Escarpment and let their animals drink from the wells in the dry riverbed of Nangalol Apolon. The Turkana came every year, but that year rain failed even on the plateau and some Jie got nervous because of the scarce water resources. It came to open dispute and fighting. One Jie man was killed and several others were injured, because one Jie used his machine gun. At last the Jie elders managed the situation and led the counter parties to be willing to negotiate for peace. A convent to establish a peace contract was prepared. Therefore an elder, who was very popular because of his rhetoric skills, was brought from Turkana. Meanwhile Jie and Turkana women worked together in the fields. E. g. they harvested sorghum and brew the beer. Everyone, Jie and Turkana, men and women, exchanged small gifts. The elders of the wider neighbourhood were invited. Mirzeler mentions that a weak elder was carried on the back of a youngster for participation. Altogether Mirzeler describes all rites that I got to know about this kind of event:

- The ritual place (*akiriket*) is marked by green leaves of the tree called *esekon*, laid in a half circle. Along this half circle the elders are sitting on their *ekicolong* according to the seating arrangements of their initiation. An *ekicolong* is a wooden carving that serves as seat and as head rest.
- The ground, men, the spear and the sacrificial animal, an ox, are sprinkled with water. Water is a non verbal symbol, it makes »cool«.
- Group dances are performed. Dances belong to the cooling activities.
- Men put liquid made *emunyen* on their skin. *Emunyen* is white, grey or light blue coloured ochre. It is a non verbal symbol, effectfully making »cool«.
- A young man, who carries a spear, leads the ox four times around the *akiriket*.
- The oxen is killed with a spear and then cut into pieces.
- The undigested content of the stomach (*ngikujit*) is put aside. From this heap men take portions bit by bit – at first the eldest. *Ngikujit* is a non verbal symbol and most effective substance to strengthen someone, purify and make him

»cool«.

- Women bring sorghum beer that they have brewed.
- Speeches (*agata*) are delivered. The *agata* is foremost a motivation speech, it includes also petitions to *Akuj*. To whom it is addressed is not always revealed. The speaker stands in the middle with the spear in his hand, spearhead upwards. The listeners are sitting now as a gesture of respect, beside their *ekicolon* on the ground.

Mirzeler renders for us the petition (*agata)* of a Turkana participant in a monologue form. In advance of the petition the speaker praised *Akuj* and the man who donated the ox for their generosity. Then he names the ancestors, that were heard by *Akuj* before. Power distance from *Akuj* to humans is to be seen in a genealogical perspective. Of all living people the most senior has the best chance to be heard.

Iyong! Iyong, Akuj. Kingarakinae	You! You, Akuj. Help us
Akuj, nakinae akiyar, nakinae ngibaren, nakinae ngitunga; nakinae ngakipi; nakinae ekisil	Akuj, give us life, give us cattle, give us people, give us water; give us peace
Iyong Akuj, kiteyarae, nanae ngakipi	You Akuj, give life, give water
Akuj, akiring na kon tanyam	Akuj, this is your meat, eat it
Akuj, emon lo kon lo tanyam	Akuj, this is your ox, eat it
(Mirzeler 2014:173–184)	

First of all the addressing of the highly respected *Akuj* on eye level, calling him in direct speech 'you' is striking. Even if we note that only senior men are speaking - women and children do not appear at all - the desire is requested openly and directly. The verb *akingarakin*, that mostly is translated as to help, means in Ohta's dictionary at first to assist, then to support and at last to help. The connotation is different. If it's about assistance or support, the speaker is less small. He remains active and an autonomous part in the action. The man who prays is standing upright with a

spear in his hand. The spear is the status symbol of the initiated men, and to be ready to fight is an ideal in Turkana culture. Gulliver reports on Turkana ethics: "When someone comes (to attack you), fight." (Gulliver 1963:177)

In the second and third line the issues are named, I may say they are articulated in a nutshell. *Akuj* is spoken to as if he is a fellow man., only the desire is of higher dimension, of course *Akuj* is seen as the origin, the source of life.

The fourth and fifth lines make clear that it is a commensal occasion, a communal meal where *Akuj* is treated like an invited guest or friend. Everything is done to get him near and make him happy, with smoke, roasted meat, speeches, songs and dance.

The procedure of a rain ceremony is in principle the same as described above. Needless to say there are always distinctions and variants, for each feast is a unique event. The essential difference to the peace agreement lies in the preparation, to be exact in the choice of which animal has to be selected for sacrifice. A rain ceremony can be performed only when the *emuron*, who is a dreamer, an *emuron* of the head, receives the conditions from *Akuj.* These conditions concern e. g. the species and the color of the animal. Then an animal with those properties has to be found. That's why Barrett calls the rain ceremony a prophetic sacrifice, because the revelation of the conditions are necessary.

3.1.2 Mediators between Akuj and Turkana

In Turkana culture, there is an institution through which *Akuj* can send messages to people. These are the *ngimurok* (pl.), in the singular *emuron* (mask.) or *amuron* (fem.). The *emuron* , who derives his knowledge from *Akuj* in a dream, is the highest in the hierarchy of *ngimurok*. He is the only one who is able to initiate a rain ritual. Other *ngimurok* have a special ability to read and correctly interpret thrown sandals, tobacco leaves, intestines of a sacrificial animal, stones or other media.

Emuron is not a profession which is taught, but a vocation given by Akuij himself. Ngimurok are completely on their own to develop their skills. The answer to the

question Lines poses in the title of his work (who tells you that you are?) Barrett has already given:

> "Every prophet has been made by Akuij; they are all hierachically ordered depending on the type and eventual accuracy of their prediction, together with the final outcome. " (Barrett 1998: 134)

In practice, however, it is the case that the sons and daughters of an *emuron* assist their father or mother and gradually learn the craftsmanship know-how. For a calling then the blessing of the father is necessary.

If a person is ill and can not recover health through self-care, one can consult an *emuron*. He will learn from *Akuj* the cause of the disease and which healing treatment will bring improvement. In such cases, the causes are hidden, there are no obvious natural causes, but e.g. problems in social relationships that cause anger, heat and illness. The violation of social rules can upset *Akuj* or a fellow human being and make the rule breaker sick. The special ability of the *emuron* or the *amuron* is to recognize and name the problem and the cause of the disease through a dream or by means of an oracle. The utterance of the truth that comes from *Akuj* is an important act and is named in Turkana language: *alimor* (to speak the truth). This is considered the prophecy. If the identified causative agent is a human, he should express his anger, which makes him hot. The treatment takes several days. This will cool him down and if he is »cool«. he will then smear the patient with white clay (*emunyen*) and end the conflict. (Barrett 1998: 130-133)

In the last session the perpetrator speaks words like this:

Ngakaakiro daang nu angoit kang daang na.	These are all my words and this is all my anger.
Kidongo ngakaairo daang ne.	You my words, remain here.
Kidongo ngakiro daang na karonok nege.	You all my bad words, remain here.
Esal ne, nyikiriama nabo.	This is the end. We will not meet again.
Iyoong Akuj toesik ngakiro nguna.	You Akuj, leave those matters.

