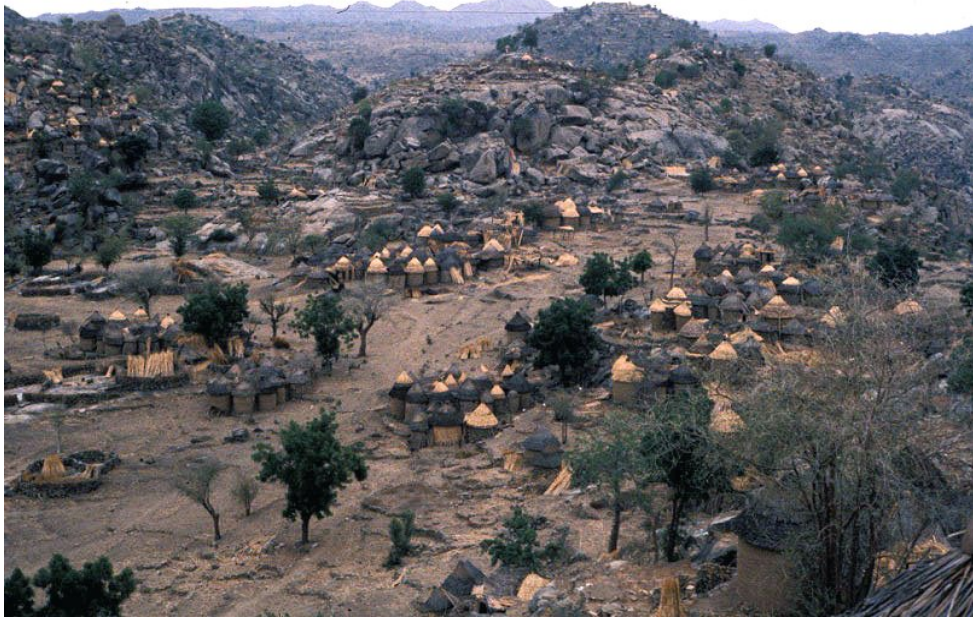


**SCOTT MACEACHERN**



***DU KUNDE: PROCESSES OF MONTAGNARD  
ETHNOGENESIS IN THE NORTHERN MANDARA  
MOUNTAINS OF CAMEROON***

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DU KUNDE: PROCESSES OF MONTAGNARD ETHNOGENESIS IN THE  
NORTHERN MANDARA MOUNTAINS OF CAMEROON

BY SCOTT MACEACHERN

A THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

The northern Mandara Mountains of Cameroon are inhabited by non-Muslim agricultural populations, living in acephalous societies at high population densities and with great cultural and ethnic diversity. In contrast, Muslim states traditionally occupied the plains around these mountains. Relations between plainsmen and montagnards have always been ambiguous, characterized by both cooperation and conflict, and remain today.

Linguistic data indicate that the Mandara massif has been occupied for at least 700 to 1000 years by people speaking languages ancestral to those spoken there today. In contrast, archaeological and ethnohistorical investigations have produced little evidence of intensive occupation for more than a few hundred years. In this dissertation, I attempt to reconcile these apparently conflicting data and propose a model for montagnard ethnogenesis in this extremely complex area.

Five hundred years ago, the plains around the Mandara Mountains were occupied by non-Muslim 'Sao' and 'Maya' populations; the peripheries of the massif were occupied by a small number of autochthonous groups speaking languages ancestral to the montagnard languages of today. Slave-raiding by the Muslim Kanuri and the establishment of a local slave-raiding state, that of the Wandala, produced a flow of refugees into the mountains. The conversion of the Wandala to Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries accelerated this process. This immigration and the conflicts it engendered drastically augmented the massif population, but did so in such a way that linguistic and cultural continuity from earlier montagnard populations was to a great extent maintained. I discuss processes by which this would have occurred.

In discussing ethnogenesis, it is necessary to first examine concepts of 'ethnicity' as they are traditionally used in this area. Montagnard 'ethnic groups', as they are usually defined, are to a great extent linguistic and

administrative constructs. They are important to their members, but I argue that groups at larger and smaller scales of organization are often more important. In particular, lineages and territorial lineage groups function as primary groups of self-identification and as vital social and corporate units. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of lineages in processes of ethnogenesis in and around the northern Mandara Mountains.

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My work has, since 1984, been carried on within the structure of the Mandara Archaeological Project. The moral and academic support of the other researchers associated with the Project have been essential to me. Most of the ideas expressed in this dissertation developed in the course of conversations with Ian Robertson, Judy Sterner, Kodzo Gavua, Diane Lyons, Maureen Reeves, Mike Wilson, Nick Jones and David Killick.

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For Genevieve, as always.

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## CHAPTER 1 -- INTRODUCTION

### **Problems to be examined: history and ethnicity**

#### *Problems of history*

In this dissertation, I will discuss the recent prehistory and history of the northern Mandara Mountains of Cameroon, and of the expanses of piedmonts and plains surrounding those mountains. I begin to resolve certain questions about the origins of the present-day social and cultural milieu in this area which have not as yet been answered. I am particularly concerned with the processes of social fission, alteration and amalgamation which have resulted in the extremely complex constellation of human groups which inhabit the massif itself and the inselbergs and foothills immediately surrounding it. I will also examine the equivocal, ambiguous relationship between these groups and certain groups -- at first glance very different, and almost determined by culture and circumstance to be antagonistic to their highland neighbours -- who live on the plains around the massif. I am most interested in processes of ethnogenesis among the former groups, the *du kunde*, the 'people of the mountain'.

Previous writers have viewed the prehistory and history of these groups and of the relations between them in quite different ways over time. These changes in points of view have to an extent mirrored wider changes in the ways that investigators have looked at historical and cultural developments in other areas. Analyses from the 1920s and 1930s tended to be both extremely diffusionistic and often explicitly or implicitly racist in nature (Palmer 1970 [1936]), Schultze 1968 [1913]169-171, 196-198; Meek 1925:162 *et seq.*). These two characteristics are intimately linked; traits that these investigators regarded favourably were said to have been introduced, often by light-skinned immigrants from the north or east, while traits that they disliked were

held to have been the product of a primitive, indigenous substratum. This latter was assumed to include the montagnard groups in which I am most interested.

An entirely legitimate reaction to these early excesses produced models in which group stability and innovation in place were emphasized, and these models are at present widely accepted. I do not entirely agree with these paradigms, and emphasize the importance of local -- but quite large-scale -- migration processes in the formation of the present human milieu in and around the Mandara massif. I will also stress the importance of changes in the mountains to populations living around the massif. There has been a tendency to treat montagnard populations as peripheral to the more spectacular cultural and political developments that have occurred on the plains of the Chad Basin in the present millennium, particularly the establishment of Sudanic states. I find the mountains to be at least as interesting and will attempt to reverse this analytical imbalance.

In pursuit of these goals, I take advantage of a variety of data sources. Unlike many areas of the world, the Mandara Mountains and the lands around them have seen a good deal of very fine research done by investigators in the historical sciences -- archaeologists, historians, ethnographers, linguists and so on. I think that there has been some lack of synthesis of these diverse investigations, at least concerning the subject and the time period that I am most interested in. Archaeologists have the reputation of being the magpies of science, picking and choosing data from various disciplines as they construct their reconstructions. I will follow this tradition, which I think is often a useful one, in attempting to construct a synthetic model of ethnic group formation in my study area. I hope that, in doing so, I will be able to avoid the most common failing of magpies -- that is, their tendency to choose the brightest and gaudiest, and not necessarily the most useful, objects for incorporation into their structures.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation provide some information on the physical and the general cultural milieu in my study area. I briefly examine historical records on the area in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 examines the available archaeological data on the

area; because the northern Mandara massif has only recently been investigated archaeologically, I also include the results of other relevant research south of Lake Chad. In Chapter 6, relevant ethnohistorical data on the peopling of the Mandara massif are synthesized. Different sources of data -- linguistic, ethnohistory, archaeology, history -- provide conflicting evidence concerning the time-depth of occupation of the Mandara Mountains themselves; I will examine these data in Chapter 7, and briefly consider the concept of the 'ethnic group' as it applies to this area. In Chapter 8, I will review data on regional cultural variation in this area. My conclusions make up Chapter 9.

### *Problems of comparability*

Use of information from different disciplines is essential in any investigation that attempts to construct a coherent picture of human history in an area. Concentration on only one type of data leads to fundamentally imbalanced pictures of humanity: woman/man-as-talker, woman/man-as-producer, woman/man-as-reporter and so on. One danger is that the data to be used may differ in nature, in ways that sometimes are obvious and sometimes are not. For example, historians, linguists, archaeologists and ethnohistorians have all recognized the effects that change over time can have on the traces of human events. In archaeology, this awareness has been reified, made concrete as the study of taphonomy. Other professions, perhaps less enamoured by specializations, have not gone this far, but the same problems are recognized to greater or lesser extents. Data sets are not strictly comparable. I will examine this problem in later chapters.

### *Problems of ethnicity*

Practically all anthropological research rests on the premise that cultural variation is discontinuous: that there are aggregates of people who essentially share a common culture, and interconnected

differences that distinguish each such discrete culture from all others.

Since culture is nothing but a way to describe human behaviour, it would follow that there are discrete groups of people, i.e. ethnic units, to correspond to each culture.

F. Barth, 1969

In the course of this work, I will take issue with a number of concepts which have, I believe, been used in an uncritical manner by some researchers in this region, and by others working outside it as well. The most important of these are 'ethnicity' and, closely related to it, the 'ethnic group'.

The human population in the Mandara Mountains is conventionally divided up between more than 20 different 'ethnic groups'. These groups are usually assumed to be the culture-bearing units referred to by Barth (1969:9); the review by Boulet et al. (1984) is a good example of this assumption. These have often served as convenient units of analysis. They frequently occupy a territory small enough to be easily comprehensible, their members almost always speak a single, unique language or dialect and are known by one name, they usually have common customs, their territories are coordinate with modern administrative boundaries (so lessening the administrative burdens of research) and so on.

This convenience is dangerous, however. It appears that, while these 'ethnic groups' may be coherent linguistic and/or administrative units, they do not necessarily serve as units of ethnic ascription and self-ascription or indeed even as privileged cultural units (see Chapters 3, 7 and 8). After Barth (1969), I regard these latter criteria of ascription as most useful and interesting in the definition of ethnic groups. Concentration on the traditional 'ethnic' level of social hierarchy has obscured a number of other important cultural elements in this area. The importance of social/cultural/ historical units both smaller and larger in scale than the 'ethnic group', as it is usually conceived of, has been greatly underestimated. In this dissertation, I will accordingly concentrate on these smaller and larger groups.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the concept of 'ethnic groups' itself. When questions of ethnicity are handled with understanding and with a sensitivity to their cultural and historical milieux, they can tell us vital things about the way people view their relationship with the human and natural worlds that they inhabit, and with their own history. Such considerations are, however, basic to anyone's sense of self, and are bound to be loaded with emotional and social connotations. They are thus amenable to manipulation by people seeking to defend or improve their own position(s) in the world. In addition, the complexity of ethnic identification is often underestimated by social scientists and other outsiders, who persist in attaching unitary labels to groups. This tends to generate the (sometimes unconscious) assumption that such labels describe the people they are ascribed to totally, equally and unambiguously.

I do not think that 'ethnic groups' in the northern Mandara Mountains can be satisfactorily described by the use of linguistic or administrative criteria. A concentration on the importance of ascription in the definition of ethnic groups implies that ethnicity is itself a construct, one result of the varied set of identities that people and groups deploy to locate themselves in the world. It arises as the result of a complex set of interactions between individuals and other members of groups that they are parts of on a more or less frequent basis. These may be kinship or task groups; they may be ascribed groupings (groups of married women or senior men, for example); they may be groups that we would not normally think of as interacting social units, such as the groups of young men who arrive one day on a battlefield to fight one another. When people choose how to answer the question "What kind of person are you?", they do not answer in some sort of solipsistic void, nor does their society answer for them; their answer will depend on a dialogue between the two.

If ethnicity is concerned with ascription of the definition of primary groups of identification, then it is also the result of negotiations about how these units are formed. This does not diminish its importance in the least; as social primates, we are obsessed by membership, and there is nothing more basic to humanity than the

determination of what groups we join and are joined to. Group membership and culture are inseparable.

This means, however, that membership in an 'ethnic group' is in no way the simple, clear-cut notion that many social scientists assume it to be -- or hope it to be, since such clarity greatly facilitates the production of lists and distribution maps of such groups (Figure 1.2). For one thing, negotiation implies disagreement, which is very common in any ascriptions of ethnicity. People or groups of people may or may not wish to belong to larger groups, and equally other people may want to force or disallow their membership.

In addition, people almost always belong to a number of different kinship, task-based, political and other groups, and these groups often operate on different social and political levels of organization. The suite of such groups that one person will belong to are almost never totally coherent; they overlap to varying degrees. Priority in determining ethnicity may be accorded to membership in one or a combination of these groups, but it will almost certainly not be a simple process. People will often be able to legitimately lay claim to membership in a number of different groups.

This raises the possibility that (self-)ascription to an 'ethnic group' will vary according to the situation that an actor finds herself or himself in. This does not mean that ethnicity is merely a variable to be manipulated to maximize benefit to the individual -- it is usually invested with far more personal significance than that -- but its different levels and nuances may be important in different situations. These factors also imply that ethnicity may vary over time.

## **The study area and research within it**

### *Definition of the study area*

The area that I will concentrate my attention on in the course of this work is the northern part of the Mandara mountains and the plains around those mountains, extending from 10° 30' to 11° 15' North latitude and 13° to 14° 20' East longitude (Figure 1.1). This includes regions now included in Cameroon and Nigeria, primarily within the present *départements* of Mayo-Sava, Diamaré and Mayo-Tsanaga (Cameroon) and the Northern Division of Sardauna Province and Dikwa Division of Bornu Province (Nigeria). It includes all or part of the territories of the Murahá, Urzá, Dumwá, 'Vamé-Mbremé', Plata, Uldemé, Mada, Muyan, Molkwo, Podokwo, Muktelé, Zulgo, Gemjek and Minéo montagnard ethnic groups in Cameroon and the similar Glavda, Valé, Hidé/Turu, Mabas, Guduf, Gevoko, Ngosi, Cikidé, Hedkala, Dligé and Dghwede in Nigeria. The northern extension of Mafa group territory also reaches into my study area, but differences in Mafa social structure and history will exempt them from detailed consideration in this work; they belong to a southern montagnard cultural tradition which I will at times compare with that of the more northerly montagnard groups (see especially Chapter 8). The study area also includes plains land now occupied by the Muslim Wandala, Kanuri, Fulbe (also known as Fulani, Fula, Fellata, Peul, etc.) and Arab Shuwa groups and by recently non-Muslim Marghi, Sukur and Melgwa plains-dwellers (Figure 1.2).

Many of these groups, especially the montagnard ones, are very small, sometimes numbering only in the hundreds. The information available to me on each of them varies widely. This results from differences in access to their territories -- I was unable to work in Nigeria and with some of the Cameroonian groups -- and/or in the amount of already-published material available on them. For some of these groups, no such specific material exists; in other cases, this information is decades old. What these earlier works and information that I gathered in the field make clear is

the fact that all of these populations were intensely interrelated, both historically and socially, and so that they may be profitably studied as a group.

This study area is not a coherent geographical unit. There is no physical differentiation between the territory which will be the subject of this dissertation and its continuation in the plains of the Chad Basin to the north and east, the Yedseram and smaller river valleys to the west and the Mandara massif itself to the south. In cultural terms, the area again does not form a coherent unit. There is a vast amount of variation within it, and its boundaries are not coterminous with this variation. Most of the montagnard groups found within the study area resemble in various ways other montagnard groups lying further to the south, east and west. There are some patterned differences between groups within this area and those outside it -- the general absence of 'blacksmith' castes within it, for example -- but these are certainly not clear-cut. Of the plains-dwelling groups, only the Wandala are found uniquely within the study area and they live as citizens within a Sudanic Muslim polity which is similar in many ways to other, better-known states. The Kanuri, Fulbe and Shuwa occupy much larger territories; their importance in African history is well-known.

I have chosen to concentrate my work in this area for two reasons. In the first place, it does, I think, form an historical unit. The mountains and plains within it were heavily impacted by the presence of the Kanuri and particularly the Wandala states as dominant polities over the last 500 years. I will argue that the establishment and expansion of these two states was the engine responsible for much of the social and cultural change which is the subject of this work. The montagnard and plains groups within this area -- even those groups able to resist outside control -- all had to deal with either or both of these states. The Wandala, in particular, have at different times claimed that all of the study area was under their sovereignty, even though this control must usually have been pretty theoretical. The claimed Kanuri suzerainty over the Wandala was of the same order.

My second reason for delimiting the study area as I have is considerably simpler. Geographical, cultural and historical areas almost never have sharp edges. It

would be quite possible and legitimate to extend the boundaries of this study to encompass a much larger area, but this would entail dealing with a greatly increased, and much more intractable, data set. I have to stop somewhere.

In the course of this work, there are times when I will move outside of the bounds of the study area, to examine groups or events that I think are relevant to the present research. The imprecise nature of these geographical, cultural and historical boundaries makes this imperative. Failure to do so would create a quite misleading impression of separation and distinctiveness.

### *Periods of fieldwork*

Research in this area was undertaken in conjunction with a larger project, the Mandara Archaeological Project, which was established by Dr. Nicholas David (Department of Archaeology, University of Calgary) in 1983. Three seasons of fieldwork were undertaken in conjunction with other members of the Mandara Archaeological Project team, in 1984, 1986 and 1989. During four months (May - August) in 1984, we carried out an archaeological survey of the Mandara Archaeological Project survey area -- not the same as the study area of the present work (Figure 1.3) -- and excavated at a number of sites located in the course of that survey. The survey involved intensive surface investigation and collection of a stratified random sample of 1-km<sup>2</sup> localities within the 2000 km<sup>2</sup> survey area. This has yielded a preliminary culture-historical framework for this area, which was previously almost unknown archaeologically.

Our 1986 fieldwork, carried out between January and December of that year, was rather different. It primarily involved coordinated ethnographic, ethnoarchaeological and ethnohistorical research projects carried out individually by members of the research team. In addition, team members carried out joint research projects. These projects were quite diverse, involving different research topics and different research locations among different ethnic groups. This extremely successful field season yielded a great deal of comparative data on the culture histories and

present practises of these groups of people. It is doubtful that such data could have been so usefully gathered in any other way.

In 1989, three members of the Mandara Archaeological Project research team (Nicholas David, Judy Sterner and myself, along with David Killick [Harvard University]) returned to Cameroon for a short field season (May-July), primarily to clarify issues which were raised during the 1986 field season and to gather additional data. This work involved a comparative analysis of traditional iron-working practices among a number of different montagnard groups. My own involvement during this field season was cut short by illness, but research was, again, quite successful.

Our 1984 research was, as I have said, primarily archaeological. In 1986, I became involved in ethnoarchaeological and (secondarily) ethnohistorical research with members of one of the smallest groups in the Mandara Archaeological Project survey area, the Plata (Figure 1.2). This involved, in the first place, studies of the distributions of items of material culture -- primarily ceramics -- in and around Plata territory and also an investigation of the oral histories of the Plata and surrounding groups. I continued this latter work in 1989.

In the course of research, the importance of these two objectives was reversed. I became interested in what appeared to be a slow process of amalgamation, in the course of which the fortunes of the Plata were becoming more intimately tied to those of a larger, neighbouring group, the Uldemé. I also became interested in the Plata as part of a larger group of people who shared common, and interesting, traditions of origin and who are called in *pelasla*, the language of the Plata, the *du ngolélé*, the 'people of Ngolélé'. I started to investigate the traditions of that group as a whole. I also came to know and like a number of Plata themselves, including one man who acted as host, interpreter and informant for me, Michel Kourdapaye Amba; he, and the Plata in general, have been very gracious to me. Most of the people whom I have met in the mountains have been so. This probably goes furthest to explain both my interest in the recent prehistory of the Plata and their neighbours and any success that I have enjoyed working among them.

## Problems of Historical Viewpoint

The relations between the Plata, other people living in the study area and myself are important in this work. In that sense, this may be a slightly atypical archaeological dissertation. My emphasis will be upon groups of people, sometimes individuals, and the things that are supposed to have happened to them, more than upon material culture -- although I have by no means abandoned consideration of the latter entirely. Material cultures and human groups are often considered as equivalents, which they certainly are not.

This does not mean that gathering oral histories is a better avenue to a knowledge of past processes than is gathering artefacts. They provide access to complementary realms of human behaviour, each has limitations of time depth and data recovery and each is subject to forces equivalent to the taphonomic processes examined by archaeologists. There are, however, good reasons to think that, in the particular environment of the Mandara Mountains, the insights to be gained from archaeological research are more than usually limited (see Chapter 5), and so ethnohistorical research rightly assumes a more important role.

This is not necessarily such a bad thing. There has been a deplorable tendency in archaeology and related 'historical' disciplines (such as palaeontology [Gould 1989]) to equate rigor with enumeration. This has been intimately connected with the long-standing debate over the exact status of these disciplines within the sciences and humanities. Different researchers, originating within different scholastic traditions, feel most comfortable defining their own studies as existing in a closer relationship to the hard sciences or, alternatively, to historical studies. Allegiance to the hard sciences has been most fashionable in North America.

I will certainly not claim great rigor for this work, but at the same time I do not think that a concentration upon interviews with old men rather than upon statistical analyses of potsherds is any *a priori* disadvantage. It might be so if the archaeological evidence was abundant and informative but, as I have said, this is not

particularly so. In addition, variation in the most common artefact type in this area -- the ubiquitous potsherd -- seems to reflect only some of the processes of social and cultural interaction that take place, and then only in ways which will be of little comfort to archaeologists (see Chapter 8).

### **A Note on Informants**

I have, as I have said, depended extensively on data derived from interviews with local informants as I prepared this work. These interviews were conducted with a number of different objectives in mind, and may generally be divided into three series, one concerned with a ceramic survey in 1986, one with eliciting information on traditional history in the same year and one concerned with traditional iron smelting and smithing; this latter series was conducted in 1989. In fact, there was a great deal of overlap in the data that I derived from these interviews.

Appendix 1 is a further discussion of my interview methodology, along with a list of my informants. In Appendix 2, I have provided examples of the ways in which certain informants recounted certain important traditions. In the text of this work, references to certain interviews are given with the name of the informant and the date of the interview -- for example, (Lima, 10/10/1986).

### **A Note on Transcription**

In the course of this work, I have at various times used words from a number of the languages used in my study area. Transcription of such terms and their presentation in the present work present some problems. I am not a linguist, and my transcriptions of the (quite intricate) sound systems of the Chadic languages spoken in the northern Mandara Mountains are not precise. I also do not have the ability to reproduce letters of the International Phonetic Alphabet in this text.

I have therefore transcribed these terms without using special characters, instead using the diphthongs/glides and other letter combinations used in English to approximately reproduce the cadences of these Chadic languages. This has meant that some renderings of these words are slightly different than those usually used by researchers working in area -- primarily because such research often originates in France, where orthographic conventions differ from those used in anglophone countries. As an example, the most common name of the periodic ceremony involving a bull observed by some southern montagnard groups in my study area and briefly described in Chapter 8 is usually transcribed as *maray* by those francophone researchers working in that region. I have instead written it as *marai*, because the last phoneme is a long 'i' (rhyming with 'try') and not a long 'a' (rhyming with 'bay'). I have, however, made an exception for commonly accepted geographical names and left Keroua and Maroua, for example, as is.

This is not a perfect solution. I have, of course, distorted Chadic words to some extent by failing to fully describe the plosives and other sounds used in these languages and especially by neglecting their tonal qualities. I hope that the resulting losses in precision are compensated for by some gains in comprehensibility. I can only add in my own defense that my own attempts to speak *pelasla* were sometimes comprehensible to the people with whom I was conversing.

## CHAPTER 2 -- THE PHYSICAL AND ECOLOGICAL MILIEU

### Introduction

The central element in the physical and cultural landscape of northern Cameroon is the dichotomy between plains and mountains that exists there. The hills and peaks of the Mandara Mountains are not very high -- they project to a maximum altitude of about 1500 m above sea level, from a plain already at 300 to 500 m -- but their extent and abrupt relief dominate their surroundings. Orographic effects cause increased rainfall in the mountains, sometimes doubling the amount that falls on the nearby plains, with attendant ecological and economic effects. This rainfall feeds the seasonal rivers which flow out into the plains, sustaining life there. The mountains also protected the pagan '*kirdi*' peoples from attack by their Islamized plainsmen neighbours -- and have thus, I think, lent the area much of its interest.

These regions are now and have in the past been extremely heavily exploited by humans. The mountains, in particular, were in many places occupied at very high population densities indeed. These montagnard populations made various cultural adaptations which have allowed them to survive in such constrained environments; many of these adaptations play a part in defining what it is to be a montagnard. Multilinguality, acephality and the general 'looseness' of corporate groups are topics which will be examined in later chapters, but all may to an extent be seen as adaptations to an existence with many neighbours and very little elbow room.

Under these circumstances, changes in the environment would have been of central importance. Adverse changes, such as droughts or deforestation, could easily be catastrophic, since there would have been few opportunities to amass the surpluses necessary to cushion against the effects of misfortunes, either natural or man-made. Equally, release from environmental constraints (through, for example, climatic amelioration or migrations onto the plains and into urban areas) could allow

fundamental changes in systems of cultural adaptation -- and thus cut at the basic definition of the montagnard way of life. Both processes have occurred during historical times in this area.

This chapter will examine the physical and ecological milieu of the study area in the relatively recent past and until the present day. I hope that this will help illuminate changes in these fundamental environmental influences over the last few hundred years. Four topics will be examined in turn: (1) the present landscape in general, (2) present vegetation zones, (3) past climatic changes and their environmental effects over the last 2000 years (this will help to establish long-term, as well as short-term, trends) and (4) human environmental influences.

## **Mountains and plains**

### *Massif Geology*

General summaries of the geology and physical geography of the northern Mandara Mountains and their environs can be found in Boutrais (1984a, b), Hervieu (1969) and Wilson (1988, n.d.). These need not be considered in any detail. The massif itself is within the northeastern extension of a failed rift (the Benue aulacogen [Wilson 1988:21]), which runs from the Gulf of Guinea inland toward Lake Chad and which probably formed at the same time, in the Cretaceous, as the two successful rifts which separated what are now Africa and South America. The mountains themselves originated in folding and vulcanism associated with tectonic activity along the aulacogen since the Cretaceous period. The massif itself is made up mostly of intrusive igneous masses, much of it granitic, with some metamorphic material, mostly gneissic. The inselbergs which surround the massif are igneous.

The Mandara massif also contains a number of internal plateaux, the most important in this study being the Kapsiki plateau and the Zouelva-Meri plateau (Figure 2.1). These are covered by eluvial deposits derived from the mostly granitic

bedrock and by colluvial and alluvial deposits originating in the mountains which fringe these plateaux. Over much of these plateaux, erosion has deprived the developing regosols and other soils of much of their finer fractions, leaving them thin and very rocky. Areas of deeper alluvial soils are rare. The soils of the plateaux are generally not as fertile as those of the surrounding mountains, but the Kapsiki and Gouaza-Meri plateaux have better soils than does the plateau around Mokolo.

### *Piedmont Deposits*

The massif is encircled by a belt of diverse deposits derived from the slopes above. These range from undeveloped regosols on the bases of slopes, to coarse, well-drained colluvial soils, to alluvial sandy soils further out on the piedmont to the relatively rare deposits of massif-derived clay alluvium. In some areas, such as the Koza Plain and the area among the inselbergs to the east of the massif, these deposits extend for tens of kilometres into the plains. The origins of the alluvial deposits are probably tied to episodes of increasing precipitation levels and thus to both increased outflow from the mountain drainages and, in certain periods, increased levels of Lake Mega-Chad or more local lakes of the Chad Basin (see below).

The origin of the colluvium may be more interesting. Wilson (1988:36, 42; n.d.); suggests that the mantle of colluvium found at the bottom of many of the slopes of the massif and inselbergs results from a loss of slope stability caused by deforestation and terrace farming in the Iron Age. This has obvious implications. If the accumulation of such colluvium is an inescapable correlate of intensive human occupation of the mountains, then it is possible that observation of rates of accumulation and efforts to obtain absolute ages for these deposits can yield information about the time of origin of this very important adaptation.

It is also possible, however, that these deposits began to be formed during a period of environmental disturbance, caused, for example, by increases in population or by climatic change. It should be noted that Wilson (1988) quotes Butzer's (1981) analysis of environmental deterioration at Axum as giving an example of the sort of

degradational processes he sees occurring in northern Cameroon. Butzer does, however, recognize that political and climatic changes were instrumental in at least accelerating this deterioration. It is probable that colluvium accumulation actually charts different rates of environmental disturbance over time.

There is evidence that this accumulation can be quite rapid. Wilson (n.d.:77, 145) refers to a colluvial section (86.5) on the Mayo Uldemé which is 175 cm deep. He believes that the upper 97 cm derive from locally-tilled fields close to the section, while the lower unit is colluvium from other sources. If this is the case, and if the upper unit correlates to local tilling in the recent period of montagnard occupation away from the massif -- as seems most reasonable -- then this 97 cm of soil would have accumulated in perhaps 50-70 years.

### *Plains Deposits*

Beyond the mountains, plains stretch away north toward Lake Chad and east to the Logone River. These plains have formed under the influence of two major factors: (1) drainage from the mountains, which has deposited alluvium over much of the nearby plains and (2) the rise and fall of Lake Mega-Chad and probably other, more local lakes which formed in the area and have left lacustrine deposits to the north, west and east. The boundary between these two depositional environments is generally quite clear, marked by the Bama Ridge, a sandy 'beach ridge' complex running northwest to southeast about 15 km north of Mora. It is usually assumed that this ridge was built up by wind and wave action during a Lake Mega-Chad highstand at 320 m, when an increase in size of the lake brought its shoreline to this distance from the mountains. However, it is probable that recent tectonic activity contributed to its formation (Durand 1982; Wilson n.d.:25). In any case, the Bama Ridge has had at least local environmental effects, since its damming effect promotes lagoonal formation between it and the mountains.

The Mora Plain (between the massif and the Bama Ridge) is a mosaic of these lagoonal deposits and alluvial deposits of different ages deriving from the mountains.

The depths of these deposits on bedrock varies from a few metres near the mountains to several tens of metres at the ridge. The alluvial deposits cover large areas, probably because of lateral movement of the rivers that carried this material out of the mountains (Boutrais 1984a:48-51). There are also a number of relict sand dunes in this area, oriented generally SW-NE, which almost certainly date from late Pleistocene hyperarid episode(s).

The Chad Plain extends from the Bama Ridge north toward Lake Chad and east to the Logone. Deposits here are primarily a series of extremely flat, thick clay and sand sediments laid down by alternating advances and retreats of a Pleistocene/Holocene Lake Mega-Chad and/or of more local lakes. Close to the ridge, these are overlain in a number of locations by alluvial deposits laid down by rivers which have originated in the mountains and broken through the ridge barrier. Much of the eastern part of the Chad Plain is seasonally inundated to a greater or lesser extent by flooding of the Logone River, giving rise to the black clay deposits known as *firki*, and *yaéré*; the latter areas are subject to much deeper flooding (i.e., 1-2 m) than are the former (Boutrais 1984a:60; Connah 1981:28-29). These soils are not, however, common in the study area.

Throughout the plains, sterile halomorphic soils known as *hardé* in *fulfulde* (the language of the Fulbe) are found. These soils occur when the breakdown of (often feldspathic) minerals derived from bedrock results in a concentration of sodium salts in clay horizons low in the soil profile (Boutrais 1984b:78; Lind and Morrison 1974:174; White 1983:226). In hot areas with high evaporation, these salts are not removed from the profile through run-off. This has two main effects: (1) the high salt concentrations will kill most plants whose roots reach the zones of concentration, and (2) the alkalinity of the clay level causes a dispersal of clay particles, resulting in very low permeability of this level. These soils are almost uniquely unsuited to any cultivation. Soils in the plains around the Mandara massif are quite vulnerable to overexploitation; this can hasten their trajectory to *hardé*. Boutrais (1984b:78)

estimates that, at present, about 50,000 ha of the Mora Plain and the Diamaré to the east of Mora are *hardé*, and another 200,000 ha exhibit *hardé* characteristics.

### **Present Vegetation Patterns**

Ecologically, the study area is situated close to the interface between the Sudanic and Sahelian environmental zones, but primarily within the Sudanic zone. (There are also a few mountainous locations where altitude effects have made possible the existence of high-altitude vegetation communities, but these are not very large.) There is as yet no universally agreed-upon definition for these very broadly-defined zones, but we may define the boundary between them as lying between the 600 mm and 750 mm isohyets.

The plant communities to be found in different regions of the study area may be primarily Sahelian or primarily Sudanic, depending on a number of factors. Orographic effects give rise to a rainfall regime which a simple consideration of latitude would not lead one to expect. In Waza National Park, rainfall is approximately 700 mm/year (Esser and van Lavieren 1979). At Mora, at the base of the massif, it is about 700 mm/year (Beauvilain 1989:51). At Maroua, still further south and east, it is ca 750-800 mm/year (Beauvilain 1989:51; Guillard 1965:36). In the mountains, however, mean annual rainfall is greater; Mokolo receives 950-1000 mm/year, while Meri receives perhaps 1400 mm/year (Beauvilain 1989; Boutrais 1984a:36).

Other factors which may play a part in the determination of plant communities include variability in rainfall and in the timing of the beginnings of the rainy season from year to year (which is very great in the study area [Beauvilain 1989:43-61; Boutrais 1984b:63-66; Guillard 1965:35-37]), temperature and variation in temperature (which are relatively constant, but dependent upon orographic effects) and soil conditions. This last may in turn be altered by natural and human effects; soils are derived from the deposits created by different physiographic processes, but

they are also changed by human handiwork -- this is perhaps the most important and most basic way in which humans change their environment. In the study area, human action tends to create a trajectory by which areas supporting Sudanic plant communities become more fit for Sahelian communities. Probable causes of this are the loss of moisture through devegetation and albedo change, and soil degradation (see below).

The plant communities associated with these two zones are not totally distinct, but we may define that of the Sahelian zone as a sparsely wooded grassland prairie dominated by *Cenchrus biflorus*, *Schoenfeldia gracilis* and other annual grasses, with *Balanites aegyptica* and *Acacia* and *Commiphora* tree and shrub species. The Sudanic vegetational cover in this area is a dry wooded savanna, with a tree community dominated by *Adansonia digitata*, *Acacia* spp., *Terminalia* spp. and especially *Anogeissus leiocarpus* and *Combretum* spp. The grass cover that goes along with these tree species includes *Andropogon gayanus* and *Hyparrhenia* spp. Unfortunately, available plant lists in the study area are heavily biased toward the very visible tree and shrub species; they pay little attention to grasses. (Data are derived from Boutrais 1984a20; .Bradley 197737; .Rodier 19753-4; .Talbot 198038-39; White 1983:102-109; .Whyte 1968106-107).

The study area can be divided into four vegetational zones, the Chad Plain, the alluvial plains and piedmont extending from the mountains to the Chad Plain, the massif and the inselbergs around it and the interior plateaux of the massif. These will be dealt with in turn.

#### *Vegetation of the Chad Plain*

The vegetational status of this area is quite different from that of the plains closer to the massif, mostly because of the large extent of lacustrine clay deposits and the seasonal inundation which affects it. In addition, there is very little farming in this region (except around settlements -- Hallaire [1965] and personal observation) and

within the confines of the National Park at Waza elephants and other large herbivores also change the landscape (Esser and van Lavieren 1979).

The floral environment is one of open wooded grasslands, dominated by tree species characteristic of a Sahel-Sudan transition zone (Boutrais 1984a:60; Bradley 1977:37; Esser and van Lavieren 1979:5-6), particularly the Acacias and *Sclerocarya birrea*; grass species include *Andropogon gayanus*, *Diheteropogon hageruppi* and *Echinochloa* spp. On weathered soils, similar wooded grasslands are dominated by *Anogeissus leiocarpus*, while areas impacted by human occupation (settlement mounds or *hardé* soils, for example) support tree species almost exclusively Sahelian, such as *Balanites aegyptica*, *Acacia seyal* and *Ziziphus mauritiana*.

It is interesting to note the presence of species (*Balanites*, *Eragrostris tremula*, *Schoenfeldia gracilis*) which are certainly Sahelian and which are often found in much drier locations, such as the Ferlo reserve in Senegal, which receives 350 mm/year of rainfall (Bille and Poupon 1972). The lower Logone floods and resulting lower water table of the late 1970s accelerated this trend (Esser and van Lavieren 1979:23) toward replacement by Sahelian species.

*Yaéré* soils, seasonally inundated, are almost treeless and covered with *Echinochloa stagnina*, *Vetivaria nigritana* and *Hyparrhenia rufa* grasses. The vegetation of the Bama Ridge itself generally resembles that of the Chad Plain, except for the occurrence of *Acacia albida* there. This is probably due to the increased population density there (20-30 people/km<sup>2</sup> at Limani, as opposed to fewer than 10/km<sup>2</sup> on the Chad Plain) and consequent preferential preservation of this tree for its products and its fertilizing effect.

#### *Vegetation of the Plains Around the Massif*

The alluvial plains south of the Bama Ridge and the piedmont of the Mandara Mountains will be considered together because of general similarities in their vegetational suites and in their exploitation by humans. They were, in addition,

formed primarily under the influence of the neighbouring massif, from whence their sediments are derived.

Soils in these areas are very diverse, ranging from regosols barely differentiated from underlying rock to those developed on rich, thick alluvium. Much of the northern and eastern parts of these plains are covered by recent alluvial deposits, which are quite rich and support wooded grasslands with a tree cover of *Acacia albida*, *Anogeissus leiocarpus*, *Terminalia macroptera* and *Combretum glutinosum* -- that is, generally Sudanic species (Boutrais 1984a:49-51; Bradley 1977:38-39). Essentially the same species are found in the richer soils found on parts of the piedmont, with the addition of *Annona senegalensis* (a shrub species often found in association with Combretaceous wooded grasslands in eastern Africa [Lind and Morrison 1974]) and *Khaya senegalensis* (cailcédrat). *Acacia albida* and cailcédrat are the dominant species in much of this latter area, especially on the Koza Plain and in the Uarba-Tokombéré plains (Figure 2.1), probably because of the high population densities in these regions and the usefulness of these species to (especially) montagnards.

(Of some interest in this context is the Gokoro Forest Reserve, which was established in the 1930s. At that time, it was primarily farmland; since then, it has been protected from fire and cultivation. At present, it is an almost impenetrable closed forest, but with a very high proportion of *Acacia albida* and *Khaya senegalensis*. *A. albida* only attains great size under human protection, and primary forest dominated by these two species is unknown (Boutrais 1984b:93; Letouzey 1968) -- these are Sudanic wooded grassland species. We thus appear to have an entirely artificial forest; its future evolution (if any) will be interesting to observe.)

Older sediments on these plains display a tendency to evolve toward halomorphic *hardé* soils. It is possible that much of the *hardé* terrain in this region is artificial in origin. As on the Chad Plain, Sudanic species are replaced on *hardé* by Sahelian ones, especially *Balanites aegyptica*, *Acacia seyal* and *Lannea humilis*

(Boutrais 1984a:51). These soils are unsuitable for cultivation after this process is completed; even their grazing utility is minimal.

### *Massif Vegetation*

Included within this zone are the mountainous regions of the massif itself and the inselbergs close to it (some of which, such as the Muyan-Palbara-Muyengue complex, are very large) but not the interior plateaux. A great deal of this zone is bare rock, with little or no soil development. There are also a great number of small interior drainages where alluvium and/or colluvium have been trapped, allowing the development of more substantial, albeit young soils. These are similar to the soils of the piedmont but are often coarser and more rocky (Beauvilain 1989; Boutrais 1984a:27-28; ORSTOM/IRCAM 1962). Run-off and a low moisture retention capability are problems in these regions, especially during the long dry seasons. On the other hand, these soils have high organic mineral contents and mineral reserves, and the carbon/nitrogen and cation exchange ratios indicate good availability of organic materials (see for example Boutrais 1984b:75).

These characteristics are needed to support extremely high population densities found throughout this region, some of the highest in rural Africa. To the west of Mora, in the Podokwo cantons, densities of over  $200/\text{km}^2$  are attained; to the south of that town, densities reach  $135/\text{km}^2$ . Densities are lower in the southern part of the study area, but it must be remembered that much of the terrain is totally unsuitable for cultivation -- it is either bare rock or vertical -- so actual population densities per square kilometre of arable land are much higher.

The effect of this is that the terrain within these mountains is very heavily impacted by human intervention. The landscape itself has been modified; innumerable small terraces cover nearly all of the arable land surface in regions with higher population densities (Figure 2.2) and large areas in less densely populated regions. These terraces have important effects upon the small internal mountain drainages and also help to reduce erosion and increase slope stability. Other architectural features,

such as compounds and defensive walls of stone and vegetation, contribute to the observer's impression of a very domesticated landscape.

A consideration of the vegetation supports this conviction. Most important are, of course, the domesticated species, especially *Sorghum bicolor*, the dietary staple over most of the northern Mandara Mountains. The suite of 'wild' tree species appears as individuals within this terrain. These species are allowed to exist in this crowded landscape because of the contributions that they make to the lives of the human inhabitants of the mountains. They are not planted, but are protected and sometimes weeded when small, which is why *A. albida* attains a large size only near human settlements, as I have pointed out. *A. albida* is one of the dominant species in this suite of protected vegetation; others include *A. ataxacantha*, *Adansonia digitata*, *Annona senegalensis*, *Borassus aethiopium* (dom palm), *Combretum glutinosum*, *Commiphora africana*, various *Euphorbia*, *Khaya senegalensis* (cailcédrat), *Tamarindus indica* (tamarind) and *Ziziphus* spp. (jujube) (Beauvilain 1989; Boutrais 1984a, b; David 1976; Juillerat 1971; Richard 1977; Seignobos 1980). Products of these plants are used as food, animal forage, fuel, architectural materials, medicine/poisons, shade and for many other things.

The intensity of occupation means that it is extremely difficult to find places where 'pre-human' vegetation might have persisted undisturbed. Certain relatively little-occupied massifs exhibit a tree cover where *Parkia biglobosa* and *Anogeissus leiocarpus* predominate -- essentially an open Sudanic woodland (White 1983:105, 106), which is about what we might expect. *Woodfloria uniflora* and *Olea hochstetteri* are mountain species which occur in the higher parts of the region (see Boutrais 1984a:28).

#### *Vegetation of the Interior Plateaux*

Much of the interior area of the massif is covered by a set of plateaux which lie between 700 m and 900 m asl. A long, narrow plateau runs from about Gouaza to Meri along the centre of the northeastern extension of the massif, while much of

southern Mafa territory is also a plateau. The vegetation of these areas is fairly similar to that of the surrounding mountains, a sparsely-wooded grassland dominated by many of the same species, along with *Boswellia dalzielii* and cailcédrat. These soils are quite vulnerable to degradation through erosion and over-exploitation and they may deteriorate to the point where they will only support Sahelian species such as *Balanites* and *Ziziphus*. This has occurred in parts of the northwestern Mokolo-Mayo Louti plateau.

Population densities on the plateaux are variable, ranging from over 200/km<sup>2</sup> in parts of Podokwo territory at the northern end of the Gouaza-Meri plateau to fewer than 15/km<sup>2</sup> west of Mokolo, where poor soils and an ethnic boundary limit habitation. Lower population densities and gentler slopes mean that terracing is less prevalent on these plateaux than in the surrounding mountains, giving these regions a less 'managed' appearance. More terracing might be useful in combatting erosion, though.

The Kapsiki plateau marks the northernmost extension of *Isoberlinia doka*, a tree species which forms quite distinctive Sudanic woodlands further to the south. On the plateau, it tends to invade fallow lands, along with *Daniella oliveri* (Boutrais 1984a:26, 1984b:94); these species only attain the size of a large shrub this far north, but are much larger further south in Cameroon. *Isoberlinia* - *Daniella* woodland is widespread south of the Sahara, reaching east to Uganda, and is similar to the *Brachystegia* - *Jubernalia miombo* woodland found in eastern and southern Africa under a rainfall of 500-1200 mm/year (Lind and Morrison 1974:81; White 1983:106).

### **Climates in the study area 2000 b.p. to the present**

The palaeoclimatology of the Chad Basin and the area around it has been extensively investigated by a number of researchers. Perhaps the only area in Africa that is better-known in terms of ancient climates is the East African Rift Valley system. The works of Alan Durand (1982), Jean Maley (especially 1981), Sharon

Nicholson (1980;) and Michel Servant and Simone Servantt-Vildary (Servant 1970; .Servant and Servant-Vildary 1980; .Servant-Vildary 1973) are particularly important for the area around the Chad Basin.

### *Pleistocene and Holocene Palaeoclimates*

I will briefly discuss terminal Pleistocene and earlier Holocene palaeoclimates before examining climatic change over the last two millennia. This encompasses the period of interest for this work and also provides some earlier baseline data, since important variation in climate and so (presumably) in environments has occurred over this period. This variation was of markedly greater magnitude than that of the more recent past.

As an example, the relict dunes which can be found on the Chad Plain and on the Mora Plain between the massif and the Bama Ridge probably date to a very arid period at the end of the Pleistocene (20,000-12,000 b.p. [Talbot 1980:42-45]). It is possible that this period was interrupted by a more humid episode at 15,000-14,000 b.p. which has only recently been detected through radiocarbon dating of calcareous nodules (M. Wilson, personal communication, 1989). An arid interval which caused dune formation and activation this far south (ca 500 km south of the present dune limits [Talbot 1980:40]) would be significantly more severe than recent climatic deterioration and would have had drastic effects upon the environment of the Mandara Mountains. This case also highlights one of the problems associated with reconstruction of palaeoclimatic sequences; it is probable that evidence of any 15,000-14,000 b.p. amelioration was destroyed by more later aridity. Other problems with palaeoclimatic data in the Lake Chad area include the distance of most sample locations from the study area -- most were collected much further north -- and the fact that most samples were collected from interdunal ponds, which may have distorted results.

Terminal Pleistocene hyperaridity was replaced during the Pleistocene/Holocene transition period and in the early-/mid-Holocene by a period

significantly more humid than today. This was the case over most of sub-Saharan Africa. Earlier dune fields became stabilized and extensive soil development took place on them. There were increases in lake levels and palynological evidence indicates significant shifts toward floral communities characteristic of wetter environments.

The extent to which this climatic amelioration caused drastic changes in the levels of Lake Chad (through the formation of 'Lake Mega-Chad') has been questioned (Durand 1982), especially for the later periods, after ca 8000 b.p. It appears quite probable that Lake Chad never attained the tremendous size ascribed to it for the early-/mid-Holocene, but to an extent this is not important in the study area. There is evidence for a continued episode of more humid climate until the mid-Holocene, from the Chad Basin and from other parts of Africa, and this episode would have had significant environmental effects. It is quite possible that there was formation of more local lakes in the southern Chad Plain over this time period and later.

This more humid climatic regime persisted until after 6000 b.p., although with a significant interruption at ca 7500 b.p. in the Lake Chad Basin (Servant and Servant-Vildary 1980; Talbot 1980:42-43; M. Wilson, personal communication). This latter period of increased dryness probably caused reactivation of some of the relict dunes found in the plains, and correlates reasonably well in time with regressions elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa.

By ca 5000-4000 b.p., the definitive retreat from the early-/mid-Holocene highstand was occurring. There is evidence of dune reactivation, although not nearly to the same extent as during the Pleistocene or earlier Holocene (Talbot 1980:43). Climatic variations of a smaller magnitude become visible in the palaeoclimatic record of the last 4000 years (Beauvilain 1989: 84; Maley 1981:58; Robinson 1980; Servant and Servant-Vildary 1988:143-145, 150), which is most probably due to increases in the resolution of research techniques possible for these more recent periods. In general, there has been a fluctuating decline to present levels in this

period, with relatively increased humidity at ca 3500-2600 b.p., at about 1700-1500 b.p. and at about 700-800 b.p. It appears that most of the period between 2000 b.p. and the present was, on average, wetter than is the case today.