Akaangoit daang na epud ayong ne kalapatan na.	This is all my anger, and I 'revealed' it in the open space.
Alimo ayong akaaronis daang.	I told all my bad things.
(Barrett 1998:133)	

Comments on the prayer:

If necessary, the perpetrator (an ekapilan or an ekasuban) must be forced to perform this ritual of release because he is accused of using asocial practices, damage spells, or witchcraft. In advance of the treatment through an *emuron* he might be beaten by the elders. If a conflict can be solved in the described way, that is an ideal case. For the current purpose it is of importance that the prayer includes a demand on *Akuj* to leave those matters, which means not only that *Akuj* is involved but is the responsible power to effect or terminate the damage. At last it is *Akuj* who must forget the affair and stop any action against the suffering person. I don't want to conclude a general rule out of a single case, and additionally it is not said that *Akuj* is always called explicitly. The words could be spoken loudly that all beings of the spiritual world might hear them. Nevertheless *Akuj* is the highest or remotest instance when solving those human conflicts.

3.2 Communication with Akuj in the context of a Christian Church

3.2.1 General Observations

An outstanding distinction are the regular gatherings according to the calendar of a Christian parish in a church building. Christians prefer to worship inside of a house. Wherever they found a new parish, sooner or later a church house made of stones is built. The architecture helps to create a reverential atmosphere for the worship. Whereas in a traditional context people turn to *Akuj* when there is a concrete need and they do it in the open air, either in the homestead (*awi*) of an *emuron* or under the shadow tree of the men or in the bush. The immigrants initiate the construction of churches, school houses, hospitals, shops, administration and residential buildings.

The imported economic and social structures and institutions express themselves in the architecture, the whole industrial inventory has to be transported to Turkana County. Kakuma e. g. has grown from a place were about one hundred persons (incl. school children) lived in 1979 to a town with 180,000 inhabitants after the turn of the millennium. Next to Kakuma are the refugee camp with about 200,000 residents and Africa's largest school with 20,000 pupils at the summit. The population growth of Turkana people raised from about 240,000 in 1979 to an estimated one million in 2014. (KNBS 2017: 5. Table 3.2)

Since the 1990s a large number of mission societies have become active in Turkana County. There are mass baptisms performed. Entire communities, Lines speaks of villages, are baptized in one day. The inhabitants of the same hope for the construction of a hospital or a school or other social projects.

The diversity of Christian churches is present through Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Methodist, Gospel, Quaker and diverse mission societies. We find multiple organizations trying to convince the Turkana. None of them documents their conditions for baptizing or liturgy. The two extreme positions are a Gospel choir which performs a caricature of the Turkana lifestyle and a Kenyan couple who wants to make the whole of Turkana a "Buffer Zone of Truth" and works in a business manner. Most websites and video films describe welfare projects that deal about water supply and gardening.

Women, as in the previous century, seem to make up the majority of parishioners of the churches. There are numerous video contributions made available via the youtube internet service. The high proportion of women, especially in conservative organizations, is due to the requirement of monogamous marriage. Men who are married to more than one woman are not baptized. Since women are married to only one man the admission into the church is no obstacle. But when it comes to occupying positions that are socially relevant, they are not eligible They participate actively in the Mass celebrations and that is more than they are conceded in the context of indige-

nous religious practice that are a community affair. When a big meat festival is held, like the peace agreement or a rain ritual, they are involved in the preparations, but otherwise stay away from the men's festival place. They have their own place where they sing and dance. Dance and song can become very fast, loud, shrill and ecstatic here. This is different in the church events especially during worship.

The service of worship of the different christian churches is prescribed in self given and accepted protocols or liturgies. The worship or Masses that I have attended followed the Roman Catholic liturgy that is prescribed by the Vatican. It has four main parts: Introductory rites, liturgy of the Word, liturgy of the Eucharist and concluding rites. It begins with the advent of the priest in the church room and ends when he leaves the church room. The so called 'Penitential Act', the confession of guilt and sins, belongs to the first part. In the second part texts from the bible were accounted and explained. This was done by a catechist whose mother-tongue is Ngaturkana. The third, the Eucharist part, is the most important of the whole ceremony and begins with the so called 'preparation of the gifts'. This is accompanied by an alms giving collection. The practice is that a collection plate (sac or basket) is given from one person to the neighbouring person that everyone is demanded but not openly forced to give something. When I stayed at Kakaerongole I wondered that in the small and poor community a collection took place. After the communion the thanksgiving is an obligatory act. The Mass terminates with a blessing of the gathered people.

The Catholic and protestant churches generally perform the collection in the described manner. The handling in other denominations might be distinct. Whether in Turkana parishes nowadays a collection of money during the worship at church is practiced evades my observation. It seems to be treated as a minor matter, but it is of course a remarkable point because the indigenous Turkana parishers are faced with a system of contribution and reciprocity which differ from their own traditions. Every traveller or newcomer to Turkana County is confronted with the outstanding habit of the Turkana to request openly for things. Already Gulliver - with the help of his ac-

companying wife - found out what the basic contrary point is. Western Christian persons are not allowed to ask for a present. When an informant came to Philipp Gulliver asking what he will get for his help in the past Pamela Gulliver hit the point of a cultural conflict when she interfered.

> My wife told him that he must wait and see, for in our country one did not ask for presents, but if one was a friend one was given them in due course. "Oh, we do not do that" he replied immediately, "we ask for what we want or we do not get anything." "But", said my wife, "no-one ever gives us presents in return for those that we give out". "Well, you should ask for them" was his answer. It is an obligation to give, and the European is in a disadvantage because he has so much to give. (Gulliver 1963: 9)

From childhood on the individual has to learn how to deal with the demands from others and how to articulate his or her own needs. Gulliver reviews his experiences and states that

> A general relationship based on past assistance creates a sense of mutual assistance, not accurately assessed or clearly considered. It is not an obligation to return the help or the gift. (Gulliver 1963: 9)

Mutual assistance is also personalized by giving gifts with which friendship are made. Among friends the value of the counter gift is not measured.

> The relationship and the attitude is the thing that matters, not the strict or even the general accounting of equalities. (Gulliver 1963: 9)

Later researchers affirm Gulliver's assessment of mutual help as a common habit but move the focus to an expected return gift in the future. Already Gulliver introduces the term 'reciprocity' when he writes:

> There is of course an element of reciprocity in all this, although usually the reciprocal gift comes from a third party, who begs from a fourth and so on. Thus ornaments, for example, change hands continually. (Gulliver 1963: 9)

Schultz and Scholz interviewed Turkana women living at a quarter of Lodwar. These women account that they maintain mutual assistance in friendship relations as they have formerly experienced in a pastoral community. Even though they regret that friendship in a town place is not as reliable and long lasting as in the pastoral com-

munity. (Schultz & Scholz 1994) Referring to Gulliver's descriptions and Sahlins' theoretical approach Schultz (1996) interprets the social dimension of mutuality as 'generalized reciprocity' that functions as a kind of insurance to cope with future risks of life support as there are drought, diseases and raids.

Juma, a Christian educated researcher coming from Wellington, Australia, cautions us that a change in perspective concerning the term 'reciprocity' would be necessary.

> The concept of reciprocity is an important and often overlooked aspect of Turkana survival, but it is an essential aspect of their ability to survive their environment. To fully appreciate reciprocity in Turkana society, one must abandon western notions of the concept. Although westerners may value the concept, they do not practice it to the extent that the Turkana do during a crisis. The western/agrarian ideal of saving seems contradictory to the practice of reciprocity in the Turkana District. Reciprocity is an intimate part of the social fabric of nomadic Turkana culture. It is altruistic behaviour and its benefits outweigh the costs. In Turkana, the cost, or risk, of not reciprocating is social ostracism. Generally, the act of reciprocity is uniformly adhered to in Turkana culture, and a herd owner can be confident that a gift (cost) today will probably yield a greater needed gift-in-return (benefit) at some point in the future. (Juma 2009: 209)

Juma's understanding of 'reciprocity' is not clear. First he calls the Turkana style an altruistic behaviour and contrary to western notions of the concept but in his conclusion Juma speaks of reciprocity as other (western) authors do and he thinks of a greater return gift in the future. Juma has a theoretical preference for a utilitarian scheme:

> The social exchange theory is a utilitarian scheme for the study of human behaviour. It assumes that people always behave rationally to maximize gain. It emphasizes the fact that people behave according to anticipated rewards, and, where faced with competing choices, they will choose the option which carries the higher rewards. The rewards could be material things, or they could be purely social and psychological such as acceptance, prestige, sympathy, praise or esteem. (Juma 2009: 49).

Though when he describes the Turkana habit or renders what his informants taught him he uses other words like sharing and mutuality:

> Respondents explained that an individual's network consists of people who share food, exchange livestock, discuss future plans, share

information, make decisions and engage in mutually affectionate la-
bour. (Juma 2009: 23)

3.2.2 Imparting with a chant

As in European tradition *Akuj* is praised in a Christian church in hymns. As early as 1975, Barrett and Ruhnau put together a collection of songs in a booklet titled "KIPURO AKUJ". From this collection I will now introduce one song which includes central items. I use the word lists of Best 1983, Barrett 1988 and Ohta 1989 for com-pared translations. The outstanding feature of Best's work is that he provides sample sentences in an appendix. Barrett's volume strikes for its scope and Ohta's collection is organized in semiotic groups and contains sometimes additional hints to the meanings.

The title of the song booklet contains the verb *akipur* which can be translated as to smoke, to season or to praise. When a wooden container has been carved, at last glowing charcoal or firewood is put inside finishing the work. This is done for conser-vation. It gives the milk or fat or whatever content a typical flavour. As seen before it is said that *Akuj* likes also the smell of the smoke and comes close to the ceremonial place when the smoke of the firewood or of roasted meat is in the air. Barrett places in his English-Turkana Dictionary the verb *akipur* for a translation of to thank, but that's not satisfying, because the first given explanations are in the sense of making compliments or to make happy another person and the underlying emotions of thank point to a different direction. Unless the action of thanking is understood as an enter-tainment to the adressed person one could use *akipur* in a translation.

The chosen song gives several epithets for the term *Akuij*:

After each line, the refrain given below is sung by everyone.

1	Akuj ekasuban yokko	Akuj our creator
2	Akuj ekapolon yokko	Akuj our big man
3	Akuj Apa yokko	Akuj our father
4	Ikale ka Akuja	goat kid of Akuj
5	Yesu ekeyokon yokko	Jesus our shepherd

6	Etau lo a nakuja	This heart of Akuj
	Akibuses toyaiya	Be with us holiness
Chorus:	kidyama nakuja	Akuj above in the sky
	ekisila nakwapa	peace on earth

1.) In the first line *Akuj* is called *ekasuban,* and this is the most confusing epithet for Christians, because this might be someone who works with secret ritual practices and usually does not have anything good in mind. The stem of the word is *sub* and the verb is *akisub*. It is translated as to do or to make, also to mould. The application of this verb covers a broad spectrum. According to Ohta one may use *akisub* for a craft job - and it can be used when meaning to repair something - as well as to use ritual practice. *Akisub akimiet* means to make oil (butter). As far as I know it is done by shaking the cream in a container to separate fat from water. *Akisub etic* means to work (lit. to do a work or to do a duty). *Esubete ngitunga taara* means they killed people by curse or sorcery. (Lines 2014:297)

An *ekasuban* is someone who knows secret techniques and it is he alone who knows the carefully hidden practices. In the human world they are hidden because they are malevolent and the *ekasuban* is punished when detected. Otherwise it is told that he has clients and it is an open secret who it is. Lines asked his interview partners what they think of an *ekasuban*. "Research participants consistently described the *ekasuban* as an *emuron* who deviates from the ways of his father and from God because of jealousy." (Lines 2014: 160) This answer might be already a reaction to the recent critiques. Nevertheless we may extract that an *emuron* is able to use his skills for healing a person as well as to harm or even to kill a person. The association to compare the creator god with an *ekasuban* is the use of unknown techniques, because Christians do not know how God realized the creation out of nothing or how did God speak.

The purpose of the Christian Mission in the song is to transport the image of the Christian creator of the world, and this creator has particular qualities. There is an-

other song that lists what *Akuj* has created. It states: *asubi Akuj kidyama, asubi Akuj nakwapa, Akuj* created the sky, *Akuj* created the earth (the land). In Christian theology God produced the world out of nothing (*ex nihilus*) in a willful act ready to use for human beings. God as a creator has rights on his product. The Christian God is the owner of the world and has given life. For the gift of life God expects thankfulness.