Within the study area, there are very few data on recent palaeoclimates to work with. Dating of calcareous nodules indicates a humid period about 1700 years ago (M. Wilson, personal communication, 1989). Excavation at MAP 506, located just north of the Bama Ridge within the survey area, has uncovered fluviolacustrine sediments overlying a Neolithic occupation with a probable minimum age of A.D. 10+/-190 (Alpha-1875 -- [David and MacEachern 1988:58]). It is conceivable that the *karal/firki* clay levels overlying the lowest spits at Daima, much closer to Lake Chad, (Connah 1981:108, 109, 113) derive from the same type of deposits, although Connah thinks that they are artificial. These spits date to between 600 B.C. and 400 B.C. (Connah 1981:114).

### *Historical Data*

There is also historical evidence for climatic change in and around the study area, although these data refer to more recent periods. Nicholson (1976, 1980) and Urvoy (1949) note the general lack of mention of famines and droughts in the chronicles of the rulers of Bornu, which begin well before A.D. 1500. This agrees quite well with historical data from other areas, such as that of Timbuktu and the Niger Bend (Nicholson 1980:179-180). There is, however, some evidence for a drought in northern Cameroon in the 1550s-1560s (Beauvilain 1989:116), although oral testimony should be taken with a grain of salt at such a remove. Ibn Fartwa's (1926:46) statement in the late sixteenth century that the Sao Tatala followed the receding Lake east probably describes a seasonal variation, not a climatic one. Evidence for generally moist conditions agrees with data indicating high Lake Chad levels in the middle of this millennium (Maley 1981:58).

This was followed by a set of severe droughts in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Nicholson 1980:188-191), which seem to have been nearly

universal in the Sudanic zone. Particularly severe droughts occurred in the 1680s, in the 1730s-1750s and in the 1780s-1790s. These droughts were probably at least as severe of those of recent years, but they seem to have been separated by periods of return to conditions moister than those of the present day (Maley 1981). By contrast, the period between ca 1800 and the 1850s/1860s was quite arid over much of Africa, and the Chad Basin was one of the areas particularly hard hit, with 12 years of famine and drought between 1828 and 1839 (Nicholson 1976, 1980:190). This was followed by a partial return to moister conditions in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but it seems that lake levels and general availability of water did not attain the levels of earlier centuries. Accounts by European travellers, which began during this period (Barth 1965 [1857-1859]; Denham and Clapperton 1826; Rohlfs 1875), seem to paint a picture of a country appreciably wetter and more vegetated than is the case today (witness Barths [1965:2:114] description of a permanent lake with large fish west of Sukur, just southwest of the study area), but it is not clear if much of this is due to human-induced environmental degradation over the last century.

There was a severe drought at the beginning of this century, culminating in severe droughts and famines in 1903-1906 and 1912-1914 in the study area. Since then, there have been a number of droughts of varying intensities, culminating in those of the early-/mid-1970s, which caused a great deal of economic dislocation and human suffering, despite the provision of some foreign aid.

### *The Effects of Climatic Variation*

The effects of these successive variations in climates on environments in the study area are difficult to determine. Data on climatic changes are derived from sources -- calcareous nodules, pollen diagrams -- which do not give direct indications of environment in the areas in which they are found, when they yield environmental data at all. For example, pollen diagrams from the site of Tjéri, ca 330 km northeast of the study area in Chad, show large proportions of pollen from Sudanic and Sudanic-Guinean species for the period 8500/8000-4000 b.p., with the disappearance of pollen

from these taxa and a rise of Sahelian pollen after 4000 b.p. (Maley 1981:278-371). However, it is likely that much of this pollen was derived from rivers flowing south to north (Maley 1981:368-371) and so applies to areas quite far away -- perhaps at the same latitude as the Mandara Mountains, but it is impossible to be sure.

The study area is now in the zone of transition between Sahelian and Sudanic vegetational zones. If the present conditions are unusually dry, it is probable that the environment of the area was more akin to that of the Sudanic zone in the past. It would be dangerous to try to draw an exact picture of possible changes in the complete absence of quantifiable data, but we should expect that the plains would support a more heavily wooded savanna than they do now, with more *Combretum* and *Anogeissus* and other Sudanic tree and grass species -- perhaps similar to the 'intermediate' Sudanic woodland described by White (1983:107). It is possible that this cover and a higher ratio of precipitation to evaporation would inhibit the development of *hardé* soils (see Lind and Morrison 1974:174). Run-off from the Mandara Mountains would be greater, as would the flow of rivers such as the Logone which are supplied from much further south. We would then expect more alluviation and also longer-lasting water courses in the plains, with the development of gallery forests in wet periods. Increased flow of the Logone River and lagoon formation between the Bama Ridge and the massif would increase the amount of area seasonally flooded and also the length of the time this flooding persisted. Under some circumstances, this would result in the existence of permanent lakes in the area.

In wetter periods the mountains would receive even more rain than the plains. Beauvilain's (1989:53-56) maps of northern Cameroon isohyets from 1940 to the present make the extent to which the massif is favoured in rainfall quite clear. Certain areas, such as Meri, already receive well over 1000 mm/year and, if not heavily impacted by humans, would probably exhibit an extensive tree cover. This would most likely be related to Sudanic woodlands found to the south of the study region, which make an appearance (in a 'shrubland' form) on fallow land on the Kapsiki plateau. A general increase in rainfall would extend this woodland, probably over

most of the massif, and it might even be found in the plains below. It may also be inferred that this woodland cover would increase slope stability, although this is certainly open to human intervention.

Plant communities do not respond instantly to environmental changes, and usually more quickly to environmental degradation than to amelioration. We should not expect that every increase in rainfall in the varied climatic history of northern Cameroon over the last 2000 years would result in the establishment of Sudanic or Guinean vegetational communities. However, we may say that sustained increases in rainfall over decades or centuries would increase the areas covered by wooded grasslands and woodlands in and around the northern Mandara Mountains, that it would increase the number of permanent water sources and that it would probably contribute to the general potential of the area for human habitation, by increasing slope stability in the mountains and alluviation in the plains, and by inhibiting the development of halomorphic soils. The unknown factor in this is, of course, human intervention. Population increase and overexploitation could easily undo all the benefits of climatic amelioration. Human effects are examined in the section below.

### **Human Influences on the Environment**

#### *Mechanisms of Change*

The major mechanisms of human effects on the environment of the study area are clearing and cultivating, grazing and burning. While the environment is limited by climatic influences which are more or less outside of human control, human intervention has drastically affected the ways in which these influences are expressed. The vegetation of this area can, in many ways, be considered as an 'artefact' of human occupation (see for example Boutrais 1984b:93-100). This is the case for extremely large areas of the savannas and woodlands of Central Africa (Bradley 1977:40; de Leeuw and Tuley 1972:122-124; Hopkins 1965:62; Sillans 1958, quoted in David

1976:230-231; .White 1983:103; .Whyte 1974). It is obvious in the 'managed' land on the densely-occupied massif, but is also the case on the plains.

The effects of clearing, cultivating and grazing are obviously dependent upon both the density of occupation and the cultural practices of the population. The effects of fire need not be so constrained (Trollope 1982). The populations of the Mandara massif and the surrounding piedmont are engaged in intensive agriculture, and we may assume that clearing and cultivation are the primary mechanisms by which anthropogenic environments are maintained in this region. The extreme sophistication of montagnard agriculture has been noted by a number of authors (see for example Boulet [1975] and Hallaire [1971, 1984a]) and this sophistication -- in fertilizing, fallowing and crop rotation, in soil and water management, in the deployment of specialized varieties of food plants such as sorghum -- would mitigate the worst effects of high population densities in what Europeans would regard as an unfriendly landscape.

The density of sheep and (especially) goats is high in the mountains, compared with regions further away from the massif (Frechou 1984:436-440), so that grazing might also have important environmental effects. Ovicaprid grazing is, however, closely controlled. The density of cattle on the massif is quite low, and they tend to be very closely confined and fed on cut forage. It is likely that cattle grazing is not important there. Burning must be tightly controlled, given the small size of cultivated plots and the dense, ubiquitous settlement.

It should be noted that older informants in Plata and Urza territory uniformly say that the massif was slightly more treed, and the piedmont much more so, when they were growing up -- that is, in the 1910s and 1920s. The same is said to have been the case on the Mafa plateau, but probably not in Kapsiki/Higi territory to its south (N. David, personal communication). They ascribe the disappearance of these trees to increased exploitation for fuel, both for home fires and for iron smelting, and to the movement of people down from the mountains. This latter is particularly interesting; it appears that the piedmont was to some extent a buffer zone between montagnard

peoples and the Wandala in precolonial times, little exploited by both groups and so more heavily treed. When people moved on to the plains, these woodlands rapidly disappeared.

On the plains away from the piedmont, human impact operates more uniformly through the mechanisms of cultivation, grazing and burning. Settlements are nucleated among the Wandala, Kanuri, Fulbe, Melgwa and Shuwa and the population density is lower, sometimes by 10 to 20 times (Boulet et al. 1984:108-114). Anthropogenic plant associations and soils such as *hardé* occur around settlement locations, as they do around ancient settlement mounds on the *firki* of the Chad Plain (Esser and van Lavieren 1979:5) and the Diamaré (Marliac 1982; Marliac et al. 1983; Marliac and Delneuf 1984). The density of cattle is as high or higher than it is on most areas of the massif, while the density of ovicaprids is lower (Frechou 1984: 436-440). Cultivation is extensive, with frequent fallowing and a lack of fertilization and soil/water management, in contrast with the very intensive cultivation on the massif and (to a lesser extent) on the piedmont. The lack of sophisticated management techniques and the lower rainfall probably make this area vulnerable to overgrazing and overcultivation, even though land use is not intensive. This is particularly noticeable in the invasion of fallow lands by Sahelian species described above.

Fire undoubtedly plays a much greater role in determining plains vegetational patterns in the study area than it does in determining mountain patterns. This appears to be general throughout huge areas of the African plains and savannas. Hamilton (1974:208) considers that, without human-induced burning, much of East Africa would be covered by closed woodlands. Hopkins (1965:63-66) agrees that imposition of fire protection and a cessation of cultivation would allow West/Central African wooded grasslands to evolve to a specific climatic climax, probably involving closed forests in most areas. Burning appears to be an important mechanism for the replacement of Sudanic tree species by Sahelian bushes in Waza National Park (Esser and van Lavieren 1979:23). The effects of fire may be particularly difficult to examine prehistorically because the magnitudes of these effects may not be directly

related to the population density of an area; fires are easy to set, so that a few people may cause drastic environmental effects (Kuhnholz-Lordat 1939). This is not so much the case with cultivation or grazing, where we expect such consequences to be more closely tied to intensity of settlement.

## CHAPTER 3 -- THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC MILIEU

### Introduction

The human milieu within the area of interest of this dissertation is even more complex than is the environment, to the extent that it can be extremely difficult to decide just how many 'ethnic groups' are present within the northern Mandara Mountains -- or even exactly what languages they speak. Barreteau (1987) has recently established that the speech of a small group of people found within what is usually considered as Zulgo or Gemjek territory is actually a separate language, called *gaduwa* -- this in an area where detailed ethnographic and linguistic investigation began in the 1930s and 1940s (Mouchet 1938, 1949, 1953, 1957). Similarly, the classification of languages and dialects spoken along the western extension of the Mandara Mountains, in Nigeria, seems to be much less advanced than the equivalent situation in Cameroon (see for example Wente-Lukas 1985 and Wolff 1983, 1987, but also Newman 1977, Newman and Ma 1966, Wolff 1971, 1974). The ethnic and linguistic situation on the plains surrounding the massif is much simpler, or at least it was before the recent descent of mountain peoples, but the complexity of the montagnard situation more than makes up for this. (On the other hand, it tends to be easier to localise groups within the mountains, since the higher population densities and more constrained environment found there make multi-ethnic settlement much less common.)

Part of this problem is one of nomenclature, common in many areas of Africa. One group of people or language may be referred to by a number of names or, conversely, one designation may be indiscriminately and inappropriately applied to a number of different groups. The 'Vamé-Mbremé', living south of Mora on the eastern edge of the Mandara massif (Figure 1.2), has long been recognized as an 'ethnic group', although no such ethnic designation is used by people in the region; the

'Vamé-Mbremé' are actually a set of independent clans living close to one another. Again, a good example of this is given in Wente-Lukas (1985); her catalogue of ethnic units in the northwestern Mandara Mountains in Nigeria shows the results of both of these processes in the multiplicity of names assigned to each group. The picture of the ethnic (and linguistic) milieu in the region rapidly concatenates into one of quite extreme complexity. This problem is exacerbated in the Mandara Mountains by the fact that detailed ethnographic descriptions of the peoples of the area are not common and are in most cases quite recent.

The general inappropriateness of many anthropological conceptions of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic groups' and the frequent failure to distinguish between 'ethnic groups' and linguistic groupings add to the confusion encountered by researchers interested in the cultural milieu in the Mandara Mountains. I will examine this problem in a later section of this dissertation, and will at this point only say that many ethnographic analyses of montagnard groups and reconstructions of their past histories accept as analytic units groupings which are: (1) artefacts of Muslim and/or European colonialism and the resulting systems of control and taxation, or (2) based in whole or in part on the languages -- often themselves not well defined -- spoken by different peoples or (3) both. Needless to say, this leads to problems. In the course of this work, I will often refer to these traditional units as 'ethnic/linguistic groups'; I hope that use of this admittedly unwieldy term will emphasize my dissatisfaction with the standard conceptions of ethnicity in the study area.

These caveats should be kept in mind throughout this chapter. In it, I will attempt to give an overview of the ethnic and linguistic environment within the study area according to current conceptions. I will deal with 'ethnic' groups in the area first. I will not attempt to give detailed descriptions of each group; there are at least 20, so this would take far too much time and space, and the writings of primary researchers are much more valuable guides in this regard. In addition, numbers of these groups, especially in the mountains, share common features of economy and material culture, of social and political organization, of belief systems and so on. Because of this, I will

first examine a number of features which many of the montagnard groups hold in common and which are of importance in understanding the dynamics of group formation; details on differences between these groups deal mostly with oral history and are dealt with in Chapters 5 and 6. I will then briefly examine the groups which occupy the plains surrounding the Mandara massif, particularly the Wandala, and finally finish the chapter with a brief description of linguistic reconstructions in the study area.

I regret the extent to which such a procedure may do violence to an understanding of what are after all unique peoples, with their own vital histories and traditions, but see no alternative in this case.

## **Montagnard peoples**

### *Introduction*

There are about 20 different montagnard 'ethnic groups' in the study area, ranging from the Podokwo in the north to the Zulgo and Gemjek in the south, and from the Molkwo in the east to the *laamang*-speaking groups and Sukur in the west. Approximate traditional locations for these groups (i.e., pre-twentieth century locations) are given in Figure 1.2. This is one of the highest concentrations of different peoples in Africa. Group sizes vary from the 80,000-100,000 of the Mafa, taken as a whole, down to a few hundred in the cases of groups like the Plata, Chinine, Mabas and so on. Obviously, when talking about units of such varying sizes, we are talking about quite different things, if only because of limitations imposed by political and demographic constraints.

### *Economy*

*Sorghum*. The basis of the economies of all of these groups is intensive subsistence farming. The main crop in most cases is *Sorghum bicolor*, with

*Pennisetum* attaining local importance. There are an extremely large number of different varieties of sorghum grown throughout northern Cameroon, but those traditionally associated with montagnard groups are varieties of the 'red' sorghum of the caudatum race, known as *tchergé*, *zhay* (Uldemé), *al hai* (Plata) and so on (personal observation, David 1976:245, 246; Hallaire 1971, 1984b:408, 412). In certain cases, 'white' sorghum of various caudatum and guinea varieties is also grown (David 1976:246; Hallaire 1984b:411), almost exclusively on the plains and especially since the movement of many montagnard people out of the mountains in this century. 'White' sorghum tends to have a higher status, particularly among plains peoples -- with whom it is traditionally identified -- but also to an extent among younger people from mountain groups; 'red' sorghum is sometimes seen as rustic (M. Kourdapaye, personal communication). 'White' sorghum does not, however, grow as successfully in the mountains (M. Kourdapaye). There is very little use of dry-season sorghum (*mouskwari*) within the mountains.

The Mandara Mountains are at the western edge of the postulated 'non-centre' for the domestication of sorghum, and are in the area postulated for the evolution of the caudatum race (Harlan and Stemler 1975), so the dependence upon the crop by populations in the area and their expertise in manipulating it are perhaps not surprising. Chadic-speaking peoples were probably intimately involved in the domestication of this grain. Hallaire (1971, 1984a) points out that more than 20 different varieties of *tchergé* are planted in different contexts by the inhabitants of the Hodogwai quarter of the Uldemé massif, and that the context in which these types are planted will vary according to sophisticated considerations of slope, aspect, drainage and soil type.

*Planting techniques.* This sophistication in planting techniques is rivalled by that displayed in the creation and maintenance of the terrace systems which are, in many regions, the most obvious human works in the Mandara Mountains (Figure 2.2). These terraces are usually very small -- perhaps five to six metres long and only one to two metres wide, sometimes smaller than that -- but their ubiquity and the care with

which they were traditionally built and maintained have made them dominant influences in the landscape of the massif. They fulfill two roles; they act as water- and soil-control devices, preventing erosion and conserving moisture, and they increase the amount of land available for cultivation (Boulet 1975; Hallaire 1971; Wilson n.d.). This latter is important in an area of high population densities and large areas of bare rock. As noted in Chapter 2, terraced soils will often be more fertile than those on the plains, if care is taken to maintain them.

A number of other techniques are also used to maximize returns from limited arable land. Irrigation is extensively used, particularly on the plains, and varies in scope from the watering of individual plants from pots to the use of elaborate government irrigation systems. The association of crops with *Acacia albida* has been noted. Related to this is the association of other leguminous crops, such as peanuts or beans, with grains to make use of the nitrogen-fixing properties of the former (Boutrais 1984b:98; Hallaire 1984b:427; Richard 1977:62-63). Manuring is extensively used, especially for household gardens (see below). This involves the gathering and spreading of both human and animal wastes and also grazing of animals on cleared fields after harvests; this has the twin benefits of providing forage and additional manuring. Ashes and cinders are often similarly spread. One traditional problem with this practice was a lack of manure; many montagnard people would have few goats or sheep, and cattle were even rarer. In addition, the chronic lack of salt meant that wastes are burned to create this necessary commodity (Hallaire 1984a:381; Lima, 3/5/86; Gwozda, 13/5/1986). Fallowing and crop rotation are also widely practiced, the latter particularly in regions with lower population densities.

*Other plants.* No other cereal approaches the importance of sorghum in and around the Mandara massif, but there is some cultivation of millet (*Pennisetum americanum*), particularly in some parts of Mafa territory (where it is often rotated with sorghum on a two-year cycle, since it demands relatively little of soils) and on the drier plains to the north and west of the massif, where its tolerance of poor soils and dry conditions outweigh its poor yields. Certain montagnard groups which claim

to have emigrated from near Keroua preserve memories of its use, and it plays a role in their migration stories (see Chapter 6).

By the end of the growing season, the landscape is dominated by sorghum, houses and paths submerged by a tide of green. Other domesticated plants are more modest, and less visible, but are nonetheless vital to the everyday life of people. As noted above, some of these (peanuts and beans, but also okra, eleusine, sesame and so on) are sown in the fields with sorghum, for space and convenience and for the beneficial effects which some of these have upon the all-important cereal. Other plants are cultivated in small plots close to each home. Perhaps the most important of these is tobacco, prized as a medicinal and ritual plant as well as for its more leisurely uses, but *Voandzeia* groundnuts, tiger nuts (*Cyperus esculentus*), tomatoes, onions (more recently), gourds and other such plants are also grown where they can be easily watered and manured, if necessary. These plants are supplemented by the products of those trees and shrubs permitted to exist on mountain farmland and in the 'bush' around settlements, many species of which contribute leaves, fruits and other products which add nutrients and variety to a pretty unchanging diet.

*Domestic animals.* Domestic animals are important in all of the cultures of the area, but the role that they play in domestic economies varies. In even the most densely populated area of the massif itself, chickens, goats and sheep provide protein, feathers, skins, manure and sacrifices for a minimal investment in forage, time and labour. Pigs are only kept by non-Muslims and are not widely kept, at least partially because of their need for shade and water; their antiquity in this part of Africa is unknown (Epstein 1971:2346-348).

Cattle are another matter entirely. They are large and vulnerable to predators and disease, demand a great deal of forage and water and could easily damage both themselves and structures, particularly when kept on terraced hill-sides. They are a rarer commodity in the densely-populated northern Mandara Mountains, by no means every household keeping one. Raising cattle does, however, seem to be an occupation of some antiquity among the montagnard groups of northern Cameroon, given the

presence of a small, humpless race of the animals which seems to be unique to this area and quite distinct from the humped zebu/sanga cattle now kept by plains groups (Epstein 1971).

Cattle are more carefully confined within the boundaries of the homestead, often within their own hut, than are smaller animals. Their value lies within the political, social and ritual spheres rather than the economic. The prestige which accompanies ownership may be informal, or it may be as ritualized as during the *marai* ceremony among the Gemjek, Zulgo, Mafa, Mada, northern Mofu and a number of other montagnard groups, where the release, recapture and subsequent sacrifice of a confined bull are intimately tied to social and ritual mores. In this sense, cattle ownership may be abundantly valuable, although the animal will never repay in meat the effort lavished upon it.

On the plains, cattle-keeping is a much more feasible occupation, and it is there that their use is most widespread. Herding varies from the nomadic pastoralism of the Mbororo Fulbe, through the seasonal transhumance of Shuwa, Fulbe and some Kanuri to sedentary pasturage by Kanuri, Wandala and some ex-montagnard peoples. Easily the most important seasonal movement is that to and from the plains of Waza, where annual flooding of the Logone gives abundant grazing (Frechou 1984). Cooperation between herding groups and sedentary cultivators is extensive, if not always friendly (as, for example, between the Fulbe and Shuwa and the Wandala -- D. Lyons, personal communication, 1988). Cultivators will allow herders to graze their animals on harvested fields, providing forage for the one and manure for the other, and herders will often include cultivators' animals in their herds, both in the immediate vicinity of farmers' settlements and at more distant pasturages. Again, sheep, goats and poultry provide valuable additional meat and other products, at little cost.

*Hunting and fishing.* Hunting and fishing are not important economic activities around the Mandara Mountains at present, although at least the former was more important in the past, before the establishment of game reserves and the

expansion of population on the plains. In precolonial times, elephants, giraffe, large antelope and large cats (leopard, lion) were found on the plains close to the mountains, as witnessed by ethnohistorical accounts, travellers' reports (Barth 1965 [1857-1859]:345-353; Denham and Clapperton 1826:130-131) and accounts by more recent colonial officials (for example, Lembezat 1961:14).

These animals furnished meat, skins and trade goods to those hunters brave and lucky enough to be able to kill them, but they were probably never abundant enough to provide a steady supply of food -- the smaller, local game and 'slow game' (hyraces, monkeys, rodents, snakes, birds, lizards, termites and other insects) which are eaten today would have been more abundant. It is probable that large herds of game animals were most commonly found further away from the massif, in less inhabited areas. Certainly Barth's account seems to indicate that elephants, antelope and giraffe were found 140 years ago where they are most often found now -- in the vicinity of Waza National Park. Fishing does not appear to have been an important pursuit within the area, given the ephemeral nature of the water-courses, but a trade in dried fish (probably from the Logone, as today) existed at least late in the last century; such fish were one of the most important items traded by plainsmen to the montagnards (Tlevu Augla, 7/8/1986; Abokwa Baje, 20/10/1986; Ugshé Vale, 10/11/86; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/86; Kachecka Chokfem, 23/5/89; Chemchem Dauwaka, 16/5/89; Baje Maugjeta, 12/6/89; Augula Kulemdia, 13/6/89; Ajangwa, 22/5/89).

### *Social organization*

Despite the wide variance in the sizes of 'ethnic groups', as traditionally defined in this area, striking similarities in social organization exist. Most of these 'groups' are acephalous collections of small, exogamous patrilineal lineages or clans, existing in a web of traditional relations of alliance and/or opposition with similar groups and with historical ties to a particular home territory. In that sense, linguistic and ethnic reality are at odds, demonstrating the dangers of relying on the former as a guide to the latter. Communities -- defined in terms of proximity, and not of kinship --

play a more important role among at least the Mafa than they do among many of the smaller groups, but even in that case a vital lineage system still exists.

There are two major elements which make this situation more complex: the existence of a caste of specialists/ 'transformers' (blacksmiths/undertakers/ diviners, potters/midwives/healers -- see David et al. [1989:184]) among some groups and the existence of stratification among groups in the south and west of the study area. The two phenomena appear to be related (see Chapter 8), in that stratification seems to have occurred only where one finds an iron-working caste and is related to the social structuring of that caste (Kirk-Greene 1960:83-87; Vaughan 1970:87-89).

*Family structure.* The basis of social organization among Mandara montagnards is the patriarchal extended family, living together in a bounded (often walled) compound of functionally differentiated buildings. No 'urban/rural' or 'village/non-village' dichotomy traditionally existed in the northern Mandara massif, since these compounds are distributed fairly evenly over the occupied landscape and surrounded by the fields which are worked by the family (Figure 3.1). In many cases, there will be some clustering of the households of closely related men (brothers, father and sons and so on). More nucleated areas exist further to the south of the study area.

At a slightly more inclusive level, groups of related families will often occupy a single feature, such as a defensible hillock or ridge line, yielding a 'lineage territory' (see below). This territory may not be exclusive to one lineage, although one lineage will be dominant. Movement on to the plains in the latter part of this century has broken down this structure to a great extent, with the formation of villages and the mixing of people of different lineages and different groups within plains settlements.

The life cycles of montagnard families vary widely, depending upon the particular circumstances which a new couple finds itself in. Patrilocal residence is very common, especially during the first years of marriage, when it may be an expected norm (Juillerat 1971:133-135). A father's ability to keep his sons close by, whether in the same compound or closely adjacent, seems to be generally prized. A

new couple will often find itself included within a large extended family after marriage, but may then leave after some years in order to found its own household.

If things go well, this new household will be expected to grow, with the addition of other wives and/or of children and the eventual incorporation of married children in a new extended family. Polygamy is accepted as the ideal state for a household head (for prestige, a larger labour force and a larger number of children), although the percentage of cases in which it is actually attained varies widely: 20% of married men among the Uldemé/Plata (a poor group, where there is widespread complaint that brideprices demanded by other groups are too high -- de Colombel [1986:32] personal observation), 60% among the Mada and 71% among the Muyan (Richard 1977:276), 50% among the Muktélé (Juillerat 1971:226) and so on.

Ideally, the life cycle of a family will follow a steady procession from the first marriage of the male family head until its fragmentation at his death. In practice, this is often not the case. Levels of marital instability are high among these montagnard groups, due in great part to the ability of a woman to leave a man with whom she is dissatisfied (Juillerat 1971:229-239; Richard 1977:285-286; van Beek 1978:457, also personal observation) and, it appears, to a lesser extent to regularized forms of divorce. This escape route for women was probably more restricted in precolonial times, with the greater 'boundedness' of settlements confined to the mountains, but has been important in furnishing a female counterbalance to men's power. (Levels of marital instability are still higher among many plains-dwelling groups [N. David, personal communication].)

Sex and age roles within montagnard society are highly structured in theory and perhaps rather less so in practice. The male/female dichotomy is highly regularized and is integrated into a set of binary oppositions common to most of these groups, but differing in details (see below). Task differentiation is most explicit in more technological work; men are blacksmiths and women are potters, but the other sex may play peripheral roles in both these sets of tasks. Among certain groups in the south and west of the study area (the Mafa, Sirak, Bulahay, Sukur and so on), these

two task sets are performed, with others, by the men and women of a caste which has been labelled the 'transformers' (David et al. 1989), but which might equally be called the 'specialists'.

Participation in agriculture by men and women, by young and old, is vital in the constrained montagnard environment but, again, task differentiation is the ideal. Women often appear to have the worst of it, since many of the jobs left to them (carrying water for plants, much of the weeding, etc.) are very arduous. Both males and females participate in the market economy as buyers and sellers, although the items bought and sold are often differentiated, women concentrating in the food trade.

One anthropologically significant task often performed -- and frequently jealously guarded -- by men is that of keepers of history. This is certainly the case in northern Cameroon. Attempts to elicit historical information from women met with interference from any males present (often including, unfortunately, my interpreters), who claimed that women 'were not interested in such things'. I was usually able to solicit information about only recent events from the women I asked, when they would reply at all. In some senses, women in these societies really are divorced from history. History is the history of patrilineages in the study area. Women will remain members of the patrilineage they are born into, but after marriage they are immersed in the milieu of another patrilineage with another history. It is possible, too, that enquiries by a female would elicit more information than I gathered from women, although this is by no means certain.

*Inheritance.* Questions of inheritance will greatly affect the social position of households, and nothing so well illustrates the dangers of generalizing about montagnard social structures. There is a whole constellation of material goods, of land, of structured social relations and of duties toward individuals, both living and dead, which may be passed down from one generation to the next, depending upon the group. Among the Mafa and neighbouring groups around Mokolo, the pot which acts as repository for the spirit of the head of the household is curated by the eldest

son, along with the ceremonies that ensure proper relations between the deceased ancestor and the living household.

The youngest son will inherit the equivalent vessel for his mother among these groups; he will also often 'inherit' the compound itself, since he is most likely to be occupying it when his father dies (J. Sterner, personal communication, 1989). Land is often allocated in a fairly informal manner by lineage or community (where different lineages coexist) agreement. This may work best when the population density is low and there is not much pressure on land (Boulet et al. 1984:109-114). Among the Muktelé, although at rather higher population densities (Hallaire 1965:13), micro-migrations to open up new areas appear to have been possible (Juillerat 1971:69).

Among the Mada and Muyan, on the other hand, the inheritor of many religious duties will be a younger son, rigidly the youngest among the former while other factors (such as character and interest in traditions) can intervene among the latter (Richard 1977:90-93) and among the Podokwo (Siran n.d.). Among the Plata and Uldemé, the eldest son will usually inherit these duties. Among all of these latter groups, living in a densely-populated environment, disposal of land is very tightly controlled and rests upon precedents of occupation by ancestors and rigid rules which allow all a household's sons access to this, the only available means of subsistence. Perhaps the most important common factor among all of these groups is the extent to which inheritance must be conceived of as assumption of rights and duties to the ancestors (the immediate ancestors especially, but the aggregate of proper performances of these duties helps to ensure the well-being of lineages and clans), and only secondarily as the acquisition of material goods or rights.

*Lineages.* The most important social group within the northern Mandara Mountains was, historically, the patrilineage. The size and ubiquity of these lineages varies drastically; the Muktelé, Urza, Mafa and many other 'ethnic groups' are made up of a large number of patrilineages of diverse origins, some autochthonous but generally most the descendants of immigrants. The Uldemé, Mora, Podokwo and some others are again comprised of many diverse patrilineages, but with one

particular lineage predominating; among the Uldemé, for example, the descendants of a culture hero known as Agzavrinja are the most powerful group on the massif. A relatively few groups have a very homogeneous origin, nearly all members being descended from one founding hero. The Mada are perhaps the best example, but the Plata also qualify. I will examine details of lineage makeup and relations in Chapter 6, but will give a brief introduction here.

The patrilineage itself is a fundamental unit of self-identification within the montagnard groups of the study area, although this will often be modified by considerations of residence. It should probably be viewed as the fundamental unit of self-identification and ascription, and so as a fundamental 'ethnic' unit (Barth 1969:13). This increases the number of such units from about 25, when linguistic and colonial criteria are used (Boulet et al. [1984:115] and Wente-Lukas [1985]), to at least 100. This figure gives a much better idea of the social and political complexity of the Mandara massif.

These units do appear to be lineages, and not clans, if the usual criterion of explicit knowledge of genealogical lines of descent in lineages is used (Fox 1967:83; .Keesing 1975:31). This cannot, of course, be a criterion which absolutely differentiates the two. It does not take into account different levels of interest in or ignorance about one's ancestry, nor can it account for the invention of fictional kin or the other distortions to which genealogies are heir (see Vansina 1985:102-108, 182-185). Nevertheless, there appear to be explicit links between patrilineage members in most cases, and there are, for example among the Plata, consistent maximal numbers of generations of descent claimed by particular groups. In most cases, it is claimed that eight to twelve generations have passed since the lineage was established; this often correlates to the reported immigration of the founding ancestor.

Clans of an informal nature do exist. Certain lineages consider themselves 'brothers' of other lineages because of an imputed common ancestry. For example, many men who are well informed on the history of the Plata, Dumwa and Urza consider those three clans to be 'brothers' because of their common ancestry at a place

called Ngolélé in what is now Nigeria (see Chapter 6) and say that marriage interdictions once existed between these lineages. A similar situation appears to exist among the Muktelé clans said to have come from 'Majewi' (Juillerat 1971:58). No explicit genealogical connection is made, however, and such links may of course be invented to legitimize relationships between groups.

Lineages are not homogeneous structures. They are internally subdivided and stratified in many different ways. To facilitate consideration of lineage structures, I will use the terms *maximal*, *medial* and *minimal* lineages to designate differing levels of organization within the kinship group as a whole. I must emphasize that this structuring is not used by members of these different groups, although they are quite aware of the existence of larger and smaller subdivisions of lineages as a whole -- in many cases, such smaller groupings do have a corporate, or at least a genealogical, reality. In addition, lineages do not depend entirely upon descent for their membership. Many lineages and lineage segments incorporate families of immigrants from other areas, for example. The corporate, political nature of the lineage is at least as important as its genealogical persistence.

A *maximal lineage* may be defined in the northern Mandara Mountains as the total unilineal descent group claiming definite links of descent from a common ancestor. Examples can range from nearly the totality of Mada society (Cuingnet 1968; Richard 1977), to smaller units maintaining some separate identity, such as Plata in Uldemé or the Dumwa, sometimes associated with the 'Vamé-Mbremé', to groups fully participating in a larger society, such as the Matsabaiyam autochthones in Uldemé or the Valawak in Urza. These units cooperate in religious rituals and they may act corporately in attack, defence and other political matters, if they are not too large. They will mostly be exogamous, although this is not necessarily the case; among the Mada, the size of the lineage as a whole has meant that many of the roles of its maximal lineages have been taken over by *medial lineages*.

Medial lineages are found among many of the larger lineages in the mountains. They act primarily as organizational devices, validated by historical

precedent and often considered as the descendants of the sons of the founder of the lineage. Examples include the two divisions of Dumlelai and Kapa among the Plata, the three divisions of Tlidiwé, Ndakwoza and Dume-Kata in Dumwa, the various Mada divisions, those of the descendants of Agzavrinja among the Uldemé and so on. These units are always exogamous and are constituted as units of political action where they exist in a coherent territorial form. The combination of marriage restrictions and political independence can cause problems between medial lineage segments (see Chapter 6).

*Minimal lineages* may be defined as a small number of extended families living within tens or hundreds of metres of one another, holding a relatively recently-deceased ancestor in common and often cooperating in daily activities. These units can be fairly old and quite formalized. They are called *jibe* in Plata, for example, and similar terms in other languages; this word simply means 'lineage' and is also applied to larger groupings, such as the Plata maximal and Kapa/Dumlelai medial lineages. These smaller *jibe* are best seen as intermediate stages between the larger group and the (extended) family, the *da tundes adau*, 'the people who rest in the stomach of the house' (see Table 3.1 -- Abokwa Baje, 27/7/86; Mezele Sheelebé 28/7/86; Gskai Augla 6/8/86; Ajokfa and Michel Kourdapaye 30/5/89). Similar units exist in other groups: Dumwa (Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/86), Glavda (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/86, 13/11/86), Podokwo (Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/86; Naje Makwaie, 11/11/86), Uldemé (de Colombel 1986:16, 22) and Mada (Richard 1977:78). They probably correspond in function and organization to the smaller territorial groupings found in Muyan (Richard 1977:82) and Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:75-78), which have an important lineage component (see below). These minimal lineages can themselves encompass different levels of size and organization.

Lineages act corporately within two main realms, the political and the religious. The political nature of the lineage can be affected by external factors. As stated above, a lineage may occupy a contiguous territory or lineage segments may be relatively scattered. The reasons for this are unclear; to an extent, it is probably due to

different emphases placed by researchers. Even relatively homogeneous lineages, like the Plata, contain smaller groups which claim different origins, so that the lineage should be regarded as a political, and not purely a genealogical, entity. A greater emphasis on heterogeneity and on relationships between scattered minimal lineages by researchers would lead to a stress on the non-contiguous nature of kinship units. This would not explain, though, the differences between the Mada and Muyang, who were examined by one investigator (Richard 1977). We can expect relatively homogeneous groups with few immigrant lineages, such as the Mada or the Plata, to have contiguous lineage territories, but the origins of the Uldemé and 'Vamé-Mbremé' lineages are more varied, and their lineage territories appear to be coherent.

In the violent world occupied by these montagnard groups, considerations of defense mandated occupation of defensible positions by households which could cooperate in war. This was not merely a question of denying entry into the mountains by slave-raiding plainsmen or by colonial officials bent on taxation; the danger of violence by one's neighbours was at least as great as the danger from outsiders. In areas of high population density, such as the northern and northeastern borders of the massif, this meant that every defensible hillock, ridge line or plateau would be occupied to the very greatest extent possible. Even in less densely-populated areas, very few such features would be left empty.

When lineage occupation coincided with such a defensible feature or features, the lineage itself assumes a fundamental corporate role. In that case, the group of fighting men -- that most basic of corporate groups -- tasked with defense and offence would be at least a lineage subset. Direction would be provided by an individual or a council based on lineage membership. This seems to have been the case with the Plata, the Dumwa and the Urza (personal observation), the Uldemé (de Colombel 1986:15-17) and the Mada (Richard 1977:78), for example. Among the Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:74) and the Muyan (Richard 1977:82), by contrast, exclusive lineage territories do not exist. Defensible positions may be dominated by one lineage, but there is no necessary relationship between them. This will create a structure above the

level of the lineage responsible for coordination of defense; a good example is the role of war chief (*sfl guvl*), responsible for massif defense, among the Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:102, 109-112).

Lineages are organizational entities. They are manageable social and political units, but they also play a basic role in the organizing of history and of relations with the non-human world. One does not have an individual ancestry in the Mandara Mountains except on the shortest of timescales; the past is the domain of the ancestors of the lineage. A lineage would cease to be coherent if its ancestry was lost; conversely, it will in the final analysis maintain itself not through language, nor unique festivals, nor distinct material culture (although all of these may serve as mnemonics) but through contact with its own ancestors and a knowledge of its own past. Previously powerful groups, such as the Maya and the Zoumaya (Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/86; Mouchet 1947b, d; Seignobos 1986), do not at present exist politically or materially, but lineages that claim descent from the ancients of these groups do exist.

The spirits of deceased members of montagnard lineages still keep up an active interest in its functioning, and maintenance of good relations between the living, the dead and other supernatural beings is a primary concern. Lineage leaders will often play a primary role in this task, through a cycle of yearly and multi-yearly offerings which involve propitiation and honouring of the ancestors. These range from annual ceremonies which are simply integrated into the yearly ritual round, as among the Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:85-88), Muyan (Richard 1977:152-154), Uldemé and Plata (de Colombel 1986:46-47; Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication; Baldama Detché and M. Kourdapaye, 25/5/89; personal observation) to the elaborate, multi-yearly 'festival of the bulls', the *marai*, found among the Zulgo, Gemjek (), Mada (Cuingnet 1968; Richard 1977:149-152) and other 'ethnic'/linguistic units, which generally involves all of the lineages in a certain group.

*Lineage relations with external groups.* Relations between lineages and with groups outside of the social milieu of the Mandara massif were profoundly paradoxical. Lineages-as-corporate-groups (that is, either maximal or medial lineages,

units of political, social and religious action) were too small to survive without constant interaction with the external world. There was always a need for wives for sons and husbands for daughters, for technical and religious expertise and often for products that could not be produced on the limited terrain that one lineage could control. At the same time, this constraint caused constant conflict, as people struggled to survive in a highly-utilized environment. People fought over land, over women, over accusations of sorcery, but their battles were often engendered by the often-inadequate resources available to them.

The result was that lineages would fight with, trade with and marry into the same groups. Often these other lineages would be those closest by, since the dense population of the northern massif would make regular interaction over long distances difficult and unnecessary. In many cases, these considerations of proximity meant that such interactions would be across 'ethnic' and linguistic frontiers. Alliances and long-standing enmities would modify these relations of paradox by providing lineages that one might often marry into and very seldom fight with, or vice versa, but these relations were not themselves immutable and people would still have to deal with many other groups with which such regular relations did not exist. These paradoxical relations should perhaps not seem so strange to us; in our own, Western culture, they are often subsumed under the term 'diplomacy'.

Relations with groups external to the massif were often just as equivocal. Within the study area, the only external group that most montagnards would have any regular contact with was the Wandala, Islamic plainsmen who speak a Chadic language very closely akin to those spoken in the massif. The Wandala have depended on the massif for reserves of two vital resources, slaves and iron, for some hundreds of years, but the methods used to extract these were of necessity rather different. The taking of slaves involved raiding and kidnapping as often as trade, while gaining access to iron ore and bloom demanded more peaceful relations. The Wandala also depended upon the mountains as a source of refuge during times of pressure from other plains groups. In their turn, montagnards depended on trade from

the plains for certain vital resources, such as salt and fish. Such relations of dependency and conflict could not fail to be ambiguous. Contact with other plains groups, including the Muslim Kanuri, Fulbe and Shuwa Arabs and the pagan Melgwa, was much more apt to be restricted to armed conflict, since these groups did not tend to have normalized trading relations with montagnards in this area. People in the mountains view these groups in a uniformly negative light.

*Relations with the world religion, the natural and the supernatural*

It is perhaps a truism to say that many peoples do not use the dichotomies of sacred and profane, natural and supernatural, that are widely used in the Western world. Truism or not, this is certainly true for the montagnard groups of northern Cameroon. These people live in a difficult world, and must strive against natural and human pressures that are often inimical to their survival. To endure, they must use all of their considerable ingenuity. Their world also encompasses forces and entities which are a little further removed from everyday experience, which we would call 'supernatural'. They have developed procedures for dealing with these, too, by neutralizing or destroying the malign and evilly-disposed and gaining the aid of better-disposed forces.

In this sense, much of what we would call 'religion' in the study area is extremely practical in nature. It often involves specialists, but so do other technological tasks, such as iron and ceramic production, and there are very important supernatural elements in those processes, too. We should not, however, picture religious conceptions among montagnard groups as mere extensions of the local economy and political structure. Questions about good and evil, about fate, and about the way the world is are asked as frequently and as fervently as they are in our society, and the possible answers to these questions seem to be just as unsatisfactory. There is often a penetrating consideration of the underlying reasons for ritual, too, such as the view that a great deal of ritual is done so that people of one 'clan' (lineage) will get along well with one another (Ajokfa, 29/5/89).

*God.* A (male) supreme being exists in the world view of all of these groups. He is known as *Malafete* to the Uldemé and the Plata (de Colombel 1986:46; personal observation), *Méléfit* to the Muyan and *Gigla babadama* to the Mada (Richard 1977:132), *Zeta* (personal observation) or *Zigta* (Lembezat 1950:56) to the Podokwo, *Zagla/Zizagla* to the Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:34), *Yazighille* in Glavda/Yaghwatadaxa (Rapp and Mühle 1969:166), *Jigle/Zhikile* in Mafa. Similar terms exist in the other languages of the area; all invoke the idea of a sky-being.

It appears that conceptions of this being are, to some extent, an exception to the utilitarian view of religious practice given above. His characteristics are usually not well-defined, and it is thought that he does not often directly interfere in the affairs of humans, although life comes from him. He is omnipresent and omniscient, but rather uninterested (de Colombel 1986:44, 46; Juillerat 1971:34; Richard 1977:132-134). His characteristics often seem close enough to our own conceptions of the creator that the progress of Christianity among many of the montagnard groups is not surprising and, indeed, the similarities between the Christian god and the Cameroonian one are stressed by missionaries in the area (P. George Truchot, personal communication, 13/5/89; Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication).

*The spirits of things.* God gives creatures their spirit, or spirits. There are numerous conceptions about how humans gain their spirits, and it is often not easy to tell whether montagnard religious beliefs have been affected by contacts with Muslims or Christians (as they certainly have been with regard to the evil spirit called 'Satan', see below). The conception of the components of a human being are extremely sophisticated. There is, of course, first the physical body, but this is animated by a life force which may in itself be subdivided into various more specific forces. The term given for this force may usually be translated as 'breath' and seems to correlate quite well with the original meaning of the Chinese term *ch'i*, in that it is a technical term and only secondarily a religious one.

In addition, creatures have souls, which can exist independently of the body and which are given by God. While the life force organizes and animates, a being's

own identity is encapsulated in their soul. It is this soul that can be seized by sorcerers, when it travels away from the body. The soul continues to exist after death, at times in the spirit world but also in this one, and in both worlds the ease and happiness of the human soul depend upon its valid membership in a lineage which continues to observe the rituals necessary for its support.

For humans, at least, the relation between the life force and the spirit is complex. For example, according to the Plata (Michel Kourdapaye, 17/6/86; Gskai Augla, 30/10/86) twins (*maholak*) are dangerous entities, not so much because they (their souls) are malevolent as because they cannot control their 'force' and so may harm themselves, each other or others. People of Bister lineage have somewhat the same characteristic (Gskai Augla, 7/10/1986; Michel Kourdapaye and Abokwa Baje, 26/10/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986). Similarly, it is difficult to tell whether other creatures, especially animals and powerful entities like sorghum, have souls or only a life force. Various techniques, including some techniques of ceramic decoration (see Chapter 8), are deployed to guard against dangerous, but not necessarily sentient, cosmic forces of this sort.

Finally, humans in the northern massif at least have 'guardians', also given to them by God. These are independent entities which look after people throughout their lives. (The above section was derived from the following sources: conversations with Abokwa Beje, Gskai and Tlevu Augla, Michel Kourdapaye and Père George Truchot; de Colombel 1986:45-48; Juillerat 1971:34, 41; Richard 1977:133-138; Siran n.d.)

*The ancestors.* Lineage ancestors have already been mentioned. If they are correctly honoured and reasonably satisfied with the way the lineage is being run, then they may be expected to help the lineage and its members in times of trouble. If these conditions are not met, the ancestors may show their displeasure in different ways and the lineage is left open to attack from natural and human enemies, maleficent beings and sorcerers. Individual spirits, if they are badly treated (where, for example, proper burial rituals are not followed) may cause problems on their own.

Propitiation involves sets of ritual which must be performed in the course of the year and when certain events, such as a death, occur.

*Other spirits.* The world is also inhabited by conscious spirits which are non-human and may either be directly associated with a certain locality -- a large tree, a prominent rock, a water source and so on -- or independent. Some may be thought of as spirits of the wild world, while others inhabit households. Some of them are benevolent toward humans; others are maleficent and must be protected against and fought against. These latter often transmit disease, such as smallpox or influenza. One peculiarity is that a number of these groups recognize the existence of a spirit called *setené*, *shétené* or some equivalent, a word presumably borrowed from Muslim belief, but the characteristics of this spirit are not constant from group to group. Among the Muktelé, he drinks the blood of sacrifices, among the Plata and Podokwo he causes people to go mad and/or do evil, while in Uldemé territory he is conceived of as a spirit of sorcery, though not necessarily an evil one (personal observation; de Colombel 1986:48; Juillerat 1971:39; Siran n.d.:5).

*Sorcerers and healers.* Sorcery brings cosmic forces into the home; sorcerers and healers may be considered as the cultural equivalent of the non-human spirits which inhabit the world outside the walls. Belief in sorcery appears to be universal in the study area and is a preoccupation of both Muslim and non-Muslim groups -- and often seems more virulent among the former (Lyons 1989a). Sorcerers (*kileng* [male]/*merkechek* [female] in Plata) are humans who can affect the spirits of things, most often humans but also, for example, sorghum. They do not necessarily have control over this ability (for example, twins are in a sense sorcerers [Michel Kourdapaye, 17/6/86]) but most of them do. They steal or eat the souls of their victims; if a soul is stolen, its owner will fall sick and grow thin and, if the soul is killed, the owner will die. If the soul of sorghum is stolen and eaten, graneries will empty and harvests will not refill them; twins often do this (Gskai Augla, 30/10/86). Obviously, this ability can be useful, and Plata who have knowledge of these techniques boast that they would often capture the souls of others and keep them in

beer pots stoppered with thorns (Gskai Augla, 28/7/86). Stakes were high, though; sorcerers were killed if detected. Souls could be rescued by diviners and healers with the help of the magical vine *Cissus quadrangularis* (*mawndi sarai* in *pelasla*) (Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986; Hlaba, 16/5/1989).