2.) The *ekapolon* is an important man, who has detailed knowledge of the customs, a leader in communal rituals, a herd owner, mostly someone who is successful concerning herd management or a brilliant orator, always an elder. He enjoys a high social status in his community, he is the most senior elder.

3.) In Christian mind when God is called 'father' the focus is set on the social role of a father as head of the family, authority and provider. When Turkana say that *Akuj* is their father (*apa*), then there is a long, unspecific line of ancestors connoted, because *Akuj* is the oldest of all seniors, the first in genealogy, the most powerful authority. When a Christian prayer speaks to God as the 'almighty father', it matches with the Turkana imaginings referring the aspect of authority although *Akuj* is not an absolutist autocrat as God is in Christian imaginings.

4.)The fourth line compares Jesus Christ with a goat kid: *ikale,* because God Father sacrificed his kid. The Christian complex is brought into a Turkana context where a he goat or a ram is the usual offering.

5.) The shepherd, *ekeyokon*, is the one who takes daily care of the herd leading it to the pasture and water. The parish is compared with an animal herd like in European tradition.

6.) The heart, *etau,* is a metaphor that expresses depth. The deepest point in a river is called the heart of the river. (Ohta 1989: 70) This metaphor was found in search for a translation for the aspect of the Holy Spirit. Missionaries avoid speaking about other spirits as there are the spirits of the ancestors and other unspecific spirits, the *ngipean*. A single of the latter is known as *ekipe* who is in service for *Akuj* and executes punishments. The role and relationship to *Akuj* or whether *ekipe* is autonomous is not

well known. But it is sure that *ekipe* is dangerous for humans. On the other side, the Holy Spirit is characterized explicitly by its peaceful mind. By those means a construction like the "Holy Ekipe" would not be acceptable. Since the Holy Spirit is localized inside of the Christian person and to emphasize the peaceful attitude of the Christian person the construction of *etau ngolo ebusan* was built as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit of the Christian trinity. More critically to be considered is, whether there is a word to express the state of holiness at all. No place, no object, no person was recognized that stresses the state and feelings of what is meant by Christians with holiness. The substitute word *ebusan* that was chosen, expresses the state of beauty.

Missionaries have always had to learn the foreign languages in order to articulate and teach verbally the meaning of their symbols. Again and again they create their usual and required structures. The above samples belong to a period where first experiences were made after the reforming conclusions of the Second Vatican Council.

3.2.3 Missionary Positions

At this point it would be useful to introduce key concepts of the strategies of Christian mission theology and how they are reflected by missionaries who are or have been working among the Turkana. The key terms are: incarnation, inculturation, interculturation, contextualization and giftive mission. The stated concern of any Christian church or missionary society is the proclamation of the 'Good News'. So we have to ask what this Good News is. Bassols explains that the Good News signifies the proclamation of the reign of God, which is an absolute value and is the measure for everything else. This good news of the reign of God has a very concrete content in the liberation of people from everything that is a burden on them. At the heart and centre, according to official church documents, this means liberation from sin and from evil. (Bassols 2012:133) The significant church documents are *Nostra Aetate* and *Ad Gentes* from 1965 and *Evangelii nuntiandi* from 1975 which all result from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and are directives in the Catholic Church. They stand for an opening and adjusting of the church to globalism and multicultural Christianity.

Thereafter missionary practices stand on a test-bench. Missionaries themselves think about their situation and reflect about their work in meetings, journals and academic works. The above key terms indicate states of reflection and differ according to the degree of involvement of the proselytized disciples in the process of Christianization, and whether there is a return flow to the active mission church.

The term 'incarnation' was used in the scripture *Ad Gentes* to express the idea that the knowledge of the Gospel has to 'become flesh' in the various foreign cultures. This should be done with 'profound adaptation' of the indigenous religious customs and engaged missionaries to study them. Like Barrett who wrote a booklet titled "Incarnating the Church in Turkana", which alas was not available to me. Instead I consult Grenham who is like Barrett a member of St. Patrick's mission society and lived ten years in Turkana County. He describes why in a missio-theological discourse incarnation was soon accompanied by the term 'inculturation'. The link was seen in the experience that religious practices are embedded in a local culture.

> Inculturation summoned Christian missionaries everywhere to move beyond a mere adaptation of the gospel. That is to say, the gospel was envisaged as cultureless - as something that could be transplanted from one culture to another impervious of the deep structures of meaning that diverse cultures embrace. (Grenham 2001:191)

The scripture *Nostra Aetate* contains declarations concerning non-Christian religions and claimed that the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in those religions. It is now assumed that in each culture, respective religion, self-revelations of God are present. In dialogue with indigenous actors, the missionaries should recognize the signs and symbols that are consistent with Christian doctrine and incorporate them into the practice of faith. The goal is therefore no longer the one-sided indoctrination, but the mutual enrichment. (s. Grenham 2005: 52-53)

The term 'interculturation' was coined by Bishop Joseph Blomjous to promote the ideas of mutuality and partnership in the process of inculturation. (Grenham 2002: 45) Grenham puts great hope in the new method:

> Being open to diverse cultures and religions will evoke a third element in their missionary work; the realization that missionaries could be changed or transformed. This transformation will be mutual and reciprocal within a paradigmatic process of respectful intercultural and interreligious interaction toward gospel vision. This is a model of interculturation. Such a concept challenges previous methods of assimilation, adaptation, and inculturation. Interculturation proposes to respect the deep structures of meaning embraced by diverse cultures and religions, especially among African peoples. (Grenham 2002: 44)

Grenham is much impressed by the live-giving capacities of Turkana indigenous religion. Everyone who is of goodwill is

> summond to reconstruct their lives, cultures, and religious world views to reflect a universal live-giving vision symbolised for Christians in God's reign (Gospel) revealed through Jesus Christ. (Grenham 2005: 16)

The term 'contextualization' derived from outside the Catholic Church as a perspective of the poor. According to Bassols this position is called a theology from below. It initiated discussions since it was a subject at a meeting of the World Mission Conference of the World Council of Churches 1973 in Bangkok. When the term became more popular it was developed in diverse forms and directions. Lines for example restricts the meaning of context to the religious or cultural context:

> First, contextualization is a process that looks at a specific form in a local context and then asks the question, "Can this form be adapted for Christian use?" Comparative theology moves beyond this in asking, "Can the current contextual religious understanding not only be considered as compatible with Christian understanding, but also instructive for deepening the Christian understanding?" This is not a process that is only concerned with fitting Christian faith into context, but is concerned with bringing the context into the Christian faith. (Lines 2014: 24)

Lines, like others, fades out socio-economic problems of livelihood. Bassols prefers the position of the contextual theology in the sense that it changes the perspective and takes the point of view of the poor. It meets the conflict that missionaries should bring a scripture to a people that is in need of nutriment, water, rain, medicine. Inculturation and interculturation remain often in the cultural sphere fading out the physical problems of livelihood. (Bassols 2012: 47)

In their theoretical approaches Grenham, part of the Catholic discourse, and Lines,

working with diverse other denominations, meet each other when Lines speaks about giftive missiology referring to Muck & Adeney:

> Giftive mission moves away from witness based on coercion, fear, competition, marketing and one-way transactions, toward witness based on meeting needs, hope, relationship and two-way giving/receiving (Muck and Adeney 2009:273). This is a powerful metaphor that allows Christians to freely seek the ways that God is already at work in a specific context as they share the story of Jesus. We learn from others in our mission. We have gifts to offer them and they have gifts to offer us. (Lines 2014: 42)

But distrust seems to be always present when he visits the homesteads of potential interview partners.

> This perspective of the church causing the division led quickly to suspicion for one emuron: "It is the people of the church who are digging into, undermining, speaking ill (ebokete) of the ngimurok. The ngimurok are not speaking ill of the church. The church wants to snatch/steal (ademar) the traditions from very long ago and teach their own traditions". {Lines 2014: 225–226}

Lines whose motivation is a rehabilitation of the *ngimurok* against reproaches to work with satanic or demonic forces adds the theory of an 'ontic expansion' to his approach to provide insights to 'the missionaries own western exegetical blind spots' through the perspective of the *ngimurok*:

> If there are positive ways that God has used Turkana ngimurok in their communities, and some of the ngimurok have accepted faith in Jesus, how can the truth of God, from a ngimurok perspective expand our own understandings of God? (Lines 2014: 44)

I would like to end this brief outline with a comment on a word from Bassols. He states that not only does Christianity decisively shape the cultures it meets, it is also complemented by contact with these cultures. What he means is that the religious ceremony could be transformed into its expression. First, it must be said that any supplements taken from a local culture to a Christian practice is geographically limited. Even in Turkana County there might be regional differences. It depends on an administrative disposition. A return flow is locally limited. Second, and that's very important, the Christian core complex is not touched at all! That means e. g. the live-giving as-

pect must be implemented into the story of Jesus. Third, if the expression of faith has been transformed, I mean if it is not a superficial change of the performance, but really a transformation, then the transformation of a relationship and an attitude must have been processed in advance. When Bassols positions himself at the side of the poor he expresses more respect and tolerance than other missionaries do. From an anthropologist point of view even poverty itself is 'a matter of perspective'. Müller-Dempf points out that Ngaturkana orginally has no word for being poor. The economic status is measured whether someone has many, few or no animals, whereby cattle is of most importance. He states:

> I rarely found people in Turkana, who would perceive themselves as really poor, although in terms of most poverty definitions they surely would qualify for this label. (Müller-Dempf 2014: 7)

Furthermore he concludes "that western concepts of poverty do not necessarily match local perceptions". The self-perception indicates in my own view the mood of a person which is influenced through habitual practice and at last originates in the conception of god or cosmology.

4   What we have learned

4.1   About the Conception of God

The first instance was to highlight the subtle differences between the indigenous and the Christian imagination of a deity. The differences are obscured by the use of the generic term *akuj* in the Christian churches.

I assumed that the intention how people act and the underlying mental constitution are implicit in the concept of god or the concept of cosmology. The abstract conceptions were to explore to show the links between ideas, attitudes and behaviour.

Now I give an overview in a table that is not complete because it goes beyond the scope of this article. I cut off the complexes of reconciliation, of ownership, "magic" and more; all these items are a topic on its own. I regard fundamental properties with

regard to the consequences on the believers' behaviour.

Christian God	Akuj
almighty Creator God (owner)	source-being, continously
gave earth to humans	initiator of processes
Holy Trinity (defined)	spirit world (unsharp, mingled)
authority (omnipotent)	authority (omnipotent)
only good	ekasuban (uses unknown techniques)
expects regular devotion	is turned to when in need
guilt-giving	life-giving
order to reflect sins	people deliver dances
offerings, sacrifice, scapegoat	commensal meal, also sacrifice, to make Akuj happy
expects thankfulness (debt of gratitude)	'/,
expects humbleness, self-abasement	do not quarrel, don't cry (when anticipating rain)
patience in crisis, sickness, martyrdom	release, end of crisis or sickness
after death: resurrection and judgement, return to the creator	after death a human becomes an ancestor spirit, return to the source

Van der Jagt concludes his analysis of the Turkana symbol structure with the cognizance that *Akuj* is a source-being. This means in other words that *Akuj* is live giving in the sense of giving force, energy or power. People are strengthened to overcome sickness; animals are strengthened to overcome the attacks of a witch or to overcome a drought. This is done in particular rites. Barrett states: "*Akuj* causes things to be cool." We may say *Akuj* causes the rain to fall, *Akuj* causes the grass to grow, causes children or animals to grow. These aspects lead us to recognize *Akuj* as a causative power or force that initiates processes continuously.

When we see *Akuj* as an initiator of processes we are able to interpret the statement of the origin of the Turkana people in a distinct way. The above given statement was:

"The High God created the Turkana and all other tribes, but since he especially loves the Turkana, he gave them a lot of cows, goats, camels, sheep and donkeys, so that they always have enough food to eat and milk to drink."

The origin of the Turkana is historically remembered that it took place about three-hundred years ago. So it was *Akuj* who initiated the split off from the Jie. The group that became the Turkana decided to live on animals, because in this semi-arid region agriculture is less possible than in the land of the Jie. The animals were not given in the way that they appeared on its own grazing peacefully in the landscape waiting for the herdsmen. With the guidance of an *emuron* who received dreams from *Akuij* the animals - historically in particular the camels which were not in possession before - had to be raided from neighbouring ethnic groups. In respect to the relation between *Akuj* and Turkana, *Akuj* "gave" to the Turkana unconditionally animals and only for one reason: because *Akuj* loves them.