The activities of these sorcerers were combatted by a series of diviners, healers, magicians and wise people found throughout every society in the study area. They did not limit their efforts to detecting and fighting sorcery, but acted as technicians, specializing in the understanding and adjustment of cosmic and human forces through fortune-telling, divination, sacrifice, the preparation of medicine and so on. These activities are far too diverse to examine here, but the relationship between temporal and spiritual power must be emphasised.

One of the most important positions within this part of the Mandara massif was that of the 'Master of the rains' (*bai shevin* in Plata), whose task and power was to intercede with God who controls atmospheric events. It should be noted that the reason given by locals for the power of the descendants of the culture-hero Agzavrinja among the Uldemé is that fact that he appropriated the power of the stones of the former rain master, who had to that point belonged to the Mejeleñ clan of Uldemé. (A similar transfer of ritual power between clans occurred among certain groups practising the *marai* ceremony [or *via zla*, in that region] further to the south [von Graffenried 1984:110-111]).

This also highlights another feature of the division of ritual labour which occurs in this region -- the assignment of power in certain areas of life to certain groups. This may translate into political power, as it does in Uldemé (de Colombel 1986:41-44) and in neighbouring areas. Other groups may have hereditary functions which lie in other realms. For example, 'Masters of the crops' may be responsible for the proper growth of sorghum and its protection against caterpillars and locusts (see for example Nyssens 1986). Other lineages are recognized to have power over certain maladies, although this power is not always controllable (Abokwa Baje, 26/10/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986; Nyssens 1986), while some (Dumwa and Plata, for example)

are generally recognized for the competence of their diviners and healers (Tlevu Augla, 16/6/1986; Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986; Hlaba, 16/5/1989). This assignment of powers will be further examined in Chapters 6 and 8.

*Organization of the world.* Inseparably related to montagnard world view is a system which is used for organizing certain fundamental qualities of the world as a whole. This takes the form of a set of opposed dualities which permeate people's lives. These have been analysed (obscurely) by Nigel Barley (1983) for the Dowayo of the Alantika Mountains but are also found further north. Values of some of the elements of this system are consistent throughout the study area, but others change from group to group. For example, a male-female dichotomy is universal in this area, and outside of it. Associated with this are sorghum (male) and certain other crops (female). However, associations of left and right change. In the Mayo Plata region, the right hand is 'the hand of man' and the left is female, but further south and west the opposite is the case. Oppositions which may be incorporated in this system include man:woman, right:left, clockwise:counterclockwise, clean:dirty, west:east, goats:sheep, sorghum:vegetables (particularly beans); others probably exist.

### **The Wandala**

The Muslim group most involved in the affairs of the montagnard populations of the study area is the Wandala. The Wandala, or Mandara as the Kanuri call them, are a plains-dwelling people who inhabit much of the area directly surrounding the northern Mandara massif, extending from Tokombéré and Makalingay in the southeast to the Bama Ridge in the north and then west to Keroua and into Nigeria (Figure 1.2). They are not, at this point, a numerous people; there are less than 20,000 of them in Cameroon according to recent data (13,500: Boulet et al. 1984:116; about 166,500: Hallaire 1965:45). A number now live in Nigeria, but it is quite difficult to say how many; data from 1952 (Westermann and Bryan 1952:159, in Wente-Lukas 1985:258) indicate rather less than 5000. Most appear to live near Keroua, but

Wandala settlement continues to Gwoza on the western side of the massif. They speak the same Chadic language, *wandala*, as do the Muraha montagnards who live near their capital of Mora, and this language is closely related to those of a number of other montagnard groups.

Wandala society is very different than that of the montagnards who live in such close proximity to them. Traditionally, the Wandala lived as members of a small state in many ways similar to a number of other Muslim Sudanic states. Government was by an hereditary monarchy, with a *tlikse*, or ruler, at its head, who governed successively from capitals at Keroua, Doulo and Mora. This state seems to have been quite decentralized until the nineteenth century, with the *makaji*, the governors of the four provinces of the state, having considerable independence. This state of affairs ended in the 1840s, when *tlikse* Bukar Anarbana broke the powers of the governors and split the state into many smaller units, the governors of which would be much more dependent upon the central power (Forkl 1986:6-7; 1989:542-543). The Wandala adopted Islam early in the eighteenth century (there is some controversy over the exact date -- see Forkl [1986:6-7] and Mohammadou [1982:11, 234]) under *tlikse* Bukar Aji.

Anthropological research on the Wandala has until quite recently concentrated upon details of court life and hierarchy, along with historical research (see for example J.-P. Lebeuf and Rodinson (1956), Mohammadou (1982), Mouchet (1946) and Vossart (1953)). Data on Wandala society has been quite limited but, since the start of the 1980s, more research has been done on the Wandala as a whole. Most of the available data comes from the work of Hermann Forkl, a German anthropologist with a particular interest in the social evolution of the Wandala state (Forkl 1983b, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989; see also .Boutrais [1984c] and Morrissey [1984]).

### *Wandala economy*

The economic basis of Wandala life is the cultivation of sorghum, as is the case in the mountains. This includes both intensive cultivation near water-courses and

more extensive cultivation in fields on the plains; both 'white' caudatum/guinea and dry season *moukwari* sorghum are grown, the latter on seasonally-inundated *karal* soils. This highlights the difference between Wandala and montagnard, since such farming depends on the availability of montagnard labour in the fields; the Wandala do not view such work as prestigious. At present, this labour is done by hired field hands (Hallaire 1965:58-59), but until this century it was, if possible, done by montagnard slaves.

*The slave trade.* If sorghum was the foundation of the Wandala economy, slavery gave that economy much of its impetus. The slave trade in this area was in place for centuries (see Chapters 4 and 5) and provided a large proportion of the trade to Bornu throughout this time. Slaves were taken through raids on the neighbouring massif and through purchase of those captured in intra-massif warfare and of children; these latter sources probably were more available in times of hunger or other privation. On the eastern edge of the massif at least, there is evidence that organized raids for slaves originated from the *tlikse's* capital of Mora, and not from the nearer communities of Ouarba or Mémé-Manaouatchi (Tlevu Augla, 7/8/86; Ahlama Mauganwé 17/5/89; Augula Kulemdia 13/6/89), whose inhabitants had to dwell in much closer proximity to and trade with the people of the massif. Life for the Muraha and other groups living closer to such settlements involved much more uncertainty (see, for example, Denham and Clapperton 1826:117), although their close contact and control over refuges on the heights which the Wandala occasionally used must have given them some bargaining power.

Raiding for slaves was a hazardous pursuit if entered into with too much enthusiasm, since the montagnard defences were almost without exception very strong and Wandala horses would be worse than useless in the hills. People of the mountains even cultivated fields close to the edge of the plains, well-armed, guarded by lookouts and with the cultivators ready to draw into a dangerous defensive circle -- or to flee to the hills if the odds were against them (Tlevu Augla, 7/8/86). 'Slave-raids' often seem to have been kidnappings of single people caught out on the plains.

Much less dangerous was the purchase of slaves captured by montagnards in the interminable conflicts between mountain groups. This source of bodies probably made up a large proportion of the trade, and collusion between Wandala and montagnards was often quite deliberate. For example, the Plata-speaking 'Vamé-Mbremé' lineage of Dibilikwer, living on Miyaw ridge just north of Mayo Plata (Figure 3.2), was eliminated after its depredations on neighbouring groups became too extreme. To do this, the Afam (and perhaps the Plata) lineage coordinated an attack with the Wandala. When the Wandala arrived to the east of Miyaw on horseback and the Dibilikwer men went out to defend their territory, the Afam attacked them from the west and burned their homes. Many were killed, others were sold into slavery and only a few were able to escape to Uldemé territory (Michel Kourdapaye and Gskai Augla 15/10/86; Nyssens 1986).

Informants around Plata and Uldemé territories deny that children were ever sold to the Wandala in times of hardship, but data on neighbouring regions strongly indicate that this was the case (Beauvilain 1989:120, 124, 245-249), and such trade probably went on in this region as well. Slaves were used as labour on Wandala plantations; the magnitude of this market may be gauged by the estimate by Cost (1923, in Hallaire 1965:58) that half of the Wandala population was made up of captives. Others were sent to Bornu, either as tribute (100 every two years for a period [Mohammadou 1982:194-195]) or as the subject of commercial transactions (Beauvilain 1989:314-315). Some of these unfortunates died on the way, some remained captives in Bornu and some probably were sent on to North Africa on the great trans-Saharan route through Bilma and Murzuk. The actual number of slaves so exported is very difficult to determine; Lovejoy (1983:24-25, 59-60, 137, 149-150) gives a rough estimate of perhaps 1000/year on each of the trans-Saharan routes, from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries, rising to perhaps three times that number from Bornu between 1810 and 1870 and then falling again. Probably quite a high proportion of these were exported from the Wandala state.

*Other industries and trade.* One of the first references to the Wandala state occurs in 1573 (Anania 1573, in Lange and Berthoud 1972:343), and the presence of rich iron deposits is already mentioned. This was perhaps its first major export (see Chapters 4, 6) and it was certainly important in the nineteenth century (H. Barth 1965 [1857-1859]2216; Denham and Clapperton 1826:146; Rohlf's 1875). The ore seems to have been exclusively obtained from sandy deposits in watercourses originating in the massif and its recovery formed an incentive for Wandala-montagnard cooperation. Montagnard informants all say that this trade involved smelting of ore in the mountains, after which the resulting iron was sold to Wandala smiths who would come to the mountains. These Wandala would then make tools and trade them. Wandala smiths say that they were capable of smelting, too.

The Wandala were also involved in large-scale trade in other commodities. Forkl (1986:7; 1989:543) credits *tlikse* Elyaasa (1832/33-1845) with developing an export in cotton garments to neighbouring Muslim states (and possibly to montagnard populations, too, as these were used in burial rituals [Michel Kourdapaye, 17/6/86; Lembezat 1952; Richard 1977]). Some montagnards state that they bought cloth from the Wandala (Ugshé Valé, 10/11/86; Augulaw Kulemdia, 12/6/89), but the most important imports appear to have been salt and fish (see above, and Baje Maugjeta 12/6/89; Kacheke Chokfem 23/5/89; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/86; Tlevu Augla 7/8/86). The presence of the latter certainly implies import, probably of dried fish from Lake Chad and the Logone as is the case today, and so may the former; much of Wandala salt is now imported from Nigeria and Chad (personal observation; Siran 1981).

*Tlikse* Elyaasa and his successor, *tlikse* Bukar Anarbana, were instrumental in establishing a general monetary system in the state (Forkl 1989:543; Morrissey 1984:102). The first currencies used were strips of cotton cloth and cowries, but these were speedily replaced by Maria Theresa thalers in the 1830s/1840s. The montagnards accepted German coins in payment for their iron by at least the early part of this century. There was also a local trade in sorghum between mountains and

plains, which helped even out supply in times of famine (Augulaw Kulemdia, 13/6/89).

### *Social organization*

I will not examine the intricacies of Wandala court hierarchy; the best examinations of this aspect of the Wandala political system are those of Mohammadou (1982) and Morrissey (1984). (These latter sources are also very useful in examination of the evolution of the Wandala state.) The hierarchy melds Kanuri and indigenous positions and terminology. The *tlikse* was attended by different groups of bureaucrats, nobles, vassals and clerics, whose positions were derived from earlier leadership of Wandala clans or of allied or subject groups (such as the Melgwa and the Giziga of Maroua), from bureaucratic success or from religious learning. He did not have absolute power, and could be deposed by the 12 greatest lords of the state, the *alamaha*, acting *en masse*. Local authority in the realm flowed from the *tlikse* to title-holding local governors, to the *chima*, whom one might term 'district representatives', to the *blama* or village chiefs.

Hermann Forkl (1986, 1989) and Stephen Morrissey (1984) both posit a process of increased centralization, bureaucratization and secularization of the Wandala state from a loosely-organized, pre-Islamic aristocratic beginning to the Sudanic state of the nineteenth century. Certain *tlikse* are remembered for the introduction of innovations, which include Islam, more efficient bureaucratic structures and so on.

Wandala social organization today does not resemble that of their montagnard neighbours. Patrilineages do not exist, and descent is reckoned through both parents. As a result, Wandala genealogies (and also other aspects of oral history) do not appear to have the 'time depth' common in the mountains; this is compensated for by the existence of written records. Families are rarely polygynous and most often live together in nucleated villages, which also contain quarters for foreigners (traders, for

example) and montagnards. Property is privately owned by family heads and can be bequeathed to anyone and sold without consultation.

In keeping with Muslim tenets, sex roles are much more rigidly defined among the Wandala than among montagnard groups. Men are expected to take care of activities external to the home, such as farming, while women are housewives and mothers; they do not work in the fields, and montagnard men say that they would not marry them for this reason. Many do, however, buy and sell in the markets.

The lack of a lineage structure may have contributed to the lack of social solidarity which is one of the most striking features of Wandala society (Forkl 1984, 1986:4; Lyons 1989a, b; personal observation). Familial and other social relations often seem to be founded on a basis of competitiveness and distrust. About 94% of Wandala marriages end in divorce; children play a game of 'divorce' as children in other societies play at marriage (Forkl 1989:4-5). The Wandala, particularly those in Mora, often seem to be a damaged society, undermined by political and economic reverses, colonialism and tourism.

Forkl (1986:7-8) divides Wandala society into two classes: the *galipaha*, which appears to correlate to nobles and bureaucrats, and the *talagaha*, or commoners. Cross-cutting this is a slave/free division; slaves can be members of either class. He also speaks of two occupational castes, barbers and smiths, along with the *talagaha*. There is conflicting evidence on the status of smiths, at least; evidence from informants at Mora and Manaouatchi suggests that smiths do not form a separate caste, but intermarry and are integrated into society as a whole (David and Robertson, in press; I. Robertson, personal communication, 1988). This may reflect differences between the social situation in the capital, Mora, and in the iron-producing centre of Manaouatchi, but it is difficult to imagine an occupation that is casted in one town and not in another, when the towns are only about 10 km apart and the ethnic group is the same. It may be more useful to think of smiths as integrated into a highly corporate guild system.

## *Religion*

The Wandala are Sunni Muslims, and have theoretically been so since the early eighteenth century. The festivals and observances which give structure to the Wandala year are Muslim -- modified now by European and national influences -- and Muslim numerology, cosmology and folk beliefs are important (Forkl 1986:9).

There is a great deal of evidence that the conversion of *tlikse* Bukar Aji did not result in the quick conversion of his subjects through religious fiat (Mohammadou 1982; Mouchet 1946; .Seignobos 1986:34) and that this conversion process is still not complete. There is an important element of non-Muslim belief in Wandala society, which prompted a British colonial official in Nigeria to remark that "...The 'Mai' of Mandara and the bulk of his people profess to be Mohammedans, but their professions are little more than a veneer of respectability over their original paganism..." (Tomlinson 1916:22). Forkl (1986:9-10; 1989) emphasises the importance of the *slizha*, a pre-Islamic religious figure, and of blacksmiths in the investiture of the *tlikse* up to the present time. It is also possible that the *tlikse* was at least peripherally involved in propitiating the Muraha 'Master of the rains' (Mouchet 1947c).

Folk religion is even more compromised. There is widespread belief in spirits much like those found in montagnard cosmology (*shetanaha* [Forkl 1984:13]; one of the montagnard spirits is, of course, *shetené*), in were-animals (including were-elephants and were-panthers) and in the exceptional position and powers of twins, a preoccupation with sorcery and various non-Muslim rites and practices for the dead (Forkl 1984:13-14, 1986:9-10). Traditional medicine is carried out by two classes of healers, the *mad samaha* and the *gawaha*. Both use both plants and magic to heal diseases caused by natural causes and by sorcery; the former can also heal through the Muslim medium of the amulet, small leather-covered packages containing written verses from the Koran and magical substances.

### *Wandala culture before Islam*

Wandala social and religious organizations more closely resemble, on the face of it, those of other Muslim Sudanic states than those of their neighbours a few kilometres away in the massif. This is misleading. There is, for example, evidence that clans and/or lineages were a fundamental structuring principle in Wandala society until the quite recent past (Forkl 1986:14, 1989:542; Morrissey 1984).

The special status of smiths and barbers (whether it be a caste system or not) and also hunters is very characteristic, particularly of the western groups in the study area, such as Sukur and, more generally, Marghi (Kirk-Greene 1960; Vaughan 1970); the commoners are known in the former area as the *talakawa*. There are also parallels between Wandala court terminology and that of the councillors of the *llidi* (the 'king') of Sukur. Thus the Sukur term *lluffu* and Marghi *thlifu* (president of the council and representative of the commoners) corresponds to the Wandala *tlufa* (representative of the Melgwa), the Sukur *medella* and Marghi *midela* (war leader and priest) to the Wandala *tlimdala* (assistant to the treasurer), Sukur *llagama* (head of the barber-smiths) to Wandala *tlagama* (war leader and prime minister -- possibly originally a Kanuri term -- see Mohammadou [1982:130-131]), Sukur *barguma* (funeral director and comptroller) to Wandala *barguma* (market overseer and former military leader) and possibly Sukur *dallatu* (harvest priest) to Wandala *tlidla* (another market overseer).

It is difficult to say exactly what this means; the terms are nearly identical (some are probably of Kanuri or Hausa origin), but the functions have changed -- most of the Sukur and Marghi posts have religious implications that would not fit into a Muslim society as they are. It possibly signals borrowing of terms (and institutions?) from Wandala to Sukur, but this would have to have been quite some time ago, since the Wandala lost effective control of this region in the early nineteenth century (Morrissey 1984), and Sukur was certainly a strong kingdom by the middle part of the century (H. Barth 1965 [1857-1859]). It is, indeed, questionable what control the Wandala exerted over Sukur. The question of relationships between

the Wandala state and centralized political units in the western part of the study area will be examined in Chapter 4.

The non-Muslim elements in Wandala folk-religion are very similar to montagnard religious beliefs. The beliefs in spirits and in sorcerers scarcely need comment, but the traditions about were-elephants and were-panthers and about the power of twins specifically are quite important. The two classes of healers, the *madsamaha* and the *gawaha*, are identical to those found in Podokwo territory (Siran n.d.:6). Again, it is difficult to know to what extent cultural borrowing is responsible for these resemblances -- especially if half of the 'Wandala' population is made up of former slaves. Finally, the linguistic similarities between the Wandala and neighbouring montagnard groups must be remembered; both Wandala and Muraha speak *wandala*, which is also very closely related to the language of the Podokwo.

### **Other Plains Populations**

The plains around the Mandara massif is also inhabited by other populations, most of whom are Muslim. Of these latter, the most important are the Kanuri, Fulbe and Shuwa Arabs. The Kanuri are primarily farmers, living along the Ngassawé River and on the plains to the west and along the Bama Ridge. Most of them are of recent origin (Hallaire 1965:61), although some are descended from refugees fleeing attacks on the state of Bornu in the nineteenth century. Shuwa Arab herders live in the same region, often in close and friendly contact with the Kanuri (personal observation, 1986); they have lived within this region for at least 200 years.

The Fulbe live further to the east, from Magdemé on the Bama Ridge south and east into the Diamaré, where they are the dominant ethnic group. They are almost exclusively herders -- more so even than the Shuwa, who now cultivate some commercial crops. They often depend on Wandala for traded foods and forage, but the relationship between the groups is often one of enmity (D. Lyons, personal communication, 1986). This is not surprising, given that the Fulbe were responsible

for the great Wandala losses of territory in the nineteenth century, and conflict between them has been frequent.

All of these groups lived under Wandala suzerainty and the Shuwa and Fulbe were represented in the *tlikse's* court by permanent officials. Until recently, Kanuri were probably not numerous enough to be represented. These groups are not central players in this dissertation; they will not be examined at this time.

### **Babel Revisited Linguistic Reconstructions in and around the Mandara Mountains**

There are speakers of three of the four indigenous African linguistic groups found within the study area. The Fulbe speak a language of the West Atlantic branch of Niger-Congo and the Kanuri speak a Saharan language of the Nilo-Saharan group. The rest of the languages spoken are Afroasiatic. Arabic, spoken by the Shuwa, is a Semitic language and all other languages spoken are members of Sub-Branch A of the Central (Biu-Mandara) branch of Chadic. This section will examine the positions of these latter, Chadic languages within the study area. It should be noted that the linguistic groups of the study area are almost totally coordinated with the 'ethnic' groups as traditionally defined, so that one map may virtually be used to define both.

These languages are divided into two coordinate groups, Wandala and Mafa, and into geographical sub-groupings at a lower level (Barreteau 1987, personal communication). It is hardly necessary to note that boundaries between linguistic territories are often not clear-cut. For groups living at lower population densities especially (for example, the Wandala, Glavda and so on), they function as general positional indicators only; for more constrained montagnard groups, such boundaries may be known to within a few hundred metres. It should also be noted that the map (Figure 3.3) reflects the linguistic situation before the widespread descent of montagnards into the plains in this century. Finally, the Nigeria-Cameroon border has greatly complicated understanding of the locations of different linguistic groups. The

boundaries shown on Figure 3.3 are fairly precise for Cameroonian peoples; the locations of Nigerian groups have been inferred from the very disparate sources quoted in Wente-Lukas (1985).

As can be seen in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.3, the linguistic situation in this area is extremely complex indeed. At least 18 languages are spoken and closely related languages are spoken in neighbouring regions. The areas of greatest linguistic diversity are in the eastern and western extremities of the study area. This may be related simply to the higher population densities there, to the expansion of the Mafa from the south on to the Koza Plain and as far north as Gréa and/or to the close proximity of various state-level societies to these peoples.

The Wandala group of languages has a tripartite distribution. One part, including the dialects of *wandala* spoken by the Wandala themselves and by the Muraha, and *parekwa* (Podokwo), extends eastward in the mountains and on the plains to beyond Mora. Another, which includes the montagnard languages *gelvaxdaxa* (Glavda and Chinine), *xedi/gwad lamañ* (including Laamang, Hidé and Turu/Vemgo/Vizik/Woga), *mabas* (Mabas), *kdupe* (Guduf and Yaghwatadaxa), *gevoko* (Gevoko and Ngosi), *dghwede* (Dghwede) and *gwara* (Gwara), stretches south-southeast, along the eastern edge of the mountains and the Nigeria-Cameroon border, toward Marghi-speaking territory. The third part stretches to the north and west, out on to the Chad Plains, and is made up of speakers of the *melgwa* dialect of Wandala (see Barreteau 1988; Newman 1976; Wente-Lukass 1985; Wolff 1983). This distribution is interrupted by a northern extension of Mafa-speakers onto the Koza and Mora Plains, an extension that is probably quite recent.

The separation of *mbuko* (Mboku) and *pelasla* (Plata -- 'Vamé-Mbremé', Dumwa, Urza and Plata) from the languages of the Mafa group is quite striking; they may, in fact, form a third coordinate grouping, with the Wandala and Mafa groups, within this sub-branch of Biu-Mandara (Barreteau and Dieu, in press). *Pelasla*-speakers at least share elements of material culture with the Muraha to the north, but this may be at least partly due to relatively recent innovations and borrowing around

Mora (see Chapter 8). The geographical separation of *pelasla* and *mbuko*, and the differences between the two languages, might imply a more recent expansion of the *wuzlam-mada-muyang-melokwo* languages into the intervening region (Figure 3.3).

Speakers of the Mafa group languages occupy most of the northeastern extension of the massif, most of the inselbergs to the east and all of the southern part of the study area. The internal arrangement of this group generally appears to follow geographic lines, suggesting differentiation in place. Speakers of these languages make up by far the largest population segment in the area; three sets of languages, *mafa*, *mofu* and *giziga*, are spoken by about 175,000 people.

The degree of separation between related languages in this area indicates that most of the languages have been distinct for 500 to 700 years, and that many of the groups that we would expect to be quite similar are older yet. It should be noted that these time-depths are not being derived through conventional glottochronological analysis, since the lexicostatistical basis of that analysis is different from that usually used (Barreteau 1987; .Barreteau and Dieu, in press). The chief difference is that Barreteau (1987) has established an index of resemblance, which he uses to compare terms found in the different Chadic languages in and around the study area. He uses a six-point scale, where a coefficient of 0 indicates no resemblance between the two forms and one of 5 indicates essential identity of forms.

This has resulted in substantial changes in the methods of calculating minimal, maximal and corrected 'resemblance rates' between different languages. Most other such analyses use simple binary criteria of similarity in calculating percentages of common vocabulary. The word-list used is the *Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun* 120-word list. Barreteau claims that his approach is more useful for calculating distantly-related languages and that it allows for a finer-grained analysis of the differences between terms. I am, unfortunately, not competent to judge what effects these differences would have on the results of the glottochronological analysis. Other linguists will have to answer that question.

The level of internal differentiation among these languages presents a conundrum. It is difficult to explain how *zelgwa* and *gaduwa* could have been in an extremely close cultural and social relationship for nearly 700 years, but at the same time remained linguistically separate. The same is the case for *wandala* and *gelvaxdaxa*. If anything, we might expect high population densities and close, intense interaction to make the times of separation of these groups appear more recent than they actually are, as borrowing and assimilation causes the languages in question to more closely resemble one another. If this process has gone in the area, separation of these languages would probably be more ancient than data indicate.

Ethnohistorical sources in this region indicate an appreciably more recent origin for most of these groupings, at least in anything approaching their present forms. In most cases, lineage histories go back six to perhaps 15 generations at the maximum, and the latter are quite rare (personal observation; de Colombel 1986:22; Juillerat 1971: 59; Lembezat 1952:129-130; Mouchet 1947b, c, d, 1948:107, 1949, 1957; Richard 1977:38-40; von Graffenried 1984:69-71). While I appreciate all of the dangers of using genealogies as dating devices, this does not suggest occupations of perhaps 700 to 1000 years in the study area by all of the same groups that exist there today. The earliest references to any of these groups in historical sources mention the Wandala, Gamergu (Melgwa) and Marghi (see Chapter 4). Fra Mauro's mid-fifteenth century world map names the Wandala and Marghi. Ibn Fartwa (1926 [1582/3]) treats all three groups much alike -- as enemies to be soundly defeated and confounded by *mai* Idris Aloma -- but they are recognized as separate peoples. This does not imply linguistic differentiation, though; even today, the Wandala and Melgwa speak dialects of one language.

Archaeological data on the mountains is equivocal, to say the least -- see Chapter 5. The lack of stratified sites and datable proveniences and artefacts make reconstructing the period of occupation of the present groups speculative in the extreme, but there is little evidence of long occupation. It is possible that the processes of settlement and assimilation of small immigrant groups may help explain

the discordance between linguistic and other data. Lineages which claim to be autochthonous exist among most of the 'ethnic groups' in the massif, although they are often few and are rarely politically important. It is possible that these groups were linguistic sources for immigrants -- that is, that the autochthones are the remnants of earlier montagnard populations whose longer occupation of the Mandara Mountains involved development of the languages spoken there today, and that these languages were then adopted by the small, relatively powerless immigrant groups which later moved into unfamiliar territories of the massif. These immigrants are very often held to have then usurped the power of the groups they found when they entered their new territories. These processes will be examined in Chapters 6 and 7.

## CHAPTER 4 -- HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR RESEARCH IN THE STUDY AREA

### Introduction

The area to the south of Lake Chad was relatively well-known to Europeans before the colonial incursions of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries -- well-known, that is, compared to neighbouring areas. The obscurity of these latter territories probably did not bother their inhabitants in the least, of course. We can be thankful to those known and anonymous travellers who brought back accounts of the Mandara Mountains and the lands around them, and to the writers who lived there, since their accounts offer valuable calibrations for areal chronologies, as well as being ethnographically interesting in their own right.

The Chad basin attracted and interested travellers and writers for a number of reasons. The existence of the great lake exerted its own fascination -- was it a source of the Nile/Niger/Benue? It was an area rich in resources, the southern end of one of the great trans-Saharan trade routes through Bilma to the Mediterranean. The existence of the states of Kanem (and possibly Bornu [Lange 1988]) during the latter part of the first millennium A.D. and much of the present millennium provided an additional lure for travellers and chroniclers and also increased the probability that they could travel and still survive the experience. As many European -- and no doubt earlier -- adventurers found, there was no guarantee of survival at all.

Useful pre-colonial sources fall into a number of categories; there are also a large number of useless sources, useless either because they are fantasies or because they are simply copies of preceding works. Earliest of the useful ones are certain 'external' Muslim sources, accounts by foreign travellers and traders or by geographers who collected traveller's stories, often at third-, fourth- or fifth hand. The earliest of these date to the last centuries of the first millennium A.D. The second category comprises 'internal' Muslim sources, written by inhabitants of the lands south

of the Sahara from the thirteenth century A.D. on. These might be expected to be much more useful than the external sources, but the utility of some is compromised by assumption of familiarity on the part of their readers, by political considerations and by lack of knowledge of the events about which they speak, due to distance or cultural differences. The third category includes external European accounts, which become important only in the sixteenth century in this area and which often still derive from Muslim sources.

### **The earliest written records**

The first written references to people whose legacy would later become important (although at a great temporal and cultural remove) in the development of societies in and around the Mandara Mountains date to the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. (Lange 1988:445). Al-Ya'kubi and ibn Kutayba both mention the Zaghawa, a nomadic group ruling the kingdom of Kanem to the east of Lake Chad. Their dynasty disappeared, but their state did not. With a set of tortuous changes in dynasty, in religion (from paganism to Islam in the late eleventh century) and in geographic centre of power (from east of the lake in the twelfth century to southwest of it by the fourteenth -- Lange 1984), the Kanembu rulers of Kanem became the rulers of Bornu. It is possible that there was an independent state in Bornu before the thirteenth century, but Al-'Umari and ibn Battuta both mention it in the context of a state connected to or ruled by Kanem a century later. The montagnard and Wandala inhabitants of the study area had to deal with this state in one way or another for more than five hundred years.

There are slightly later references to autochthonous groups of the southern Lake Chad basin in the works of ibn Sa'id and al-Maqrizi (Lange 1989:200; Lewicki 1974). They mention the Kotoko, Hausa, Bede and a number of other groups. The first 'internal' historical source (that is, a source written by people who actually lived in the area) to speak of ethnic groups in the southern Chad basin was the royal

chronicles of the Sefuwa dynasty of Kanem and Bornu (Lange 1977, in Lange 1989), which was probably begun in the thirteenth century and periodically updated until the 1800s. It states that, in the fourteenth century, four kings of that dynasty died fighting the 'Sao', two at a town called Ghaliwa south of Lake Chad (Lange 1984:255, 1989:201). This was a period when Kanem was heavily involved in affairs south of the lake and, indeed, the Sefuwa would be forced to finally settle in Bornu at the end of the century. It is not surprising that battles between the Sao and the invaders took place, although the attrition of Sefuwa kings is mildly startling. This toll may have resulted in a change in royal family, leading to the reign of a king who improved relations with the autochthones (Lange 1984:263).

Ghaliwa is identified by Lange (1989) with the Kotoko place-name 'Ngala' and 'Sao' was probably originally a general term for the sedentary inhabitants of walled towns found on the *firki* plains to the south of the lake. The Kanuri and Kotoko groups who occupy these regions today designate as Sao the previous occupiers of the *firki*. In some cases, it is held that the Sao were replaced by the ancestors of today's peoples; in others, that they were themselves the ancestors of the Kotoko and some Kanuri (Connah 1981:38; Lange 1989:190)). Probably both processes occurred; there are obvious cultural and genealogical connections between certain (especially Kotoko) groups and the Sao, but immigration associated with the Sefuwa move to Bornu would also have drastically changed the ethnic and linguistic milieu -- probably accounting for the presence of Kanuri-speakers in the area.

Sao is still used, at least by Fulbe, in the plains around the Mandara massif to designate the previous inhabitants of the country. The Fulbe living at Mehé Djiddere attribute the large Iron Age mound sites found there to the Sao (Figure 5.2; David and MacEachern 1988:60) and the same term is used by Shuwa and Kanuri. The Wandala and montagnards, who presumably have more local knowledge, say that the 'Maya' were the pre-Wandala inhabitants of these plains, although the Sao are said to have occupied areas further to the west (see below).

One of the most interesting sources on the study area before the sixteenth century is not part of the Islamic tradition, but is rather a world map completed probably in the 1440s - 1450s by Fra Mauro, an Italian monk known for his geographical expertise (Garparrini Leporace 1956). This incorporated some information from contemporary Portuguese explorations of the African coastline, as well as traveller's reports and most of the traditional sources for such maps; Fra Mauro insisted that the information on Abyssinia at least was derived from the accounts of native informants (Almagia and Destombes 1964; Crone 1978). It incorporates a good deal of imaginary detail on the African interior, but 'Mergi' and 'Mandera' are placed in approximately their correct positions, along with 'Bolaglia' (Bulala?) and a number of places which are not, as yet, identified.

'Mergi' appears to have been thought of as a more important locality than 'Mandera' on Fra Mauro's map; 'Mergi' is treated as the name of a region, with that term and 'Mandera' also given as the names of towns. The incorporation of 'Bolaglia' and the use of the Kanuri term 'Mandera', instead of 'Wandala' would indicate that Fra Mauro's information probably derived from a traveller from or to the court of Kanem/Bornu. This is the earliest use of these terms that has come down to us, indicating as it does the existence of these groups in the early-/mid-fifteenth century. As far as I am aware, this information on Central Africa, its terminology on the study area more accurate than anything that would appear in Europe for hundreds of years, was not reproduced on later maps.

### **The Sixteenth Century**

Besides Fra Mauro's map, there are few fifteenth-century historical sources on the southern Lake Chad basin. This may be related to the upheavals when the Sefuwa lost Kanem to the Bulala and the realm was afflicted by political crises, but chance probably played a great part in the loss or survival of specific documents, as it did, for example, with ibn Fartwa's work (see below). The sixteenth century, in contrast,

provides us with a number of sources which yield valuable information on the study area.

### *Leo Africanus*

The first is the account of al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzani az-Zayyati, or Leo Africanus, a Christianized Moor who described Bornu and its ruler and the surrounding lands (Leo Africanus 1896 [1526]:1:128, 134, 3:832-834, 980-981). His first reference to Bornu describes it as one of fifteen sub-Saharan kingdoms which he had visited personally (there is some doubt about this), and he also states that there are other states lying further to the south, including one called Me?dra -- one letter is obliterated in the Arabic original of the text (R. Brown, in Leo Africanus 1896 [1526]:1:199). It is often assumed that this refers to Mandara (i.e., the Wandala state) and, given Anania's appellation Mandra (see below), this may well be the case. He gives no information concerning Medra.

He is more forthcoming with Bornu. He describes the position of the state, and of a 'desert of Seu' which lies near it; this probably refers to Sao territory. There is, for the first time, a description of pagan montagnards living in the kingdom of Bornu, "...herdsmen and shepherds [who] bring forth mill and other grain..." (Leo Africanus 1896 [1526]:3:833). He comments disapprovingly on their nakedness and (sic) "...brutish manner..." and says that they hold wives and children in common -- a canard that persists into the nineteenth century (see for example Denham and Clapperton 1826). It is impossible to say whether these people inhabited the Mandara Mountains or other highlands further to the west -- quite possibly the latter -- but by this time they have entered history, at least. They have entered it in another way, too; Leo Africanus describes the avidity of the Bornu ruler for horses. These horses were paid for with slaves, and he vividly describes the harrying of neighbouring territories that produced the captives. No doubt some montagnard people were caught up in this trade.

From the point of view of this work, one of the most interesting 'external' sources for the history of the study area is *L'Universale fabrica del mondo, overo cosmografia*, published in three different editions (1573, 1576 and 1582) by Giovanni Lorenzo Anania (in Lange and Berthoud 1972). Most of his original information appears to have come from a number of European informants, some of it at first hand, over the course of the three editions. The text is in the form of four chapters dealing with different areas of the world, the third of which concerns Africa. This consists of a list of place-names and comments upon them, and the information concerning the Chad basin is quite accurate and detailed (Anania [1573, 1576 and 1582], in Lange and Berthoud 1972:342-343, 346, 348).

The first reference (Anania [1573, 1576 and 1582], in Lange and Berthoud 1972:342) is to 'Mandra', or Mandara; it is not clear whether the reference is to a state or simply a region, but probably the former. The great mountains of the place are said to be rich in iron ore, and the principal town of the country is 'Craua' -- Keroua, the first capital of the Wandala state. The other town mentioned is 'Mochola', which Lange and Berthoud (1972:343) identify with Mokolo. This cannot be the present town, since that was only established in this century and the area was never under Wandala domination; the name is not uncommon in the study area, and the fact that it was the name of important centres in the sixteenth and twentieth centuries is an ironic coincidence. The name does not resemble that of any other Wandala towns. It might refer to one of the small mountain societies in the area near Keroua, perhaps similar to those described by ibn Fartwa (see below). Mochole is a possibility; another could be the ritual centre of Gudur, known as Mcakali to the Marghi (Vaughan 1970:75).

One of the main characteristics of the region is, in Anania's view, the presence of 'pierres Nicoli', described as black gems with red lines in them. References to 'Nicolo' stones in early gemological sources seem to refer to onyx or sardonyx; the term is a distortion of the Italian *onniccolo*, a diminutive for 'onyx'. Nicolo gems are closely associated with Egypt, and are often said to originate in the Western Desert

there (Middleton 1891:147; Webster 1983:586). Such 'gems' are unknown in the study area today, as far as I know, but associations of black and red are often of ritual significance and this may be involved in the description (see for example Barth 1965 [1857-1859]:2:117, 215, 218). Anania's description of Bornu is also of interest; he borrows Leo Africanus' description of montagnard groups and mentions a trade of hides for horses in the Fezzan.

Mandara iron trade is also mentioned in the last section of Anania's book (Anania [1573, 1576 and 1582], in Lange and Berthoud 1972:351), where he says that a town called 'Quamaco' is the site of a great trade in iron which is brought from Mandara; Lange and Berthoud identify 'Quamaco' with Kamogo, a town north of Goulfey and close to Lake Chad near the Logone. This identification must be considered tentative; there is a list of place-names given which are hard to identify with particular locations, and this is one of them.

Another of the place names mentioned in this latter list is 'Galeo'. 'Galeo' seems to be located between Mandara and 'Mele' -- the latter is not reliably identified. The reference to 'Galeo' is as follows, in Lange and Berthoud's translation, "Entre les deux [Mandra and Mele] se trouve Galeo (où réside un grand prêtre), ville très grande, considérée par les Noirs comme Rome par nous" (Anania [1573, 1576 and 1582], in Lange and Berthoud 1972:351).

Lange and Berthoud (1972:351) tentatively identify 'Galeo' as Galoué, a community quite close to Lake Chad which has never had (so far as I can determine) any ritual importance. Perhaps a more likely identification of 'Galeo' is Gudur (or a predecessor), the centre which I have discussed above as a possible equivalent to 'Mochola'. In contrast to Galoué, the ritual importance of that centre has often been commented upon; Kirk-Greene (1960:70) calls it "...the pagan Mecca of pre-European Adamawa...", and local Kapsiki seem to agree (van Beek 1981:118) -- an interesting parallel to Anania's comparison of 'Galeo' and its 'pope' to Rome.

In this case, the term 'Galeo' would probably equate with the Giziga term 'Kaliaw' or 'Kaliao', the name of the river which runs close to Gudur and also of an

important Giziga chieftancy in the vicinity in pre-Fulbe times (Pontié 1981). A conflict between the most important Giziga chief, the *bi-marva*, and his son, the *bi-kaliao*, contributed to the Fulbe takeover of that part of the Diamaré in the early nineteenth century (Morrissey 1984:59). However, it should be noted that the chronology of Giziga polities in this region dates only to the late seventeenth century and not to the sixteenth century, when Anania wrote his account. This chronology might, of course, be wrong, or the importance of Gudur as a ritual centre and the place-name Kaliao might predate the establishment of those polities. Gudur is in Mofu, not Giziga, territory and in any case there are linguistic affiliations and traditions of common relations between the two groups (Pontié 1981:259). The connection between 'Galeo' and Kaliao could also, of course, be wrong.

#### *Ibn Fartwa*

The most extensive sixteenth century source on the study area is an 'internal' one, the *Kirgam ghazawat Barnu*, or 'book of the expeditions of Bornu', written in the latter part of the century by the imam of Bornu, ibn Fartwa (1926 [1582/3]). This is a laudatory (servile might be a better term) account of the first twelve years of the reign of *mai* Idris Aloma of Bornu, between 1571 and 1583. It concentrates upon his military campaigns against the many peoples who had been harrying the frontiers and even the internal regions of the empire. It might be thought that, as an 'internal' source, it would be more accurate and more informative, but this is not necessarily the case; the source suffers from the problems noted in the first section of the chapter, notably a lack of familiarity with the border regions by one dwelling in the capital, and political propagandizing.

*Mai* Idris Aloma is recognized as one of the important and energetic rulers of the state of Bornu. This is at least partly because we know so much about him (due to the efforts of ibn Fartwa) but also because of his relative success in unifying at least the core of his empire and extending the influence of Islam (Trimingham 1962:122-123). The work contains a great deal of information on the social and political

conditions present in this part of Central Africa in the late sixteenth century, but of most interest for this work is the account of *mai* Idris' dealings with various groups living around the peripheries of the Mandara massif (ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]:29, 35-36, 49, 50, 68, 70-73); it is thus primarily of political interest.

The Wandala state (always called Mandara) is mentioned throughout the text, although its territory is never defined. It is implied that Wandala, along with Marghi, followed "...our Sultan in war...", presumably as a tributary state (ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]35). In a number of cases, *mai* Idris moves through Wandala territory in order to do battle elsewhere, but he also involves himself in a question of dynastic succession, supporting the son of a dead ruler against the brother of that ruler. (Given the difficulties such questions had caused earlier in the history of Bornu [Lange 1984:263], *mai* Idris may have been sympathetic to the problem.) According to ibn Fartwa, *mai* Idris' intervention was decisive in restoring the deposed ruler to his throne. This involved at least two, and possibly more, armed expeditions to Keroua, where the Wandala made the first recorded use of a tactic which would stand them in good stead for hundreds of years; they retreated to fortified positions at the top of the inselberg which lies directly to the west of Keroua town. The first time they did this, they outlasted the force from Bornu, which had to leave. The second time, *mai* Idris starved them out and restored the deposed ruler to his throne.

He is then said to have taken the usurper back to Bornu (ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]:50), although there is no record of this event at this time in Wandala memoirs (Mohammadou 1982:9-10, 21). Only one ruler, Akotava Davla, is said to have been killed at Birni Gazargamo, the capital of Bornu, and this was not associated with a dynastic struggle; no reason is given. If this ruler was involved with *mai* Idris at the end of the sixteenth century, it would seem that the Wandala king-list chronology, as derived from the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* by Eldridge Mohammadou (see below), is too long. There are supposed to have been three rulers between Akotava Davla and Sankré, who probably ruled at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. (My confidence in the general accuracy of the dates given

for Sankré's reign is due to the fact that the writing of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* began only about a century later.)

Ibn Fartwa's text is interesting because it confirms the existence of a Wandala state with its capital at Keroua. (Indeed, one wonders if this intervention in Wandala affairs may have directly prompted the move of the capital to Doulo, somewhat further away from such an over-helpful prince; again, this rather depends upon the accuracy of the chronology of Wandala rulers [Mohammadou 1982:10].) If ibn Fartwa can be trusted, close relations between *mai* Idris and the previous Wandala ruler are indicated, since the latter appealed to the former to protect his son's interests -- but this justification is not unknown from the politics of our own day. It also confirms that the Wandala ruler, and so probably his subjects, were 'pagans' at this time. Finally, it should be noted that the restored ruler found it necessary to crush rebellions among his 'chiefs' (presumably the *makajiha* [Morrissey 1984]) and make peace between them.

The Marghi are also prominent in ibn Fartwa's account (ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]:35, 36). There is no evidence that the chief of the Marghi was much less powerful than the Wandala ruler; both are dignified with the title of Emir. The chief was named Adwa (a term similar to one having significance for a number of montagnard groups and the Wandala -- see Chapter 6) and he renounced his alliance to Bornu. *mai* Idris then proceeded to Marghi territory and eventually brought him to book, after what seems to have been a long chase. From the place-names given, Marghi territory at that time appears to have been similar to that of today.

There is also some information on Bornuan relations with the 'Gamargu', or Melgwa, in ibn Fartwa's (1926 [1582/3]:29) account. They play the role that they still often play in the perceptions of peoples in the study area, even of peoples who would have had no contact with them -- they are said to be untrustworthy bandits, from whom no one is safe. There is no mention made of political organization among the Melgwa, in contrast to Wandala and Marghi.

Finally, ibn Fartwa spends a great deal of time talking about *mai* Idris' campaigns against and relations with various Sao groups and others ('Nguma', 'Makari', Kotoko) to the south and southwest of the lake. These are not the immediate concern of this dissertation, and they have been very closely examined by Dierk Lange (1984, 1989). It is his conclusion that ibn Fartwa's use of the term 'Sao' is one of the last examples of a usage coined by the Kanembu newcomers as they moved their state to Bornu, before they became more familiar with the area south and west of the lake. As this happened, they became more conscious of differentiated ethnic groups and of the names for those groups, and the term 'Sao' fell out of use as a catch-all. This may well be the case, but the term was used by indigenous groups as well. The *Kirgam-a-Wandala* uses it to designate settled peoples living to the north of the Mandara massif (Mohammadou 1982:16).

### **The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: the *Kirgam-a-Wandala***

#### *The Lack of External Sources*

In contrast to the sixteenth century, there are many fewer written sources available from the next two hundred years in and around the Mandara Mountains. Bornu became more powerful and then suffered a relative decline in the eighteenth century, but still remained easily the most powerful state in the area, and the Wandala state was consolidating itself as something rather different than the societies with which it shared the Mandara region. On the face of it, one would expect that the relative stability of the country around Lake Chad would allow for more travel and for better preservation of documents, but this was not the case.

The conditions that allowed late medieval Europeans to travel across the Sahara and Muslims (even captured ones) to publish books in European languages mostly disappeared with the establishment of Ottoman rule in North Africa and the victory of Islam militant between the North African coast and Mandara. The

Mediterranean became a dangerous place, and the states around it were too evenly balanced in power to allow Europeans to force their way into the African interior as they would in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Arabic writers and geographers became less interested in sub-Saharan Africa at about the same time (see for example Lewicki 1974:11, 98-99), creating a hiatus in 'external' sources in general.

Descriptions of Africa south of the Sahara were still published, but they contained little new information, and what was novel in them was usually wrong. Mapmakers appear to have extensively copied one another, to the extent that a common format for depiction of Central Africa was used until the beginning of the nineteenth century. This is extremely striking in Klemps' (ed., 1968) collection of reproductions of antique maps of Africa, where maps from the *Africae tabula nova*, produced by Abraham Ortelius in A.D. 1570, to the *Skizze des nördlichen Theils von Africa...* of A.D. 1794 all essentially derive their information on Sudanic states from the list given by Leo Africanus (1896 [1526]:1:128) of countries he had visited or heard of, along with supplementary geographical information contained in that and (presumably) other works.

Since Leo Africanus mentions Me?dra, 'Medra' is found on all of these maps, usually in a position far to the south of the Mandara Mountains and far removed from Bornu. One can trace the gradual effects of European exploration along the coastline and inland in Africa by the progressive modifications to and abandonment of this plan of Leo Africanus' in the maps that are produced, but Bornu and 'Medra', not easily accessible, had to wait until the nineteenth century before they became better known. It is of interest that most of these maps seem to have made no use of Anania's *L'Universale fabrica del mondo...* One of the few exceptions to this is Schenk and Valk's *Nova Barbariae descriptio* of ca A.D. 1700 (in Klemps [ed.] 1968:sheet 26); the reference to 'Lapides de ??? Nicoli' in the lower right-hand extremity of the map indicates access to Anania's work.