When we regard the world not as ready for use but in a permanent and dynamic development where always cause and effect take place, we regard the world in processes. This world view in processes, multiple causes and effects, is mirrored in the Ngaturkana grammar. Each verb can be easily transformed into a mode of a causative expression. This is done by inserting a syllable into the verb. This syllable is called 'causative marker' and is a prefix to the stem of the verb. Ngaturkana has two classes of verbs known as class 1 and class 2 according to Dimmendaal or TO class and KI class according to Heine due to the prefix of the imperative form. Three examples show how the causative verb is built: 1.- *amasi* = I drink; *e**ta**masi* = I cause to drink (e.g. the animals at the well). 2.- *egoro* = I cry; *e**si**gori* = I cause to cry. 3.- *akitam* = to think; *aki**ta**tam* = to cause to think or to teach.

Barrett makes an illustrative example which refers to a custom. After the death of a herd owner, his eldest son has to take animals out of the herd for consumtion:

> *Kesicumanakinete*: 'they will cause me to kill for them frequently' (literal translation). There is a mortuary ceremony called *Ngakisicumanakinet*: to cause to kill often for the purpose of wiping away tears of bereavement.

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Ke-    (prefix) :      action being done to me
-si-   (infix)  :      causative
-cum- (stem)   :      stem of the verb to spear
-an-   (infix)  :      frequently
-akin- (infix)  :      for the purpose
-ete   (suffix) :      they are doing something
(Barrett 1988: xi)
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The causative formation seems to be a common feature in distinct Nilotic languages which have two morphological classes. (s. Dimmendaal 1983: 196) Linguistic special-ists like Dimmendaal might see the causative formation as a morphological issue. An-thropologists might value this grammatical phenomenon as an inherent aspect of a culture specific world view.

4.2   About Thankfulness, Solidarity and Dignity

When I discovered Barrett's English-Turkana Dictionary in the library, I was interested to look up what periphrases for 'to thank' would be offered in it. Although Barrett's dictionary is a pioneer work in its scope it lacks hints to the context wherein a term is used. Again I compared with the word lists of Best and Ohta and made an overview in the following table:

English	Best, 1983	Barrett, 1988	Ohta, 1989
to enjoy		aminakin **alakar**	to feel pleased: **alakara**
gratitude		**alakara, akipuro**kinet (also compliment)	
joy	**alakara**	**alakara**, apwatuna, eletilet, **akipuro**	
to delight		akitalakar	**alakara**
to entertain		akitalakar	**alakara**
to play merrily, to play loudly			**alakara**
to praise	**akipur**	**akipur,** (also to smoke)	akikut, (also to encourage, to blow)

English	Best, 1983	Barrett, 1988	Ohta, 1989
			akipur (also to envy, to season)
to thank; thank		**akipur**, akikut; **alakara**, **akipuro**	**alakara**

There are two terms that occur repeatedly with several meanings: 'akipur' and 'alakara'. The verb *akipur* was already mentioned in chapter 3.2.2. To place the verb *akipur* for a translation of to thank, is shaky, because the first given explanations are in the sense of making compliments or to make another person happy. To make someone happy with compliments in a humble position means that the addressed person enjoys the humbleness of the other. In the Christian case thank is a part of an exchange and limits or even suppresses joy or happiness by the demand of humility on the side of the receiver. The term *alakara* is given for joy and for thank. There is no need to prove that joy and thank express different emotions. The task is to show the details that build the mental constitution in order to detect the differences in the Turkana and Christian long-lasting moods which are the base when people must cope with the conditions of life. I will examine the relevant symbolic acts in the liturgy and compare it with the norm of social action in the culture of the Turkana.

The underlying emotions of thank or gratitude - I use these two terms synonymously - are more complex than joy. I take joy as an elementary emotion. A person who has got what he was asking for feels joy or at least easement, relief. When he directs his attention to the donor he might feel a kind of closeness or affinity to that person. In the case of a simple transfer, thank arises from joy and adds an emotion of social connectedness. To put the case in an easy formula: thank is joy plus connectivity. I assume both, joy and thank, as integral parts of human nature. The sentiment or the feeling of gratitude is probably a universal phenomenon. The obligation to do so is already a culture-specific add on. The next step is to explore how the emotion of thank becomes a debt of gratitude.

In Christian practice thanksgiving is institutionalized in the liturgy. We find two arguments and two symbolic gestures which explain and train thanksgiving. To start with the gestures we see in many Christian churches the so called 'alms collection' during the third part, the liturgy of the Eucharist. When the priest at the altar prepares the wafers and the wine for the consecration a collection plate or a collection sac passes round from one person given to the neighbouring person. Although it is not prescribed in an order of Mass, it is rather a custom that is practiced since the first century of Christendom onward. In some churches not only money but also other gifts are collected and displayed. The second symbolic action is a prayer at the end of the Eucharist part after the communion. The symbolic act of thanksgiving is a spoken prayer or is sung as a common song. There are utterances of thanksgiving throughout the whole celebration but this one after communion is a standard. The faithful thank God for the offering of Jesus Christ.[7]

The first theoretical arguments for a collection are the economic need of the self-organization of the parish and the support of the poor. Later, a second theological argument occurs and added the idea of an exchange between god and men.

Two succinct self-descriptions, one from a Catholic parish and the other from a representative of a Protestant church, bring the reason for the custom to the point.

The St. Mary Catholic Church in Washington DC gives us the following explanation of the offertory:

> The Offertory, or Collection, at Mass is an integral part of the Sunday liturgy, not just because it is the primary means by which the parish receives financial support from the parishioners, but because it is also an expression of our gratitude to God for the blessings He has given us to return a portion of them back to Him for use by His Church. (Saint Mary Parish, 176 Washington St., East Walpole)

In the above cited view are two offerings already assumed. First God offered his divine son Jesus, and during the service of devotion the disciples offer in return in a collection act. Reverend Margevicius looks back to the roots of Christianity when he

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7   The offering of Jesus Christ is the core of what is called the 'whole work of salvation'.

gives a sample out of the third century when everyone, the rich and the poor, were expected to contribute something to the celebration:

> The preparation of the gifts is also called the "offertory," and it assumed great importance in the early church.
> St. Cyprian, martyred in Africa in 258, chided those who came to Mass and received the Eucharist but made no offering of their own: "You are wealthy and rich, and do you think that you celebrate the Lord's Supper, not at all considering the offering? Who comes to the Lord's Supper without a sacrifice, and yet take part of the sacrifice which the poor man has offered? (Rev. Thomas Margevicius)

From one of the Early Fathers of the church it is known that he added the metaphor of an exchange between the congregation and their god.

> St. Augustine was impressed by a fifth-century procession of gifts in Rome in which the faithful brought from their own homes things from their kitchen tables.
> Augustine called this an "admirable exchange" — for their gifts God gave back Jesus. The prayer over the gifts from the sixth day in the octave of Christmas uses Augustine's language: "Lord, receive our gifts in this wonderful exchange: from all you have given us we bring you these gifts, and in return, you give us yourself."(Rev. Thomas Margevicius)

According to Enders, Augustine of Hippo defines the relation between god and man as a debt relation. Man received from god that they are and what they are. Man is the receiver and god is the one who gives. It is the duty of the receiver to return what he once had received. (Enders 2004: 401)

During the centuries the 'alms collection' has become a symbolic gesture for the acceptance of the duty to give always something in return, and the symbolic gesture of thanksgiving got the meaning of the acknowledgement of an open debt. Thus the quality of the relationship has been manifested as a reciprocal relation.

Now, what happens with a Christian disciple who is poor and experiences regularly that he cannot fulfil the expectations of the church leaders and the wealthy members. Because he cannot pay with money or other gifts, the more he pays in the currency of honor and dignity. At this point the expectation of humbleness takes effect and leads the poor person into an iteration of increasing debt, degrading and increasing hum-

bleness. The self-esteem of the person is going to be destroyed. This is the situation in a conservative application of the Christian doctrines which differ in detail from one denomination to another by their own choice and self-organization. Within the cited publications of van der Jagt and Barrett about the Turkana indigenous religion, there is no indication of an institutionalized thanksgiving to be found. The meaning of gratitude or thank to the nouns *alakara* and *akipur* is additional to their original meanings. The missionaries are in the situation that they must find words for something that is not present in the foreign culture.

From the point of philosophy of the Turkana social tradition people are thankful in the way to answer with loyalty or sympathy and the willingness to help others at any time for ones means and capacities.

The answer to the question why there is no need for a duty to return something is because it is an obligation to give. Everyone is giving as well as everyone is asking for something. The social norm of giving provides the motivation and general order of existence. In times of crisis the scope of the social norm of giving, in an other word solidarity, is valid in the whole of Turkana society. Everyone is asked for food who has a surplus or is expected to have a surplus. Social cohesion is built upon the obligation to give and not upon the duty of the receiver to return something. But at the same time the rule is limited by the availabilities of the people to give. In a large scale drought since that of 1980 and later ones it is hard to find families who still have enough to eat. Then someone who has allies in a remote region is better off than someone who has none. The social norm of giving fosters the distribution of all available food. But the growth of population density limits the chance to get a share of it.

Generally in a society exists more than one system of transactions simultaneously that contain the rules for different social and economic situations. The lecture of the present descriptions taken together with my personal experience lead to the recognition of three transaction systems in Turkana traditional culture: altruistic giving, mutual sharing and selling.

The first is a social norm that contains the longing for food, that is traditionally milk, porridge, meat and blood. Best depicts that every Turkana can theoretically oppose the assignment of its property, with only one exception: the food: *akimuj*. The social norm requires that a hungry person may partake in a meal; the "*nakanai (akiring) atonyam*" ("give me (meat) to eat") must not be ignored,[…]. (Best 1978:74) Best has given the fundamental rule in a recorded statement:

> Ani kelal akimuj na imuji iyong, nyipuko itwaan ni kilipi yong akimuj epewai.
> If you are eating food and you have enough, you must never refuse a person
> who asks you for some.(Best 1983: 60, T 137)

Because in this case is no counter gift expected, I speak of altruistic giving. Schultz for example referring to Sahlins, speaks of a 'generalized reciprocity'. The argument in the idea of reciprocity concerning the motivation to give is that in future will come - potentially from another person - something in return. Gulliver, Schultz and Juma who consider social behaviour in their researches, do not differentiate between asking for food and asking for ornaments and other utilities. This differentiation is rather a moral compass[8] than observable behaviour. These authors mark a threshold from giving small utilities to the giving of animals.

The described fundamental rule glides easily into the next level of an explicitly personalized social network which is practiced with affinal relatives and in the neighbourhood. Alternate food sharing is a custom in the *adakar*, the neighbourhood in a rural pastoral community. Juma affirms the maintenance of the custom:

> Informants pointed out that neighbourhoods act as a corporate system
> whereby members share food such as meat, milk, and grain in adverse ecologi-
> cal conditions. For example, heads of households would slaughter animals in
> turn and share meat with all members of the neighbourhood. (Juma 2009: 167)

A family that owns large herds will call their neighbours more often for a meal than a family with less animals. Beside food sharing friendship is initiated with small gifts like ornaments or utilities. Within these friendship relations there is mutual assistance like

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8 or in a larger scope an ethic maxim

working together and support in social conflicts of great importance. Schultz and Juma interpret these personal relations as reciprocal. Because the term 'reciprocity' contains multiple variants of concepts and to point out the diversity of cultural solutions how to organize inter human relations, I prefer to speak of mutual sharing or mutual assistance. The characteristics of this special "reciprocity" or 'mutual sharing' are the durability of the relation and that the value of the given things are not calculated whether they are higher or lower or equal or even single sided for a longer period. The relation is based on sympathy, patience and trust. We remember what Gulliver said: It is the attitude that matters.

Mutual assistance is also important when a man must gather animals to pay a compensation for marriage or other reasons. Negotiations between the two parties of the suitor and of the bride about the amount of animals contains already the agreements of distribution among the bride's party. The transfer of the stock of marriage takes place when the guests arrived at the homestead of the suitor where the animals are gathered and each ox, cow and camel is handed over individually before an audience of witnesses.

> Each head of cattle is struck ceremonially with the stick and driven to the gate of the homestead. The man doing this calls out the type of animal, and this is relayed to the waiting bride's family, where the father agrees to accept it and states to whom it is to go. (Gulliver 1963: 211)

The stock of marriage is distributed among the relatives of the bride after the animals are transferred and the marriage oxen is speared.

> The bride-wealth is widely distributed among patrilineal and matrilineal lineages to establish and strengthen kinship between affinals, as well as to establish bonds of marital status between the bride and bridegroom; and the legitimacy of the children conceived in and born out of the union. (Juma 2009: 131)

This custom is still practiced preconditioned that animals are available.

Further on Juma points out that Turkana make a difference between giving for the reason of solidarity and a transaction for the economic reason of herd management. The latter is compared with buying and selling something. This is what I recognized

as another third system of transaction:

> In Turkana society, there is a difference between 'asking' (akilip) for an animal and 'exchanging' (akilokony) an animal. When a man 'asks' for an animal, "he simply asks for it". For example, he might say, "my children are hungry and I need a milking cow". In such cases, "you do not tell the man you will give him something later". To exchange (akilokony), one goes to a man who is known to have a surplus of the wanted or needed animals; if both parties are willing, an exchange is made. "Exchanging is like buying something" and both parties are mutual beneficiaries. Akilokony is a way to increase or diversify the herds. (Juma 2009:209)

The western-Christian culture complex is dominated by reciprocity and contribution characterized by the duty of the recipient to give something in return. On the other side stands a culture that is dominated by distribution and sharing characterized by the promise to share and the claim to get one's share. In a Turkana community someone who has resources available should give (on demand).