### *The Kirgam-a-Wandala*

There are also few 'internal' sources from these centuries. The royal chronicles of Bornu were continued (Lange 1977, in Lange 1989), but there was no seventeenth or eighteenth century equivalent to ibn Fartwa's *Kirgam ghazawat Barnu*; most of *mai Idris*' successors remain relative cyphers to us. Easily the most important source from these two centuries is, for our purposes, the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* or 'chronicles of Wandala', a list of *tlikse*s with accompanying commentary which was begun in the time of *tlikse* Bukar Aji in the early eighteenth century, with progressive updates on the events of each *tlikse*'s reign until the mid-1970s (Mohammadou 1982). Nearly one-half of this text deals with the events of the realm before the beginning of the nineteenth century. The danger is, of course, that we do not know what modifications were incorporated during the course of these successive updates; at this point, they do not appear to have been major. The source is very useful indeed. Mohammadou's (1982) research has also uncovered another text, the *Uñwa-a-Mufaka*, 'the Bornu War', which was written in the reign of *tlikse* Iliyassa in the mid-nineteenth century, but which is an account of the 1781/2 fighting between Wandala and Bornu. I will also examine this text, given the period it covers.

The *Kirgam-a-Wandala* treats the beginnings of the Wandala people and state as an admixture of indigenous elements (the Gamergu or Melgwa) and the descendants of an immigrant who came from the east (Mohammadou 1982:16). According to Mohammadou (1982:211-213), this immigrant, Bukar Ayssâmi, was one of four companions who between them (or more accurately, between the populations represented in the *Kirgam* by four individuals) founded a number of states to the west and south of Lake Chad.

Bukar Ayssâmi married the daughter of the chief of the Melgwa, and eventually became the ruler of the group himself. There was a struggle for power between his son and the son of the indigenous chief, which ended with the latter fleeing and Vaya, Bukar Ayssâmi's son, holding political control of Ishga-Kéwé, the country of the Melgwa/Wandala. The descendants of the indigenous chief

nevertheless retained ritual powers and these were later confirmed by Adja Makiya, a descendant of Vaya; these descendants became holders of the title of *tlija* ('chiefs of the earth'), one of the most important in the Wandala realm. Adja Makiya also took on the title of *tlikse*, presumably to symbolize his rule over the whole territory of the Wandala.

Adja Makiya's daughter, Soukda, reigned after his rather startling death (Mohammadou 1982:18-19) and eventually married a bow-hunter who came from the east (from Yemen, although Mohammadou [1982:221] thinks that this is again a memory of a group immigration from Kanem); his two companions established further provinces of the Wandala state. Gaya, the hunter, is considered by Mohammadou (1982:9) to be the founder of the Wandala dynasty. It was in this period that the Wandala capital was moved from Ishga-Kéwé to Keroua, a Sao town, as a result of an agreement with the Sao chief. Gaya was followed by a succession of *tlikses* who reigned and (most often) died and were buried at Keroua, possibly indicating relatively peaceful reigns. One exception is the Akotava Davla mentioned in connection with ibn Fartwa's work (see above).

To this point, the Wandala state's centre of gravity lay within what is now Nigeria, between Keroua and Melgwa territory to the north and west. The next well-known *tlikse*, Sankré, was responsible for an eastward expansion which gave it boundaries approximating those of the recent past. He did this by taking over the town of Doulo, formerly ruled by a Maya chief, by trickery, first gaining the confidence of the Maya chief and marrying his daughter and then gaining access to Doulo by a ruse and quick cavalry attack. Sankré seems to have given the pre-Islamic state its definitive form (Mohammadou 1982:224). He was followed, again, by a succession of *tlikse*, notable only for the fact that rather more of them seem to have died away from their capitals than did those before Sankré. They may have been some of the casualties of a process of territorial expansion. The tenth *tlikse* after Sankré, in the early eighteenth century, was Bukar Aji, who embraced Islam and in whose reign the first sections of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* were written.

The Islamization of the Wandala is, to the Wandala themselves, perhaps the most important event in their history, at least partly because it definitively separates them from the nearby montagnards. This may explain why there are so many variants to the story of *tlikse* Bukar Aji's reign (Mohammadou 1982:26, 195-196; Mouchet 1946; Vossart 1953). There is general agreement that there was immigration of learned Muslims who provided a proper grounding for the faith (their coming may be a precursor to the immigration of Kanuri religious leaders later in the eighteenth century [Morrissey 1984:47, 48n]) and that acceptance of the faith was slow, not completed at least until the reign of Bukar Aji's son, Madi-a-Makiya.

The latter part of the eighteenth century was the period of Wandala's greatest power. At that time, the Wandala state exercised some control over territory from the Yedseram river in the west nearly to the Logone in the east, and from Waza in the north to south of Maroua (Figure 6.1). In some cases this was through direct rule, in others, through alliances with groups (such as the Giziga) which recognized Wandala suzerainty. Relations with Bornu worsened, and *mai* Ali Ajimi invaded Wandala in 1781/2 after the Wandala failed to send the yearly tribute (Mohammadou 1982:231; Morrissey 1984). The Kanuri were defeated at Doulo, with drastic effects for the power of the Bornu state in succeeding decades.

Later, in the reign of Bukar Adjama, a Fulbe force from Adamawa occupied Doulo, forcing the *tlikse* to flee to the western margins of his realm for some years. He later retook Doulo, but then moved the capital to its present position, Mora, which offered a better defensive position and refuge within the mass of the Mandara Mountains themselves. During this period, in the early nineteenth century, the *jihads* of Uthman dan Fodio and his governors, especially *modibbo* Adama, established the Fulbe as organised Muslim enemies of the Wandala to their south. Ultimately, they would be a greater threat to the state than would be Bornu, enfeebled by wars, dynastic struggles and decadence.

### *Notes on the Kirgam-a-Wandala*

It is important to note that the *Kirgam* enters 'historical time' only after it was first put to paper, early in the eighteenth century. Its previous form was an oral king-list, supplemented by stories about Wandala culture heroes -- Vaya, Adja Makiya, Soukda, Sankré. Certain elements of the *Kirgam* bear this out. It contains almost no chronological information before the reign of Bukar Aji. (For a list of Wandala *tlikse*, taken from Mohammadou [1982], see Table 4.1.)

Mohammadou (1982:10) attempts to provide such data at two points; he says that the reign of Akotava Davla must have ended after A.D. 1487, presumably because this *tlikse* is said to have died at Birni Gazargamo, which was only established as the capital of Bornu late in the fifteenth century. He also infers, however, that Sankré was the *tlikse* attacked by *mai* Idris Aloma late in the sixteenth century, although there is not a great deal of evidence to support this beyond the fact that Sankré moved the capital from Keroua to Doulo. The traditional elements of the *Kirgam* (i.e., those sections written in the early eighteenth century) may not carry much chronological information, but their originators were careful to include data on the place of death and of interment of each *tlikse*. It is quite likely that Akotava Davla was the usurper referred to in the *Kirgam ghazawat Barnu*, who eventually died at Birni Gazargamo; he is the only *tlikse* known to have died there.

If this is the case and the succession of the *tlikse* listed in the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* is correct, then the reigns of certain *tlikse* must have been very short indeed. Akotava Davla was taken to Bornu in 1585 or thereabouts. Sankré reigned in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. There are supposed to have been three *tlikse* who reigned between them (Mohammadou 1982:10), whose reigns would of necessity be rather short, certainly shorter than is indicated for the dated reigns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Mohammadou 1982:11-12). This might imply a period of dynastic instability in the Wandala state (perhaps related to the interference of *mai* Idris Aloma) or problems with the accuracy of the lists.

The *Kirgam-a-Wandala* is the earliest written reference to the Maya, although they are well-known from oral traditions and lineages claiming Maya origin still survive in the mountains. The cultural and linguistic relations between the Maya, the Sao and other ethnic groups living between the massif and Lake Chad are not at all clear. It is probably best to say that the former were the autochthonous inhabitants of the plains to the northeast of the Mandara massif, that they probably spoke a Chadic language or languages and that their best-known settlements were built near inselbergs, as at Doulo, Gréa and Aissa Hardé. They may well have been very closely related to the Sao groups.

In passing, the resemblances between details of accounts of the creation of the Wandala people and the oral traditions of a number of montagnard groups are striking. These will be examined more fully in Chapter 6.

#### *The Uñwa-a-Mufaka*

The events of 1781-1782 have already been mentioned; *mai* Ali Ajimi invaded Wandala with a huge force and was decisively defeated before Doulo. The account of the organization of the armies and of the battle itself are not particularly relevant to the present account, since most conflict within the study area consisted of raids and fighting on a much smaller scale. The text does, however, shed some light on another Wandala predilection when faced with invading forces.

The first council of many of the *tlikse's* advisors was to retreat into the mountains to fortified positions with permanent water sources, positions from which it would be impossible to dislodge them. The phrase used is "Préparons-nous à gagner nos montagnes..." (Mohammadou 1982:46), which probably indicates a retreat, not to the top of Doulo mountain (which would in any case be too small to be defended in the long term) but into the massif itself. Further, many plains-dwelling Wandala sent their children into the mountains for safe-keeping as the Kanuri army approached (Mohammadou 1982:58). These actions show that at least some Wandala tactics had not changed much since the time of *mai* Idris Aloma, two hundred years earlier, and

that relations between plains- and neighbouring mountain-dwellers must have been close at that time.

### **Mandara and the Outside World the Nineteenth Century**

It was inevitable that the political and economic ascendancy of the European powers would eventually translate into attempts to explore the interior of the African continent, even from the north across the Sahara. Exploration from this direction demanded a firm base for communications and supplies somewhere along the North African coast, and this was provided not by colonies, but by agents and consuls in places like Tripoli. Several early attempts to cross the Sahara and reach Bornu, 'Medra' and other lands remembered from earlier times failed because such conditions did not yet exist. Even with such a base, many Europeans lost their lives in countries that were dangerous because of different climates, because of disease and because Muslims south of the Sahara were much less accustomed to dealing with Christians than were their North African co-religionists. I will first summarize these 'external' European texts (there are almost no 'external' Arabic texts by this point) and then examine the 'internal' Wandala texts.

#### *Denham's Trip to Wandala*

The most important nineteenth-century European sources on the survey area are the accounts of trips taken through that area by Denham, Barth and Rohlfs. (Another European, Eduard Vogel, spent a month at Mora in 1854 but wrote no account of his stay and was killed before he returned to Europe.) Major Dixon Denham's trip from Bornu to Wandala and then south to 'Musfeia' (almost certainly Maroua (Vincent 1978) was part of a larger expedition from Tripoli in 1822-1824 (Denham and Clapperton 1826), in which a number of other explorers were also involved. The trip to the Mandara area was as much a result of internal politics at the court of Bornu as it was a slaving expedition. Denham accompanied a mixed force of

Kanuri and North African Arabs on what was supposed to be a raid for slaves somewhere in Wandala territory; instead, the *tlikse* Bukar Adjama suggested a more military adventure, against the Fulbe to the south at what is now Maroua, in conjunction with his own troops. Denham stayed in Mora for about four days while all of this was being planned, enquiring about the nature of the country while he was there.

In the ensuing assault against the fortified town of Musfeia, the Arabs who had accompanied Denham and his European companions from North Africa suffered heavy casualties, their leader being killed. They were not supported in the attack by the Kanuri or the Wandala. The reason for the latter's pusillanimity appears to have been the desire of the *de facto* ruler of Bornu, el-Kanemi, and the Wandala ruler to ward off threats to their monopoly over the slave trade while at the same time trying to hurt the Fulbe (Denham and Clapperton 1826:114; Morrissey 1984:75). In addition, the arrival of a large slaving force in Wandala territory could have been extremely disruptive to Wandala -montagnard relations, if it had been allowed to raid near Mora as its people wished. The *tlikse* may well have seized upon the idea of a Fulbe raid to move the devastation somewhere else. Denham barely escaped with his life from the debacle..

His account of his week in Wandala territory is exceedingly interesting, as much for its observations on montagnards as for his discussion of the Wandala court. He appears to have been handicapped by the religious bigotry of his hosts, which may explain some of the errors in fact that he did make. A lot of these latter simply appear to be due to exaggeration, however; as a minor example, see the illustration of the town of Mora and its surroundings in his book (Denham and Clapperton 1826:opposite p. 110) -- the mountains are pictured as many times higher than they actually are.

*Denham and the montagnards.* In his time in Mora, Denham had no contact with the peoples who lived in the mountains around the town, presumably the ancestors of the present Muraha. He attempted to make such contact at one point, but

was prevented from doing so by his Wandala escort. Nevertheless, his description is very similar to the ethnic situation early in this century, with Muslim Wandala on the plains and montagnard ('Kerdi' to Denham) settlements dense in the massif nearby (Denham and Clapperton 1826:117, 144).

He also makes it clear that relations between the two groups were sometimes nonviolent, if not peaceful, with montagnards occasionally serving in small numbers in the *tlikse's* armies (Denham and Clapperton 1826:117). He also provides details on the items which would be brought in tribute to the Wandala -- skins, honey, slaves, asses, goats -- although the offer of these items may have been an extempore reaction to the threat of a very violent slave raid to be carried out by Denham's companions. It may thus not be representative of normal tribute or trade. Trade within the mountains is said to be carried out by freed slaves, who penetrated the massif with beads and cloth and exchanged these for slaves and skins (Denham and Clapperton 1826:121). He also mentions the importance of iron and iron-working in the area (Denham and Clapperton 1826:122, 146-147).

It is obvious from his description of the montagnards' reaction to his companions approach that their relations with the plainsmen were not uniformly good. Even those living close to Mora, who presumably had the most incentive to evolve good relations with the Wandala, were observed to flee, surely because of their fear of a raid countenanced by their neighbours. They had to fear one another, too; Denham mentions offerings of slaves captured from other montagnard communities in several places in his work.

There is some disagreement about the identities of Musgow 'pagans', who arrived on horses with slaves and other presents for the *tlikse* to forestall a raid on their territory; they were the only 'kerdi' that Denham was to see at close range. It is usually assumed that they were Musgum, from the plains along the Logone, but Vincent (1978:583-584) argues for an identification as Mafa from Mozogo. Her main reason for saying this is that Musgum territory is too far away to have collected slaves and brought them to Mora in a day or two. This may be the case, but a similar

argument applies with almost equal force for Mozogo; the delay would probably be in collecting slaves, not moving them. In any case, the progress of a large Kanuri-Arab force toward Mora would have hardly gone unremarked and it is probable that their approach was known for some time before they arrived at Mora. It is also less likely that Mafa would not only be mounted but would bring horses as tribute to the *tlikse* than that plains-dwelling Musgum would do so.

Denham provides little cultural data on the montagnards living near Mora, because he had no opportunity to collect such. He appears to have borrowed part of his description from Leo Africanus (Denham and Clapperton 1826:121), when he says that the montagnards "...live in common, without any regard to relationship..." The fires in the hills which he refers to (Denham and Clapperton 1826:117) may have been caused by montagnards clearing stubble in fields; this often occurs in late April, when he arrived.

His most interesting observations come on the trip from Mora south to his encounter with the Fulbe. Vincent (1978) reconstructs this as a trip from Mora, to Urza, to Muyan, to Makalingay and then south. This routing does not totally agree with his description, but no other does either. From Urza, Denham describes and names the mountains to his west and south as his party moves south-south-west across the plains toward Muyan, and these can be correlated with the lineages and peoples who still live in the region today. The list is given differently in the text (Denham and Clapperton 1826:127) and on the two maps which accompany that text, but the full list and equivalent names are given in Table 4.2. His naming of locations further to the south is generally also accurate.

As Vincent (1978:595) has pointed out, such persistence in toponymy has cultural, as well as geographical, implications. These terms are not only the names of heights in the Mandara massif; they are equally associated with the human groups that occupy those heights and if one changes, the other changes. We thus have good evidence that the montagnard groups found in the area today have been in their present locations for at least 170 years -- and probably that the Wandala could

differentiate their lineages successfully. This is the first reference to separate mountain groups in the study area; there would be no others for another century.

*Denham and the Wandala.* Denham found the Wandala at a cusp in their history. Fifty years before, they had defeated a powerful Bornuan army outside Doulo, thus preserving their independence. With the removal of pressure from Bornu, they had expanded to the south and east, vastly increasing their domains. That same movement had, however, brought them into conflict with the Fulbe to the south. The decentralized Fulbe were at first not able to offer much resistance to a strong Wandala state, but increased pressure, alliances with Bornu and montagnards and, later, the religious enthusiasm generated by the *jihads* of the early nineteenth century made the Fulbe much more formidable opponents (Morrissey 1984). In the long run, it would be the Fulbe, not the Kanuri of Bornu, who posed the greatest threat to the Wandala state.

There were signs of this at the time of Denham's visit. *Tlikse* Bukar Adjama had already moved the Wandala capital from Doulo to Mora as a defence against Fulbe attacks and, indeed, Denham says that 'Mandara' had already been occupied once by the Fulbe (Denham and Clapperton 1826:115). The movement to Mora was a significant admission of weakness, and it probably was a sign of greater cooperation with the Muraha montagnards, since full exploitation of the defensive capabilities of the position demanded control of and (probably) movement on to the heights around the town. This was demonstrated by von Raben in his defence during World War I (see below). His statement that Doulo had already been occupied by the Fulbe, forcing Bukar Adjama to flee to the west before he retook his capital, is supported by the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* (Mohammadou 1982:27, *contra* Morrissey 1984:62).

At the same time, Denham saw the Wandala state as fundamentally a powerful one, with great resources, which el-Kanemi of Bornu found advantageous to have as an ally (Denham and Clapperton 1826:115-117). There is no doubt that he was favourably impressed throughout his Wandala adventure, by the richness of the country and the grandeur of the Wandala court -- although he seems to have been less

than impressed by many of the Wandala he met. He stated that the Wandala army was primarily cavalry, well-armed and with better horses than Bornu had.

He says (Denham and Clapperton 1826:115) that there are actually two Wandala states, Mandara and 'Karowa' (certainly Keroua), which were joined until the time of the Fulbe occupation of Doulo, and that they were ruled by a ruler called 'Kerdy'. Bukar Adjama is said to have been the son of the ruler of Keroua (the same 'Kerdy'?) and to have recovered the country from the Fulbe. This distortion (there is no evidence that the Wandala state was ever so divided nor that the Fulbe occupation was long-term) may be a result of misinformation passed on to Denham by Kanuri and Arab sources. 'Kerdy' would refer to a pagan ruler. There is no reason to think that at least the *tlikes* of Wandala had not been Muslim for 100 years before Denham's visit, so this whole statement probably refers to a period in Wandala's past (whether Denham so recognized or not) and either to the previous status of Keroua as the capital of the whole country or to a time of greater decentralization of the state, as argued for by Morrissey (1984).

Mora, Doulo and Keroua are the only three Wandala towns mentioned by name; 'Hairy' (Heré, near Urza? -- see Vincent 1978) is said to be in ruins. Denham says that there are eight major Wandala towns and other, smaller ones which surround them, and that all of these are "...in the valley..." (Denham and Clapperton 1826:117). This presumably means that they are on the plains. His remark that the "...Kerdies are far more numerous..." anticipates the results of censuses 150 years later. The main items traded are said to be slaves -- always the most important -- skins and iron. Iron mostly came from around Keroua and was exported to Bornu as finished products. Denham's (Denham and Clapperton 1826:146-147) description of a Wandala forge resembles those still found in the region today, although he mistook a bloom mass for iron in its natural state.

*Barth's trips to Adamawa and the Logone*

Heinrich Barth completed an epic journey through the Sudanic zone of Africa between 1851 and 1855, as a member of a British expedition formed with the goal of securing political and commercial relations with a number of states south of the Sahara. In the course of travels from Tripoli through the Hausa states, Bornu, Adamawa, Kanem, Baghirmi, back through Hausa territory and on to Timbuktu, he outlasted the other original European members of the expedition (Adolf Overweg and James Richardson), both of whom died, and Eduard Vogel, who was sent out to accompany him and who was killed in Wadai. Vogel was the second European to have visited the study area, although his notes on this area did not survive, except possibly for part of an itinerary from Mora to Yola (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:1:628-631) and other assorted notes.

Barth himself never visited the Mandara Mountains, although he came very close on two occasions. He travelled from Kukawa, by then the capital of Bornu, to Yola in Adamawa between 20 May and 24 July, 1851 (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:85-227). This trip took him along the western edges of the massif, through Melgwa and Marghi territory and then south into Adamawa. He also, with Overweg, accompanied a Kanuri force on what started out as a punitive expedition against the Wandala but which quickly degenerated into a farcical slave raid against the Musgum between 25 November, 1851, and 1 February, 1852 (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:316-424).

This latter trip took Barth and Overweg to within a day of Mora, but they instead crossed the Chad Plain from northwest to southeast, going just south of Waza and stopping at that inselberg when returning. As members of a large expedition, they had little opportunity to meet inhabitants of that region. This trip is of interest for two reasons. In the first place, it started out as a punitive expedition against Wandala, although not one to be pursued with much enthusiasm. It was, in fact, abandoned after news was received that the *tlikse* had retreated to the mountains to resist the invaders, since the Kanuri realized the difficulty of attacking him there.

His description of the area he passed through is also of considerable interest. Travelling as he did, at the end of the rainy season, much of the Chad Plain was water-covered. The appearance of the region is much as one would find now at the same time of year, although perhaps more heavily forested and with more elephants and other large game visible. The plains were inhabited by Shuwa Arabs, some living in association with Kanuri as is the case today, and by Fulbe moving up to the east of the by then much-reduced Wandala borders.

Barth's earlier trip, south from Kukawa to Adamawa, is of considerably more interest. In this case, he skirted the west of the survey area, close enough to see the Mandara massif in the survey area off to the east and close enough to gather information about the groups who lived there. He did not, however, move through the territory of the many small montagnard groups which inhabit the western edge of the massif between its northwestern tip and the territories of Kapsiki and Sukur. As such, his account does not reflect the ethnic diversity of that region.

Barth first passed through land chiefly inhabited by Shuwa before moving into Melgwa territory at Maiduguri. He found this region intensively cultivated and quite productive -- a contrast to ibn Fartwa's description of those people 250 years earlier, but Barth also emphasizes their subordination to Bornu. He then appears to have travelled along the Bama Ridge to Kasakula, about halfway to Bama, after which he and his companions went southwest to Molghoy (Mulgwe). His first view of the Mandara mountains was at Kasakula, when he saw 'Mount Deladaba' (the Zelideva hills west of Keroua) as he passed from Melgwa into Marghi territory. It must have been at the limit of his vision, some 70 kilometres away, but there are no other large peaks visible from there.

Much of his trip through Marghi territory to Mulgwe seems to have been through a no-man's-land; he says (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:102) that this land formerly belonged to the Marghi and had since been annexed by the Kanuri and Melgwa, but that its occupation was at the time of his writing in doubt. Mulgwe itself was occupied by Marghi. His party then turned toward the south-southeast, arriving at Isge, also

inhabited by Marghi. They then turned south-southwest again, along the frontier between Higi/Kapsiki, Kilba and Marghi territory (and under some threat from the evidently unsubdued Higi/Kapsiki -- Barth (1965 [1857-9]:2:118, 119, 123-125, 213-216)) before reaching first Uba and then Mubi, within Adamawa control. They returned from Adamawa by the same route as far as Kasakula.

From Isge Barth (1965 [1857-9]:2:115-116) was able to carefully view the border of the Mandara massif to his east and southeast, identifying Mounts 'Legge' (Dlige in Laamang), 'Magar' (Mabas?), 'Gulak' (the massif around the Hill Marghi settlement of the same name), 'Mukata' (Mogodé?), 'Kamalle' (Kamale), 'Metchika' (Michika? -- it seems too far southeast) and 'Mindif/Mendefi'. Barth states that this is the Pic Mindif, which Denham observed south of Maroua; in reality, he was almost certainly the first European to view one of the volcanic plugs at Rhumsiki. He also identifies the territories of two ethnic groups in or near the mountains, 'Sugur' (Sukur) and 'Bazza' (Baza -- Higi/Kapsiki). Sukur is described as a powerful, independent chiefdom (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:100, 116-117), well-fortified and powerful at least in part because of its religious authority -- a description remarkably in accordance with those of later writers (see for example Kirk-Greene 1960). Kamale, Michika and Rhumsiki are all in Higi/Kapsiki territory and it is evident that Bornu writ did not extend to that group. His description of travel between Kasakula and Mubi is generally one of movement through a contested, sparsely inhabited landscape, but he only seems to have actually felt some danger to his party south of Isge.

His account seems to be remarkably accurate, although he was wrong on some counts, such as the identification of 'Mindif'. (Barth's opinion of Denham was never high, and he was always ready to ascribe differences in observations to a mistake on the earlier explorer's part.) There are a number of observations made by Barth which are of interest in the context of this study. In the first place, within the very general limits set by Barth, there seems to have been little movement of the ethnic groups described until the colonial period, when many moved out of the hills. His descriptions of places and placenames, whether personally observed or obtained

through interviews, are usually correct; this is as true for the massif around Keroua (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:117, 218-219f) as for country he saw himself. It is unfortunate that his itinerary took him from Kasakula to Mulgwe (and so away from the massif) before his party turned back to the southeast to Isge. Had they chosen a more direct route, he probably would have had more to say about the montagnards of the Zelideva Hills and about the Wandala around Keroua. It is possible that the direct route was too dangerous at the time, due to Melgwa bandits (see below, on Rohlf's).

The whole region from Kasakula to around Mubi seems to have been in a state of near anarchy, contested by the Kanuri and Melgwa, the Marghi, various montagnard groups (especially the Higi/Kapsiki) and the Fulbe of Adamawa. Within this vacuum, the Marghi and Sukur emerge from Barth's description as local powers, able to (mostly) resist the onslaughts of the Muslim states surrounding them and capable of maintaining an internal cohesiveness. Other local montagnard groups, such as the Higi/Kapsiki, lacked such cohesiveness and power, but were still a threat. Barth's description of montagnard culture in the region, fragmentary as it is, seems correct. Some elements, such as his description of the Marghi custom of deciding conflicts by holding cock-fights at Koptchi, echoes customs further to the east; the Plata and their neighbours, for example, believe that certain ceremonies for war will invoke a magical red cock which can burn down the houses of their enemies (Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986; Tlevu Augla, 18/6/1986) and the chiefs of Gudur have asserted their suzerainty over neighbouring groups by removing the cocks from their settlements (Jouaux n.d.).

One of the most striking aspects of his description of this region is the absence of reference to Wandala rule there. Theoretically, the Yedseram River valley had been under Wandala control until about 30 years before Barth's trip to Adamawa. That control had often been contested, particularly since the beginning of the nineteenth century and with the later establishment of a Fulbe *lamidat* at Madagali and the loss of the lower Yedseram (Mohammadou 1982:203-204; Morrissey 1984:57, 63; Strumpell 1912:66). The only relic of Wandala rule seems to have been Barth's habit

of calling the massif the Wandala range. He does not appear conscious of former Wandala rule.

Barth's conception of the Wandala state in general is very different from that of Denham 25 years earlier, and this is an indication of the changing fortunes of Wandala and Fulbe. Denham saw a powerful, independent country under some Fulbe pressure. Barth's view may in part be due to the fact that he never visited the country himself, but he speaks (for example Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:93) of a "...little country...", about to be swallowed up by the Fulbe, and consistently underestimates its size. He also appears to have been under the impression that it was a mountainous state -- so perhaps like Marghi or Sukur -- although inhabited by Muslims. The total disappearance of the Wandala much west of Keroua is an indication of how things had changed.

#### *Rohlf's Visit to Doulo*

Gerhard Rohlf's visited the study area during September and October, 1866; he arrived from Bornu and travelled from Maiduguri to Mora, later returning via Dikwa (Rohlf's 1875). This was only a small diversion on a trip that took him from the Mediterranean, at Tripoli, to the Gulf of Guinea at Lagos. He was the first European to make this trip, and he did so alone.

As Schmokel (1970:191) says, "The general tone [of Rohlf's account] is that of a matter-of-fact travelogue." His description of his trip to Doulo (Rohlf's 1875:13-77) certainly bears this out; indeed, one would wish for rather less travelogue and rather more description of the landscape and peoples of the country he passed through. He spent most of his time in Wandala territory in Doulo, which was at that time again being used as the capital; Mora had been destroyed by the Kanuri in 1863, but was in the process of being reoccupied at the time of Rohlf's visit (Rohlf's 1875:57).

He devotes some time to description of court hierarchy and ritual, quite naturally given the time he had to devote to the *tlikse's* questions and requests. He was neither the first nor the last visitor to have occasion to complain of the hospitality of

the Wandala court. His description of court hierarchy agrees with that of today (see Mohammadou 1982, Morrissey 1984). The *tlikse's* mistrustfulness and refusal to eat food not prepared by his mother (Rohlf's 1875:55) is mirrored in Wandala society now, where fear of poisoning and of witchcraft through the ingestion of charmed foods is very prevalent (D. Lyons, personal communication, 1989).

His account does contain valuable information. In the first place, it corroborates the testimony of Barth and indigenous sources (see below) concerning the diminution of Wandala power in the last half of the nineteenth century. Rohlf's himself refers to Wandala as a small state dependent on Bornu, and shows a great deal of contempt for courtly elaboration in such an insignificant realm (Rohlf's 1875:41).

His travels bear this out. He crossed from Bornu into Wandala at the 'Nschua' (probably the Zuwa or Dangalang [Survey Department, Nigeria 1953]) stream, just north and to the west of the Zelideva Hills near Keroua, a far cry from the time, only a few decades earlier, when the Wandala had controlled much of the Yedseram Valley. He travelled to Mora, which he says (Rohlf's 1875:58) is one of the most southerly places in the country. On his map, the southern frontier appears to be around Molkwo inselberg, which was the furthest peak he saw from his ascent of 'Sramarda' (Sera Ouarda) (Rohlf's 1875:49); this may well have been a guess on his part, however, as he went no further south than Mora. It is difficult to say where he crossed back into Bornu on his way to Dikwa on the return trip, but it does not appear to have been far north of what is now the Nigeria-Cameroon border at Banki-Limani (Rohlf's 1875:67; Survey Department, Nigeria, 1953).

There are other proofs of the loss of Wandala power. The border areas were extremely unsettled and conflict between Wandala and montagnards was constant, according to members of the court (Rohlf's 1875:35, 53), due in great part to the raids necessary for the slave trade. Rohlf's was (as was Denham) on several occasions offered slaves as gifts or in exchange for items of European manufacture. Some sort of accommodation must have been made with the Muraha occupying the mountains above Mora, however, since not only was the town being rebuilt, but goods and stock

were being stored on the heights above. According to Rohlfs (1875:63), the whole army consisted of about 1000 men, of whom about 100 were cavalry and 20 or 30 fusiliers. This probably does not take levies into account, but still seems very low. It also does not seem probable, given the state of relations with montagnards and the testimony of the latter peoples themselves, that men from the hill communities made up a large part of the professional army (*contra* Morrissey 1984:124). It is possible that these archers were Wandala slaves.

After his climb of Sera Ouarda, Rohlfs identified 'Melko' (Molkwo), 'Muéngdje' (Muyan), 'Wame' ('Vamé-Mbremé'), 'Padógo' (the Podokwo massif), 'Moktéle' (Muktélé), 'Gelabda-Gebirge' (Glavda), 'Dladebá' (Zelideva), Gréa and "...den einzelnstehenden Fels Mosa..." (Waza) as separate massifs in his sight. The population of the country as a whole was given as 150,000, of whom 30,000 were said to live in Doulo and the great majority of whom were pagan montagnards. Both population figures are certainly overestimates, especially the latter. Even if all of the montagnards in areas under Wandala control were added in, the total population of the Wandala state today would not be much more than half of Rohlfs' estimate.

He was not impressed with the craft production of the state, only the output of iron being at all important. Like Denham, he assumed (Rohlfs 1875:61) that the large bloom masses produced by smelting were actually ore. The chief commerce of the country was in slaves, the capture and traffic of whom were a constant preoccupation. The monetary system does not seem to have been well-developed, with pieces of iron only used as currency in the southern part of Wandala territory and with cloth used for smaller transactions (Rohlfs 1875:62). The degree of usage of Maria Theresa thalers at the time is not clear. It is obvious that they were used outside of Wandala territory (see for example Rohlfs [1875:26, 60]) and it is said (Morrissey 1984:102) that they had been used within the state since the 1830s, but Rohlfs certainly implied that they were not widely known.

Rohlfs also gave the first specific description of the montagnards around Mora. He wrote that they were monogamous and had a conception of a supreme being

and of life after death, as well as of good and evil spirits. This was, if hardly ethnography, at least a change from Leo Africanus. He also appears to have believed that the Wandala and montagnards had at least a common religion at one point, since "...with their conversion [the Wandala] adopted only the worst of Islam..." (Rohlf's 1875:62).

#### *The Kirgam-a-Wandala and other internal sources*

The final important pre-colonial sources on the study area are those Wandala texts examined by Mohammadou (1982), including that portion of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* already discussed. The other written sources are: the *Uñwa-a-Mufaka* ('the Bornu War'), the *Udle-a-Wandala* (a list of Wandala court titles and functions, written about 1850) and the *Nada-a-Wandala* (a list of taxes paid to the *tlikse* and customary presents given by him, again written about 1850). The *Uñwa-a-Wandala* has already been mentioned; the other two sources are quite short and deal with elements of Wandala culture peripheral to this work. They will not be addressed here. Mohammadou's (1982) work also contains a body of oral tradition valuable in investigating the history and functioning of the state.

That part of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* which treats the nineteenth century (about one-half of it [Mohammadou 1982:27-41]) is mostly concerned with the conflict with Rabeh at the end of that period. The first 94 years of the century are covered in one and a half pages, the main themes of which are the wars with the Fulbe, Bornu and the montagnards around Mora. Conflict with the Fulbe appears to have stayed at a relatively constant level over most of the century, while an uneasy peace between Wandala and Bornu was the norm. This state of affairs was punctuated by armed conflict at certain times (in mid-century, for example, when Barth visited and just before Rohlf's visit) and by alliances cemented by marriage between the ruling families of the country at other times (early in the century and at the time of Rohlf's visit). Wandala and Bornu were too important to one another to allow permanent enmity. *Mai* Ali Ajimi's attack in the 1780s was probably the last serious attempt to

actually incorporate Wandala into Bornu; from that time on, most conflicts appear to have been over trade and tribute.

Relations with neighbouring montagnard groups were very complex over this period. There was obviously extensive cooperation between the Wandala state and their neighbours on the massif, both in trade and in political action; during the period of tension with Bornu in mid-century, the *tlikse* and his court took refuge in the mountains at least twice, and probably more often. In addition, half of the treasury was kept in a fortified place in the mountains from the time of *tlikse* Bukar Anarbana (Mohammadou 1982:179). At the same time, *tlikse* Elyassa was killed by montagnards in mid-century and, according to the *Kirgam-a-Wandala*, the Muraha raided Mora and pillaged the *tlikse's* palace during the reign of his successor, Bukar Anarbana, after which this *tlikse* moved the capital back to Doulo. Morrissey (1984:179) views this only as the result of incitement by the enemies of Bukar Anarbana; he does not appear to believe that the montagnards were capable of independent action.

The events of 1894 to 1902 plunged the study area into an entirely new world, one in which the colonial powers of Europe became the arbiters of events in the Lake Chad basin. The successes of the armies of Rabeh, a Shuwa Arab ex-slave leading a Mahdist force which had already overthrown the dynasties of Wadai, Baghirmi, the Kotoko states and Bornu (Brenner 1973; Hallam 1977), were already known in Wandala (Mohammadou 1982:29) and, when the conqueror of Bornu demanded that the *tlikse* or his son come to Dikwa to submit to him, the threat was taken seriously.

The first Wandala response involved tactics that had always served them well before in their dealings with Bornu. They sent tribute to Rabeh at Dikwa as a sign of submission, but neither the ruler nor his son accompanied it. When this tribute was refused, the population moved themselves and their goods into the mountains south of Mora and to Urza, into the keeping of the montagnards there. There was a delay of some months in the Mahdist attack, and so some of the population removed themselves from the mountains back to Doulo. It is also probable (Morrissey 1984)

that there was some Wandala collusion with the invasion. These factors, and the refusal of the Wandala administration to take much action when the attack did take place, meant that when Rabeh triumphed the devastation to the Wandala state was great. The Wandala tactics may have worked with the state of Bornu, not armed with modern weapons and much further away than was Rabeh's capital at Dikwa, and with procedures and a mind-set well understood by the Wandala, but they were ineffectual against a well-armed Mahdist force. The Wandala paid a great price for their inability to react to the new conditions.

The *tlikse* and many of his relations were taken back to Dikwa in captivity, where the males (including the *tlikse*) were eventually put to death and the females entered into slavery. Doulo was again destroyed. Refugees from the attack fled to the massif, to Urza and, in some cases, toward the Fulbe at Maroua (Mohammadou 1982:33). These refugees, with the Wandala and the montagnards already occupying positions in the mountains, successfully resisted attacks by Rabeh's forces over many months, depending for supplies on sorghum from the Diamaré bought with money from that part of the Wandala treasury kept in the mountains (Mohammadou 1982:179-180). Eventually, Rabeh's force moved back to Dikwa and the Wandala moved out of the mountains and began the rebuilding of Mora; Doulo would never again be the capital of Wandala. They were driven back into the mountains some years later by a new attack by one of Rabeh's generals, but successfully beat this off.

It is unlikely that the Wandala state in its traditional form would have survived a long-term Mahdist occupation of the southern Lake Chad basin. Rabeh's capital of Dikwa was much closer to Wandala central territory than was Kukawa, and Rabeh himself was a far different person than were the feuding rulers of Bornu. It is improbable that he would have tolerated even a semi-independent state so close to his capital. Wandala military power, based on mailed cavalry and musketry, could not cope on the plains with the rifled repeating weapons of Rabeh's troops. Wandala would probably been faced with two choices: becoming a vassal of Rabeh's state, with little scope for independent manoeuvre, or becoming more and more dependent upon

occupation of the massif. The Wandala did not have to make this choice, of course; Rabeh was killed at Kousseri in 1900 by the French and, after a short period of *de facto* (and rather desultory) French administration, the study area was brought under (at least theoretical) German rule by Lieutenant Pavel in 1902.

### **The Colonial Occupation**

European interest in the area had been growing for some time. Rohlfs (for example, 1875:63) and other explorers and politicians were in favour of greater European involvement in the affairs of the Chad Basin. The first steps toward control over this area came with the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, when an attempt was made to clarify European 'spheres of influence' in Africa. It was obvious that British interests in what is now Nigeria, German interests in Cameroon and French interests in Central and West Africa would at some point intersect. They did so south of Lake Chad, along the great north-south and east-west axes of trade and migration that had existed there for thousands of years. Preliminary borders between German- and British-controlled territories were set up in the mid-1890s, although neither country was as yet at all established in the Central African interior. Delineation of the boundaries south of Lake Chad appears to have roughly followed the routes of Barth and Rohlfs -- probably because, at that point, no European had a good idea of what lay on either side of those routes.

Both the British and the Germans moved into the Chad Basin from the south, gradually establishing their domination by defeating traditional polities, including the Fulbe of the Adamawa and Sokoto states, and then arrogating their authority through the 1890s and in the early years of the twentieth century. The French approach was rather different. Benefitting from the early control of Senegal, they drove east across the Sudan-Sahel zone and secondarily tried to extend their influence north and south. At the same time and in part because of the ravages of Rabeh, French forces also advanced from North Africa and from their enclaves in Gabon around 1900, meeting

south of Lake Chad. The result was a situation where Great Britain controlled most of Bornu, first through the Royal Niger Company and then directly (now part of northern Nigeria), the French were left in control of the territory to the east of the Logone (now Chad) and Germany controlled a triangular territory which included the study area and reached north to Lake Chad (generally the modern territory of northern Cameroon, but with borders reaching rather further to the west). This situation continued until World War I when, with the defeat of the Germans, Great Britain and France divided up the captured territory, ruling most of it under a League of Nations mandate.

It might be imagined that, with the coming of European administration, the physical and cultural makeup of the study area would become much better known. This certainly was the case in the plains, since it was fundamentally with the Muslim states in the area that the imperial powers dealt. The plains south of the lake were increasingly crossed by soldiers, administrators, traders and tourists, European posts were established (at Kousseri, Dikwa and eventually Mora, for example) and in general the southern Lake Chad basin was integrated into the various imperial realms.

The first detailed map of the peripheries of the northern Mandara massif was produced (Moisel et al. 1906) as an annex to the German-British border agreement of 19 March of that year (F.O. 93/36, no. 55). This was followed by successive surveys and reports on the plains and mountain peripheries in the study area, mostly pertaining to boundary renegotiations with the French after World War I (see documents in the Colonial Office dossier C.O. 879/118, Africa (West) no. 1049, *Correspondence related to the Territories of the Cameroon under British Administration and their Boundaries...*). These contain some information on montagnard groups on the peripheries of the massif, but are particularly useful in indicating the limitations of Wandala control west of Keroua (C.O. 879/118, no. 1049-90). Other texts concentrating upon the plains proliferated during the period of German occupation. The more useful include Schulz (1913 [1910]), Friedrich (1913), Bauer (1904), Dominik (1908) and Zimmermann (1906).

Compared to the plains, the mountains remained a cypher over this period. The German style of colonial administration in northern Cameroon was much more like that of the British than of the French -- that is, there was a greater emphasis on indirect rule, albeit with much greater powers of intervention by the German colonial officer on the spot. When the first European administrators arrived in the area, they found Muslim chiefs who cooperated and made useful auxiliaries, and who were, in fact, quite ready to use European forces to quell 'troublemakers' in their territories (Lembezat 1949; Stewart 1970). They also found elements of administration, such as tax systems, censuses and judiciary systems already in place. It is small wonder that all three colonial powers were content, to greater or lesser degrees, to replace merely the head of the local administration, and not its body.

This meant, however, that there was very little contact between Europeans and montagnards. Their settlements were often difficult to reach, they spoke a multitude of strange languages and they often actively resisted contact with any outsider. Moreover, the Muslim populations, whether Kanuri, Wandala or Fulbe, found it in their interest to prevent any comprehension of montagnards and their lifeways by Europeans. If they could do this, if they could prevent any growth of empathy between colonial officials and the indigenes who, after all, made up the majority of the population, they would have a powerful weapon -- the demonstrated European capability to cause havoc and death on a large scale -- in their attempts to extend their control over the mountains. An example was the Wandala attempt to extend their influence into the Koza Plain to Mozogo in the 1920s and 1930s, which was bloodily repulsed (Beauvilain 1989:341-342; Lembezat 1949; Lenoir 1929). In general, they were quite successful at this. The view persisted throughout the German, and well into the French, period of administration that the montagnards were naturally rebellious and hostile to their control, and European attacks and repression against real or imagined montagnard outrages were often devastating (AOM Archives du Gouvernement General de l'A.E.F. Série D., Sous-Série 2D, 2D39, no. 8866; Beauvilain 1989:316-339; Lembezat 1949, 1950).

The result is that montagnard groups were little better known in the early period of colonial occupation (up until the early 1920s, perhaps) than they were at the time of Barth. This is quite striking when one examines maps of the area, for example those of Ferrandi (1928), Lemoigne 1918; Moisel et al. (1906), Schultze (1913 [1910]) and Zimmermann (1906). The peripheries of the mountains were well-mapped by the end of the German administration. Penetration of the interior of the massif occurred, especially during the war (although even at that time, most communication skirted the massif [Ferrandi 1928:119]), but there was remarkably little comprehension of the cultural diversity of the mountain environment.

This is not to say that there was no generation of cultural information on montagnard groups during this period. So far as I know, the first photographs of the mountains of the survey area around Mora date from 1913 (Friedrich 1913:1:photos 148-151), and they show a landscape and people much like those found there today. One of the few German observers of montagnard customs was Captain von Raben, who led an extremely successful defense of positions on the massif south of Mora from late 1914 to early 1916, only surrendering when he learned that no German resistance remained in the country (AOM Série Géographique, carton 12, dossier 94, no. 187-8). He had concluded a peace treaty with the montagnard groups whose positions he occupied (most of whom appear to have been Dumwa), using traditional observances including the killing of a dog, and those people extended full cooperation to him during the approximately 18 month siege, under extremely difficult conditions (Ferrandi 1928:118; see also AOM Archives du Gouvernement General de l'A.E.F. Série D., Sous-Série 2D, dossier 2D39). Von Raben also wrote several quite thorough reports on various aspects of the northern colonies, although not of the Mandara area.

The Mandara Mountains within what is now Cameroon were under French military control from Mokolo until 1939, although some of the peripheral plains passed under civil administration by the end of the 1920s. Lembezat (1949:8; 1950:22) thought that this militated against the development of good relations between the colonial government and the montagnards. He also pointed out a

dichotomy in approaches to montagnard government between upper-level and lower-level administrators; higher authorities wished to leave 'kirdi' groups independent, under direct European control, while regional administrators wanted to put them under the control of the local Muslim authorities. This split can also be seen in correspondence from the early 1920s concerning bloody French punitive expeditions in the north of Cameroon. These happened quite regularly, especially in the early 1920s, at the behest of local administrators, and were as regularly deplored by their superiors, who seem to have been much more conscious of French humanitarian responsibilities under the League of Nations mandate (Beauvilain 1989; AOM: Archives du Gouvernement General de l'A.E.F. Série D., Sous-Série 2D, dossier 2D39; Série Géographique, carton 30, dossier 258). French control eventually became much more direct (Masson 1938). Conflict between the colonial administration and montagnard groups in the territory under British mandate continued through the 1920s and into the 1930s (Secretary of State for the Colonies 1931 *et seq.*).

The first French texts to extensively treat the peoples of northern Cameroon were by military men during World War I and in the 1920s. Perhaps the best known sources are those of Captain Lemoigne and Ferrandi (1928). Lemoigne first translated a number of German texts during the war, including the diary Captain von Raben kept during the Mora siege, and eventually wrote his own study on the territory (Lemoigne 1918), the first European work to specifically address the history and peoples of the study area. He emphasized the relationship between the Muslim Wandala and 'pagan' montagnards and gave some details of montagnard lifeways, including their agriculture and blacksmithing, sacrifices of cattle (probably the *marai* ceremony) and the importance of the cult centre of Gudur. He also wrote the first account of the coronation ceremony for the *tlikse*, with its emphasis on montagnard and blacksmithing associations, and gave the first history of the Wandala themselves.

Ferrandi's (1928) work is more specialized, in that its concern is the conquest of German north Cameroon by Great Britain and France, but he gives an extensive description of the Mora siege and of the Wandala and montagnards whose territories

were fought over. His depiction of Wandala-montagnard relations is of particular interest. He says that local notables play the role of tax-collectors, but that the *tlikse* has few powers of coercion over them, given their strong defensive position and lack of need for goods from the plains. As such, the *tlikse* resorts to "...common traditions, to his own prestige and also to supernatural arguments, which may have some effect on them..." (Ferrandi 1928:115). Apparently, ten tons of grain which the *tlikse* had hidden in the mountains played a great part in sustaining the German forces throughout their defense (Ferrandi 1928:128). In general, Ferrandi tends to overemphasize montagnard resources and independence, possibly as a way of explaining away the poor results of the Allied siege.

Other publications concerning this period from northern Cameroon include shorter works by Chombard de Lauwe (1937), Grall (1936) and von Duisberg (1927), along with the first publications on the area by Jean-Paul Lebeuf, whose work would become central to views of the prehistory of the Chad Basin. There is a brief description of a sojourn at Mora, in early 1931, in Michel Leiris' diary of his experiences with Griaule's Dakar-Djibouti expedition, *L'Afrique fantôme* (Leiris 1951:153-162). Northeastern Nigeria was well-served, particularly by the work of Meek (1925, 1931), who in the course of work as a colonial officer (particularly in compiling the 1921 census) amassed a great deal of information concerning this region and whose work is particularly valuable in its descriptions of montagnard groups, some of whom have never again been described in so detailed a fashion. Palmer (1970 [1936]; ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]) also contributed to ethnographic knowledge of the area, although again this was mostly concerned with Muslim groups on the plains. It is probable that the persistence of French military administration in the Mandara Mountains and the rather ambiguous political status of the mandated territories lessened the amount of research done in the study area throughout the inter-war years.

It is not surprising that most of the early description of and research into the histories and lifeways of groups in the study area was done by officials who held

posts in the colonial administrations. In a remote area, they were the only Europeans who would have a chance to get interested in the people they ruled and time to carry out detailed investigations. Such work was often officially mandated, especially in British territories, and it would also have helped to relieve the boredom of long periods spent in isolated posts. Many -- probably most -- such officials had no interest in such projects, and the information collected by others was often wildly inaccurate, coloured, perhaps, by their own preconceptions (as, for example, with Bouchard [1948], who in an address to the Centre des Hautes Etudes des Affaires Musulmanes advanced the idea that the Wandala were originally Nestorian Christians pushed eastward by Jewish groups).

There were, however, a core of administrators and soldiers who conducted such research, both during and after their periods of tenure, and they account for most of the publications on the study area until the 1950s and 1960s. Their work is invaluable. They include Meek and Palmer, and later writers such as Anthony Kirk-Greene and Stanhope White in northern Nigeria and British Cameroons, and Bertrand Lembezat and Jean Mouchet in the French protectorate. Of these latter, Lembezat (1952) published the first detailed ethnography of a montagnard group in northern Cameroon, the Mukuléhé lineage of Podokwo, as well as a general study of the 'kirdi' groups (Lembezat 1950), while Mouchet (1938, 1947a, b, c, d, 1948, 1949, 1957) produced a vital series of short ethnographic sketches on groups mostly living on the eastern edge of the massif south of Mora. There is no later published ethnographic information on some of these groups, although they live in an area that is now very easily accessible -- indeed, a tourist attraction. Times have changed in half a century.

The 1950s and 1960s saw northern Cameroon and Nigeria becoming much more accessible to the outside world. Roads, airports and hotels were built and tourism was encouraged. This coincided with the first intensive anthropological investigations done by academics in the area, albeit often in conjunction with governmental work.

## Conclusion

From the 1950s onward, descriptions of the peoples, history and cultural practices of the study area enter what might be called the 'modern period', one in which sources of information are examined as artefacts of ethnographic research and not as historical artefacts, stories told by visitors to a place. The boundaries of this shift in perspective are not clear-cut. They are expressed as much in differences in the status of writers (professionals versus amateurs, historians and anthropologists versus travellers, court writers and administrators) and in the contexts in which their writings appear, as by any change in the content or the intent of their work. Meek, Lembezat and Mouchet's works, and those of many of their contemporaries, must certainly rank as good anthropological investigations and, as such, may be included within the 'modern period'.

We approach such works in a different way than we do earlier writings. This is partly because these writers often share sensibilities with us which we may recognize as those of the modern world. The matter-of-fact account of a colonial soldier -- Zimmermann, perhaps -- shooting his way through the Mandara Mountains in 1905 can seem as alien as ibn Fartwa's description of similar doings on the plains 300 years earlier. It is easy to put such behaviour under an historical microscope. Our distinctions may also stem from the fact that recent researchers are not merely words on a page, but are colleagues, living people. In large part, they come from a shared belief in what science is and how scientific research should be treated. Such attitudes have come under attack in recent years, particularly in anthropology, but they are still widely observed and I shall continue the tradition. The results of recent anthropological, linguistic and archaeological research are thus examined, where relevant, in the appropriate chapters of this work.

## CHAPTER 5 -- ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE STUDY AREA

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will examine available archaeological data on the recent culture history of the study area. In addition, I will introduce comparative material from neighbouring areas where such seems appropriate. In the next chapter, I will introduce comparable historical and ethnohistorical evidence. This will, I hope, serve to place such data on the Mandara massif and the plains immediately surrounding it in a more comprehensible framework for evaluation.

Such research is fraught with difficulties. There are large gaps in the available evidence, especially archaeological data. The changes brought about by colonization and the introduction of Western culture, by conversion to Christianity and Islam and by recent population movements have caused dislocation in the societies of the study area. The most intractable obstacle to such an investigation remains, however, the identification of behaviourally- and culturally-significant entities and processes in the past and the correlation of these as they are constructed in the different disciplines of anthropological research. It is often difficult to understand the relationship of an archaeological 'culture' or 'tradition' or 'industry' to human activities and organization in the past; it is even more difficult to combine data on such archaeological units with historical data from the same time period and with linguistic and ethnohistorical information elicited from present-day informants to build up a picture of past events. However, to the extent that this can be done in an informed, restrained way, anthropologists can prevent culture history from becoming a one-dimensional mockery of human life, with artefacts -- or phonemes, or genealogies -- confused with cultural processes at a remove of hundreds of years.

It is widely recognized that the definition of archaeological units and their identification with human groups and processes is extremely problematic (see for

example Clarke 1968:363-404; .Hodder 1978, 1982:11; .Renfrew 1977:93-95, 1978:94; .Shennan 1978). This problem also exists in strictly ethnographic research, when investigators attempt to reify groups within human society (see for example Barth 1969; .Fried 1975). The examination of maximal, medial and minimal lineages in Chapter 3 is a good example of the problems implicit in this. Simplification and abstraction of human behaviour are the groundwork of anthropology. We put humans into categories and groups so that we can deal with their behaviour, but this inevitably does violence to the complexity and richness of real human events. Anthropology is caricature; good anthropology is good caricature, with the nose and ears right.

Within ethnographic research, however, the investigator usually has the human group close to hand, daily reminding her or him of the complexities of real life. Such a corrective, vital in every sense of the word, is not often available to the archaeologist. (Indeed, this may be one of the best reasons for doing ethnoarchaeology.) The typological concepts used to define patterning among artefacts convey a strong implication of closure, exclusiveness and stability (Green and Perlman 1985) -- arguably not concepts involved in much of human existence. They may also imply representativeness, the idea that the output of cultural subsystems may completely stand for culture as a whole. None of these implications are necessarily correct. A similar problem exists in historical linguistics.

The use of data derived from the different subdisciplines of anthropology and from historical research complicates things further. Data for the present work include: (1) those derived from ethnographic observation of particular processes, (2) those derived from oral history, (3) those derived from historical sources, (4) those from linguistic research and (5) those from archaeological research. All of these are vulnerable to different distorting factors: emic/etic disjunctions, prejudice, forgetfulness, differential preservation, inappropriate categorization, multilingualism/multiculturalism and so on. It might be thought that any attempt to combine these and create any coherent multi-dimensional picture of human behaviour would be doomed to failure.

This is not necessarily the case, but it does involve some reassessment of research goals. For example, it is almost certainly impossible to establish definitive, one-to-one correlations between archaeological 'cultures' and real human groups, because real groups do not possess the coherence of scientifically-defined entities. An individual belongs to a multitude of groups, and membership may fluctuate daily in response to economic or sociopolitical demands. There may be more or less overlap between these groups and they may well be responsible for the production of different aspects of local material culture.

This sort of variance ensures that human groups, although they can be defined, can only be defined in a statistical sense, in terms of the degree of overlap in different areas of behaviour of a group of people. This may be detectable for past populations, too, but it can only be done reliably if the maximum number of different cultural elements can be examined. Archaeology does not reliably inform us of a linguistic situation, nor linguistics of group intermarriage, nor historical sources of ceramic production. All of these taken together can, however, greatly enrich our knowledge of past human groups and human behaviours.

### **Archaeological Research in the Study Area**

#### *Research before the 1980s*

*Cameroon.* There was no systematic archaeological research within the Cameroonian portion of the survey area before the start of Mandara Archaeological Project fieldwork in 1984. There have been scattered finds of stone tools in many parts of the area, near Keroua, Mora and Godigong, on the upper reaches of the Mayo Uldemé, in Muktélé territory and further south in Mafa, Sirak, Wula and Kapsiki (personal observation; de Lauwe 1937; Hervieu 1968; Juillerat 1971, 1981; .Marliac 1981; .Martin 1981). The objects found have most often been well-made unpolished and polished bifaces of various sorts, spheroids and mortars. In a number of cases, the

stone used in the tools seems similar to a fine-grained volcanic material which is found in outcrops on inselbergs near Maroua, outcrops with extensive lithic workshops on them. These workshops are between 40 and 100 km from the areas where the tools were found.

They are thus very distinctive and recognizable artefact types, perhaps the most likely to be picked up and curated by inquisitive Europeans and by locals, who often ascribed ritual importance to them. Nearly all of these tools are surface finds and, with no information on context or dating, they are of little use in the construction of culture histories. They may indicate Neolithic occupation of the massif and the plains around it, but research by Connah and Marliac (see below) leaves the possibility of an Iron Age association for some of the material open.

The local presence of large numbers of potsherds in fields and terrace walls in the massif has also been recognized for some time (personal observation; see for example Juillerat 1971:12). Most of this material is not recognizably different from modern pottery, and much is extremely worn and abraded. The lack of coherent prehistoric sites in the massif is quite striking; see below for a further consideration of this phenomenon. In essence, the survey area in Cameroon was archaeologically-unknown until very recently.

*Nigeria.* The situation is rather different in the Nigerian part of this area and in territory surrounding it in both Nigeria and Cameroon. The first systematic research in and around the Mandara massif in Nigeria was carried out by Robert Soper (1965). During the 1960s and for a short period in 1978, Graham Connah conducted archaeological survey and excavation in the same area (Connah 1981). These investigations resulted in the discovery of a number of undated sites with lithic scatters, one site with pot burials and one quarry site along the periphery of the massif, as well as a number of occupation sites near the town of Bama (Connah 1981:47, 55, 80; Soper 1965:191). In addition, Connah's (1981) reports on a number of other sites and site types (especially Daima and the 'Yobe-type' mounds -- see below) are of significance in a consideration of recent culture history. It would appear

that coherent sites are as rare within the Nigerian massif itself as they are in Cameroon.

*The Chad Plain.* Important research had also taken place in the country surrounding the study area before the 1980s. There was the same sort of random collecting that occurs worldwide (Marliac 1981) but the earliest significant, systematic research done in the southern Chad Basin was that of Jean-Paul Lebeuf (Griaule and Lebeuf 1948, 1951; Lebeuf 1962, 1969). This research resulted in the detection of just under 600 sites in northern Cameroon and in Chad, from the margins of Lake Chad down to, in Cameroon, the latitude of the Bama Ridge and so just north of the survey area. Many of these are settlement mounds on the *firki* plain. Lebeuf (1969) called these 'Sao' sites and ascribed them to successive migrations of incoming hunters ('chasseurs armés de sagaies', coming from Kanem in the east, and 'archers', coming from the north) and fishermen coming from the coastline of Lake Chad (Lebeuf 1969:1-28 1981:21-23). According to Lebeuf (1969:12, 19-22), these movements are somewhat correlated with a development through time of sites, in a sequence that runs from Sao I (early mounds without walls), Sao II (mounds with walls), Sao III (recent sites without walls) and Sao IV (recent sites in the Diamaré and the Benue basin); certain inhumation methods are also associated with these groups. In his later work, Lebeuf (1981:22) expresses less faith in these correlations. These sites are similar to the mound sites located by Connah in his archaeological survey in Nigerian Bornu.

The correlation of 'Sao' sites with human groups is weak, since available data do not seem strong enough to bear the weights of the reconstructions of human migration or site occupation. Nevertheless, this monumental work is of great value in establishing a context in a region where these mound sites are the dominant archaeological feature in the landscape. Very few of these sites have been excavated or dated (Holl 1987a; Lebeuf 1969); the most important exception is Mdaga, a mound site north of N'Djaména ascribed originally to Sao II (Lebeuf et al. 1980). Of those

sites for which radiocarbon dates are available (Holl 1987a:129; Lebeuf 1969:8), it would appear that a number date to the Iron Age and so are relevant to this work.

*The Diamaré.* During the 1960s and 1970s, significant research was conducted by Alain Marliac in the Diamaré and the region around Maroua (Marliac 1981, 1982). This work resulted in the discovery of a number of sites near the Mayo Tsanaga in the immediate vicinity of Maroua. These included the lithic workshops at the Tsanaga II and CFDT sites (Marliac 1981), which yielded a date at Tsanaga II of 1720+/-90 b.p. (Gif-2232) and an association of ceramics, bifaces and iron artefacts. The lithic remains at the workshop sites in the inselbergs around Maroua were also investigated and described. Finally, this research involved the location and description of a number of sites in the Diamaré plain and the Chad Plain. These include Kamay, Salak and Goray, all of which were test excavated, with Salak being dated (though not reliably) through  $^{14}\text{C}$  and thermoluminescence. A large number of the sites discovered are also mound sites, indicating the great spread of such sites in the plains around the Mandara massif.

#### *Archaeological Research in the 1980s*

*Cameroon.* The Mandara Archaeological Project carried out extensive archaeological survey and excavation in and around the study area in 1984 (David and MacEachern 1988; .Wilson 1988). Some investigations were also carried out in 1986, but these were extremely limited. A stratified random survey was carried out in an area of 2000 km<sup>2</sup> in the mountains and on the plains, which had in turn been divided into four rectangular sub-areas and finally into 2000 1x1 km squares (Figure 1.3). This area was chosen to encompass the maximum environmental and ethnic variation possible in an area notable for such variation. This survey area was divided into nine environmental zones and a sample of 39 squares within these zones were chosen for intensive foot survey (David and MacEachern 1988:78). Due to time and transport constraints, only 33 of these were actually visited.

A judgemental survey was also carried out in conjunction with the probabilistic survey, and not necessarily within its boundaries. There were, in some cases, preexisting indications that sites would be found in certain localities, and these were examined; such areas included parts of Afam and Ndremé territory north of Mayo Plata and parts of the crater of Mount Gouaza, where Hervieu (1968:14-15) had reported several finds of lithic artefacts. In other cases, areas which seemed geomorphologically interesting were examined. These included a number of river-valley cut banks and road cuts and excavations, along with a number of dune locations. Geomorphological examination took place in both 1984 and 1986 (David and MacEachern 1988; Wilson 1988, n.d.). In addition, transit to and from survey areas afforded a great deal of exposure to the Cameroonian landscape, and a number of collections were made from sites found in this way. In all, collections were taken from 78 locations in and around the survey area.

This archaeological survey resulted in the discovery of a number of important archaeological sites. These include a Neolithic campsite just north of the Bama Ridge (Blabli -- MAP 506), an extensive quarry site located near the inselberg at Mozogo (MAP 529B) and a set of Iron Age mound clusters found northwest of the Urza inselberg (MAP 523, 526, 527, 528), of which one site, Mehé Djiddere (MAP 523) had already been located on aerial photographs by Alain Marliac. In addition, the walled site of Kuva, first extensively described by Seignobos (1982) was further examined. Two of these sites, Blabli and Mehé Djiddere, were tested in 1984 by the Mandara Archaeological Project field team.

In general, the results of the project were mixed. The lack of coherent montane sites, especially in the northeastern part of the massif, was abundantly demonstrated. It appears that all but extremely recent associations of material are quickly dispersed by the constant architectural activity associated with terrace maintenance and house-building. A good example of this can be seen on the massif north of Mayo Plata at Wamakada, where the stone foundations of German fortifications dating from World War I (von Raben 1914-1916) have already almost disappeared (personal

observation). Locals have taken advantage of preexisting walls in terrace construction (Figure 5.1). Much of the material collected from survey in the study area comes from collections taken over the whole of 1 km<sup>2</sup> units, and not from coherent sites. In addition, the amounts of material (lithic and ceramic) which appear to be distinctively different from present artefacts -- and so perhaps to predate the present occupation -- are not high, although the local habit of collecting bifaces and other stone tools as ritual objects may in part account for their absence.

The situation is rather different on the plains. The most distinctive sites recognized were the cluster of mound sites located northeast of Urza and between that inselberg and the Bama Ridge. These are much closer to the mountains than had earlier been thought to be the case, which reflects Connah's (1984) findings (see below). Most of the other Iron Age sites found were surface scatters of sherds (in some cases on low mounds, which may or may not be artificial) or the remains of very recently abandoned habitations, with a very few cases of Iron Age material found in stream and road cuts. Analysis of the ceramics recovered from the survey has been carried out by Nicholas Jones (n.d. a); aspects of the material recovered from the Mehé Djiddere site have been examined by Wahome (1989) and Mueller (1989).

*Nigeria.* Graham Connah (1984) carried out an intensive survey of the Mandara massif and the nearby plains, between Gwoza in the south and Ngurosoye in the north, in 1981 (Figures 5.2, 5.3). He also excavated the site of Gagava Nawayanda Amthe (B119), a mound site located near the northwestern end of the massif at Pulke. As was the case with the Mandara Archaeological Project survey, he located no certainly early sites in the massif itself. The two rock shelter sites he located east of Gwoza (B115 and B116) were definitely Iron Age (Connah 1984:168) and, judging from the association of shelters with both forges and iron ore hoards in Plata territory today (personal observation), their occupation may well have been very recent.

The other striking element of his survey is, again, the preponderance of mound sites on the Chad Plain, on the plain between the Bama Ridge and the massif and along the periphery of the massif and the Keroua inselberg. Of 28 sites enumerated

(Connah 1984:162-163), 21 are settlement mounds, two are flat settlement sites, two are rock shelters, two are lithic scatters and one is a quarry site. This preponderance of sites on mounds must be at least partially due to the highly mobile river systems and the large amounts of colluvium which the massif slopes generate (Wilson 1988, n.d.). It would be advantageous for inhabitants of the region to build on natural elevations or to construct artificial ones -- both processes appear to have been used in the Chad Basin (Holl 1987a:151) -- in order to avoid periodic flooding, and the existence of such mounds would in turn prevent the burial by alluvial and colluvial deposits that must often have befallen flat sites.

*The Chad Plain.* The 1980s also saw important research in areas of Cameroon and Chad on the plain between the Bama Ridge and Lake Chad, that is, in the area of the 'Sao sites' located by J.-P. and A.M.D. Lebeuf. This work involved excavation of sites which had already been located by the Lebeufs. The site of Houlouf was first enumerated by J.-P. Lebeuf (1969:77) and has since become the focus of a more extensive archaeological project which has included excavation on the site itself and survey and excavation at a number of sites within a 400 km<sup>2</sup> survey area centred on Houlouf and west-southwest of Kousseri (Holl 1987a, b, 1988; Lebeuf and Holl 1985). Again, most (and possibly all) of the sites located in the survey area were mounds, most located along fossil river channels but with some located in the seasonally-flooded *yaéré*. These sites seem to show a development from a Neolithic to an Iron Age occupation, which in many cases lasted until the historic period.

The mound site(s) of Sou/Sou Blame Radjil were also excavated by Rapp in this same area in 1980 and 1984 (Holl 1987a); it shows a similar progression from 'Early Pre-Sao' (Neolithic) to 'Late Pre-Sao' (Early Iron Age) to 'Sao' (Late Iron Age), the division between the former two phases occurring in the period 300-200 B.C. and that between the latter two at A.D. 600. In the Chad Plain *yaéré* terrain, we could not expect the survival of sites not on mounds, since they would almost certainly be buried by the seasonal flooding endemic to the region. Again, the lateral mobility of river channels would contribute to this process.

*The Diamaré.* Archaeological research continued in this region throughout the 1980s, most of it again through the work of Alain Marliac and Michelle Delneuf, with assistance from a number of other researchers. This has included further survey and excavation of a number of mound sites and also sites in cut banks of the Mayo Tsanaga, Mayo Boula and Mayo Ranéo (Marliac 1982; .Marliac and Delneuf 1984; .Marliac et al. 1983). Many of the mound sites are also found close to these and smaller seasonal water-courses (Marliac and Delneuf 1984:Map 1; Marliac et al. 1983:Maps 1-3), as would be expected; this allows the inhabitants of settlements access to water for drinking, dry-season irrigation and other purposes in the wet season, when the rivers are running, and water may also be found below the dry stream beds after the rivers dry up. Most of the results of these investigations have not as yet been published. In addition to survey and excavation work on the plains, Jean Rapp (in Marliac et al. 1983:30-45) investigated some rock shelters and cave sites in Mofu territory in the Mandara massif northwest of Maroua, mostly around Wazang and Meri. This resulted in the detection of a number of sites which had been used as habitation, storage and ritual locations in the recent past; none contained significant archaeological deposits.

### **The Archaeological Milieu The Study Area since A.D. 1000**

Archaeological data which might yield an insight into the recent prehistory of the study area and its environs exist, but they are highly variable in quality and reliability and their spatial distribution is extremely patchy. Large parts of this area have never been surveyed; this may not be as great a difficulty as one would imagine, however, because the distribution of locatable sites appears to be greatly affected (and may in fact be determined by) local environmental and anthropic effects which may be broadly predictable without such survey. This has been discussed by Wilson (1988) primarily in the context of the terrain between the massif itself and the Bama

Ridge, i.e., the zone in which colluvium and alluvium will tend to obscure significant deposits, but it is also true of neighbouring regions.

Human disturbance through farming and settlement within the massif itself will also contribute to the destruction of sites, particularly in areas with high population density and with few internal drainages -- that is, much of the northern part of the massif in the study area. The extent to which population density can change over time is problematic and is, in fact, one of the subjects of this work; at this point, it would be best to concentrate on the rare internal drainages in the mountains. The discovery of non-mound sites on the Chad Plain will also depend on the seasonal flooding regime, which would probably bury flat sites and force any permanent settlement on to natural or artificial elevations. This combination of effects limits the conclusions that can be drawn from archaeological research over all of this area, but will be most significant for investigations of pre-Neolithic, Neolithic and early Iron Age occupations and for all investigations in the massif.

*Dating of sites.* Most of the sites which are known to exist have not been closely examined (many have never actually been visited by archaeologists) and most of those which have been examined are at this point undated. The question of dating is a difficult one, since there are internal inconsistencies in radiocarbon chronologies and disagreements between the results of radiocarbon and thermoluminescence dating at most of the significant sites in the area. In a number of cases, including Mdaga and Sou Blame Radjil, these do not seem important, because the problems are with isolated anomalous dates and are probably due to contamination. At Mehé Djiddere, Salak and Daima, however, there remain real problems with the site datings, which lead to uncertainties about periods of occupation by Neolithic and Iron Age groups on these sites. This has a significance beyond the immediate sites, since dated artefact sequences from such sites are often the only way of dating other sites in the area.

Nevertheless, data do exist which allow us to form some conclusions about the cultural milieu in the study area at the end of the first millennium A.D. They indicate that occupation of the area was by that time by later Iron Age populations, at sites like

Mehé Djiddere, Salak, Daima, Sou and Mdaga. In some cases demonstrable similarities to present-day inhabitants exist. I will summarize these data, first dealing with the highlands and then the plains, because there are definite differences in the information which these environments yield. I will then attempt to put the study area in a wider context by considering connections with neighbouring territories.

*Occupation of the Mandara Mountains since A.D. 1000*

The Mandara Mountains may have presented a very different aspect to the viewer one thousand years ago than they do today. It is probable that the area was at that point transiting from an extended period with rainfall levels considerably higher than today's to one of some hundreds of years in which rainfall levels were similar to those of the present or slightly higher (see Chapter 2). The higher rainfall of the late first millennium A.D. probably resulted in the establishment of Sudanic woodland in the massif. Whether our putative millennial observer would have seen a massif clothed in woodland would depend directly upon the extent of human settlement at the time, and that is a much more difficult matter to determine.

*Neolithic sites in the massif.* Evidence for prehistoric occupation of the massif comes from the collections of stone tools described by Hervieu (1968) and from the results of the Mandara Archaeological Project (David and MacEachern 1988, Jones n.d. a) and Connah (1981, 1984) surveys. No Neolithic sites have been found in the massif. The nearest are probably the quarry sites at Mozogo (MAP 529) in the Koza Plain (David and MacEachern 1988:56; Wilson n.d.:80) and around the northwestern tip of the massif near Pulke and Keroua (Connah 1981; 1984:167), along with the possible quarry site on the eastern edge of the Moskota massif (MAP 530) and a number of sites on the massif periphery which may contain Neolithic components (for example, MAP 535 and 536 near Mayo Uldemé). None of these sites are dated. Even most of the finds of in situ isolated stone tools seem to come from the massif peripheries.

Use of stone would have persisted into the Iron Age, of course, since it is needed for grinding, percussion and chopping tools (for example, the stone hammers used in iron-working), so these quarries probably remained active. The similarity between the rhyolitic rock used in stone smith's hammers and that used in Neolithic bifaces is especially striking; they probably all come from the same quarries. The qualities of the raw materials needed for grinding tools are different from those needed for these percussion tools, though, so there would have been some shift in utilization of lithic sources. At present, there is a flourishing regional trade in grindstones; they are produced in areas with the requisite fine-grained granitic rock and then moved by road to markets. In the past, their production and trade would have had to have been much more local. In addition, it is possible that use of stone unifaces and bifaces continued locally into the Iron Age, as seems to have been the case, for example, at the Tsanaga sites (Marliac 1981) and Daima (Connah 1981:120). In any case, the quarry sites may well have been used more recently than is often assumed.

*Iron Age sites in the massif.* Evidence from plains sites show that Iron Age communities were occupying the study area before A.D. 500 and had been for some time. There is no reason to think that any occupation of the massif at the same time would not also have involved the use of iron tools. Iron axes would probably have been very useful for any forest-clearing that would have needed to be done, and iron hoes would have resisted rocky mountain soils better than wooden or stone equivalents.

The problem is that there is very little evidence for even long-term Iron Age occupation of the mountains, occupation, that is, before the last few hundred years. In the absence of archaeological chronologies, ancient occupation is often assumed by authors on other bases, which often use conjectures about the amount of time necessary to create the elaborate terracing systems found throughout the mountains or to allow for the diversification of numerous races and strains of sorghum (Hallaire 1971, 1984). These may certainly be indicative of long occupation, but they are not quantifiable and we are left to speculate on whether the present physical condition of

the mountains could have been arrived at in a few hundred years or whether this would have taken much longer.

Eight Iron Age massif sites have been identified in the study area in the Connah and Mandara Archaeological Project surveys (Figure 5.2 and 5.3). These sites are: MAP 020, a cluster of abandoned compounds on the southwestern border of Mount Mougouba; MAP 023 and MAP 024, two sets of abandoned compounds in Podokwo territory just west of the Centre-Massif road; MAP 030, a cut-bank exposure of ceramics east of Moskota; MAP 512, a cut bank exposure of buried ceramics (possibly in two levels) within the Gouaza ring complex; the Kuva site (noted as MAP 539), a large set of stone structures southeast of the summit of Mount Moudoudoua; and B115 and B116, the two Nigerian rock shelter sites already mentioned. Of these, MAP 020, 023 and 024 are probably very recent sites; they are situated in areas of quite intensive farming, where house walls would not be expected to last for more than a few decades. The exposures at MAP 512 are probably the result of colluvial activity, which we could expect might be high within an ancient caldera; the sherds are heavily rolled and eroded and are found in a long, sparse scatter along the cut bank. There is also some doubt about whether the Iron Age material from MAP 030 is in situ, and neither these nor the Nigerian sites can be dated in any way.

*Kuva.* Kuva (MAP 539) is the only Iron Age montane site in the study area which is almost certainly older than the settlement of the locality by its present-day montagnard inhabitants. The site is a set of fortified hilltop structures, the main one consisting of foundation and other walls about 45-50 m long by 15 m wide, with two smaller, similar structures nearby. The walling is remarkable for its precision and the extensive use of dressed stone, with underground structures and a high door (said to have allowed the entrance of people on horseback) serving to further differentiate it from the architecture of the present-day Mafa locals. It is of interest that the Mafa have apparently neither cultivated within the structures nor robbed them of stone for their own building needs -- unusual behaviour in the Mandara Mountains.

The site had previously been described by Seignobos (1982), although it had been known to Europeans before that. According to Gerhard Müller-Kosack, a German ethnographer who works with the present Mafa inhabitants of that area, a number of similar sites exist in the neighbourhood, and the Mafa attribute them to the Ndòdáy, white cannibals with yellow hair who preceded the Mafa in the area (N. David, personal communication). Müller-Kosack also showed a collection of potsherds taken from the site to local potters, who stated that they include sherds similar to those made today and others with which they were not familiar (J. Sterner, personal communication). According to Seignobos (1982), the Mafa say they found Kuva empty when they arrived.

Seignobos (1982:44-45) also states that, besides their obvious functions in defense, such sites served as demonstrations of the importance and power of leaders in the small chiefdoms which exist in certain parts of the mountains, in Mofu territory and at Sukur, for example, and hypothesizes that they served the same purpose in this part of Mafa territory. This is very probably the case, but it does not solve the problem of who the populations involved were -- precolonial blond cannibals are unlikely in this area. Seignobos also points out some very general architectural similarities to Podokwo, Muktélé and Glavda practice and says that the builders of Kuva and the surrounding sites may have been related to the ancestors of these peoples of the northern mountains and their environs. This would make sense; it is possible that this earlier group was then submerged by the general Mafa northern advance. Possible implications of the presence of this site will be discussed in Chapter 6.

*Sites on the edge of the massif.* A number of other sites exist in the immediate periphery of the massif and adjoining inselbergs. These include sites near Gwoza (B36, a multiple pot burial reminiscent of Lembezat's [1950:18] report of 'Sao' burials near Mora [Connah 1981:55]), Pulke (B43, a quarry site, and B97, a surface scatter [Connah 1981:46, 1984:167]), Keroua (B122, a grindstone quarry site [Connah 1984:167]), Gréa (MAP 514, 515, 516 and 518, habitation sites near the inselberg),

Mount Moskota (MAP 027, a surface scatter), Mora (MAP 505, an exposure of ceramics in an erosional feature in colluvium on the edge of the massif) and in the Mayo Plata-Mayo Uldemé area (MAP 520, 535 and 536, surface scatters near the edge of the massif). Again, a number of these sites may well be of recent origin, especially those on the eastern edge of the massif and at Moskota, and the absence of absolute dates and diagnostic ceramics limits their usefulness.

The detailed distribution may, as Connah (1984:160) says, be a good guide to the distribution of archaeologists, but the broad picture is probably correct. There is simply no evidence at this point for prehistoric Iron Age occupation of most of the massif in the study area over a time scale sufficient to produce significant variations in the artefacts used. The pot burials near Gwoza (and possibly near Mora) and the site of Kuva are at present the only coherent signs of ancient populations in this area with cultural practices much different than those of the present-day population, and these are all on the peripheries of the mountains. This does not necessarily imply that the mountains were empty before their present occupiers immigrated, but it does imply, I think, that they were not occupied with anything like the population densities or intensities that are so striking today.

*Ceramic collections.* Another test of prehistoric occupation of the massif involves examination of the various ceramic collections which were gathered in the course of the 1984 Mandara Archaeological Project survey. These include collection from the defined sites as well as general area collections, samples of the artefacts which make up the archaeological landscape but which are not found in coherent sites, materials which result from pot breakage, intense disturbance and so on. As such, they can be expected to form a representative sampling of the archaeological material which exists in the massif and also, of course, in the surrounding plains. The primary problem with this sort of strategy lies in the potential for inclusion of ceramics from many different time periods and/or origins in the samples, which can cause 'smearing' in any analysis undertaken. Given the extent of reworking, redeposition and general taphonomic disturbance in many of the sites in the

mountains, even samples from such relatively discrete locations cannot be presumed to be free of such mixing.

Examination of these collections was undertaken by Nicholas Jones (n.d.) and this was later examined by Wahome (1989). Jones utilized the ceramics available from the 42 collections (41 different samples) recovered in the Mandara Archaeological Project probabilistic survey and created an attribute system to describe the variation present in these samples. He then subjected these data to a cluster analysis. This analysis generated a set of eight low-level clusters, which could be grouped into four higher-level (and broadly regional) groupings. These clusters correlate fairly well with present-day ethnic groups' areas of occupation, tending to indicate either that the ceramics are recent or that groups in the mountains have stayed in the same places for long periods of time. Archaeological and ethnohistorical (see Chapter 6) data indicate that the former is the case, especially for areas not on the edge of the massif.

(Sterner's [1990] postulation of a ceramic 'symbolic reservoir' shared among groups in this region, both today and in the past, does not imply significant distortion of the results of the archaeological survey. Groups might use specific stylistic elements or groups of elements abstracted from such a culturally-mandated suite of elements, but it is highly unlikely that they would adopt a set of such elements identical to designs used by other groups in the region. Priorities of ethnic differentiation alone would prevent that. We may thus expect to find similarities in the elements used by neighbouring groups -- but also some differences in elements and in their arrangement.)

*Conclusions.* Montagnard occupation has had a drastic effect upon the environment of the Mandara Mountains; that much is obvious. Vegetation, geomorphology, general aspect -- all combine to create a managed environment. There is, however, remarkably little evidence that this occupation has a great deal of time-depth. As was noted in Chapter 2, the colluvial deposits which are so common in the piedmont around the massif may originate in an Iron Age episode of clearing and

terracing, but rates of deposition can vary widely. Colluvium can also accumulate so quickly that the presence of significant depths of this material may not indicate ancient occupation.

There is some evidence of ancient Iron Age (and Neolithic) occupation around the edges of the massif, but very little within its bulk; Kuva (MAP 539) and its neighbours are the only such sites and they are probably not more than a few hundred years old. It is certainly the case that in many areas any sites would soon be broken up by human activity, but early occupation should have left its trace in the ceramic collections which were gathered by the Mandara Archaeological Project and more generally in stream beds and other locations where such material could be trapped. We found no such locations. The (often sparse) ceramics found show broad similarities to the material produced by the different peoples in the study area today, with few obvious differences.

A lack of sites in the northern massif implies that occupation of these mountainous regions was sparse until quite recently (perhaps A.D. 1400-1500 or afterward -- see Chapter 6). The resemblance of the ceramics recovered to those of today implies recent deposition or conservatism/stability in the production of ceramic designs, or both. I think that probably both processes contributed to the makeup of this rather uninformative ceramic suite. Comparable ceramics found in dated plains context (see below) show similar design stability, and the great areal extent of some design elements found on montagnard ceramic strongly implies that their use is ancient (Stern 1990).

The archaeological data bolster the proposition that the massif in the study area was not heavily populated until some hundreds of years ago, although linguistic and ethnohistoric data indicate that there was some sparse occupation, especially around the massif peripheries. Evidence of more intense settlement may, of course, come to light in the future, but it is not obvious today.

### *Plains occupations*

As might be expected, given the different environments and the historical cultural milieu, the results of archaeological survey of the plains surrounding the Mandara Mountains are very different than the results of surveys in the mountains themselves. Nearly all of the data on occupation of this part of the study area again comes from the work of the Mandara Archaeological Project in Cameroon and Connah's (1981, 1984) surveys in Nigeria.

As in the mountains, it is probable that the vegetational regime was a rather different one a thousand years ago than it is today, although by A.D. 1000 the climate was probably beginning a deterioration from a moist episode earlier in the first millennium A.D., which would end in a situation similar to or slightly more moist than that of the present. Vegetation at the time could have been a wet 'intermediate' Sudanic wooded grassland (with a relative dominance of *Anogeissus* and *Combretum* spp. along with other Sudanic tree and grass species, and with the acacias playing a subordinate role) rather than the present dry Sudanic and Sahel-transition vegetation; it would depend on how fast the vegetation adjusted to the drier conditions. A wetter climatic regime would probably have inhibited the development of *hardé* soils and would also have geomorphological consequences (see Chapter 2).

*The Neolithic on the plains.* The plains around the Mandara massif have certainly been settled since Neolithic times. Identified Neolithic sites within the study area include: B38 (a mound site just north-west of Bama, excavated and dated by Connah [1981:81-91]); probably B114 (a surface scatter on top of the Bama Ridge [Connah 1984:167]); MAP 504 (a possible mound site on the Mayo Ngassawé); MAP 506 (a buried Neolithic habitation site just north of the Bama Ridge, excavated and dated in 1984 [David and MacEachern 1988:58]); MAP 513 (an exposure in a roadbuilding cut north of the Bama Ridge); and MAP 522 (a surface scatter of pottery, including one comb-stamped sherd, south of Waza). Isolated stone tools and flakes were found at a number of other locations, including Mehé Djiddere and along the Mayo Uldemé at MAP 548 (Wilson n.d.:77), but this may have been the result of

curation in the former case and/or post-depositional processes in the latter. In addition, Connah (1984:161) believes it very likely that a number of the as yet unexcavated mound sites located in his 1981 survey were occupied in Neolithic times, as was Daima (and so presumably into the Iron Age).

The dating of these sites is of interest. Most of the radiocarbon dates for the B38 occupation are from the first half of the first millennium B.C., although the carbon samples gathered came from the bottom half of the profiles and site occupation probably persisted for some time -- although not into the Iron Age. Two out of three MAP 506 thermoluminescence dates are anomalously young (fourth and thirteenth centuries A.D.) while the third (A.D. 10 +/- 90, Alpha-1875) would presumably date to nearly the end of the Neolithic occupation, judging from results in other sites south of Lake Chad (Connah 1981; Holl 1987; Lebeuf et al. 1980); these indicate a Neolithic-to-Iron Age transition just before or at the turn of the millennia. On the other hand, two <sup>14</sup>C accelerator dates on ovicaprid bone from the site are in disagreement and are anomalously old (4390 +/-220 B.P. [TO-1127] and 6960 +/- 200 B.P. [TO-1128] -- David and Sterner 1989). The wide variation in the bone dates, along with the expectation that ceramics from sites so old should differ more from other Neolithic assemblages in the area than they do, makes them even less reliable than the thermoluminescence dates. All of these dates probably should be ignored.

There is little information available concerning the nature of the transition between the Neolithic and the Iron Age in the survey area. There is limited evidence of sequential occupation of sites at MAP 504 and (with very little data) MAP 522. Results from Daima (Connah 1981) and from the Tsanaga II site (Marliac 1982) are indicative of continuity of at least some cultural elements during the transition to the Iron Age. This also seems to be the case at Mdaga, although it is difficult to tell if there is continuity in ceramic (Lebeuf et al. 1980:110-131) and other elements. Certainly the ceramics recovered from MAP 506 are not at all similar to known Iron Age pottery from the study area -- the decorative technique used is quite different and the pottery is generally much finer -- but this may be in part due to a lack of material

from early-/mid-first millennium A.D. contexts. This finer pottery continued in use during the early Iron Age at Daima.

Evidence of Neolithic occupation of the plains in the study area is, if not abundant, at least convincing. By the early first millennium B.C., stone tool-using agriculturalist groups were occupying sites along the Bama Ridge and the Mayo Ngassawé at least. These environments would have probably allowed access to good farming land and also to lagoons on both sides of the Bama Ridge.

*The Iron Age.* There is abundant evidence for Iron Age occupation of the study area plains, but unfortunately this has not been followed by extensive excavations or by the extraction of materials for absolute dating. This is in part because of some greater interest in the detection and description of earlier (early Neolithic and pre-Neolithic) sites, which seem to be elusive in this area, probably because of the high levels of deposition of colluvial and fluviolacustrine deposits. The pre-Neolithic and Neolithic periods in the area are associated with a number of interesting, but unanswered, questions and the Iron Age can seem a bit prosaic by comparison.

Only two Iron Age sites within the study area have been dated absolutely and excavated to any significant degree. These are Gagava Nawayanda Amthe (B119), a mound site at the northwestern tip of the Mandara massif near Pulke (Connah 1984:164-167) and Mehé Djiddere (MAP 523), a multiple-mound site northeast of the Urza inselberg (David and MacEachern 1988:59-62). Both of these sites occur in regions where numbers of other mounds have been discovered, but it may well be that such mounds are common throughout the plains around the massif. For example, two mound sites (MAP 514 and 515) have been detected northwest of Gréa inselberg, another (MAP 003) on the Mayo Ngassawé, another three near Mehé Djiddere, along with two (MAP 016 and 508) southwest of Magdemé and about 10 km southeast of that town on the Bama Ridge respectively. Mound sites are not the only type of Iron Age site found on the plains, although they are often the most recognizable. There are numbers of flat, open sites, near Pulke and Bama, on the Bama Ridge, near Gréa,

around Doulo and Sera Warda, around Mora and between the massif and Mounts Mougouba and Muyan (Figure 5.2, 5.3).

Taken together, this appears to indicate that more permanent Iron Age occupations were concentrated in the vicinity of the massif and of inselbergs around the massif (Keroua, Gréa, Doulo-Sera Warda), along and on both sides of the Bama Ridge and possibly along at least some of the seasonal rivers which flow north to the ridge itself (this latter pattern seems quite noticeable in the Diamaré and on the Chad Plain). The number of known plains Iron Age sites in the study area is inadequate for the production of firm theses concerning settlements over a time span of probably 1500 years at least, but the data are suggestive.

Settlement along the Bama Ridge, and to a lesser extent along the rivers which flow up to it, would allow easier access to water and to lagoonal resources, as in the Neolithic. Settlement close to the massif and to inselbergs would allow continued access to the vital quarry sites, which supplied stone still needed for many purposes. There was, however, at least one, and probably two, other factor(s) which came into play in the Iron Age which could motivate people to settle close to the massif or the inselbergs, and which did not operate in earlier times. Proximity to the massif would allow easier access to sources of iron ore and a mountain refuge in case of external attack.

Iron in the study area is derived from alluvial magnetitic sands which result from the erosion of granites in the massif (see David et al. [1989] 191-192 for a fuller description of the ore). Concentrations of this ore are found where streams originating in the mountains debouch on to the plains and start to lose energy. At this point the heavy magnetitic sand is deposited, and so is found quite close to the edges of the massif. Trade in iron from the study area was important by historical times (see Chapter 6) and there is no doubt that such trade originated in the existence of Iron Age groups exploiting the ore sources.

The imperatives of defence certainly caused groups to depend on the mountains for refuge in historic times (see Chapter 6); the question is at what point

conditions on the plains became uncertain enough to make the proximity of mountains a valuable criterion for settlement. This problem is, of course, complicated by the fact that the cultural affinities of most of the mound occupations spread along the Bama Ridge and on the plains on either side are unknown. Known Neolithic sites, except for quarry sites, are not generally found close to the massif; their locations are more likely conditioned by access to good soils and fluvio-lacustrine resources. Many Iron Age sites also seem to be sited with these latter criteria in mind. It seems likely that, in the Neolithic and the early part of the Iron Age, large-scale conflict was not a great threat.

In the historical period, on the other hand, most of the known settlements on the plains in the study area were located near the massif or near inselbergs; many of the exceptions were Kanuri, Fulani and Shuwa Arab settlements, and thus those of plains-adapted immigrants who in some cases were associated with important plains polities. I think it most likely that questions of defense have become increasingly important in the study area over the last millennium and that this has caused a settlement movement closer to the heights. It may be, for example, that many Iron Age sites located along the Bama Ridge and in the plains away from the mountains were first settled earlier than those close to the massif. It is not possible at this point firmly to date the time at which these criteria became important, although the possible presence of a ditch at Daima during the Daima III period (A.D. 700 - 1200/1300? [Connah 1981:167]) may be indicative of increased need for defence.

Increases in conflict could have been caused by population increases on the plains brought about by the introduction of iron tools which would make farming on the *firki* clays much more feasible (Connah 1981:160) and also by the increased importance of state-level societies in the area around the southern part of Lake Chad as the present millennium progressed. We should not forget that some of the first detailed accounts of the region (see Chapter 4) contain descriptions of Kanuri raiding expeditions and razzias into the study area. The plains were steadily becoming a more dangerous place.

*Mehé Djiddere.* It would, at this point, be useful to summarize the archaeological data available from the two excavated Iron Age sites in the study area, Mehé Djiddere and Gagava Nawayanda Amthe. I will begin with Mehé Djiddere, because it has been most extensively excavated and has a more complete absolute chronology developed.

*Site description.* The site is a group of at least 17 mounds, most of which are rather small and low, which were discovered by the Mandara Archaeological Project in 1984 in an area of alluvium of different ages and lagoonal deposits west-northwest of Urza. The site itself is on alluvium. The mounds lie in a remarkably straight line (perhaps constrained by the presence of marshy water-courses on three sides) oriented just to the east of north, with by far the largest (Mound I, the mound that first attracted the attention of the Mandara Archaeological Project) at the northern end of the line (Figure 5.4). The southern end of the site is enveloped in extremely dense thicket, which eventually made survey, mapping, and indeed the search for other mounds, impossible.

Three excavations were carried out, one of 3 x 1.5 m on Mound I, one of 3 x 1 m on Mound VII and a 1x1 m test pit halfway between Mounds I and III. Mound I was excavated to a depth of over 4 m, Mound VII to well over 1 m and Test Pit Z to over 1 m (Wahome 1989). In no case was significant cultural stratification detected; the stratigraphic profiles appear to have been much disturbed by animals and (probably) human action. The Mound I profile was divided into 11 natural units, terminating at 4.6 m below site datum and about 4.4 m below surface.

The matrix in the upper levels of the mounds was a sandy loam, with some natural banding of different clay, sand and silt deposits in the lower part of the profile of Mound I. These latter probably reflected water action at a time when the mound area was not significantly raised above the level of the surrounding plains. The intense lateral movement of stream beds and the varied deposits these could engender were vividly apparent during the rainy seasons of 1984, 1986 and 1989.

This undifferentiated matrix contains various features, the most obvious of which are rodent burrows (especially on Mound I, Levels 4, 6 and 7), scattered areas of more compacted loam (found throughout the excavation and possibly the remains of mud walling) and various pit features and lenses in Mound I. Mound I also contains a great number of daub fragments, which probably represent the remains of structures, most likely buildings, granaries or grinding tables. There appear to be no significant associations between any of these materials and features, probably due to extensive disturbance.

A consideration of the underlying natural sediments may be useful in examining the accumulation of the mounds at Mehé Djiddere. Connah (1981:52-55) has divided the mound sites located and tested in his Bornu surveys into two types: 'firki'-type mounds and 'Yobe'-type mounds. The former are located on *firki* clay soils and their stratigraphy is fairly well-differentiated, with numerous cultural horizons in the profile. Mdaga, Daima, Bornu 38 and Gagava Nawayanda Amthe all seem to be of this type. 'Yobe' mounds are, in contrast, located primarily in areas of sandy soils, their deposits are sandy, ashy and loose and the profiles are not as much differentiated as they are in 'firki' mounds.

Connah's (1981:202-212) description of the deposits at the Yau site, a 'Yobe'-type mound on the lower Yobe River, is very reminiscent of the description of the Mound I excavation at Mehé Djiddere (in Wahome 1989:58-63). Connah (1981:53) at first thought that 'Yobe'-type mounds were simply large middens, without settlement remains, but excavation has convinced him that most of these mounds have in fact been occupied. This puzzlement well reflects the perplexity of the Mandara Archaeological Project team as excavations at Mehé Djiddere progressed and afterward, as huge numbers of artefacts (almost all potsherds) appeared in poorly stratified deposits that did not appear at all like those of a tell settlement. Connah conjects that these mounds may result from settlement (a) on sandy soils by (b) people using housing made of organic materials instead of mud. This may well be the case; the Glavda, living on the Nigeria-Cameroon border west of Keroua, use low

grass-and-stick houses, and perhaps our picture of settlement on the mounds of Mehé Djiddere should include this sort of dwellings rather than the perhaps more picturesque 'Sao' walled towns or even mud buildings.

*Dating.* Dating of the Mehé Djiddere site remains a problem. Two essentially parallel sets of charcoal samples were submitted to two different labs (Saskatchewan Research Council and Lyons) for radiocarbon dating. These labs returned two sets of internally consistent dates (Table 5.1) for Mound I, but the Lyons results are 500 to 1000 years earlier than those from Saskatchewan. The Lyons dates indicate that Mound I was occupied at about A.D. 200 and A.D. 800, the Saskatchewan dates that the mound was occupied during a period between very approximately A.D. 1375 and A.D. 1720. The two dates (one from each lab) from Mound VII are consistent (Table 5.1) indicating occupation for some centuries around the turn of the millennia.

The question thus is whether one should accept one or the other Mound I date sets, both or neither. There appear to have been serious problems with the Saskatchewan Research Council laboratory's preparation and analysis of the samples submitted to them (N. David, personal communication), which suggests that a provisional acceptance of the Lyons dates would be the safest course. This implies that Iron Age settlements recognizably akin to those of recent times existed on the plains by the early-/mid first millennium A.D.