In the Christian structure of symbols a socio-economic positioning is inherent that has a workflow which is contrary to the indigenous workflow direction. In a western christian culture an authority demands a contribution from everyone. These collected amounts are used for self-organization and partly for redistribution. This workflow is always active in the mind of fellow people even if there is no directly practiced collection. The reciprocal relation to God and the acknowledgement of the debt for the gift of life requires thankfulness and self-abasement in the Christian logical construction.

The aforementioned workflow is - as a cultural heritage - also inherent in economic and political programs as well as in Christian-minded immigrants - not only missionaries, but also e.g. teachers, administrative agents, merchants, tourists, investigators - to Turkana County. A recent press release that reached me from the Kenyan 'Daily Nation', Turkana County, testifies the importance of thankfulness in a Christian church:

> Police in Turkana hold a thanksgiving service in Lodwar
> Police from various units across Turkana County on Sunday gathered at St. Augustine's Cathedral Church in Lodwar for a thanksgiving service. Uniformed discipline services who included Kenya Police, Administration Police, Kenya Prisons, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and Criminal Investigation

Department all come together as one family of security officers under one Chaplaincy and had an opportunity to renew their relationship with God.
30/7/2018 (Daily Nation 2018)

In the above case thanksgiving is explicitly concerned to the relationship with God and the agents of governance serve as model and standard. Thanksgiving is an outstanding symbolic action that evokes an expectation of the same in the social environment.

In a secular modern world we use words like 'please' and 'thank you' daily, but we use it e. g. as a last word to end a small talk, it makes inter human encounters more kind, makes the day more friendly. The daily habit has lost the meaning of an acceptance of a debt. The French philosopher Marcel Hénaff places the wish to thank someone for a nice present at the border of a non-debt. (Hénaff 2009: 324-5) In my view he fades out that the historical manifestation of the Christian scheme has reached a nearly world wide expansion and still is reaching out. Many people are not conscious about the origin of their attitude. The confrontation with a foreign culture makes it possible to discover what has become a second nature within the own culture.

In the examined period missionaries use Turkana expressions to teach their concepts and Turkana interpreters use English terms to name an institution of their custom. In Ohta's 'Cassified Vocabularies' we find a "thanksgiving gift" that is *eboka* and ebacit. (Ohta 1989: 52) The question is whether it is equal to the Christian western conception of thank or whether it includes an alternative conception.
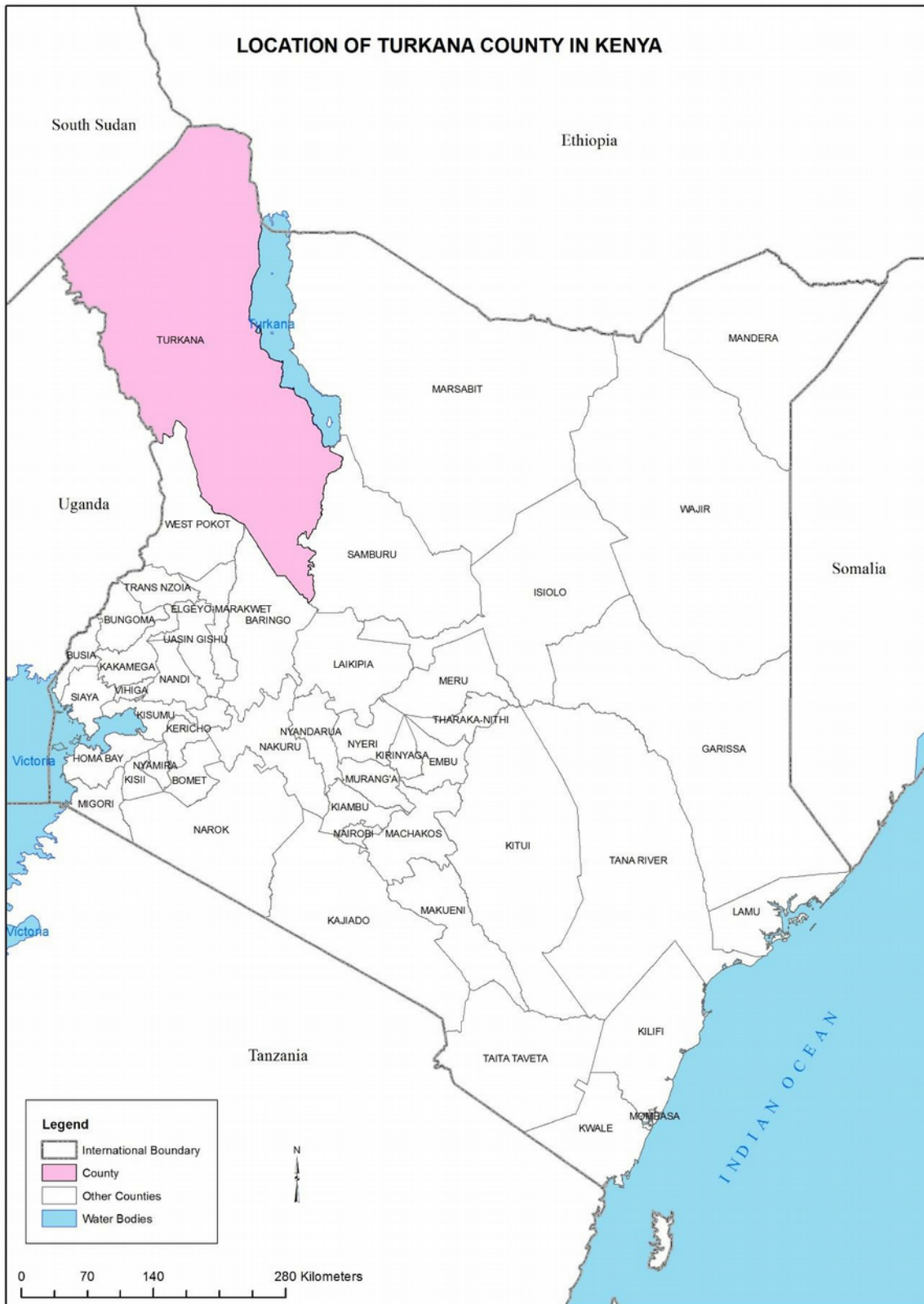
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