The duration of this occupation is still unclear. Wahome (1989:100-105) comments upon the temporal stability of the ceramic suite at Mehé Djiddere, which not only exhibits relatively little change throughout the period of occupation of the site but also exhibits important similarities to the ceramics manufactured by montagnard groups within the study area today (Wahome 1989:120,141; personal observation). This latter fact would appear to indicate that the site was abandoned relatively recently. Wahome (1989:64, Figure 3.5) posits a reduction in site deposition rates during the later part of the occupation to allow a sixteenth century abandonment date. This would then presumably correlate with Wandala state formation in the area (see Chapters 4 and 6).

There appears, however, to have been a great deal of erosion and redeposition of cultural deposits on Mound I at least. There is also no evidence of changes in site deposition rates during the period of occupation. Indeed, available evidence derived from studies of the weathering of bones from the site (LeMoine n.d. a15, n.d. b) indicates that deposition in the upper 4.2 m (nine units) of the deposits was probably fairly constant, with the possibility of a period of slower deposition and/or site abandonment in Unit 11 and thus at the very base of the excavation. There is no particular reason to think that the establishment of Wandala suzerainty in the area would have immediately led to site abandonment by indigenous plains groups, especially since the only extant account of this event (Mohammadou 1982) is not of a bloody conquest. It is probably impossible to accurately estimate the date of abandonment of Mehé Djiddere.

Mehé Djiddere has probably been occupied for a significant part of the last two millennia. This has significant implications. Cultural stability on the plains seems to have been very great. It is quite probable that the site was inhabited during the early period of Wandala occupation of the region, but its affinities (both temporal and cultural -- see below) are to the pre-Wandala 'Maya' and 'Sao' populations (see Chapter 6). It was certainly never a Wandala centre.

*Ceramics.* As stated above, Wahome (1989) has detected strong continuity of the ceramic tradition on the site, confirming much more tentative impressions gathered at the time of excavation. Where artefact frequencies are high enough to allow meaningful comment, most morphological and decorative variation is in relative frequency and not in presence/absence of features. Most often this quantitative change is in itself non-directed.

Wahome (1989:100-101) has tentatively divided the site's occupation into three periods based on this ceramic assemblage. Units 8 and 9 date to the earliest period on this basis, and were thus probably deposited in the late first millennium A.D. The second part of the sequence includes Units 7 through 2, and thus the greater part of the site stratigraphy. The last section includes only Unit 1 of Mound I and very

probably has been modified by modern deposition on the site and by similar taphonomic processes. Little reliance should thus be put on results from Unit 1. An examination of the results of Wahome's (1989:Table 4.1-Table 4.18) shows very little evidence of substantial, directed change between any of these units and at this point any subdivision of the Mehé sequence based upon variations in the ceramics is not warranted.

Variations in the frequencies of other materials (iron artefacts and slag, flakes, beads of stone, bone, shell and clay, etc.) recovered from the Mound I excavation exist (Wahome 1989:Table 4.19), but again either the frequencies are too low to allow meaningful comparison or there is little evidence for change. The main exception is in the number of iron slag fragments, since Unit 6 contains by far the most (n=235). This may indicate a smelting episode around the fourteenth century A.D. but cannot be extended much beyond that. Large amounts of slag were also recovered from the surface of the site, along with tuyere fragments and other evidence of smelting. It is certain that this site was a smelting centre (D. Killick, personal communication to N. David, 1990).

Ceramics from the Mound VII and Pit Z excavations are stored in Cameroon and are unavailable for examination, but they appear to be similar to material from Mound I and there do not appear to be discontinuities through the profile in decoration or morphology (David and MacEachern 1988). The main artefactual difference between the two excavations was the discovery of a number of probable clay lip plugs in Mound VII; none were found in Mound I. This might well be due either to specialized production of this artefact type in this part of the site or, given the varied makeup of communities in the region today, to ethnic differentiation among households at Mehé Djiddere, or to the marriage of women into a patrilineal group. Lip plugs were used by women of a number of groups in the area until quite recently.

*Economic indicators.* The faunal remains from the site were studied by LeMoine (n.d. a, b). The sample of bones from the site is large, but very highly fragmented, precluding identification in many cases. As stated above, the weathering

on the bones indicates that deposition was fairly constant over the period of site occupation, except perhaps in the lowest levels. The most obvious variation in the assemblage is the drastic reduction in bone recovered from Unit 6 (LeMoine n.d. a:Table 1, accession number 209), where the number of fragments drops to between a tenth and a fifth of the value in adjacent levels. This level also contained by far the largest number of pieces of iron slag (see above), possibly indicating variation in use of this part of the site.

The identifiable faunal material is mostly what one would expect from an Iron Age site from this millennium in this area. The bones are primarily mammalian, and most of the identifiable ones are from bovids and ovicaprids, indicating an association of the domesticated animals and sheep/goats still found in the region today (Frechou 1984). There is evidence for the presence of dog and ass bones (LeMoine n.d. a:Tables 6,7; Mueller 1989:Table 4.2), as well as those of humans. There are also numbers of fish, amphibian, snake, bird and rodent bones, as well as mollusc shells. All of these except for the fish are available in the region today and probably were so during the period of occupation of the site, and all are eaten by montagnard groups today. Some of the fish remains were identifiable as catfish. It is difficult to say whether fishing for these and other species would have been profitable close to the site; water sources either dry up or are, at best, stagnant, but catfish do have a limited ability to live out of water. If the bones recovered were not from local fish, they may represent the first evidence for the trade in dried fish from the Logone or Lake Chad, which is so important at present.

The fragmented nature of the bones and the lack of a comparative collection and of data on the effects of taphonomic processes hindered examination of natural and human modifications on the bones (LeMoine n.d. a, b). They were examined for weathering, gnawing by animals, etching/pitting, burning and cutting by humans, as well as a number of other factors, but the number of bones displaying most of these modifications was relatively small, and most of the examinations were not informative. The exceptions were the examination for weathering stages, where the

very high proportion (ca 80%) of bones at weathering stage 2 (see Behrensmeyer 1978) indicated quite a uniform period of bone exposure on the surface of the site and thus a constant rate of mound accretion (see above), and the examination for degree of deposition of carbonate on the bones recovered, which is much higher in the upper levels of Mound I (LeMoine n.d. a:Figure 5). The mechanisms which deposit carbonate on bone in arid environments are not well understood, but this might indicate a relatively drier climate around the site during its early history, and consequently less mobilization of soil carbonates by rainfall (Margaritz and Kauffman 1983), with an increase in precipitation later in the occupation sequence.

No identifiable macrobotanical remains were recovered during site excavation. Stable carbon isotope analysis of a very limited bone sample from human, cow, pig (or wild suid?), sheep/goat, ass and giraffe bones and of a number of bones of unknown taxa was done. Very few of the samples examined yielded acceptable results but, of those which did, nearly all had  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values which indicated exclusive consumption of plants with C4 isotopic pathways (Mueller 1989:118-120) or of animals eating such plants. Such plants include the domesticated sorghum and millets eaten by human populations in the study area today, as well as numbers of indigenous wild grasses. One bone sample indicated that an ovicaprid was also eating some C3-pathway plants, probably through browsing. This indicates in a very general way that plant consumption by humans and animals on the site was not dissimilar to that of the present.

The lack of exotic artefacts at the site is worthy of comment. Such goods were much more common at sites further to the north (see below). The presence of one 'faience'-like bead and some clay bells (N. David, personal communication) -- the latter probably copies of metal models -- serve only to heighten the impression of isolation from trade networks.

*Conclusions.* In sum, the site speaks to us much more strongly of cultural stability and continuity over the last two millennia in the area around the Mandara Mountains than of any dramatic interruption or innovations. Many of the

technological elements identified at Mehé Djiddere -- iron smelting, ceramics, agricultural adaptation, even, possibly, the architecture -- can be found among Chadic-speaking peoples in the area today. The great difference derives from the fact that nearly all of the present groups are montagnard or were so in the recent past. The inhabitants of Mehé Djiddere lived for hundreds of years on an open, exposed site in the plains, kilometres from any montane refuge. At some point, probably in the middle of the present millennium, the site was abandoned. It is not too great a leap to connect this with political changes on the plains at this time.

*Gagava Nawayanda Amthe.* As Mehé Djiddere is in the northeastern corner of the study area, Gagava Nawayanda Amthe (B119 -- henceforth referred to as Gagava) is in the northwest. It is a single mound of *firki* type; its extent is not specified, but it is probably at least four metres high. One 2 x 2 m pit was quickly excavated to a depth of 3.5 m, revealing a succession of sands and gravels which appears to be more stratified than that at Mehé Djiddere (Connah 1984). Sufficient charcoal samples were accumulated from his Levels 2 and 4 to allow general radiocarbon dating of these levels, which indicated that they had been accumulated during the late first millennium A.D. (Level 2 -- 1110 +/- 70 b.p. [Beta-3510], Level 4 -- 1240 +/- 80 b.p. [Beta-3917]). These two levels occur within the upper metre of deposition, which may mean that occupation on the site started considerably earlier -- possibly during the same general period as the Mehé Djiddere occupation.

There is no extensive description of the materials from the site in the short journal article which describes it. The pottery is said to resemble that from Daima, with some variation which may be either regional or temporal in origin (Connah 1984:166). Since there appear to be generalized resemblances between earlier Iron Age Daima ceramics and that from Mehé Djiddere and from present-day groups (see below), this is perhaps not surprising. In addition, the few named differences between ceramics from Gagava and Daima are instructive; pots from the former site are characterized by a frequent use of incision, appliqué bands (Connah's 'cordons') and lug handles, all of which are quite characteristic of ceramics in the study area

(personal observation; Wahome 1989). There is little evidence for iron-working on the site, in contrast to Mehé Djiddere.

Relatively little evidence concerning the site's economy was recovered. The presence of grindstone fragments and pestles is probably related to the use of domestic sorghum and/or other millet, and there is limited osteological evidence for the presence of domesticated cattle and sheep/goats. It was not possible to differentiate possible wild fauna, and there were almost no fish bones recovered. (This may be related to the high pH values in the site's soils.)

We can draw few conclusions from the excavations at Gagava Nawayanda Amthe. Graham Connah excavated it almost as a test-pit, over a period of only a few days, and the material recovered has not been extensively examined nor reported. The limited ceramic evidence shows general similarity to that from Mehé Djiddere and (to a limited extent) to present ceramic suites. There is certainly no evidence of important cultural differences over the period of site occupation, which again makes it similar to its northeastern counterpart. Material conservatism seems to be a characteristic of the archaeological record in this area.

### **Comparisons the Archaeology of the Study Area and Neighbouring Regions**

All of the known sites in the regions around the study area are located in the plains. This is not really a problem, since almost all of the known sites in the study area are in the plains, too. In this section, I will attempt to give a very cursory review of the comparisons which have been made between the study area material and that from those other sites, along with comments. This will chiefly focus on ceramics, since this is the only type of material recovered in large quantities which often carries significant stylistic information.

## *Daima*

Daima is a large mound site located on the *firki* plain about 110 km northeast of the Mandara Mountains and about 45 km from the (very mobile) shoreline of Lake Chad. It was excavated in the 1960s by Graham Connah (1981: 99-196) in a project notable for the difficulty of the work and for the size of the excavation. These factors contributed to a general lack of control over the excavation and to a decrease in the reliability of the results. In general, it appears that the lower strata of the mound were occupied by Neolithic populations; it is the upper levels (grouped as Connah's Daima II and Daima III) which are of most interest here.

*The cultural sequence.* Connah (1981:111, 146) argues that the use of iron in this region (Daima II) dates from about A.D. 50, although the available radiocarbon dates might indicate a beginning perhaps two or three hundred years later. It is probably safest to say that Daima II dates from the first two or three centuries A.D. There is strong evidence of cultural continuity on the site during the period of adoption of metallurgy, albeit with some innovations. These relate (obviously) to metallurgy, but also to the ceramic suite. Twisted cord and other roulettes and linear and nodular appliqués made their appearance, and there was a definite expansion in the variety of vessel morphologies in use (Connah 1981:Table 6.1).

Daima III is as problematic as Daima II. Variations in artefacts recovered indicate that it should be subdivided into two sub-phases about halfway down the profile. There were again elements of continuity in the material culture of the site's inhabitants from Daima II, especially in the ceramics. There were also, however, very important innovations in this phase. There were many more exotic objects, especially stone and glass beads, cowrie shells and exotic metal objects found during excavation of these levels. Carved wooden rouletting became much more common and these, and the recovery of massive rim and terminal fragments (Connah 1981:179, Figure 6.1), make it probable that the very large 'Sao pot', so characteristic of the plains south of Lake Chad, was an innovation of this period. In general, this period marked a shift from the use of 'fine wares' characteristic of the Neolithic and, presumably, the early

Iron Age to the 'coarse wares' more characteristic of present-day ceramics. This change is obvious to anyone who has compared Neolithic and later Iron Age/present-day ceramics in this area; it is of interest that the use of 'fine wares' persisted into the early Iron Age at Daima at least.

The Daima III levels have yielded three radiocarbon samples, all of which date to the very late first/early second millennia A.D. (Connah 1981:164-165). One of these samples comes from the upper levels of the profile, which have also yielded smoking pipes. This raises a number of possibilities. Either (1) pipes were used before the introduction of tobacco to Africa, or (2) this latter radiocarbon date is erroneous or (3) the site was settled only intermittently during the latter stages of its occupation (until at least the sixteenth century A.D.), yielding a compressed stratigraphy. The question of pre-Columbian pipes in this region is a contentious one; it is possible that substances were being smoked and that water pipes were used in eastern and southern Africa but, at the same time, evidence from central and western Africa is not so strong and the pipes recovered from Daima and Mdaga (see below) are of types that probably derive from North American precursors (Lebeuf et al. 1980:155-159, 201; Philips 1983).

It is useful to remember that Connah's (1981:111) ascriptions of Daima II to the period A.D. 50-700 and Daima III to A.D. 700-1150 are interpretations of the radiocarbon data. I would argue that they are over-interpretations -- that we can only say that the use of iron at the site began during the first few centuries A.D., that the Daima III phase inhabitants certainly lived on the site at A.D. 1000 and for some period on either side of that date and that at least intermittent occupation of the site continued until the sixteenth century A.D. To seek to extract more than that from the data is dangerous.

*Ceramics.* Wahome (1989:120-136) has compared Daima ceramics with those from Mehé Djiddere and from other sites excavated south of Lake Chad. I will not attempt to replicate his analysis. He found general similarities between the ceramic suites of the two sites, in decoration and in morphology. Bowls, legged vessels and

neckless jars, and incisions and twisted-cord roulettes, are important at both sites. The increase in variety of morphologies and decoration is also of interest. He slightly overstates the differences in use of appliqués, since he switches the totals for appliqué bands versus bosses/pellets in the main Daima ceramic chart (Connah 1981:58-59, Table 6.1; Wahome 1989:Table 5.14), but this is not too serious. On the other hand, the relationship between rouletting and incision decoration on the two sites is more significant. Connah (1981:Table 6.1) shows that there is a drastic increase in chevron decoration during Daima III and says that this is due to the use of carved wooden roulettes. Incised cross-hatching and chevrons are also quite characteristic of the Mehé ceramics. There is some similarity in motifs produced by the two different techniques, which may indicate some relationship between the ceramic suites.

The importance of massive 'Sao' pot morphologies, footed and flat-based vessels, carved wooden rouletting and mat impressions at Daima, and of vessels with handles and appliqué, incised and impressed decoration at Mehé, differentiate the two sites. In the study area today, footed/flat-based vessels and the use of chevrons and decorations of parallel zigzag lines, whether painted or incised, are very much characteristic of plains-dwellers (and especially of the Kanuri, the only important ceramic-producing group living on the plains). Immigrant Mafa potters and local montagnards who sell ceramics in the plains markets of Mora, Memé and Banki-Limani may also use these elements in an attempt to appeal to their plains-dwelling customers, but montagnard pottery is more often typified by the use of bands of roulette, appliqué bands and pellets and parallel incisions (personal observation). This may indicate that present-day plains-dwelling groups exhibit some continuity in material culture from the earlier populations living at Mehé Djiddere and (especially) Daima, in elements which montagnard potters did not keep, but this is based upon extremely tenuous evidence.

It suffices to conclude that there is some similarity in the ceramics from the two sites, but with important differences that probably are the result of regional cultural variation. In general, pottery from Mehé seems to resemble material from the

Daima II phase rather more than that from Daima III. A number of innovations appear at Daima during the later phase that never appear at Mehé, even though the latter site was almost certainly occupied during the Daima III period. Connah (1984) says that the ceramics from Gagava Nawayanda Amthe are generally similar to those from Daima but without the presence of 'Sao' pots and with more incision and appliqué bands and more lug handles. The ceramic suite from the latter site is obviously much more similar to that from Mehé Djiddere than is the Daima II/III collection, which is what we would expect.

*Other artefacts.* There are general similarities in other artefact types found at Mehé Djiddere and Daima. Iron tools were, of course, found on both sites, although not in great numbers. Much less slag was found at Daima than at Mehé Djiddere, where the remains of iron smelting and smithing litter the site. Daima is a long distance away from established ore sources in the Mandara Mountains and elsewhere in the Chad Basin, and most iron probably was imported already smelted. A large proportion (Daima I -- 49%, Daima II -- 72%, Daima III -- ca 21% [Connah 1981:Figure 6.26]) of the stone recovered from the site came from the Mandara massif, and it is quite possible that iron moved north to Daima along with it. The increase in importance of the massif as a lithic source for Daima II, and the subsequent drastic decrease in Daima III in favour of Hadjr el-Hamis, are interesting and may (along with the ceramic differentiation) point to a change in trade orientation toward the north and east by the end of the first millennium A.D.. This is also implied by the increased numbers of exotic items, particularly jewelry, found. By the early second millennium A.D., settlements like Daima were probably exposed to some influence from the state of Kanem to the east and such goods -- along with the possible Daima III ditch discovered by Connah -- may be souvenirs of that contact.

*Economy.* There is rather more evidence of agricultural orientation available at Daima than is the case at Mehé Djiddere. Abundant faunal material indicates that domestic cattle and sheep/goats were kept throughout the sequence, although the importance of the latter increased in the later levels of Daima III (Connah 1981:192).

This correlates with a significant increase in the diversity of wild game remains (elephant, warthog, bushpig, antelope, fish, molluscs, etc.) in these levels. This might suggest a famine period, but the increased proportion of fish and molluscs would tend to rule out drought as a problem. It is possible that the region became more dangerous for cattle-herding, much as seems to have happened in the massif itself, and the population turned to the more easily-controlled ovicaprids and to wild game instead. This cannot at present be proven. There is other evidence for the use of animals in Daima II and III, in the form of the clay figurines which were found throughout those and the Neolithic levels, the continuation of a tradition which seems to have disappeared with the Neolithic further south.

There is also evidence of the use of domesticated plants from these levels. Daima II agriculture can only be inferred from indirect evidence (dating, the presence of grinding equipment) but *caudatum*-type sorghum and millet were recovered from Daima III contexts, along with a *Zizyphus* seed and grass remains. Connah (1981:160-162) has stressed the importance of iron technology in present-day *firki* farming, where the hard plains clays are dug into low walls to trap water at the end of the seasonal inundation; it is probable that this adaptation began in the mid-first millennium A.D. at Daima.

*Conclusions.* Daima is an interesting and important site, with the large horizontal and vertical extent of its excavation, evidence for an *in situ* transition from the Neolithic to the Iron Age and abundant artefactual remains. It shares a number of economic and material traits with Mehé Djiddere, including a number of detailed similarities in ceramic styles. The larger regions around Mehé Djiddere and around Daima were probably tied into some sort of fairly regular exchange relationships during the Iron Age, with iron and stone moving north. At this point, the materials moving south cannot be identified for certain; natron is a possibility (N. David, personal communication). At a distance of 150 km, we may hope that it was not the fish found at Mehé.

Mehé Djiddere is not just Daima writ small. There are evident, patterned differences in the ceramic suite which very firmly tie the southern site to present-day montagnards living close by. Certain traits at Daima connect the ceramics found at that site to the 'Sao' mound and other sites of the *firki* plain, such as Mdaga (see below), and also possibly to the potting traditions of present-day plains-dwelling groups.

There are also other differences in material culture. These may be proof of a process of Iron Age regionalization in the southern Chad Basin, a set of events brought about by the sedentism and population increase which iron tools could facilitate and by the increased exposure of the northern part of the basin, the *firki* plains, to the influences of more organized polities to the east and (possibly) the west. The study area for this dissertation seems to have remained something of a backwater in this sense. There is no evidence of the exotic artefacts or ceramic innovations found in the Daima III levels at Mehé Djiddere, and available historical evidence supports the idea that this area had rather less contact with developing Sudanic states until the middle of the present millennium.

### *Mdaga*

Mdaga is a large mound site in Chad, about 175 km east-southeast of Daima on a tributary of the Chari River (Figure 5.5). It was the site of extensive excavations by a team led by J.-P. Lebeuf in the 1960s. Nearly 1300 m<sup>2</sup> were excavated in 13 cuttings, an area almost four times greater than the extent of excavation at Daima -- albeit over a much longer period and with a vastly easier logistic and personnel situation. The site is surrounded by an earthen wall.

*The cultural sequence.* Like Daima, the site was probably occupied by Neolithic agriculturalists in the middle of the first millennium B.C., but the transition to an Iron Age technology may come at an earlier time. It is possible that the first Iron Age levels at Mdaga may date to the third century B.C. (Lebeuf et al. 1980:201-202); there was extensive occupation throughout the Iron Age and into the historical period.

There do not appear to be any very sharp distinction of phases during the Iron Age occupation of the site (*contra* Holl [1987], who argues for an Early/Late Iron Age division corresponding to that at Daima). Islamic occupation seems to date to the last few hundred years (Lebeuf et al. 1980:15).

In general, it is exceedingly difficult to correlate the results of the excavations of different levels in the 13 trenches excavated at Mdaga. There are also a number of discordances in the materials excavated from the different trenches (see below).

General trends in cultural change can be detected, but it would not be wise to put very much reliance on finer distinctions.

Lebeuf et al. (1980:202) expected to find proof of sequential occupation by the fishermen and bow- and spear-hunters mentioned earlier in this chapter, but their evidence does not really support this. They do, however, identify a shift from fine, often incised ceramics in some of the earlier levels of the site (including probably Neolithic and certainly Iron Age levels) to coarser, often impressed and chevron-decorated ceramics in more recent levels. This is similar to the situation at Daima (see above). The problem is that there is wide variation in the levels in which this material appears in the different Mdaga excavations. The change is varied enough that it probably cannot be used to support a cultural distinction.

For example, finer wares appear only in the middle and lower levels of Trenches I, IV and VII, but are found in the upper levels of Trench XI (Lebeuf et al. 1980:118, 121-122), although there also seem to be differences in the pot types found. This may be because there is no published, comprehensive ceramic register for the site. Similar curiosities exist elsewhere on the site: bone harpoons are found in levels corresponding to the late first or early-/mid- second millennium A.D. (depending on the excavation examined -- Lebeuf et al. 1980:179, 203); smoking pipes are found in eleventh to thirteenth century A.D. contexts (Lebeuf et al. 1980:155-159); polished stone axes are more often found in the upper levels of the excavation than in the lower levels (Lebeuf et al. 1980:195-200).

Lebeuf et al. (1980:202-204) explain the extreme horizontal and vertical variation in artefact types and frequencies which seem to be characteristic of this site by positing the occupation of parts of the mound's surface only at different times by different groups. This may well be the case, but it does not sufficiently explain the near-exclusive presence of bone harpoons and polished stone axes in levels dated to periods much later than the Neolithic and of pipes in pre-Columbian levels. It also does not really explain the extreme variations in deposition/erosion rates which would have had to occur on different parts of the site.

Thus, what are we to make of a mound site where, in one area, 1.5 m of deposits accumulated in 1000 years while, about 100 m away and in a similar context, 4.5 m have accumulated in only 800 years? It is of interest that there is almost no evidence of the presence of borrow or refuse pits or of similar types of disturbance in the excavation profiles of the Mdaga trenches. I hesitate to suggest the presence of undetected disturbance, but that would be one explanation for at least some of the curiosities of the results of the Mdaga excavations. The statement (Lebeuf et al. 1980:114) that there was some mixing of different ceramics may help to support this.

*Ceramics.* As I have said, no comprehensive register of the ceramics recovered from this site has been published. It is thus extremely difficult to identify real variation in pottery decoration and morphology in the different levels of the different trenches. Lebeuf et al. (1980:114) comment upon the change from finer to coarser ceramics during the Neolithic and Iron Age; uniquely, they also state that very coarse ceramics were discovered in contexts below the (presumably) Neolithic fine wares, although this is not really within the purview of this work.

Generally, incised decoration is correlated with the earlier, finer wares and impressed (mostly rouletted) decoration with the later, coarser ceramics. Chevron decoration is said to be particularly common in recent levels and absent in earlier ones. A large number of 'Sao' burials in pots were found outside the walled area of the mound.

There is little data on morphologies of everyday ceramics from the site itself. Open bowls, 'cups', necked and neckless jars, footed vessels and larger storage vessels are found throughout the excavations, but mostly in the most recent levels. Rare basins and salt filters were found in recent and older levels. Numbers of these vessels do bear some resemblance in shape to other from Daima and Mehé Djiddere, but they do not allow firm conclusions about relationships to be drawn. Certain vessel types -- for example, flat-bottomed/footed jars with incisions on the bottoms -- are found at Daima and Mdaga but not at Mehé. The handles (Lebeuf et al. 1980:Figure 66, Nos. 61, 298) found in contexts probably dating to the last 400-500 years at Mdaga are of more interest. These closely resemble the cup-shaped handles made and used by Muraha, Dumwa, Urza, 'Vamé-Mbremé' and Plata women in the study area today and found at Mehé Djiddere and in surface collections done on the Mandara Archaeological Project archaeological survey, suggesting that those handles are a relatively recent introduction from the north.

Carved wooden roulettes creating chevron patterns were used at Mdaga (Lebeuf et al. 1980:Figures 75, 76) as at Daima. Mat impressions also appear at both sites. Neither was used at Mehé Djiddere. On the other hand, incised designs were more common at the latter site. There are also a number of quite specific patterns of morphology and decoration which appear on vessels from Mdaga and Daima, but not Mehé (see, for example, Connah [1981:Figure 7.5:10, 7.6:2] and Lebeuf et al. [1980:Figure 86] or Connah [1981:Figure 8.8:4] and Lebeuf et al. [1980:Figure 65 (No. 585), 85]). The use of large panels of cord rouletting, with a significant vertical extent, seems to be more common at Mdaga and Daima than at Mehé Djiddere, although this may be a false impression. Again, the use of footed cups and chevrons and incised zigzag lines and panels, also found at Daima and less common at Mehé, is reminiscent of Kanuri pottery produced near the study area today. In general, we may say that Mdaga pottery exhibits general regional similarities to ceramics from Mehé Djiddere, but that it is much more similar to the Daima sample. This is not surprising, given the relative proximity of the sites.

*Other artefacts.* Other ceramic artefacts from Mdaga include spindle weights, 'bolas', jewelry, gaming pieces, seats, furnaces, head-rests and (tobacco?) pipes. Objects of most of these classes were found throughout the excavations, except in the earliest levels. The presence of pipes in contexts presumably dating to the early centuries of this millennium is puzzling, to say the least, but they do date from <sup>14</sup>C dated contexts. Pipes were found in contexts which may possibly be pre-Columbian at Daima, but never at Mehé. Numerous clay human and animal (fish, tortoises, birds, a hyena, cattle, horses and other) figures were recovered, as at Daima; the Daima figures look generally better-made.

Iron was found through all the excavation levels at Mdaga except for the earliest. There does not appear to have been large amounts of slag present on the site. Iron artefacts include bracelets, spear- and arrow-points, knife blades and a number of agricultural tool types. These are not well enough illustrated to allow comparisons with tools from other sites.

Copper and copper alloy artefacts, almost all jewelry, and slag from their production appear in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D., although they are also found at some depth in undated contexts. These items exhibit a great deal of metallurgical variability; copper, tin, lead and zinc exist in varying proportions in bronze alloys, while other pieces are of brass and almost pure copper (Francaix, in Lebeuf et al. 1980:207-209). The provenance of these metals is not known, but is unlikely to be close at hand, although the comments by Lebeuf et al. (1980:170, 201) that crucibles and slag from these metals were discovered is puzzling. It seems more likely that they are imports, possibly from Kanem or from trans-Saharan trade. The artefacts seem to have been produced by lost-wax casting, as at Daima, although they do not seem to originate in grave contexts as at the latter site (Connah 1981:187, 194). Numbers of labrets and beads in glass and stone were recovered, and these also attest to long-distance contacts, to Tibesti at least for some of the stone and perhaps to North Africa for the glass. The presence of such exotic metal, stone and glass

artefacts increases the site's resemblance to Daima, especially when compared to Mehé Djiddere.

Sixteen complete and partial polished stone axes and a number of other stone tools, including pestles and other grinding and polishing stones, were recovered from different contexts, the stone axes more often in the upper levels of the site. This may be due to extensive disturbance and possibly later human conservation. The grinding stones and most of the axes are made of rock from outcrops near Lake Chad and so less than 100 km away, while the material for a number of the other axes may come from as far away as Tibesti (Lebeuf et al. 1980:178). Numerous polishing stones are made of rock from Waza, thus furnishing some connection with regions close to the study area.

Five bone harpoons, a whistle, a worked bone 'axe' and a few other bone tools were found. Four of the harpoons came from the middle levels of Trench XI, while a harpoon fragment and the 'axe' came from the lowest levels of VII and thus presumably date to before 200 B.C.

*Economy.* Lebeuf et al. (1980) say that the site was occupied by hunters and fishermen; despite this, there is a remarkable lack of faunal remains in general, and of the remains of wild animals in particular, among the materials recovered. The few fish remains indicate that lungfish were captured, possibly dug up in the seasonal swamp, and Nile perch and other fish were also caught, presumably in the nearby river. Turtle, crocodile and wild bird bones occur, as well as cane rat, wildcat, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, wild pig, kob and two species of gazelle; it is important to note that only a very small number of individuals are represented for these species, one each for most of them. Most of these species are Sudanic forms, some preferring to live near water-courses. Judging from the species recovered, the environment around the site does not seem to have been very different from that of today (Lebeuf et al. 1980:192).

Domestic remains include horse teeth and bones from a number of domestic cattle. The lack of ovicaprid remains is surprising and very different from the

situation at Daima and Mehé Djiddere. There is certainly more evidence for herding than for hunting at the site. There does not appear to have been any direct evidence for cultivation recovered, although the character of the site itself, the period of its occupation and the presence of numerous artefacts (grindstones, pots) used for food preparation strongly implies that a sorghum- and/or millet-based agricultural system was in use.

*Conclusions.* A more organized presentation of results from the Mdaga excavations would be useful. It is probably wise to remain suspicious about the site's stratigraphy, despite the presence of  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates on charcoal. Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn. The site was probably first occupied in the late first millennium B.C., and thus at the same time as Daima. Settlement persisted, albeit possibly with some interruptions, until quite recently. The artefact suite from the site appears quite similar to that found at Daima, particularly where the Iron Age ceramics are concerned. It differs from Mehé Djiddere mostly in the same ways that Daima does.

Daima and Mdaga seem to have shared in many elements of an Iron Age tradition localized on the mound sites of the *firki* plain and nearby areas close to Lake Chad. This tradition probably corresponds, at least in part, to the material culture of the historical 'Sao'. It developed from an indigenous, probably broader-based, Neolithic occupation, but certainly was affected by the openness of this area to cultural influences from the north and east, at least and by its importance in long-distance trade -- an importance amply attested to until colonial times. The area to the south, around the Mandara Mountains -- the study area for this work -- was much more peripheral to these processes, and seems to have remained more isolated from external influences.

#### *Other northern sites*

A number of other sites have also been excavated to some extent in the northern part of the Chad Basin, and thus north of the study area. They include Sou

and Sou Blame Radjil (Holl 1987a), Makari, Amkoundjo, Gawi, Maguira and Mésso (Lebeuf 1969). Of these, Sou Blame Radjil has yielded two early Iron Age dates from the third and second centuries B.C. and one later date from the fourteenth century A.D. The excavator, Jean Rapp, has divided the Iron Age sections of the stratigraphy into 'Late Pre-Sao' (early Iron Age -- 300-200 B.C. to A.D. 600) and 'Sao' (late Iron Age -- 600-1450 A.D.) phases, although the lack of absolute dates for the transition makes this a bit suspicious; it is possible that the Lebeufs' lead was followed here. I have no information on the artefacts recovered from that site nor from the others, although it is interesting that Amkoundjo, Maguira and Mésso are all identified as 'Sao I' sites, although the dates are from the first century B.C. - second century A.D., the tenth century A.D. and the eighteenth century A.D., respectively (Lebeuf 1969:38, 94, 107). This illustrates the dangers of using surface features of an unexcavated mound site as a guide to chronology or ethnohistory in this area.

### *Salak*

Salak lies in a very different environment from the sites of the northern Chad Basin; it is one of the many mound sites found in the central Diamaré and is about 75 kilometres south-southeast of Mehé Djiddere (Figure 5.5). It has been cut into by the Mayo Boula, a seasonal river, which exposed a profile of anthropic deposits, and is also dissected by a number of erosional ravines. It was test excavated in 1975-76 by a team led by Dr. Alain Marliac (1985).

Two excavations were placed in the mound at Salak, one near its summit and another where the Mayo Boula cut into it. There is a drastic difference in the deposits exposed in these excavations; the Sector I cut, near the summit, shows a profile of loose, black anthropic soils, while the Sector XI cut at the river bank was into an extremely compact clay *hardé* deposit. Marliac (1985:33) think that the latter area was potentially *hardé* before the deposition of artefacts and that it probably functioned as a garbage disposal area; his reasons are convincing. The excavations of

Sector I did not yield a great deal of artefactual material (Marliac 1985:36), that of Sector XI rather more.

*The cultural sequence.* The chronology of occupation at Salak is difficult to understand, given the conflicts between the results of various radiocarbon and thermoluminescence datings of site material. However, it would appear that the site profile can be divided into at least three units, based upon the absolute dating results, the stratigraphic data and the artefactual data.

One unit, including Levels 1 to (probably) 3 on the Sector I excavation, probably dates from the sixteenth to the eighteenth or nineteenth century A.D, although there is some possibility of contamination through modern cultivation on the mound. The second, which includes Levels 4 to 6, and probably 7, of Sector I and an upper level in Sector XI, dates to between the tenth and the twelfth century A.D. The last, from Level 9 in Sector I, dates to the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. but shows little sign of occupation. These lower levels may well be natural, with the few potsherds found within them intrusive. It is probable that the site has also been abandoned at various times throughout its occupation. All of the material recovered appears to be Iron Age in nature.

In sum, the site shows evidence of an Iron Age occupation in the very late first millennium A.D. and in the early centuries of this millennium. The date of termination of settlement is not known, but it may have been as late as the eighteenth century, possibly with some intervening episodes of abandonment. It consists of a living area (Sector I) and a refuse area (Sector XI).

*Ceramics.* The morphology and decoration of just under 1000 potsherds recovered from different parts of the site were examined. As at Salak, there is no overall catalogue of forms and decorations used and this, combined with the very poor quality of many of the illustrations, makes quantitative analysis impossible. Such an analysis has been attempted by Wahome (1989), but he also had problems with the identification of predominant decorative types. Nevertheless, some very general comparisons with the other sites examined can be attempted.

Marliac (1985:118-123) divides his sample into two general pot types, depending on whether they have straight or everted lips. The former are thinner and are sometimes polished and/or black, instead of the red-brown of the thicker vessels in his second category. The first group includes flat bowls and plates and footed jars and cups. Some of the larger of these vessels had lug handles. Bowls for eating are often polished and blackened throughout the Mandara Mountains today, and were found on the Mandara Archaeological Project survey and at Mehé; they are thus a widespread and very old vessel type, but do not appear to have been as common further north in the Chad Basin. In contrast, footed vessels are very rare at Mehé and are not a common vessel type in the northern Mandara massif at least, although they are found occasionally.

The thicker, everted-lip vessels are mostly jars with restricted mouths. They may have vertical loop or lug handles; loop handles most often join the vessel neck with the upper part of the body. Most of the tripod legs found are probably associated with vessels of this type. These features seem, again, to be more characteristic of sites around the massif edge but rare at Daima and Mdaga. Some of the loop handles (Marliac 1985:Plate XXXIX) have elongated summits to the loops, making them look like bipartite handles used in the area today (Figure 8.6; see Chapter 8), but the latter are horizontal, not vertical.

The straight-sided bowls may have impressions on their lips, while footed vessels will often have a band of roulette or incisions at the foot/body join. Decoration on the everted-rim pots is primarily of string and strip roulettes, overlain with punctates, impressions, incisions or appliqués and localized in bands on the upper part of the pot body. This arrangement of decoration appears different from that found at Daima and Mdaga, where decoration seems to be more often found in larger panels and not in bands. On the other hand, the incised/impressed/punctate designs imposed upon the roulette bands include a number of zigzag and arc designs very reminiscent of some of those found at Daima and Mdaga (Marliac 1985:Figures 14c, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 29, Plates II, XXIV, XXV, XXVI and XXVIII to

XXXVIII; see also Connah [1981:Figures 7.5, 7.6, 8.8] and Lebeuf et al. [1980:Figures 65, 84-86]). The use of appliqué bands and pellets is reminiscent of Mehé and present usage in the area.

The best present-day correlate for Salak ceramics can probably be found in an article on the ceramics of the Mofu-Gudur and, more distantly, Giziga groups (Barreteau and Sorin-Barreteau 1988). The latter formerly controlled the area of the Diamaré where Salak is located, before being displaced in the nineteenth century by the Fulbe, and the Mofu may have controlled the region before that (Boulet et al. 1984:136). The Mofu-Gudur vessel morphologies and decoration shown in the article are specifically comparable with a number of those recovered from Salak. The zigzag and arc decorations do not appear on the Mofu pottery, and it is my impression that these are quite uncommon motifs among montagnard groups at present. Other vessels (Marliac 1985:Plate LV) more closely resemble present-day beer-serving vessels from further north, especially from Mada territory.

*Other artefacts and economy.* A limited number of iron artefacts were discovered in the course of excavation; they include a probable axe blade and projectile points. No evidence of iron-working was found. A number of grindstones and stone polishers were also found. No economic information concerned with the main site occupation is mentioned in the site report, but presumably the inhabitants of Salak used the same wet- and dry-season sorghum cultivation and kept the same animals as found in the area today.

*Conclusions.* Salak was occupied in the late first millennium A.D. and the early part of this millennium at least; the termination date of occupation is not known, but was probably in the last few centuries. Virtually all of the cultural information derived from the site comes from the ceramics. These are similar enough to present-day ceramics in nearby areas to very strongly indicate that the pre-Fulbe population of this part of the Diamaré is in large part derived from much earlier Iron Age populations.

The general decorative layout in localized bands in specific zones, especially on the upper part of the vessel body, is quite characteristic of usage on the massif today, and the presence of lug and loop handles and tripod legs, the wide use of appliqué and the absence of carved wooden roulettes and mat impressions increases the site's resemblance to Mehé and decreases its resemblance to Daima or Mdaga. On the other hand, some evidence of cultural contact or of common cultural elements with the peoples represented at the northern sites of Daima and Mdaga, in the form of quite specific ceramic morphologies and decorative motifs. These characteristics, the use of footed vessels and of arcs and zigzags, do not appear to have been as common on potsherds from Mehé Djiddere.

Rather surprisingly, given its location, Salak ceramics seem to resemble pottery from Mdaga and Daima more closely than do ceramics from Mehé Djiddere, although Salak and Mehé ceramics probably do resemble each other more than they do the ceramics from the northern sites. Marliac (1985:127) does not believe that there was much change in the ceramic suite during the site occupation. This might indicate rather greater cultural contact between the northern Chad Basin and the Diamaré than between the northern Chad Basin and the northeastern part of the study area. Given the reputation of the southern Diamaré and the plains west of the Logone as reservoirs for natural resources (iron, slaves) in the historical period (Morrissey 1984), this may not be too unexpected. There may also be oral historical evidence of such contact (see Chapter 6, Seignobos 1986:16). It should be noted that no exotic artefacts of the types found at Mdaga or Daima were recovered at Mehé, probably indicating that this area was not articulated into the same trade systems as were those sites.

#### *Other southern sites*

A number of other sites in the Diamaré have been investigated by Alain Marliac, Michelle Delneuf and others of their group. Sites with excavations have included the Tsanaga and CFDT lithic workshop sites at Maroua (Marliac 1981),

Mowo and Biou (Marliac 1982:57-58), Nanikalou (Marliac 1982:54) and Goray (Marliac 1982:54-55); there have also been a number of surveys and surface collections done, particularly in the river valleys of the Diamaré. The results of these researches have not as yet been extensively published.

The few published illustrations of Tsanaga and CFDT ceramics (Marliac 1981:Plates XIII, XIV) show sherds which look generally similar to those from Salak, which would be expected, given the proximity of the sites. The site may, however, be considerably older, since it was <sup>14</sup>C dated to the third century A.D. (1720 +/- 90 B.P. [Gif-2232] -- Marliac 1981:56) and there is an association of iron tools with bifacial stone tools. On the other hand, if the site was originally a vertisol, vertical movement of artefacts and charcoal is quite possible.

It is at present not possible to come to any conclusions concerning the other sites. The survey and surface collection (Delneuf 1983) has recovered sherds from a variety of mound and flat sites. The range of ceramic morphologies and decorations recovered appears to be greater than among present inhabitants of the area (Delneuf 1983:97-98), perhaps because of the impact of Western metal and plastic containers. Footed vessels and vessels with handles appear in the archaeological sample, and comb-stamping, finger-impressions, incisions and twisted strip roulettes seem to be the most popular modes of decoration. These characteristics generally agree with those from the Salak sample. Various flaked and ground stone tools (the latter mostly grindstones) were found on these sites, pointing to an active trade, probably with populations of the Mandara massif and the inselbergs to its east. Iron tools were rare, but there was some evidence of iron smelting on some of the sites. Culturally, these southern sites (including Salak) appear to form a fairly homogeneous group, and it is tempting to correlate this with the pre-Fulbe inhabitants of the Diamaré, the Mofu, Giziga and Zumaya.

## Conclusions

The specific archaeological data discussed above will be used in the construction of general culture histories in the study area in later chapters. Some general observations may nevertheless be made. The first, and most important, concerns the lack of evidence for Neolithic and earlier Iron Age occupation of the Mandara massif, and especially its interior reaches.

This is the reverse of the historical and present situation in northern Cameroon, where the bulk of the population -- and the bulk of the ethnic and cultural diversity -- is found in the mountains. There is sparse archaeological evidence for settlement along the peripheries of the mountains, but the main evidence for internal occupation is the Kuva site. The good preservation of architectural features means that this site is quite recent and its occupation may well have been related to a process of increasing social complexity in the northwestern part of the study area which I will discuss in later chapters.

On the plains, there is evidence for continuity between the Neolithic and Iron Age populations at the sites so far excavated. This is most striking at Daima, but may also be seen at Mdaga and other Chadian sites and in the Diamaré. There is ceramic and other evidence for this. The introduction of iron technology undoubtedly caused major economic and cultural changes, but there is no evidence that it was associated with large population movements. At Daima at least, and probably at Mdaga, there is evidence of increased contact with more distant areas and articulation in a long-distance trade network later in the Iron Age sequence. Such evidence is conspicuously lacking at Mehé Djiddere; by comparison, this part of the study area at least appears to have been something of a backwater through much of the Iron Age.

The differentiation in ceramics at the Neolithic Blabli and Iron Age Mehé sites in the study area is probably due to the lack of an early Iron Age component similar to that of early Daima II or the intermediate levels at Mdaga; on these latter sites, it appears that the change from finer 'Neolithic' to coarser 'Iron Age' wares was gradual

and occurred in the early Iron Age. The abandonments of these sites occurred at different times, and may well have been related to political events such as the coming of Islam. There is also abundant evidence at Mehé Djiddere and Salak for continuity between the prehistoric Iron Age peoples and the present-day inhabitants of the area.

Daima and Mdaga seem to resemble each other more than they do the southern sites, which is to be expected. Some elements of the ceramics recovered resemble those of (mostly Kanuri) plains-dwellers in the area today. They do not seem to have been preserved by montagnard groups. (The possible resemblance between pot handles from Mdaga and the eastern study area is interesting, and needs to be more closely examined.) Certain of these elements are also found on ceramics from Salak, although these elements are, again, not preserved in the ceramic suites of montagnards and Giziga in the area today. The pottery of these indigenous groups otherwise seems to resemble the Salak material. In other ways, Salak ceramics resemble those from Mehé Djiddere and the northern surface collections, which might be expected given the relative proximity of the two areas. This pattern may indicate patterns of contact running from the northern Chad Basin through the Diamaré or along the Logone to the south, and thus to an extent bypassing the study area to the east and south.

## CHAPTER 6 -- HISTORICAL AND ETHNOHISTORICAL DATA ON ETHNIC GROUP ESTABLISHMENT IN THE STUDY AREA

### Introduction

Archaeological remains usually memorialize events on a small scale -- not trivial experiences, but those domestic occurrences which are the foundation of everyone's life, and so are easily ignored or forgotten. This often confuses interpreters of archaeological data, because our first knowledge of the culture history of an area is often derived from written sources or oral histories. Data included within these latter sources are always filtered, almost always with a bias toward the exciting or extraordinary, the happenings which are interesting enough to warrant the trouble of writing or memorization. Conditioned by our expectations of extraordinary events -- wars, migrations, conversions -- we examine the archaeological record and find, instead, relics of the things that humanity actually spends the vast majority of its time doing. We are generally disappointed by this.

This is very much the case in and around the study area. The archaeological data examined in the last chapter strongly indicate that cultural continuity has been the norm in the regions around the study area since the end of the Neolithic at least. Within the study area, there is not much information on the early Iron Age available, but it is probable that the same situation holds. One very striking difference between the present human context and the Iron Age one is the lack of demonstrated montane occupation before the last few hundred years, but even montane occupation appears to have been by the descendants of plainsmen.

Historical and ethnohistorical evidence offers a rather different picture, at a shorter time scale. Among montagnard groups, oral history provides information on domestic events primarily at the level of the lineage, the social and corporate group which structures the relations of the individual to his or her past. The subjects of oral history are the concerns of the kinship community as a whole -- migrations, wars,

famines, locust infestations, plagues -- as well as the corpus of traditions which validates the existence of that community as it exists at one particular time. When the internal or external conditions of existence of the lineage change, so may this body of traditions, in the same way that settlement patterns or agricultural systems may change under similar circumstances.

The oral traditions of plains-dwelling Muslim groups like the Wandala have been more or less ignored in this area, as researchers have concentrated on the written sources made available by the existence of this literate Islamic state. The disappearance of Wandala lineages as important organizing entities during the period of state secularization, centralization and bureaucratization (Forkl 1986, 1989; Morrissey 1984) has meant that Wandala oral histories are differently structured than are montagnard histories, tied more to the political events of the state and less to the specific past of the informant's kindred.

When oral histories were collected, they were those of the Wandala court. This is now changing, especially as the traditions of people in the Wandala regional centres are solicited. These provide a balance to the picture of a monolithic, highly centralized Wandala state which over-reliance on approved court history may engender. The 'non-court' histories may emphasize the past of different regions within the state -- regions which often had very different priorities than did the centre -- or of certain occupational or ethnic groups, such as blacksmiths (Morrissey 1984; Seignobos 1986:34).

Traditional written sources on the study area have the advantage of relative immediacy -- that is, they are themselves artefacts and operate at a reduced temporal remove from the events they describe. They have two great disadvantages: (1) it is often impossible to detect changes, deliberate or accidental, which may have crept into the texts over the course of many years and (2) many of these sources, and all of the early ones, concerned with the study area were written by outsiders, often ignorant of the area and its peoples, often operating at a distance and nearly always with a particular point of view to propagandize.

It would be ideal to have original texts written by members of indigenous groups, but these just do not exist. Many of the available texts are concerned with political relations between relatively organized groups like the Wandala or Marghi and external polities; other deal with trade, religion and such matters, almost always at a macro-scale. Most montagnards are objectified in these texts, almost never accurately described. They were silenced by written histories, but in the spoken histories of their lineages and their times, they are elegant and eloquent.

In this chapter, I will first examine the data on culture history in the study area provided by written sources, especially for the early periods. These sources are the texts described in Chapter 4. I will then compare and contrast these data with information from oral histories collected among various montagnard groups. This will draw heavily on source material from Chapters 3 and 4 and will be to a great extent concerned with the processes by which present-day groups were formed. I will spend more time on the earlier historical sources than on the nineteenth century ones because of the uniqueness of the former and their usefulness in examining the origins of the Wandala state. I will examine the transcribed oral traditions of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* (Mohammadou 1982) in conjunction with ethnohistorical sources, because some of the themes of the Wandala traditions resemble those of their montagnard neighbours.

## **Historical Data**

### *The earliest sources*

The earliest written sources on the Chad Basin in general, the works of ibn Sa'id and al-Maqrizi and the royal chronicles of Kanem and Bornu, describe only the constellation of Sao communities found there, and it is unlikely that any of these refer to groups within the study area; they appear to be oriented rather farther to the north. They were written by Arabs with as yet little understanding of the ethnic milieu of the

*firki* plains and adjoining regions (Lange 1989). The walled towns of the Sao, described as centres of resistance to the Sefuwa invaders, are recognizable as the historical correlates of Daima and Mdaga.

The earliest specific mentions of localities and groups related to the study area are in fifteenth and sixteenth century sources: Fra Mauro's *Mappamondo*, Leo Africanus' *History and description of Africa*, Anania's *Overo cosmografia* and ibn Fartwa's *Kirgam ghazawat Barnu*. The two earliest, Fra Mauro and Leo Africanus, merely confirm the existence of entities known as Mandara/Med?ra and Marghi in the study area between A.D. 1450 and 1500, although Leo Africanus does provide some supplementary information in his description of Bornu on montagnards in general and on slave-raiding. He states that montagnard groups did exist at that time, in some area open to raids from Bornu, but he says nothing about the location of these groups and is almost equally vague on their way(s) of life.

Anania and ibn Fartwa are much more useful. The former provides data on the resources of the mountains and on Wandala towns, including Keroua, while the latter offers extensive information on relations between Bornu and the peoples living on and around the Chad Basin to the east and south, with particular attention paid to the Wandala and Marghi. These four early accounts include a number of points which are of interest to the present study.

*Localization of groups.* In the first place, all four accounts localize a number of groups within the study area in localities where we might have expected them to be 400 to 500 years ago. The Wandala state is of primary interest. Its centre of gravity was located rather further to the west than today; Anania and ibn Fartwa both say that Keroua was its capital, and there is no mention of Doulo or Mora, its present, more easterly centres. Fra Mauro's *Mappamondo* indirectly confirms this, with its juxtaposition of Marghi and Wandala localities. This agrees with Wandala oral and written traditions on the subject, which state that Keroua was the capital until the very late sixteenth century at least.

Various other modern-day peoples living in and around the study area are also mentioned in these early sources, most prominent among them the Marghi. *Mai* Idris Aloma was troubled by a Marghi chieftain, according to ibn Fartwa, and the 'Mergi' appear on Fra Mauro's map of almost 150 years earlier. The place-names given in ibn Fartwa's account of the pursuit of the Marghi 'Emir' (Kopchi, Michika, Womdiu) lie approximately within Marghi territory today (Federal Surveys, Nigeria, 1960), although Michika is more often associated with the Higi.

The Marghi are not mentioned in Anania's or Leo Africanus' works. Anania does refer to a town called 'Mochola' as a part of the Wandala state, but this probably refers to either one of the small Higi/Kapsiki or Marghi groups in the area or to Gudur. Finally, the Melgwa are accorded a prominent place in ibn Fartwa's work and apparently lived in nearly the same area that they occupy today.

Notable in its absence is any obvious reference to more easterly montagnard groups in the survey area; indeed, habitation of the mountains is mentioned only peripherally, when it is mentioned at all. This is not surprising in the European sources -- Fra Mauro, Leo Africanus and Anania -- since much of their information on the study area seems to have originated from people who were more concerned with Bornu and whose interest in the Mandara massif would thus have been minimal. The more easterly regions around the massif, which did not have large centres of population, might well not have been remarked upon. The sole exception to this may be Anania's ([1573, 1576 and 1582], in Lange and Bertoud 1972:351) list of places around the southern edge of Lake Chad. Lange and Bertoud (1972:351) identify 'Pate' and 'Maio' on this list as Pété and Maya respectively, and both of these terms were associated with the study area, but Pété at least does not appear to have been founded until 1845 (Morrissey 1984:115); 'Maya' seems to have always been an ethnic ascription, and is of interest from that point of view, but never referred to a particular and unique settlement.

Exploitation of the Mandara mountains is mentioned in passing by Anania, with reference to the iron found there. Leo Africanus describes montagnard

occupation which sounds very much like that of the study area, but he never localizes it except somewhere within the sphere of influence of the kingdom of Bornu. This might be within the study area, but it might also be further to the west.

Ibn Fartwa provides a more intimate account, if only in the context of the repeated campaigns of *mai* Idris Aloma, but he mentions neither organized polities nor montagnard occupation in the eastern part of the study area. His campaigns there were exclusively on the plains. This is in contrast to the situation around Keroua and to the south, in Marghi territory. In both of these cases, it is obvious that one defensive tactic used by Marghi and Wandala alike was to defend fortified and well-supplied hilltop positions, at Kopchi, Michika, Womdiu and Keroua (or the massif itself near Pulke?) respectively. (Two hundred years later, the Wandala would sally out and defeat a Bornuan army on the plains before Doulo. Obviously, something had changed in the interim.)

His account also implies that both groups were plains-dwelling at the time. His ignorance of montagnard groups might indicate, of course, his sovereign's lack of interest in such peoples. In general, a number of western plains-dwelling groups within the study area are accurately localized, and it would appear that the territories of such groups have not changed much in the intervening centuries, but there is almost no mention of montagnard groups, nor of people living further to the east in general.

*Political realities.* The earliest source, Fra Mauro's map, accords the 'Mergi' more importance than the 'Mandera', with an implication that the country as a whole was called 'Mergi' and settlements within it were known as 'Mergi' and 'Mandera'. According to Leo Africanus, 'Me?dra' was the only place of importance within the area. According to Anania, 'Mandrà' was the name of the territory, although his 'Mochola' was almost certainly not Wandala. Ibn Fartwa treats the rulers and polities of the Wandala and Marghi as being of approximately equal importance. There is no suggestion that the 'Amir' of the Wandala was of more consequence than the 'Amir' of the Marghi; both are held to have been troublesome pagan vassals.

These sources imply far less differentiation between polities in the western part of the study area than is the case today. The Wandala had not converted to Islam nor had they begun their expansion to the east when these accounts were written. It is probable that, at that time, they made up one among a number of pagan chiefdoms in the region, more obvious perhaps to northern outsiders because of their position on the tip of the northwestern spur of the Mandara massif. Incipient centralization and/or social and political stratification seems to have occurred in different locations within the study area between perhaps A.D. 1500 and the present -- in Marghi and Wandala in the sixteenth century, later in Sukur, at the abandoned settlements at Kuva, in Mafa territory (see Chapter 5), and among the Mofu to the southeast. These processes are probably related to contact with more organized polities such as Bornu, given, for example, the relationships between some Wandala and Kanuri court titles (Mohammadou 1982). Only the Wandala progressed to the status of a full-fledged Sudanic state.

None of the sources which speak of slave trading or raids in the study area at this time include the Wandala among the raiders, an occupation which would become of central importance to them in later times, when they would supply large numbers of slaves to Bornu. Their later slave-raiding would in many ways define their difference from neighbouring groups. Slave-raiding seems to have been the occupation of Kanuri from Bornu in earlier times, and Wandala themselves were probably often taken. It is, of course, dangerous to use what is almost a hagiography of *mai* Idris Aloma in examining the influence of that sovereign in the affairs of neighbouring states, but the account of his restoration to the throne of the legitimate *tlikse* is buttressed by the oral history of the Wandala (in whose king-lists *tlikse* Akotava Davla is held to have died in the capital of Bornu) and certainly implies a subordinate status for the Wandala state (ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]:50; Mohammadou 1982:10).

At the same time, the germs of later developments in Wandala relations with the outside world can be found in these accounts. The Wandala polity was at least

known to external sources as far away as Europe, implying a larger degree of foreign contact than most other polities in the region enjoyed. A main factor in this contact was almost certainly the position of Wandala territory, at the northwestern limits of the Mandara massif.

*Trade and state formation.* This location allowed the Wandala to control the export and import of goods flowing to and from the largest market in the southern Chad Basin, the state of Bornu. Bornu had, in the very late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, more or less completed a translation of its political and economic centre to the southwest of Lake Chad, at Birni Gazargamo, and so it was well within range of trade from the mountains.

Bornu was more accessible after this move, but it is likely that only trade in relatively high-value commodities would be very worthwhile. Wandala was known for the supply of at least one of these commodities by the middle of the sixteenth century, when Anania comments upon the amount of iron which originated in the massif, and the great trade in the substance. It is likely that at least some of the iron tools found on earlier archaeological sites like Daima and Mdaga were made of Mandara iron, but the establishment of trading centres and the increased need for iron by Bornu probably enhanced the value of the trade greatly. (It is interesting to note that the other raw material associated with the mountains by Anania was some type of stone, 'pietre de Nicoli' -- probably something resembling an onyx or sardonyx -- since stone of various sorts had been an important exportable montane resource since the Neolithic at least.)

The second great historical Wandala export -- slaves -- is not mentioned in these early sources. Given the importance that slaves would subsequently assume for the Wandala state, this certainly implies a different economic relationship between Bornu and the Wandala than would later exist. Slaves were captured in raids by Bornu, not sold to the north through a trading system. This is not surprising; the Wandala state as described by ibn Fartwa does not impress us as one so able to dominate its neighbours as to allow extensive slave-raiding. The acquisition of

individual slaves could take place through mechanisms of inter-ethnic dispute or by purchase during famines, as was the case within montagnard groups until recently, but raiding on a grand scale required that numbers of horses be used rapidly to concentrate forces before victims could flee into defensible positions.

The dynamics of enslavement are, I believe, of central importance to the recent prehistory and history of the study area. The accounts of ibn Fartwa and Leo Africanus make it evident that, in the sixteenth century and before then, Kanuri raids into the plains of the Chad Basin were frequent. These raids were of great importance in the pacification of this region, but it is also obvious that large numbers of captives were taken and that these captives served as an important currency in the procurement of valuable commodities such as horses and (in later times) guns, commodities which were of central importance in the maintenance of Kanuri hegemony. The commercial aspects of Idris Aloma's offensives, and of those of his predecessors, were probably as vital to the state as was the control of territory or the glorification of Islam among the unbelievers.

As Paul Lovejoy (1983:83-84) has pointed out, however, such campaigns could not continue forever, since they would eventually result in the establishment of depopulated zones in the targeted territories. This was obviously the case on the *firki* plains south of Lake Chad, with the disappearance of the agrarian Sao groups from the many Iron Age sites found there. Some of these people were certainly incorporated into the Kanuri population, others survived in semi-independent indigenous polities and some moved to refuges on the islands of Lake Chad and in the Mandara mountains. (This happened in the study area; as Podokwo informants said, their people came from Waza and those who stayed behind '...became like Kanuri...' [Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986; Ugshé Vale, 11/10/1986]). These processes all tended to shift people beyond the range of the slavers, either physically or socially.

This left Bornu with a number of alternatives. The Kanuri could seek new territories for their raids, they could turn to alternative methods of enslavement (such as through kidnapping or criminal prosecutions) or they could pass the function of

enslaving people on to subordinate groups (Lovejoy 1983:84). It is probable, as a large and diverse state, that Bornu involved itself in all of these alternatives, but it is the last of the three which concerns us here. The Wandala were as well positioned to exploit territories around the Mandara massif for slaves, and to control the movement of those slaves to Bornu, as they had been earlier for iron production and export.

Wandala and montagnard historical and ethnohistorical evidence (see below) and the evidence for relatively recent occupation at the Mehé Djiddere site strongly suggest that the Maya and Sao inhabitants of the plains close to the Mandara massif were not as heavily impacted by Kanuri incursions as were the Sao of the *firki* plains to the north. Their territory was further from central Bornu and they could retreat to nearby inselbergs or the massif when threatened, much like the Wandala or Marghi (see above). They probably much resembled those groups during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, albeit at a smaller scale. Raids from Bornu could certainly move through their territory (see for example ibn Fartwa 1926 [1582/3]:49) but not so easily pry them from their montane strongholds and, indeed, this would be a problem for the Kanuri until the coming of the Europeans.

They would not have been nearly as safe from the Wandala, however. The Sao and Maya lived cheek by jowl with the Wandala, who were thus not so restricted to seasonal raids. Wandala histories relate that the Maya stronghold of Doulo and the Sao stronghold at Gréa were both taken by ruses and sudden attacks. In the former case at least, the importance of mounted cavalry in the occupation of Doulo is recognized (Mohammadou 1982:24). Horses were also of central importance in slave raids and their use is held by some montagnards to be one of the chief factors in the differentiation of the Wandala and highlanders (Tlevu Augla, 11/5/1986; Ahlama Mauganwé, 17/5/1989 -- see below).

The value of cavalry in raiding has long been recognized (Law 1980:136). Horses would become progressively less useful, however, as the plains were depopulated and people moved into the mountains. The lack of success enjoyed by plains cavalry when they tried to engage fortified or mountainous strong-points has

been commented upon by numerous ethnohistorical and historical sources (see below, and for example Denham and Clapperton 1826:130-133; Law 1980:136, 139-140; Temple 1965 [1922]115), at least for recent times.

Such raiding was, therefore, probably in many cases more akin to kidnapping *en masse* than to warfare. The Wandala's best hope often lay in swooping down on individuals or small groups of cultivators or travellers before their victims could properly prepare themselves. This may, as I have said, have been the result of a long period of slaving by the Wandala emptying the plains near the massif of easier targets, as the *firki* plains had earlier been emptied by the Kanuri.

It would appear that horses have long been central to Wandala control over the plains around the massif. These would have been true horses of the African Dongolawi breed, not the ponies alluded to by Seignobos (1983 -- if the latter really existed in the area [Law 1980:25-26]), which the Wandala never seem to have used. These horses almost certainly originated in Bornu; a breeding centre existed later around Maroua, but it was established by the Fulbe (Law 1980:24, 45, 65; Morrissey 1984) and does not seem to have supplied the Wandala to any great extent.

During the sixteenth century, we see the Wandala polity in an incipient state of differentiation from its pagan neighbours. It was treated as another vassal state by *mai* Idris Aloma, but was at the same time the only entity in the area well-known to Europeans -- which had not been the case 150 years before, at the time of Fra Mauro. Its iron exports were recognized. At the same time, it must have been pretty evident to the Wandala that horses, and perhaps firearms, were important in the successes which the Kanuri were enjoying against the indigenous populations of the Chad Basin. A trade of iron for horses would have been obvious.

This would have benefited both Bornu (at least in the short term) and Wandala. The Wandala would have gained an important striking weapon, allowing them to expand against the pagan communities in the plains to the east. At the same time, the Kanuri would have indirectly opened up another source of slaves, albeit one controlled directly by their vassals. Wandala was fairly independent of Kanuri control

by the eighteenth century at least, but this does not seem to have been so much the case in the sixteenth century, when *mai* Idris Aloma was able to successfully intervene in the affairs of the state.

In sum, I think it probable that the great increase in Wandala power evident between A.D. 1450 and A.D. 1800 originated in a combination of factors: (1) Wandala's prehistoric positioning at the northwestern tip of the Mandara Mountains, in a position allowing control of iron exports, and its concomitant relation to Bornu; (2) the Kanuri campaigns on the plains to the north, which caused depopulation, migration and assimilation of Sao groups; (3) the resulting Wandala ability to obtain some horses, which made expansion and slave-raiding much more feasible; and (4) the later adoption of Islam, which furnished an ideology and cultural elements well-suited to the maintenance of differentiation and control over neighbouring groups.

(It must be noted, of course, that the Kanuri and Wandala were not the only slave-raiding societies operating to the south of Lake Chad. Numerous smaller groups raided neighbours or more distant groups for slaves on a more or less organized basis; this included the montagnard societies in the study area. In addition, the Baghirmi and Fulbe states conducted raids on a scale more comparable to that of the Kanuri and Wandala. Fulbe raids took place primarily to the south of the study area, and not before their movement into the Diamaré in the early nineteenth century, and Baghirmi raids mostly targeted groups living between the Logone and the Chari and further to the southwest of the Logone [Forkl 1983a:386-387].)

#### *The eighteenth and nineteenth century sources*

These Wandala and European accounts (the *Kirgam-a-Wandala*, *Uñwa-a-Mufaka* and other Wandala sources, and the travel writings of Denham in the 1820s, Barth in the 1850s and Rohlfs in 1866) offer data of varying degrees of usefulness on various aspects of culture history within the study area. They nearly exclusively deal with events on the plains (and thus Wandala/Kanuri/Fulbe/ Arab), the greatest exception being Barth's account of his trip to Yola -- but most of his writing concerns

regions outside of the study area. Unlike earlier texts, they can also usefully be supplemented by ethnohistorical accounts. (I exclude parts of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala*, oral accounts first written down after the Wandala became Muslim and included with other ethnohistorical accounts below.) They are helpful, but not unique. Again, certain themes pertinent to the present study can be isolated from these documents.

*Localization of groups.* By the time that these texts were written, the Wandala state was centred at Doulo/Mora and was the dominant political force on the plains around the massif. Its influence in the late eighteenth century was widespread, to the Logone, to the southern Diamaré, along the Yedseram River, north towards the Kotoko polities and Lake Chad. From being one among a number of small, pagan polities localized around a particular massif, it had become a centralized Islamic state, producing its own official, written history and in the midst of a process of secularization and bureaucratization which would continue through the nineteenth century. Denham noted the impressiveness of its cavalry and the richness of its court. Things had obviously changed a great deal in 200 years.

Rather less seems to have changed among its neighbours. The Sao homelands were occupied by Kanuri and more recently by Shuwa Arab and Fulbe, with Kotoko and other Chadic groups further to the north and east. The Marghi and other western groups occupied about the same areas they occupy now, according to Barth. Barth also emphasized that in the mid-nineteenth century Marghi and Sukur were local powers west of the massif. The Giziga and Zumaya plains-dwelling indigenes of the central Diamaré, probable descendants of the Iron Age populations there, had been more or less subjugated and/or displaced by the Fulbe.

It is with these accounts that the inhabitants of the eastern Mandara Mountains are first recognized by written histories. All of these texts mention them, and Denham's description of the area around Mayo Plata includes information on named lineages -- 'Vamé', Plata, Hodogway and so on -- not just 'ethnic'/linguistic groups (Table 4.2). Again, the lineages and larger groups named occupied the same areas at

the time of writing as they do now, indicating social stability in the area over the last 175 years.

*The fortunes of the Wandala state.* The written Wandala and European sources of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries chart the rise of Wandala to its greatest extent and power and its subsequent decline to an embattled nucleus, its rulers trapped in the hills until the beginning of European colonial rule and the death of Rabeh. This point has already been stressed in Chapter 4. After the defeat of Bornu outside Doulo in A.D. 1781-1782 and before the establishment of powerful Fulbe polities to the south at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Wandala was preeminent over a large area between Lake Chad and Guider (Figure 6.1). The Wandala state retained enough power to impress Denham in the 1820s, although he was rather less impressed by the Wandala themselves. By the times of Barth's and Rohlf's visits, however, the fortunes of the state had deteriorated further, as it lost control of territories west of the Mandara massif, north of Waza and south of Maroua. Reverses suffered at the hands of Bornu, the Fulbe, montagnards and finally Rabeh signalled the end of Wandala's role as a major state of the central Sudan.

*Trading relations.* The most evident change in trading relations between the study area and neighbouring territories is the importance which slaving had attained in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the fact that the capture of slaves was now more or less the domain of the Wandala. These slaves were of central importance to the Wandala domestic economy (Hallaire 1965; Mohammadou 1982; Morrissey 1984), and they were also, of course, extensively sold directly or through Wandala and Kanuri middlemen to Bornu.

The importance of the external traffic in slaves is remarked upon in Wandala texts, since slaves were the primary form of tribute to Bornu and were also a major export (Mohammadou 1982), and also by all of the nineteenth century European travellers. It is interesting to note the parallel attitudes of the two Wandala *tlikse* visited by Denham and Rohlf's and the ruler of Bornu described by Leo Africanus over 300 years earlier (Denham and Clapperton 1826:120; Leo Africanus 1896

[1526]:3:832-834; Rohlfs 1875:60). In all of these cases, rulers attempted to evade debts or unwelcome obligations by pressing slaves upon people who did not want them. Humans were a cheap commodity in a slave-producing area; what better way to make use of them?

The descriptions of the plains regions controlled by the Wandala provided by the Wandala texts and the accounts of Denham and Rohlfs show that, by the early nineteenth century at least, these regions were primarily settled by Wandala, Kanuri and Shuwa Arabs, with probably some slave communities and pagan groups (Melgwa or Musgu, for example) in outlying areas. The Sao and Maya had obviously ceased to be important forces on the plains before this time, although Maya lineages at least retained some corporate integrity in the mountains until recently. The Wandala had evidently had the same effects on the massif peripheries that the Kanuri had had on the *firki* further north -- widespread assimilation and/or depopulation.

The final consequences were also similar. As the reservoir of enslaveable people living around the Mandara Mountains diminished, slaving itself had to turn further afield. Montagnards could be targeted, but it would be much more difficult and quite dangerous to attempt to capture large numbers of people in mountain assaults; kidnapping was more feasible and would often be used. Large-scale raiding for slaves was more and more directed toward the 'pagan' plains groups to the east and south (Denham and Clapperton 1826; Mohammadou 1982:164; Morrissey 1984:38, 72-73), although the establishment of Fulbe states in those areas would make this more difficult. The slaving frontier continued to move away from the centres of demand.

Iron production continued to be important in the study area until the colonial period, as it had been 300 years before. The industry is remarked upon by all of the nineteenth-century European travellers -- Rohlfs was of the opinion that it was the Wandala's only significant enterprise -- and iron in the form of finished tools was obviously an important export to Bornu and to the Yedseram valley to the west (Barth 1965 [1857-9]:2:216; Denham and Clapperton 1826:122, 146-147).

Montagnard ore sources were to some extent supplemented by iron from Mundang territory but the prevalence of raw blooms remarked upon by Rohlfs and Denham strongly suggests that most of the raw material was coming from the mountains around Mora and Doulo (*contra* Morrissey 1984:38). Movement of blooms for hundreds of kilometres from the south would have been tremendously inefficient. It is more likely that iron would be extracted from the slag and transported either unprocessed or in the form of finished tools, as was the case for Wandala exports and as was also true for the iron trade within the mountains.

Despite Rohlfs opinion that iron was the only significant product of the area, the Wandala did produce and trade other items. These included livestock, skins, cotton (most often produced in the Diamaré, with the Wandala acting as middlemen) and, in times of drought, grain (Denham and Clapperton 1826; Mohammadou 1982; Morrissey 1984; Rohlfs 1875). In addition, with increased contact between Central Africa, the Nile, the Mediterranean and Europe in the nineteenth century, the demand for European luxury goods such as ivory and ostrich feathers increased (Morrissey 1984:151, 194).

*Relations between montagnard and Wandala.* As will be evident below in the discussion of montagnard ethnohistorical accounts of Wandala-montagnard relations, the connections between mountains and plains in the study area were very paradoxical indeed. Conflict with and enslavement of montagnards are social facts which pervade the *Kirgam-a-Wandala*, but at the same time the Wandala of Doulo, Mora and nearby centres took refuge with montagnards or sent their children into the mountains for safe-keeping when threatened by attack from Bornu or other external sources. Rohlfs (1875) and Ferrandi (1928:128), along with Wandala sources (Mohammadou 1982:179), commented upon the fact that the Wandala stored valuables (valuables, grain, even a large proportion of their treasury) in the mountains as a reserve in case outside attack forced a retreat from the plains, and they made good use of this on a number of occasions. The Wandala sources and Denham both state that montagnards served in the *tlikse's* army. In addition, the fact that the sole supply of iron ore

available to the Wandala was in streams originating in the massif demanded at least the maintenance of relations with their 'pagan' hill-dwelling neighbours.

At the same time, the evidence of Denham and Rohlfs is ample proof that these montagnards were at times open to attack, particularly by slavers. Their reaction to such a threat varied. When Denham (Denham and Clapperton 1826:117) arrived at Mora, submission and the presentation of gifts by montagnards and other 'pagans' from further away was immediate, but this was probably in large part due to the approach of a large and well-armed alien force bent on slaving. The picture that Rohlfs (1875:35, 53) presents is one of a much more truculent population, and this may be connected to the fact that, shortly before his visit, a relatively long-lasting conflict between the Wandala and the Muraha had broken into the open, and the reigning *tlikse* had been killed by montagnards.

Cooperation and conflict, occurring at the same time -- the paradoxical nature of Wandala-montagnard relations is obvious, and its roots are at least hinted at in written texts from the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Both groups depended on the other for certain vital resources (iron, slaves and refuge for the Wandala, salt and protein for the montagnards) but circumstances also meant that Wandala would seek to extend control over the massif and that montagnards would always try to move out of their over-populated territories. In addition, procurement of the two most important Wandala exports, iron and slaves, demanded that the Wandala act toward the inhabitants of the massif in diametrically opposite ways. In the first case, montagnards were the vital extractors and controllers of the resource. In the second case, they themselves were the resource.

The dilemma in this situation is obvious. The Wandala state depended on the domestic use and export of iron and slaves. They were never able to exert any real control over the mountain populations, although they could raid the mountains for slaves and prevent montagnard movement on to the plains. To obtain iron, they had to negotiate with montagnard populations who would sell them the smelted metal. But these populations were themselves the 'resource' for the slave trade. A Wandala might

trade with a montagnard blacksmith during the dry season and attempt to capture members of that same smith's family as they worked in their fields during the harvest.

The viciousness of this paradox is even more apparent when it is considered from the point of view of the people living in the mountains. It was necessary for them to have salt, protein and the other goods that could only be obtained from the Wandala. Absence of these things would make their lives considerably more precarious. To get them, they most often sold iron, but they knew that they sold it to people who would, in other circumstances, try to capture them, or their families, as slaves -- and that the iron they sold would be used to make or buy the tools and weapons that would allow the Wandala to do this. As one of my older informants, who vividly remembered such dealings, remarked, "The Wandala are sophisticated people. They buy our iron, then they use it to make the anklets that they hold captured slaves with. We sold them the iron for our shackles." (Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989).

More than that, any important change in the nature of either of the communities would have had the most drastic effects upon the other. The presence of montagnards in the Mandara Mountains made it much more difficult for the Wandala to obtain iron, but their movement on to the plains would have meant vastly greater competition for space, good farmland and power, and would also have implied their conversion to Islam -- which would have at least theoretically removed them from the pool of possible slaves and crippled a main source of Wandala earnings.

Similarly, the montagnards depended upon the Wandala for salt, protein and other resources, bought further to the north with the proceeds from the sale of their iron and their kinsmen. The defeat of the Wandala state in war would have shut down those supplies and might well have left them faced with stronger opponents in Bornu or the Fulbe states, so they had few choices but to cooperate with the Wandala in defence. For them, the possibility of movement on to the plains would also imply the attenuation and probable disappearance of their tightly-packed lineages.

Each cultural system depended upon the existence of its antithesis for its own survival. With the coming of the colonial powers and the replacement of Wandala

control over the plains with European control, this system broke down. Wandala society has been extremely heavily impacted by the loss of their dominance, and the solidarity of montagnard lineages has been disrupted by their rapid spread into plains communities. The effects on the Wandala have been negative, while the montagnard groups have benefited from the availability of new areas of settlement and the end of slave-raiding.

*Conclusions.* The intimate relationship between the development of the Wandala state and their status as a trading and slaving society is obvious. Until the seventeenth century, the Mandara Mountains were known as a source of iron and stones, and the Wandala polity was only weakly differentiated from its neighbours. Slave-raids were in the *firki* plains and the Kanuri were the slavers. By the eighteenth century, Wandala itself was an important source of slaves and a Muslim Sudanic state.

These written sources are informative, but they have their drawbacks. The European sources are superficial and short-term. The Wandala and Bornuan sources serve as propaganda for their respective states. Through differing circumstances, each manages to silence the voice of the major element of the study area's population, the montagnard peoples. Their accounts are oral in nature, and it is to these ethnohistorical sources that we will now turn.

## **Ethnohistorical Sources**

### *Introduction*

In this section, I will examine montagnard and Wandala oral traditions which concern culture history and the history of ethnic relations within the study area. These traditions almost exclusively concern migrations by individuals or small groups (families or, maximally, groups of families) to different parts of the study area, their establishment there and their subsequent relations with their neighbours and enemies -

- often the same people. The Wandala and most montagnard lineages trace their origins to one of a limited number of points and it is possible, I think, to detect the results of different past political/military events in northern Cameroon through an examination of these traditions. I will examine the different accounts of migration from these origin places simultaneously, to establish what common points may exist among them. Before doing this, I will examine available ethnohistorical data on autochthonous groups in the study area.

*Claims of priority.* It is extremely difficult to establish the priority of such migrations through examination of the traditions concerning them, especially since the lineages involved have for a long time lived in close contact with one another. Genealogies are unreliable (Vansina 1985:102-108, 182-185) and the fact that they tend to be of about the same length in the study area (generally eight to twelve generations and maximally six to 15 -- personal observation; de Colombel 1986:22; Juillerat 1971: 59; Lembezat 1952:129-130; Mouchet 1947a, b, 1948:107, 1949, 1957; Richard 1977:38-40; von Graffenried 1984:69-71) may well be due more to the homogenizing effects of interaction than to the effects of historical events such as immigration. In a few cases, it will be admitted that other immigrant groups had preceded a certain lineage into a region or claimed that lineage had priority of arrival, but there is usually too little agreement upon these matters to allow definite conclusions to be drawn.

Such claims of precedence often occur when descendants of an immigrant ancestor have established a claim to ritual and/or political rights in a certain territory. It is recognized by all concerned that subsequent arrivals by immigrant individuals and families, which have occurred until very recent times, do not bestow the same prerogatives upon the recent immigrants as devolve upon the descendants of the culture hero who first occupied the territory or deprived autochthones of its rule. In some cases, this differentiation between original immigrants and later arrivals is formalized. Among the Muyan, members of recent lineages are called *nda kra* ('dog shit') -- a status perhaps rather less alarming than it sounds (Richard 1977:82). The

descendants of the dominant, earlier lineage are called *wur bay* ('sons of the chief'). Such hierarchies seem to be more common in situations where one maximal lineage has gained effective control of an area. In areas where lineages of diverse origins have more or less equal power, as in 'Vamé-Mbremé' or on the Urza inselberg, these distinctions are less important. In any case, at this point it does not appear to me to be worthwhile to try and rank these different sets of migrations chronologically.

*Sources.* I have used a large number of different sources of indigenous traditions, both Wandala and montagnard, in the course of this work. The Wandala sources are diverse. I include the earliest sections of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala*, especially those concerning the establishment of the state at Keroua, along with subsidiary information in published Western sources, including those of Mohammadou, Forkl, Morrissey and Seignobos. A great deal of data has been gathered by other members of the Mandara Archaeological Project, particularly Ian Robertson and Diane Lyons.

Sources of montagnard oral history are also varied. I have gathered ethnohistorical data from individuals of the Plata (-Dumlelai and -Kapa) lineage, the Dibon, Madavar, Matsabaiyam and Sama lineages of Uldemé 'ethnic'/linguistic group, the Ngermaio, Tazañ and Tlidiné lineages of Mada, the Afam and Zulé lineages of the group misnamed as 'Vamé-Mbremé', the Gulidé and Gudul lineages of Urza, the Gagadama lineage of Murahha, the Dume-Kata lineage of Dumwa, the Mukulehé and Tala Dabara lineages of Podokwo, along with individuals from a number of Glavda and Valé lineages, including Agapalawa and Pulke at least. (I was not able to determine the lineages of all of my Valé and Glavda informants; my interviews with them were the only ones made more difficult by attempts at 'supervision' by Wandala nobles from Keroua. Keroua is, of course, the traditional capital of the Wandala state and is far from the moderating effects of civil government at Mora, which may help to explain the problems I had there.) In addition, I have gathered supplementary information from Mafa (at Mora), Kanuri, Gemjek and Zulgo informants. I have also

relied upon the ethnohistorical information contained in the researches of a number of earlier authors; these will be credited in the course of the work.

These data were primarily concerned with lineage migrations and relations between montagnard lineages and the Wandala, but I was also engaged in ethnoarchaeological research on ceramic and iron production and distribution during the 1986 and 1989 field seasons. These latter studies have relevance of their own to this work (Chapter 8), but I also gathered a great deal of historical evidence in the course of these researches.

*Problems with the data set.* There are numerous shortcomings in the data I gathered, some of which were certainly avoidable and some of which may not have been. In the first place and as I pointed out in Chapter 3, each 'ethnic'/linguistic group in the study area is actually a constellation of different lineages, which may or may not share the same origins, the same traditions and customs or even the same language. Different criteria of organization may be applied to each of these constellations of lineages, so that in some cases a corporate grouping is considered an independent lineage, while in other cases it may be considered a section of another lineage. This is the case, for example, with the Plata of Uldemé canton. They share a known lineage ancestor, practise exogamy and cooperate in rituals, three important criteria for lineages. At the same time, fighting between the Dumlelai and Kapa lineage segments was frequent, there is craft specialization, with the Kapa practising smithing, and they often acted as independent units. Under such conditions, it is no wonder that there is often widespread disagreement among the lineages to be included within different 'ethnic'/linguistic groups, and why a definitive list of such lineages would be almost impossible to create.

In addition, 'ethnic'/linguistic groups, lineages and lineage segments have often incorporated families or groups with entirely different origins after their establishment. The *agweñdele* section of Plata Dumlelai includes a Podokwo group, while the *du sheleng* of Plata Kapa originated among the Plata Dumlelai (Abokwa Baje, 27/7/1986; Gskai Augla, 6/8/1986) (Table 3.1). The Mukulehé lineage of

Podokwo include a number of other groups, from Mafa and Uldemé in particular (Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986; Ugshé Vale, 10/11/1986; Lembezat 1952:44; *contra* Siran [n.d.:2]). Podokwo is also said to contain a lineage originating among the Kanuri, the Skwala (Jegwevé Gwada, 9/11/1986; Ugshé Vale, 10/11/1986). The result of this continual immigration and admixture is that the massif is occupied by literally hundreds of small, independent lineages and lineage segments, all with their own stories. It would be impossible to canvas all of them for ethnohistorical data.

I gathered almost no historical data from women. Attempts to do so met with interference from men present and/or with denials of historical knowledge from the women I was questioning, as alluded to in Chapter 3. This is obviously a serious fault, but it may be a difficult obstacle to overcome. If long-term history is (patri-) lineage history, women are systematically removed from the history of their (male) ancestors when they marry out of the group. I do not mean to say that women are 'people without a history' in this area, but their history may be less formalized and less obtrusive, uncoded in genealogies and easily overwritten by the histories of their husbands and sons. It might also be more easily accessed by female ethnographers, although this is by no means certain. Ethnographers are often reacted to as 'whites', which often implies the ascription of an honorary (and frequently undesired) 'male' status to a female researcher.

There are other, more specific issues which I should have examined in more detail during this research. One involves the issue of autochthonous inhabitants of the massif. I gathered some data on such groups among all of the peoples I worked with, but realized later that I should have devoted more time to such an obviously important subject. Similarly, I do not have enough data on linguistic transformations among immigrant groups. Material from earlier researchers can supplement my own data on these and a number of other topics, but will of course be no good substitute for original, directed research. In my own defense, I can only plead that such omissions seem to be unavoidable in the course of anthropological fieldwork and that they act as motivations for further work.

### *Autochthonous groups in the study area*

Within the study area, the traditions of montagnard ethnic groups are primarily traditions of migration. It is often accepted that autochthonous groups existed before the arrival of the immigrant lineages, but their numbers are said to have been small. It is also sometimes difficult reliably to distinguish truly autochthonous groups (i.e., those which claim to have originated in the territory that they now occupy) from groups of early immigrants. Enquiry concerning origins stories will often solve this problem, but these are sometimes not available in ethnographic accounts. The distribution of indigenous groups in the eastern part of the study area is shown on Figure 6.2.

On the Uldemé massif, the Matsabaiyam lineage is generally held to be indigenous, although the Mejeleñ and Muriñ (de Colombel's Mawéré?) are said to have been there before any other immigrants (Gskai Augla, 7/10/1986; Abokwa Baja, 26/11/1986; Mala Mbaluda, 28/5/1989; de Colombel 1986:19). In addition, the Plata say that there were other peoples living around the massif when they arrived, the Kedem and Mbaubaukw (now a section in Vindelar territory) and the descendants of a man called Mawze (Abokwa Baje, 27/7/1986; Gskai Augla, 30/10/1986; Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication; de Colombel 1986:16). The latter group is associated with the archaeological traces (ceramics and biface fragments) found on the surface site MAP 535 at the foot of the massif, about half-way between Mayo Uldemé and Mayo Plata (Abokwa Baje, 27/7/1986).

The descendants of Mawze may be connected to one of the early (though probably not autochthonous) groups claimed to have inhabited the Muyan massif immediately to the east of Uldemé, the Mazama; there may also be some connection between one of Mawze's sons, Maguraki/Maguréki, and the Guéjékré autochthones of the same area (Richard 1977:37, 79, 81). These two groups are said to have inhabited the summits of Mount Mouyan and Mount Mouyingué respectively, with a third group, the Gadray, found on the plains between the Muyan inselberg complex and the Mandara massif. The Mawze are said to have eventually left Plata territory and gone

to Dulek (Ndoloko) at the southern end of the Mboku inselberg (Gskai Augla, 30/10/1986). This provides an interesting parallel to the Murgur blacksmiths/smelters account of their arrival at that inselberg, since they found a group called Mishe, who came from "...the region of Mora..." already there (Seignobos 1988:50). These may be the same people.

One extremely small autochthonous lineage, Bjiské, and one small early immigrant lineage, Bjiguijker, have been identified in Mada territory (Richard 1977:35). There is very little information available concerning early immigrants to these mountains. There are also accounts of autochthonous groups to the south and west, among the Mofu and Zulgo for example (Vincent 1981:283-284; von Graffenried 1984:61).

The plains to the north and east of the massif are, of course, said to have been occupied by the Maya and/or Sao autochthonous groups. There were no autochthones at Urza, but the Maya retreated there after their defeat by the Wandala, or possibly because of a famine (Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986; Mohammadou 1982; Mouchet 1947b). There may have been one indigenous group living in what is now 'Vamé-Mbremé' territory, the Mékwényé, who are said to have inhabited the land at the base of the massif in what is now Zulé territory and who are associated with ceramic surface scatters there (Mala Amatsa, 26/7/1986; Nyssens 1986). There are no traditions of indigenous peoples inhabiting the Mandara massif area now occupied by the Muraha or Dumwa (Tacha Dia, 11/5/1986; Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986; Mouchet 1947c).

At the time of arrival of an ancestral culture hero, parts of the territory now occupied by the Podokwo appears to have been inhabited by the Dékedyé/Mdakédyé (Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986; Ugshé Vale, 10/11/1986; see also Siran n.d.), who invited him to live with them and eventually made him chief. (For a dissenting view, see Lembezat [1952:42-46, 64]. Lembezat says that the land occupied by the eponymous ancestor of the Mukulehé lineage was empty when he arrived. This may apply only to the territory now occupied by that important lineage, since he does speak of neighbouring 'villages', including the Skula/Sukulé community which originated with

Mafa immigrants and which was eventually incorporated into Mukulehé.) Muktelé territory was originally occupied by a number of autochthonous groups, including the HaDoay, the Plahla/Plata, the Mna, the Adzwi, the Makdaza and the HaDaô (Juillerat 1972:55). Some of these groups occupied the individual mountains on the massif, other occupied the flatter areas around those heights. The 'truest' autochthones among them, the HaDoay and HaDaô (probably actually the same group) are the subjects of a 'civilizing' myth of the late-comers. I have no reliable information concerning autochthonous groups in the western part of the study area, and there do not seem to be strong migration traditions among the Glavda/Valé I talked to, at least (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986).

The picture that emerges is one of occupation of many territories in the massif before the arrival of the dominant present-day groups, with a tendency for occupation of the lowest slopes of the mountains or the piedmont land immediately around them. The groups that occupied those areas are described variously, from being civilized agriculturalists (the people of Mawze, in Plata territory, for example) to being animalistic mud-eaters, in the case of the HaDoay/HaDaô of Muktelé. The former description seems most common, although it is often held that such groups have uncanny powers of one sort or another.

They are frequently credited with ritual or magical abilities, often over the earth from which they are said to have emerged. There seems to have been a kinship association between some of these groups and certain animals, particularly panthers and elephants. This is the case for the Matsabaiyam (Gskai Augla and Michel Kourdapaye 7/10/1986; Mala Mbaluda, 28/5/1989) and the HaDoay/HaDaô (Juillerat 1972:63), at least, but this may also be so for other, non-autochthonous groups.

(Belief in such powers are still held by many people and is not limited to those following traditional lifestyles. For example, my interpreter, Michel Kourdapaye, says that his wife's mother, a Matsabaiyam, gave birth to a were-elephant, and this was corroborated by an older Plata man (Gskai Augla and Michel Kourdapaye, 7/10/1986). It is difficult to argue with such assertions, couched in everyday, matter-

of-fact terms. Michael Jackson (1989:102-118) has written a sensitive treatment of such beliefs in Sierra Leone, and advances the possibility that they are adjustments and compensations for the liminal status(es) of individuals and groups. This may well have relevance for the autochthonous groups in northern Cameroon, relegated to a marginal status by later immigrants.)

The way of life of these people is not extensively described in oral traditions, but most of the groups held to have been civilized are said to have used iron tools and grown crops similar to those grown today. The only exception that I know of are the 'people of Mawze' in Plata territory, who are said to have left the pottery and worked stone found on MAP 535. There are no traditions of stone tool use among groups in the study area today.

Despite the fact that autochthonous groups are said to have occupied different parts of the massif and its peripheries in the study area, there is little evidence that montane occupation was intensive. Some areas, such as Urza and the territory around Mora, are said to have been empty. In other places, it was the piedmonts at the foot of the mountains which are said to have been occupied and exploited (possibly because of iron ore extraction?).

Even in montane areas where autochthonous groups are supposed to have existed, their occupation is associated with specific localities and land seems to have been occupied by or allocated to immigrant groups with relatively little trouble. This seems to have been the case for lineages of the Uldemé and Plata groups, those in 'Vamé-Mbremé' territory and in Dumwa, Podokwo and Muktelé territories at least. Given that numbers of immigrants seem to have originated from regions not too distant from the massif (see below), familiarity and trading contacts involving iron and possibly other resources may have made the accommodation of incoming groups easier. There is no evidence for occupation of the massif at high population densities in the traditions of groups in these territories and, although no such immigrant group conducted a census on arrival, there is circumstantial evidence that habitation was quite sparse.

This does not mean that there is not violence nor other forms of conflict associated with the early histories of these lineages. Their traditions frequently speak of violence and death, but it does not seem to have been associated with initial settlement of the mountains (see below). Thus, for example, traditions exist that the Muktelé HaDoay revolted against the Makdaf after the latter had immigrated (Juillerat 1971:63).

Conflict with the autochthones, when it occurred, frequently was connected with usurpation of the latter's ritual powers, as when Agzavrinja gained the powers of the Master of the Rains from the Mejeleñ by ruse (de Colombel 1986:20-21; Hallaire 1971) and then eliminated many of the earlier inhabitants of the territory. This process is also said to have occurred in Zulgo territory to the south (von Graffenried 1984:110-111). Such conflicts also occurred among later groups in areas where autochthones (if they existed) are not known to have been invested with such ritual powers, as among the Molkwo (Seignobos 1988:56).

*Journey from the West: the people of Ngolélé*

*Introduction.* Most of the lineages found in the study area are not autochthonous, at least in the eastern regions; as I have said, the situation may be different in the west, around Keroua, for expectable reasons which I will go into below. Montagnard lineages living in the massif and the inselbergs around Mora claim to have originated in a number of different areas, both within and outside of the massif. One of the main origins of immigration into the eastern part of the study area lies in the western part of the area, in and around the northwestern extremity of the Mandara massif west of Keroua. This current of migration has not been particularly 'noticeable' in the ethnographic literature, partly, I think, because it did not result in the large maximal lineages that one finds, for example, in Mada, Muyan and Uldemé territory.

Lineages claiming such a western origin are dispersed within and around the massif. Nevertheless, a central core of lineages claiming an origin in one particular

event which occurred near Keroua does exist, and there is ethnohistorical evidence that related lineages exist. Because of the number of lineages which may have been involved in such a migration and because of the relevance of this migration to certain linguistic questions which arise in the study area and to the development of the Wandala state, I will examine it first.

*The Ngolélé migration.* Informants from Plata (both Dumlelai and Kapa medial lineages) and Dumwa (Ndakwoza, Tlidiwé and Dume-Kata medial lineages) people living on the massif and informants of the Gudul and Kudangala (*contra* Mouchet 1947b) lineages occupying the Urza inselberg claim to have migrated together, or at nearly the same time, from a mountain in the west called Ngolélé. There is near-universal agreement among the members of these lineages whom I have interviewed that this migration took place and that they were involved in it. Exceptions were usually by people uninterested in lineage history; when asked how their people came to be where they are today, they tended only to say that 'perhaps God put them there'. I had only three such interviews.

It is universally held that the Plata and Dumwa came from Ngolélé, but some doubt is occasionally expressed concerning the Gudul and Kudangala lineages of Urza (Abokwa Baja, 27/7/1986; Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986). It should be noted, however, that members of those lineages themselves, and most of the other informants who know the story, claim that these Urza lineages are descended from migrants from Ngolélé and that they do share kinship relations with the Plata and Dumwa. Some of the doubt concerning migrations involves timing; some informants think that the Urza lineages had a slight priority in arrival times (for example, Abokwa Baja, 27/7/1986).

It is usually said that the four lineages (Plata, Dumwa, Gudul and Kudangala) are 'brothers', but there is no agreement concerning specific genealogical links between them. It might be best to regard this ensemble of lineages as constituting a clan, possessing a belief in common parentage but without specific ties of kinship. Thus, the four lineages can share in rituals and festivals, but they do not form an exogamic unit, although they may have done so in the past (Gskai Augla, 21/10/1986;

Ajokfa, 17/5/1989). (The two Urza lineages, Gudul and Kudangala, do regard themselves as directly related and so do not intermarry, but they have no explicit genealogical linkages [Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986]; it appears that the relation between them is primarily political. This illustrates the difficulties in defining 'lineages' in the study area.)

Primary informants on the Ngolélé migrations include: Michel Kourdapaye; Tlevu Augla, 18/6/1986, 2/7/1986, 5/11/1986; Abokwa Baje, 27/7/1986, 7/8/1986, 26/10/1986; Mezele Sheelebé, 28/7/1986; Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986, 7/10/1986; Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986; Ngaiya Sali, 28/10/1986, 4/11/1986; Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986; Tacha Dia, 23/4/1986, 13/11/1986; Hlaba, 16/5/1989; Ajokfa, 17/5/1989, 30/5/1989; Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989; Hlugbené, 24/5/1989; Baje Maugjeta, 12/6/1989; Augulaw Kulemdia, 13/6/1989. In addition, there are references by earlier researchers working in the massif to this tradition of migration from Ngolélé [Nyssens 1986] or from a mountain in the same location called Zelideva [Mouchet 1947b, c, d].)

Montagnard informants hold that Ngolélé and Zelideva are the same mountain, or are at least extremely close to one another and that they are located west of Keroua, in Nigeria. Glavda and Valé informants at Keroua (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986) and available maps (see for example Moisel et al. 1906) identify Ngolélé/Zelideva as the Zeledva Hills, the northwestern extremity of the Mandara massif, located about 15 km west of the Keroua inselberg and thus of the border with Nigeria (Directorat of Overseas Surveys 1969). Glavda/Valé informants specifically identify Ngolélé as the upper part of these hills, with the Ngwoshé lineage of Glavda occupying the foothills below. This part of the massif (or at least its peripheries, since similar pressures on montagnards to move onto the plains were exerted by the colonial and national administrations in Nigeria as was the case in Cameroon) is now occupied by Glavda/Valé and Guduf, and by various Laamang-speaking montagnard groups (Wente-Lukas 1985) (Figure 1.2).

*Chronology.* The average number of generations since the move from Ngolélé is given as twelve, with little variation. This might translate into a period of 250-300 years, but such a dating should not be relied upon. It should be recalled that Denham identified a territory on the Uldemé massif as being that of the Plata in the early nineteenth century (Denham and Clapperton 1826). The Plata, Dumwa and Urza all speak dialects of the *pelasla* language also spoken by the 'Vamé-Mbremé' lineages -- Mabar, Afam, Zulé, Ndremé and Mbremé (Barreteau 1988; Nyssens 1986). Informants often refer to the Plata, Dumwa, Gudul and Kudangala lineages together as the 'people of Ngolélé' -- the *du ngolélé*.

*Characteristics of Ngolélé.* Ngolélé is held to be a black mountain, now almost bare of trees. It was once occupied by montagnards in the same way that the massif around Mora is, but people have since moved onto the plains and only a few old people still live on the heights. This is similar to the process instigated by the national government in Cameroon. Eastern informants say that the people who now live there are the Zelideva (a Laamang lineage) and the Glavda; these two groups are held to be related and are often held to have been 'brothers' (i.e., to have shared a putative ancestral relationship) with the *du ngolélé*, the 'people of Ngolélé', ancestors of the eastern lineages (Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986, Gskai Augla, 7/10/1986, Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986, Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986, Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986).

This view is generally upheld by the Glavda/Valé (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986), although their greater knowledge of lineage relations west of Keroua complicates their perception of the association (see also Wente-Lukas 1985). More to the point, these latter people also say that the Zelideva and Glavda and the *du ngolélé* had a common ancestry. Plata, Dumwa and Urza informants say that the people living at Ngolélé now speak a language that is similar to theirs but is not readily understandable.

Men of the eastern lineages still do go to Ngolélé on occasion, sometimes for ritual reasons and sometimes because it is held to offer a place of refuge for the *du ngolélé* if they have committed crimes (Tlevu Augla, 18/6/1986; Abokwa Baja,

26/10/1986; Ajokfa, 17/5/1989; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986). Access to the mountain itself is restricted to the descendants of those who lived there -- the Zelideva, Glavda and *du ngolélé* most particularly. If other people tried to climb on to the slopes of Ngolélé, they would die or go blind. These groups are also held to have power over a fig tree, *bikwa*, said to be the only tree on the mountain (Tlevu Augla, 18/6/1986; Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986; Abokwa Baja, 27/7/1986; Augulaw Kulemdia, 13/6/1989). *Bikwa* will respond to their commands; they can tell it to grow, to sink into the ground, to put forth leaves or to let leaves fall, and it will obey. The spirit which animates *bikwa* is also involved in the exclusive nature of Ngolélé mountain, serving to keep away people who do not belong there. Glavda and Valé agreed that there was only one tree on Ngolélé, which they called *gwalve* (Zadeva Kumbaw, 29/10/1986). This may be related to either a general Glavda term for tree, *aghuviila*, or, more distantly, to the word for 'fig tree' in the same language, *ghijiva* (Rapp and Mühle 1969). My informants from around Mora could offer very little information on the actual characteristics of life at Ngolélé, either before or after the migration to the west.

*Fonio and the move to the east.* The migration east from Ngolélé is said by a number of informants to have been due to a drought and famine (Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986; Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986; Ajokfa, 17/5/1989; Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989; Mouchet 1947c; note that this tradition of famine is held by members of most of the groups I contacted, including the Plata Kapa but not the Plata Dumlelai -- Dumlelai informants said that the migration was connected with conflicts at Ngolélé [see below] or did not know why the *du ngolélé* left). This famine is in some ways anomalous, since it is said to have been caused by the effects of drought on 'fonio' (probably actually pearl millet, *Pennisetum americanum*, and not fonio, *Digitaria exilis*). The tradition says that the montagnards at Ngolélé were not familiar with 'fonio', and that they only planted it because of the drought. When it matured, they could not see the grains, which were 'covered' in the head, and thought that a disease must have struck their crop.

Accordingly, they starved, and eventually fled to the east, to the mountains which their descendants still occupy. As they left, an old woman decided to see whether there were grains inside the head of the 'fonio' and discovered that there were. She called to the departing people, but only some of them heard her and stayed behind, to live around Ngolélé. This presumably accounts for the breakup of the original group. During the same famine, the Valé moved from Shénéné to Ughwa Valé, the small inselberg just west of Keroua, for the same reason (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986; see also Wente-Lukas [1985:68] on this latter movement).

The Plata say either that one ancestor (variously named Plata or Bafañ) came from Ngolélé with the ancestors of the Dumwa, Gudul and Kudangala lineages or that the direct ancestors of the Dumlelai and Kapa lineages, Badza and Kapa, came together (*contra* Nyssens 1986; see also Mouchet 1947c, d). The Dumwa are descended from two immigrants, Aga and Abzeme (Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986; see also Mouchet 1947c). There is also a tradition that the Jeveriya lineage in Muraha territory is descended from a son of Abzeme (Mouchet 1947b, c). The ancestor of the Gudul who emigrated from Ngolélé is said to have been called Gudul (Ngaiya Sali, 28/10/1986); the ultimate Kudangala ancestor was Aduma (Mouchet 1947b).

The migration from Ngolélé was by a few families only, not by individuals, since people on their own could not evade the Wandala who controlled the plains. The *du ngolélé* share a reputation for being diviners and healers, so they came slowly, since they had to perform sacrifices and heal people whom they found ill along the way. Some informants state that they first went to Urza and stayed there for a year before the ancestors of the Plata and Dumwa moved to their present territories; others say that the ancestors of the Gudul and Kudangala arrived first, and the others later, but there is a good deal of confusion about the exact chronology of the movement. The speed and timing of the move is said to have been influenced by the presence of other individuals/groups who came from Ngolélé at the same time (see below). There were people occupying areas of the massif when the ancestors of the Plata and Dumwa arrived, but there was plenty of room for them to settle.

*Agzavrinja and his descendants.* Plata, Dumwa and other sources say that a number of other lineages are descended from people who came from Ngolélé along with the *du ngolélé*. Of these, the best-known are the Uldemé lineages which claim as an ancestor Agzavrinja, preeminent culture hero on the Uldemé massif; these include most of the medial lineages of Sama, Madavar, Vindelar and Dibon. This does not accord with previously published accounts of the traditions of the people of these lineages themselves, who all say that Agzavrinja came from Wandala territory (de Colombel 1985, 1986:20; Hallaire 1971:13; Mouchet 1947d) and, in some cases, that he was a defeated Wandala contender for the office of *tlikse*, fleeing from a victorious adversary. Mouchet (1947c) also found this latter tradition among the Muraha, concerning some of their lineages. De Colombel (1986), who has done the most thorough ethnography of the Uldemé to date, thinks that Agzavrinja might have originated among the Maya on the plains near the mountains.

Agzavrinja came to Uldemé territory, finding the Matsabaiyam and other lineages there. Through a series of tricks and with the aid of his supernatural powers, he gained control over the stones of the rain which had been the property of the Mejeleñ lineage and so over the massif (de Colombel 1986:19-23, 41, 43). He eliminated most of the former inhabitants and his descendants now comprise the bulk of the massif's population.

The Plata tell a different story about Agzavrinja, one which was in some respects corroborated by the Uldemé that I spoke with. In this story, Agzavrinja was indeed a great sorcerer and culture hero, but he came from Ngolélé at the same time as or slightly before the *du ngolélé* (Abokwa Baja, 27/7/1986, 7/8/1986, 26/10/1986; Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986; Ajokfa, 17/5/1989; Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989; Baje Maugjeta, 12/6/1989; see also Mouchet 1947b, c, d), and thus the descendants of Agzavrinja and the Plata, Dumwa and the Urza lineages are actually related. He left because of a quarrel at Ngolélé with another sorcerer there and, in one account, he was pursued by the Wandala as he came east. He is said to have been like '...the sun that kills people...' (Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989) and he deployed a number of

miracles in order to facilitate his escape to Uldemé. The Plata are distinctly ambivalent about this hero, whose descendants rule the territory that they live in. They seem to have the proper admiration for a champion of such power but, in their accounts, they also hid from him at Urza, on the journey from Ngolélé, because they were afraid of him.

It is difficult to know what to make of this story. Uldemé of Madavar lineage confirm that they are related to the Plata and that they came at the same time from Wandala territory in the west, and they do know of Ngolélé. One man, Baja Maugjeta (12/6/1989), even says that the Dumwa and Urza followed Plata and Agzavrinja here, and that the former came from Ngolélé, but only says that Plata and Agzavrinja came from Wandala 'in the west'. Dumwa and Urza informants, and a few Plata, have no tradition of Agzavrinja's presence on the journey from Ngolélé.

The Plata are the only group who ever connect the traditions of Ngolélé and Agzavrinja. This might be due to the Plata's rather anomalous position in Uldemé territory, open to the cultural influences of the large maximal lineage which dominates the massif and which claims descent from Agzavrinja. The tradition of Plata kinship with Agzavrinja might well be an appropriation -- probably a sensible one from a political perspective -- of an Uldemé tradition by the smaller group. Two facts may argue otherwise. In the first place, some Uldemé of Madavar lineage at least do acknowledge that the relationship exists much as the Plata says it does.

The second, admittedly tenuous, indication is that the name 'Agzavrinja' itself contains a particle *agza-*, similar to one found in the names of a number of other traditional ancestors who are identified with the west. Thus, we have Badza (and possibly Bafañ?) as an Plata ancestor, Aga and Abzeme/Abjama (Mouchet 1947c) as the first Dumwa and the Kudangala descending from Aduma (perhaps Abjama again). A figure closely connected to Agzavrinja and his exploits, often his son or brother, is Ajagwalda. Similarly, the particle is an element in the names of a number of early Wandala culture heroes and *tlikse*, who are also associated with the west, the region around Keroua and Ngolélé (see below). This element does not consistently appear in

the names of lineage ancestors among other groups in the study area. This question of the relations between the descendants of Agzavrinja and the *du ngolélé* certainly warrants further study in the context of this dissertation; if the two groups are related, the number of people descended from immigrants from Ngolélé (or the west in general) would just about double.

*Other lineages and Ngolélé.* There is also a tradition that the Jeveriya lineage of Muraha comes from Ngolélé, and that it shares a common ancestry with the Dumwa; my only long-term Muraha informant (Tacha Dia -- himself of Gagadama lineage) confirmed this (Tacha Dia, 23/3/1986, 13/11/1986; Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989; Augulaw Kulemdia, 13/6/1989; Mouchet 1947c). Like the *du ngolélé*, the Jeveriya are said to be skilled in the use of medicines.

The Valawa lineage of Urza is also said to have come from the west, although most often not explicitly from Ngolélé (Ngaiya Sali, 28/10/1986, 4/11/1986; Ajokfa, 17/5/1989). This lineage is probably to be identified with the 'Valé' described by Mouchet (1947b) (and not the 'Mboko' as he thought), who are said to originate among the lineage of the same name near Keroua. The Valawa are sometimes known as the 'Valawa-Maya' and are also said to have connections with Maya groups in the west. I was never able to find a Valawa informant able or willing to talk to me about the history of his lineage, which is at present very small.

As with the descendants of Agzavrinja, one element that may indicate a connection between the Valawa and the *du ngolélé* is their name. *Valawa(k)* is the *pelasla* term for 'red beer', a beer used in rituals to which cailcédrat oil has been added for bitterness. The word chiefly carries a connotation of 'redness' (Mouchet [1947b] translates *valawa* as 'the red'), and has a reddish-brown tinge rather different from the light brown of normal sorghum beer. The same word is used in Muraha for the cailcédrat (*Khaya senegalensis*) itself, and also for the beer (Mouchet 1947c; Diane Lyons, personal communication). The beer tastes much like quinine, a sensation often given added dimensions by the addition of fat and red pepper; to a European, and to some Plata, it is not a pleasant drink. The use of this beer seems to be restricted to the

massif south of Mora and the nearby inselbergs. I have, indeed, heard claims by Plata, Dumwa and Urza that only they use this bitter beer, but the Muraha and Muyan (Richard 1977:192) at least do as well.

The beer *valawa(k)* is said by the Plata and Urza to have come from the west, from Ngolélé. To Mouchet (1947b, c), the word was one of the few known words from *aldowa*, which he describes as "...the ancient language of the Melgwa...", furnishing another relation to groups in the west. These indications are not conclusive, but taken together they indicate that the Valawa may be at least conceptually connected to the territory around Ngolélé.

There is a possibility that other lineages can also trace their ancestry to immigrants from Ngolélé or the area around it, but there is at this point no conclusive proof of this. One Muktelé lineage, the DakaDaô-Wasa, is said to have come from Glavda territory about six generations ago (Juillerat 1971:59, 61, 66). Podokwo traditions state that they originated in the north, coming from Waza, but they have certainly incorporated lineages from other groups, including Mafa, Uldemé and Kanuri (Tacha Dia and others, 23/4/1986; Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986; Jegwevé Gwada, 9/11/1986; Ugshé Vale, 10/11/1986; see also Lembezat [1952], Siran [n.d.]). According to my own informants, no Podokwo lineages originated in the west. There are drastic differences between the information I gathered on Podokwo lineages and traditions and that given by Siran (n.d.); he states (p.2) that the Dizla lineage came from a place called Zlala-g-va, possibly in Nigeria. This sounds, of course, very much like 'Zelideva', but I came across no such tradition in my own work and it is not mentioned by Lembezat (1952). The connection may exist, but as yet it cannot be proven. The *parekwa* language of the Podokwo is quite closely related to *wandala* and the languages spoken by the Glavda/Valé, Laamang and other montagnards living on the Mandara massif in Nigeria.

*Conclusion.* A widespread tradition exists that the ancestors of a number of montagnard lineages living in the Mandara massif around Mora came from the west, more specifically from a locality in the extreme northwestern extension of the massif

in Nigeria. There is a core group of lineages -- Plata, Dumwa, Jeveriya, Gudul and Kudangala -- about which these traditions are more or less unanimous, and another group which may also be related -- Valawa and possibly the descendants of Agzavrinja and certain Muktelé and Podokwo lineages. There are supposed to be ritual and kinship links among the core lineages, and more distantly with the descendants of those people who stayed behind at Ngolélé. The *du ngolélé* are presumed to have certain cultural features in common: the ability to go back on to the mountain of Ngolélé; the ability to command the tree *bikwa* there; a certain reputation as diviners and healers; power over the magical vine *mawndi sarai*; the use of *valawak* in rituals.

We may, of course, question whether this was a real migration. The traditions of the *du ngolélé* might simply be a shared set of cultural elements used to explain the origins of different groups. There are a number of these sets to be found in the study area. A number of groups living in the massif say that their ancestor came to the territory that they now occupy looking for a stray cow (an extremely widespread tradition in Africa), while others ascribe the arrival to the pursuit of a rolling gourd or pot. Many peoples trace their ancestry to a particular location, Waza, perhaps, or Gaouar in the south. These traditions are common cultural elements shared among numbers of groups, just as beliefs in the natural powers of twins or the protective efficacy of roulette decoration on pots can be found throughout the mountains. Similar traditions are found throughout Africa; stories of origins at Mecca among (usually recent) Muslim groups are a good example. In some cases these origin traditions may be familiar embellishments on stories of real migrations, but they often serve to obscure the origins of certain groups. The difficulty lies in deciding which elements of traditions are customary ornaments and which describe real events. The tradition of the journey east from Ngolélé seems fairly straightforward, with no wandering gourds. We must also remember that the story was corroborated by groups living around Ngolélé now.

There is no trace of Ngolélé left in the speech of the *du ngolélé*. They all speak *pelasla*, a language rather different from that spoken by their Nigerian cousins at Ngolélé and Keroua and only associated with the eastern regions where they are now found. *Pelasla* is a member of the Mboku sub-group of Biu-Mandara, while those western languages are of the Wandala sub-group. It should be noted, however, that *pelasla* and the other language in its group, *mbuko*, do not much resemble the languages of neighbouring eastern peoples. On the other hand, the general agreement about the details of the migration and kinship relations evident in the traditions of the *du ngolélé* and of the Glavda and Valé who still live in the ancestral area is extremely impressive. It is one thing to have a group claiming to have emigrated from a place, but one's faith in their account is considerably strengthened by talking to locals whose traditions encompass their departure.

Details such as the role of millet in the migration may buttress the traditions to an extent, since this crop is not widely used in the massif around Mora at present but is much more common around Keroua. There is no archaeological evidence for or against the move, although *pelasla*-speakers in general produce a ceramic suite which is somewhat different from that of the other montagnard groups in the region around Mora. It does not really resemble Glavda ceramics, either, and there are similarities to the ceramics recovered from Mehé Djidderé (see Chapter 8).

There may be good evidence for migration of the ancestors of the *du ngolélé* and some for the Valawa, but the case for the descendants of Agzavrinja is more problematical. The Uldemé speak *wuzlam*, a language of the Mafa group of Biu-Mandara, which is closely related to neighbouring languages. There is a corpus of tradition which traces their origin to the Wandala (or possibly just the plains), perhaps in the west. Some Uldemé do say that they share an ancestry with the *du ngolélé* (particularly the Plata), although that I spoke mostly with Uldemé informants who had fairly frequent contacts with the latter group. Their ceramics resemble those of the *pelasla*-speakers in some respects, while in other ways they are like those of the Mada

and other groups to the south (see Chapter 8). Their relations to the *du ngolélé*, and those of the Podokwo and Muktelé lineages mentioned, await further study.

### *Ngolélé and the Wandala expansion*

I have, of course, tentatively located Ngolélé on the Mandara massif close to the traditional capital of the Wandala at Keroua. This is not the only relation between the groups, at least not to my informants of the *du ngolélé*, the Glavda and their neighbours. It is commonly held by montagnards of these groups that, while they dwelt at Ngolélé before the eastward migration of the *du ngolélé*, the Wandala dwelt in the same vicinity and they lived generally at peace with one another (Abokwa Baja, 8/7/1986, 26/10/1986; Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/10/1986; Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986; Ajokfa, 17/5/1989; Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication). At this time, the montagnards could live on the plains and go to markets without fear of being harassed or captured as slaves. The Wandala and the montagnards are held, in fact, to have been children of one father and one mother.

There is a traditional explanation given in most cases to account for the breakdown of this peaceful relationship. In this story, the father of the Wandala, *du ngolélé* and Glavda/Valé (and, in some cases, of Agzavrinja) decided that his children should be circumcised and become Muslims, because he saw that "...the Muslims were rulers..." His wife chose the clever, handsome children and hid them in caves in the mountains, leaving the ugly, stupid ones at home; she did not want the good ones circumcised. Her husband came home and asked where all the good children were. His wife denied any knowledge of them. The husband became angry and, after they had argued for some time, told her, "Go to the mountains with the children, but you will have to fear the ones who are left". She left, and the ugly children left at home became Muslim Wandala and hunted their erstwhile siblings, who have lived ever since as refugees in the mountains. There are variations on the story. In one case, it is said that the father hid the children in the mountains. In another, the decision to

circumcise the children came after a quarrel between mother and father. This account captures its essential nature.

This story is not unique to those montagnard groups who trace their origins to Ngolélé and the country around it. Some accounts of the Mukulehé lineage in Podokwo territory give a more elaborate but essentially identical account of the separation between their ancestors and those of the Wandala (Lembezat 1952:42-43), as do the men of the Makdaf lineage of the Muktelé just to their south. (The Mukulehé informants with whom I spoke in 1986 did not mention this story.) Juillerat (1971:64) thinks that the two lineages, Mukulehé and Makdaf, are probably related. Some Muraha lineages give similar, although not identical, accounts. Variations on this tradition have been reported by Vincent among the Mofu to the south of the study area. In the latter two cases, I do not believe that the Wandala are explicitly mentioned.

The occurrence of such a story is of great interest, reflecting as it does a consciousness of kinship between the montagnard populations of the study area and the Muslims of the surrounding plains. This consciousness is not entirely one-sided, since the Wandala and Fulbe, for example, retain traditions of a pre-Muslim period in their histories, but they tend to ignore the genealogical relationship with the *kirdi*, the 'pagans', that this implies. The fact that this specific tradition is so widespread among different lineages claiming origins in different areas suggests that it derives, not from remembrance of a specific historical event or process, but rather from cultural elements shared between a large number of montagnard groups -- rather like the traditions concerning wandering gourds or twins that I mentioned above.

The idea that differentiation at Ngolélé took place in this way may thus be an accurate reflection about a social process which was widespread in the plains around the Mandara Mountains, rather than an accurate account of a particular event. The only priority that the people who originated at Ngolélé could claim would be that, in fact, the Wandala state as we know it did originate around Keroua, only a few

kilometres east of Ngolélé, and it was from there that the Wandala embarked upon their first conquests.

It is almost certain, however, that the Wandala population was never homogeneous, especially after the start of their conquests. They incorporated large numbers of people from among the populations they conquered, and others besides (see for example Forkl 1983; Hallaire 1965; Mohammadou 1982; Morrissey 1984). So did other predatory groups; recall the Podokwo comment that the people who stayed at Waza after the ancestors of the Podokwo left for the mountains "...became like Kanuri..." (Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986; Ugshé Vale, 10/11/1986). The Sao and Maya must have, in part, disappeared this way. It is not surprising that montagnards seeking to explain the split between themselves and the peoples of the plains, and still conscious of a previous relationship, would incorporate the adoption of Islam into a common tradition to explain the split. It is important to remember that the Wandala state -- as opposed to certain elements of its population -- adopted Islam only in the early eighteenth century, well after the definition of its predatory nature. It was not Islam which first drove the ancestors of the montagnards into the hills, although it may well have hastened the process (Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986).

The other account of Wandala separation from their montagnard kin was told to me only by two Plata Dumlelai men (Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986; Ahlama Mauganwé, 17/5/1989). In one case only (T.A.) did this occur at Ngolélé. In this account, one day a man on the plains bought a horse. Before that, people in the area were scared of horses, and would run when they saw one, but he started to use it against other people, hunting them. Those other people had to move into the mountains, while his descendants became the Wandala. This tradition is not widespread, and it may be merely the perception of two old and observant men.

It is nonetheless interesting, since it identifies one element -- the horse -- which was probably essential in the establishment of a predatory state in the southern Chad Basin and the differentiation of the people of that state from their neighbours. These neighbours would serve as target populations for slave-raids, furnishing the

wherewithal to purchase more horses and goods. Islam might easily serve as another such element, connecting the Wandala state more firmly to its Muslim neighbours by ties of religion and reducing -- but not eliminating (Barth 1965 [1857-1859]:2:341-342) -- the dangers of slave raids on the Wandala population by other Muslims, while at the same time severing one type of relationship with the 'pagans' living in the mountains. To the extent that horses and Islam are seminal characteristics of a Sudanic state, these traditions are at least testimony of acute observation.

*Wandala and montagnard traditions of origin.* This may have moved us rather further away from traditions of Wandala origins near Ngolélé, that tranquil place where they lived at peace with the *du ngolélé* and their brothers, than is useful. There is nothing in these traditions to convince us that historical fact is reflected here. The earliest known Wandala centre was near Ngolélé, and that is all we can say. At the same time, the transcribed oral history set down in the early sections of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* (Mohammadou 1982:16-25) does offer some fascinating parallels with montagnard oral history in the study area -- and these deal with an area very close to Ngolélé.

The sequence of events given in the first part of the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* has already been examined in Chapter 4. The account of the creation of the Wandala people is striking. It appears to combine a set of themes widespread among Muslim and other polities in the region (Mohammadou 1982:211-214, 220-222) with elements also found in the oral traditions of a number of montagnard groups. Most of the former themes can be ascribed to later periods, on the basis of the presence of Muslim names and itineraries, for example (Mohammadou 1982:221). They may well be borrowings from the Kanuri or Baghirmi. The latter themes, which resemble montagnard ones, are of more interest.

A lone immigrant (Bukar Ayssâmi) settles among an autochthonous people and marries. Due to his abilities, he eventually becomes chief. His children multiply and become politically dominant, ousting the autochthones from control of the territory of the group. The descendants of the autochthones are nevertheless

confirmed as ritual leaders -- the *tlija* -- because of their connections with the indigenous divinities of the land. In later accounts, the descendants of the culture hero deprive the indigenous leaders of Doulo and Gréa of their power through a set of tricks and ruses, as did Agzavrinja and others in the mountains. (The dynamics of similar processes, and the relations between first-comers and late-comers in general, are examined by Kopytoff [1987:52-61].) Resemblances to the story of Agzavrinja's arrival among the Uldemé, Timhé Wadza's arrival in Podokwo territory (see below) and to similar stories told in other parts of the massif are obvious. Note that the arrival of the *du ngolélé* and most other groups in the area was rather more prosaic.

As noted above, *agza-/aja-/abja-* and similar elements are commonly found in the names of montagnard culture-heroes, particularly those concerned with migrations. *Agza-vrinja*, *Aja-gwalda*, *Badza*, *Aga* and *Abja-ma/Abze-me* are examples. The lists of Wandala *tlikse* provided in the *Kirgam-a-Wandala* offer very similar examples in a number of cases. These include *Aja Makiya* -- who reconciled the immigrant dynasty with the autochthonous leaders and first held the title *tlikse* -- *Ajwa Vongola*, *Ajwa Djokwa*, *Ajwa Kossa*, *Azwa Kirsha* (Mohammadou 1982:6-12). In addition, the first named ruler of Keroua, who ruled before the takeover of the Wandala dynasty there, was *Agakouma Jato* (Mohammadou 1982:19, 21) -- a name with basically the same construction in the same area near Ngolélé. This structure was one associated with Wandala *tlikse* until quite recent times.

Mohammadou (1982: 214-217) provides Melgwa and Wandala terms for 'land'/'territory'/'country' as *ishge* and *ekse* or *egze*, respectively. Thus, the term *tlikse* itself may be expanded to *tlihi-egze*, 'chief of the land'. I do not have sufficient knowledge of the languages in the study area to attempt to evaluate this reconstruction, nor can I definitively say that these terms are related to those of montagnard culture heroes. In the mountains, these proper names are not reduced to semantic components and it is not possible to tell whether these *agza-/aja-/abja-* elements do have components dealing with territories, with 'land'. I think it highly probable, however, that the resemblance between the names of montagnard culture

heroes of the *du ngolélé* and the names for (especially early) Wandala *tlikse* is not accidental.

There is no need to claim exotic origins for the Wandala; indeed, linguistic and archaeology strongly indicate that no such origins exist. Their traditions of origin seem to be a variation of those of montagnard groups, dignified by being written down. The similarity of the Wandala traditions and the traditions concerning Agzavrinja may argue against a literal interpretation of the latter stories, as given by the Plata Dumlelai, in which Agzavrinja came from Ngolélé with them. It does not, however, vitiate the traditions of migration of the *du ngolélé* themselves, which are quite separate, and it does tie the Wandala more closely to their montagnard neighbours.

In sum, the traditions concerning a prehistoric breakup of an ancestral group which included the ancestors of the Wandala and of different montagnard groups probably do not refer to specific historical occurrences; they are too similar for that. The Wandala probably did not break away from other groups at Ngolélé, or at Waza. On the other hand, it may well be a common account of the process of differentiation between the population of a Wandala polity in the process of becoming a predatory state and the population of other, originally fairly similar groups which lived alongside them and then were gradually forced to retreat into the mountains before a technological and organizational structure that they could not match. Both horses and Islam probably had a great deal to do with defining that structure.

#### *Journey from the North: the migrations from 'Waza'*

*Immigrant lineages.* A large number of montagnard lineages claim to have migrated to the Mandara Mountains from 'Waza', which they identify as the large inselberg bearing that name and lying about 60 kilometres northeast of Mora (Figure 6.1). It is possible that the prominent nature of that land-mark, visible from the massif, has led to its identification as a point of origin in a number of traditions regarding immigration from the north. At this point it is impossible to tell.

Most of the Podokwo lineages trace their ancestry to culture heroes who arrived from Waza, although they do not all claim the same ancestor (*contra* Siran n.d.). The Mukulehé maximal lineage claims that their ancestor Gwelma or Blemté arrived from Waza, in some accounts as one of the brothers hidden by their mother from a father who pronounced them slaves (Lembezat 1952), in others simply because "...things were not going well for him there..." (Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986; Jegwevé Gwada, 9/11/1986). As with *bikwa* at Ngolélé, there is a tamarind tree at Waza, *moota wize*, that was worshipped for some time. No Mukulehé goes to Waza now, though, because the people left there have all become Serrata (Kanuri). It is claimed that the Uldegaiya, Namba and Tala Dabara came from Waza at the same time, but not that there was any relation between the immigrants.

Tala Dabara origins at Waza are also claimed by members of that Podokwo lineage (Ugshé Vale, 10/11/1986; see also Lembezat 1952:90). In this case, the ancestor Timhé Wadza came to the mountains searching for a large bull which had followed a gourd vine from Waza to the present Tala Dabara territory. When he arrived there, he could not persuade the bull to come back and eventually settled there, after being welcomed by the Mdakédye people that he found living there and, eventually, becoming their chief -- another case of this theme. Again, there is a belief in Tala Dabara that most of the Podokwo do come from Waza, although lineages from other places now live among them. The people who were left at Waza 'became like Kanuri'. The most interesting element of these Podokwo traditions is their lack of commonalty. There is no claim of common ancestry among these lineages, nor of a common mechanism for movement. They simply claim to have come from the same locality, and to have left relatives there who have since 'become Kanuri'.

Among the Muktelé, the Makdaf lineage also claims descent from people originating at Waza; they are supposed to have been the earliest settlers there, only the autochthones having a longer history in Muktelé territory (Juillera 1971:61, 64-65). As mentioned above, their account of the move from Waza closely resembles the stories of the schism between Wandala and montagnards at Ngolélé or that of

Mukulehé origins given by Lembezat above, with six handsome brothers hidden by their mother and six ugly ones inheriting from their father.

A number of the Muraha lineages living on the massif just south of Mora and around the Doulo inselberg (the Kwawvré) claim ancestors who immigrated from Waza (Tacha Dia and others, 23/3/1986; Mouchet 1947c), either because of an epidemic or attacks by Arabs. According to Mouchet, at least two separate movements were involved and the immigrants were related to the Melgwa, but this is not confirmed by more recent sources. My own Muraha informants were rather young, which may help explain the lack of detail of their accounts. According to Mouchet (1947b), the immigrants were named after Bilgémé, ancestor of a group which has now almost disappeared, and Katsaka, ancestor of the Muraha maximal lineage, whose descendants still make up most of the inhabitants of the massif.

There are no traditions of Urza or 'Vamé-Mbremé' lineages originating at Waza, although the Maya lineage found at Urza did come from the northwest; Doulo is, however, perhaps too close to count. According to Mouchet (1947d), the Muriñ lineage of Uldemé came from Waza, while de Colombel (1986:19) says that the Mejeleñ lineage originated there. Hallaire (1971) states that lineages in Hodogwai territory and those of Bister and Meouré (which includes Mejeleñ -- de Colombel [1984:16]) originated at Waza.

The terminology of Uldemé lineages used by these sources are sometimes difficult to reconcile with my own data -- which probably simply indicates that the lineage makeup of montagnard groups is complicated and contradictory in general -- and it is quite possible that there is some overlap in the kin groups said to have come from Waza. These accounts certainly do indicate, however, a tradition of migration from that point by some Uldemé lineages before the arrival of Agzavrinja. There is no evidence of an origin at Waza for any of the Mada or Muyan lineages, although the preeminent maximal lineage in Muyan territory claims that its ancestor came from Doulo because of "...famine and troubles..." (Richard 1977:36), although there seems to be no claim that he was of Maya extraction.

A claim of Maya ancestry is made for one of the Mboku maximal lineages (Mouchet 1947a), while another (Chibék) claims to have originated somewhere around Mora, but in both cases these migrations seem to have been comparatively recent, probably sometime during the nineteenth century. Among the Zulgo, Gemjek, Mofu and Mafa, there are isolated accounts of certain lineages arriving from Waza, but none of these peoples claim a predominant origin there (Martin 1981:224-225; .Mouchet 1957; .Vincent 1981; von Graffenried 1984:49-50, 62;;).

In sum, among the Muktelé, Podokwo and Muraha in the northeastern part of the massif, a large proportion of the population belongs to lineages which trace their origins to Waza. Further to the south, such lineages still exist, but they tend to be small and somewhat subordinate. This tends to reinforce the idea that a real movement of people is remembered in these traditions. It is quite possible that stories of origin at Waza -- a rather prominent landmark on the plains -- might be, in fact, simply shared cultural elements, without any historical underpinning, but this would be mostly likely to occur in regions where such traditions already existed and could be adopted. The adoption of such traditions by lineages living in the southern part of Mafa territory would be less understandable, particularly since there are different, but equally strong, traditions of origin (at Gudur, for example) in those regions.

*The Waza immigration and the Sao and Maya.* A number of researchers hold that traditions of origin 'at Waza' in fact refer to migrations from further to the north and east, from Kotoko territory for example (Boulet et al. 1984:135; Juillerat 1971:61; Siran n.d.:2). Waza is discounted as a point of origin, it seems, because of 'historical ties' (such as those claimed for some Sao by Mohammadou [1982:85]) between the peoples of the northeastern massif and the ethnic groups around the Logone, and because Waza is not an important population centre today. It may well be, however, that 'Waza' serves as a conspicuous symbol for the southern *firki* plains in general. There also seems to have been ritual elements of identification with Waza, in the tree *moota wize* worshipped there at least (Mtsa Gwada, 6/11/1986). This is similar to the stories about *bikwa* at Ngolélé, and both may be related to the idea of a central, vital

territory which holds among a number of the montagnard groups. Among the Plata, for example, these territories are *fadi dumlelai* and *fadi kapa*, respectively the centres of the two sub-lineages, where ancestral graves and many of the lineage sacred places are located.

If Waza was such a location, it could be claimed as a point of origin by people who actually resided some distance away from the inselberg itself. The archaeological data examined in Chapter 5 and linguistic relations make it very probable that prehistoric cultural connections did exist between the massif and the plains closer to the Logone and Lake Chad now occupied by the Kotoko, but it seems most parsimonious to accept for the time being that the ancestors of the lineages claiming a Waza origin did in fact come from the general area around that inselberg -- thus Sao, perhaps, but 'southern Sao' or even Maya. This has the advantages of not requiring us to posit a migration from the Logone for which little evidence exists, nor of contradicting oral histories needlessly.

There are two striking elements in the migration traditions of the northern lineages claiming origins at Waza. (Relevant ethnohistorical information is not available for the Mafa and other southern lineages.) First, there is no claim made of a coherent migration of a single related group of people, as there is among the *du ngolélé*. The different Podokwo and Murahā lineages appear to have arrived independently, although the arrival of the ancestor(s) of the Podokwo Mukulehé and the Muktelé Makdaf may be related. There are thus no relations of 'brotherhood', fictive or otherwise, recognized between these lineages. In the second place, a number of these traditions state that impetus for the emigration was provided by conflict with other groups, in different cases Wandala, Kanuri, Arabs and Kotoko. Famine is mentioned less often.

Archaeological survey on the plains to the north of the massif, especially on the *firki*, indicate that that region once was inhabited by a settled agricultural (or agropastoral) population, probably living at higher population densities than the Arabs and others who live there today. The same is true on the southern side of the Bama Ridge;

the evidence for mound clusters around Mehé and for settlements at Gréa, Aissa Hardé and other such locations contrasts with the situation in the recent past. Some of the inhabitants of these communities were probably absorbed by incoming groups -- Wandala, Kanuri, Shuwa Arabs -- as my Podokwo informants said of their erstwhile relatives at Waza.

It is very probable, however, that others took refuge in the massif which can so easily be seen when one looks south over the flatness of the clay plains. The ceramics found on sites like Mehé Djiddere resemble those made in the mountains. Traditions of migrations to the massif from Waza substantiate these links. In Chapter 5 and earlier in this chapter, I advanced the idea that the plains were steadily becoming a more dangerous place throughout the early-/mid-second millennium A.D., due to population increases and the incursions of newer and/or larger polities, and that this caused the progressive relocation of populations to communities near or on the massif and/or inselbergs. I think that stories of immigration from 'Waza' are probably memories of movement by people of these groups who sought to escape the increasing dangers of the plains by settling within the massif itself.

*The Nigerian montagnard and plains groups: problems of data comparability*

The separate analysis of Nigerian and Cameroonian 'pagan' groups really defeats the purpose of this work, which aims for an integrated investigation of culture history on both sides of a recent, artificial border. This separation is demanded by the differences in data quantity and quality between Cameroon and Nigeria. Detailed, modern ethnographies of most of the Nigerian part of the study area do not, as yet, exist. There are honourable exceptions, such as Vaughan's (1960, 1964, 1970, 1973) various works on the Marghi. Very little research has been carried out among the much smaller societies living on the northwestern extension of the massif; most of it has been done by linguists and few of them were interested in the collection of detailed accounts of the traditions of those groups. In many cases, the only sources available are Meek's works from sixty years ago (Meek 1925, 1931). It is difficult to

decide whether general differences between the traditions of Cameroonian and Nigerian groups are real or due to limitations in the data available.

That being said, it still appears useful to examine the data on traditions of group origin and migration in the Nigerian part of the study area, while keeping the limitations on those data in mind. In the first place, a number of groups claim to have come from the plains to the north of the massif (Table 6.1). These include the Hedkala lineage of Laamang (Wente-Lukas 1985:248), the Melgwa (Mohammadou 1982), certain Marghi and Sukur groups (Kirk-Greene 1960; Meek 1931:1312; Vaughan 1970:75; Wente-Lukas 1985:261, 320) and possibly some Ngosi (Boulet 19984). The Hedkala at least say that they were driven out of Bornu by the Kanuri, and Marghi and Sukur traditions also maintain that a relationship with the Kanuri existed. These traditions are thus somewhat similar to those recording movement from Waza, in that they record a reduction of 'pagan' territories in the plains to the north of the Mandara Mountains.

There also appears to be a tradition of movement from the south. Thus the Gevoko and Guduf say that they came from Kapsiki/Higi territory about 50 km to the south and the Dghwede claim to have moved a shorter distance from Hidé territory in what is now Cameroon (Wente-Lukas 1985:76, 137, 143). However, many of the recorded migrations in this region seem to have involved travel over only very short distances, perhaps 20 km or less, and in many cases groups claim to have originated in essentially the areas they live in today. Thus, the Glavda and Valé claim to have always occupied the same regions they now inhabit (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986, 13/11/1986), originating at Ngwoshé, the lower slopes of the Zelideva Hills (and not the village of Ngoshi/Ngweshe 10 km to the south, as Wente-Lukas [1985:138] states). Other, *laamang*-speaking lineages living along the top and the western slopes of the same massif also appear to be autochthonous, including the Zelideva (Wente-Lukas 1985:247-248). Most of the other enumerated groups in the northwestern part of the massif seem to have arrived in their present territories after

migrations within that quite confined area. These include other *laamang*-speaking lineages, the Chinine and other groups.

In contrast to the eastern part of the study area, non-Muslim plains groups were able to survive pressure from the Kanuri and Wandala states and the Fulbe of Adamawa in what is now Nigeria. Within this region, a number of these groups were able to accumulate considerable power. This was probably due to the fact that much of this region was a frontier area for these Muslim states (see Kopytoff 1987), and to the defensive possibilities of the nearby massif and inselbergs. It certainly seems to have been somewhat of a no-man's-land when Barth and Rohlf's travelled through it (see Chapter 4). All of these plains groups (the Melgwa and some Higi, Marghi and Sukur groups) have traditions of long-distance moves from other areas to their recent locations, mostly from the north and east.

In very marked contrast to Cameroon, a number of the Nigerian montagnard groups claim to either be autochthonous or to have migrated only very short distances to arrive at their present territories. The migrations which did occur seem to have been confined to the massif itself, with very little movement through plains territories. This is particularly the case among the groups living around the northern extremity of the massif, including the Glavda and many Laamang. Groups further to the south traditionally arrived in their territories from rather further away, many from Gudur or Bornu.

If we accept that montagnard traditions of migration do have an historical component -- that they are not simply variations and recombinations of elements shared by many groups -- this difference requires an explanation. This may lie in the different relations of these groups to the Wandala state. The southern groups, in addition to having migration traditions, also incorporated much more organized polities, such as those of Marghi and Sukur. Laamang, Glavda and other northern groups resemble those in the eastern study area, with political organization limited to the level of (rather small) lineages. They also exist in very close proximity to the heartland of the early Wandala kingdom, the region around Keroua.

Evidently, the Wandala state has interacted with montagnard groups in this area for a long time. Five hundred years ago, when Fra Mauro produced his world map and we gain our earliest acknowledgement of the existence of the Wandala, there was almost certainly less differentiation between the Wandala and montagnard groups than was later the case, after the Wandala state started to trade in slaves and expand at the expense of neighbouring groups, and especially after Islam was adopted. Montagnard traditions support this viewpoint. At the same time, their proximity meant that the montagnards living west of Keroua would be the first to feel the effects of any changes in Wandala priorities and orientations. If the Wandala wanted slaves, they would be the first to be hunted from the plains; movement within the mountains would have been possible, movement on the plains highly dangerous. It is also unlikely that the Wandala would have tolerated any increase in political complexity that close to their capital.

This would not have been the case further to the south, away from Wandala interference. There, in a region where the competitive advantages of state organization (the Kanuri first, and later the Wandala and Adamawa Fulbe polities) were visible but where the writ of those same states was often relatively weak, occasional indigenous states developed which retained their local characteristics until the present. Under these circumstances, it is understandable why the Glavda and Laamang on the one hand, and the Marghi and Sukur on the other, have such very different political organizations. The lack of traditions of long-distance migration in the northwestern massif is also unsurprising, if the area has been intensively controlled by the Wandala for a long time.

#### *Other population movements in the massif*

*Gudur.* Ngolélé and Waza are not the only traditional centres of emigration known in the northern Mandara Mountains. Further to the south, the traditions of a number of groups (including, but not limited to, communities among the Giziga, Kapsiki, Mofu, Mafa in Cameroon and the Higi, Sukur and related Marghi in Nigeria)

named Gudur (a location in Mofu territory on the edge of the massif, about halfway between Maroua and Mokolo) as their ultimate point of origin or, alternatively, as an important place where they stopped during their travels (Kirk-Greene 196070; .Martin 1981224; .Pontié 1981254, 257; .Seignobos 1988 Vaughan 197075; .Vincent 1981; Wente-Lukas 1985:158). Gudur is rather more than a simple location of origin, though; it also serves as an extremely important political and religious centre for lineages among these same groups and others (Jouaux n.d.). It is certainly a more important and better-known point of origin or sojourn in the Mandara massif than are Ngolélé or Waza, but most of the groups which claim an origin there are found south of the study area of this work. There does not seem to be any consciousness of genetic kinship between any of these groups, but shared relationships do exist.

In most cases, motives for the departure of groups from Gudur are not given in ethnographic sources. There are, however, at least two reasons for believing that traditions of Gudur origins can be rather less reliable than others known from within and around the study area. In the first place, as Martin (1981:224) points out, Gudur lies on the frontier between the massif and the western Diamaré plains and on a natural route of entry into the mountains. It might thus be recalled as an origin point by people who had come from further out on the plains. In the second place, the continuing ritual importance of Gudur may have led diverse groups to claim it as a point of origin -- thus, perhaps, partaking of its ritual power. It is at least possible that the ritual importance of Gudur (or at least that area) has a time-depth of some hundreds of years, given the intriguing reference to the ritual importance of 'Galeo' in Anania's *L'Universale fabbrica del mondo, overo cosmografia* (see Chapter 4).

*Migrations from Mafa territory.* The dominant maximal lineages in Muktelé and Mada territories, along with the Mupé and Sukulé lineages of Podokwo and important lineages in Zulgo and Gemjek, trace their ancestries to immigration from areas now occupied by the Mafa. In most cases, the exact points of origin are not known, but seem in most cases to lie somewhere around Mokolo -- 'Majewi', 'Wula' or 'Mafa'. These migrations are said to have occurred between five and ten generations

ago (perhaps 150 to 200 years?), but this may well be a cultural artefact. Traditions concerning motives of departure of these groups are not well known. The Muktelé Hlalagal lineage of Majewi fled that place in fear of vengeance after killing a chief (Juillerat 1971:65). The Guzogum lineage from Muktelé, the Podokwo Sukulé lineage and the Mada maximal patrilineage's migration were all concerned with following a cow to the location where they are now settled, a common theme in the region (Juillerat 1971:66; Lembezat 1952:89; Richard 1977:35) and over much of Africa. These groups do not claim any sort of kinship with one another.

It cannot be firmly claimed that these traditions have a basis in fact. They may, however, be connected to an northward expansion of Mafa-speaking groups which seems to have occurred in the late prehistoric period, and which concluded with the settlement of Mafa at Gréa, on the plains south of the Bama Ridge (Hallaire 1965; Mohammadou 1982:93-94). This expansion may have played a part in dissecting the distribution of Wandala languages spoken along the northern edge of the massif, with a number of such languages spoken in enclaves south of Keroua and Podokwo and Murahha spoken in the northeastern massif, but none in between. Its origins are at present obscure. The stone-built structures around Kuva indicate some development of political complexity in what is now the northern part of Mafa territory (see Chapter 5). This probably occurred in pre-Mafa times, although more research in certainly needed to settle this question.

*Migrations from the south.* The Uldemé Wazañrawa lineage, the various Murgur iron-working groups found throughout the inselbergs to the south and east of the massif, the Ftak lineage in Molkwo, the Gemjek Makabay lineage and Giziga and Zumaya groups within the Wandala polity all have traditions of an earlier period spent in Zumaya and/or Giziga territory on the Diamaré plains (de Colombel 1986; Morrissey 1984; Mohammadou 1982; Mouchet 1957; .Seignobos 1988; von Graffenried 1984). In many cases, the 'roots' of these groups are claimed to lie further to the east, along the Logone. (The language *zumaya* itself is indeed very closely related to the languages of the Masa and Musey populations of the Logone borders,

and only much more distantly so to the Biu-Mandara languages of the northern Mandara massif.) Their migrations northward seem to be related to the disruption of life in the Diamaré by the Fulbe *jihads* of the early nineteenth century and, to a lesser extent, by the establishment of Giziga polities there over 100 years earlier (Pontié 1981).

*Other migrations.* Montagnard lineages within the study area claim an extremely diverse set of locations as their places of origin. Some of these lie within the massif itself, while others are some distance away. An extremely provisional list of these lineages, with their origins and the approximate date of their migrations, is given in Table 6.1. Lineages which seem to have come from Waza or Ngolélé are not included in the table. It is quite certain that this list is not exhaustive and that there are mistakes in it, and in addition it conflates the migrations of groups which are now of very different sizes and of widely varying importance -- from the maximal lineage which includes nearly all of the Mada and Muktelé populations to the small, recently-immigrated minimal lineages/family groups of *du sheleñ* and *agwendele* among the Plata. Finally, the fact that the data are culled from very disparate sources reduces their utility. Table 6.1 will, I hope, nevertheless serve to give a very general idea of the magnitude of the population movements in the Mandara massif.

The diversity of points of origin given by members of different lineages is impressive. Virtually every part of the massif and every inselberg around it has furnished emigrants to other territories at different times in the past. Certain territories seem to have been particularly prone to this. Mada territory appears as the origin of a number of groups, which may well be connected to the Mada's long-standing -- and apparently deserved -- reputation as a belligerent, tumultuous group. During the campaign to move montagnards on to the plains to the east of the massif pursued during the 1950s and 1960s, Mada moved in relatively large numbers and for relatively long distances, apparently in part to escape the despotism of their chief. It is perhaps not surprising that they migrated in precolonial times, too.

Most of the identifiable movements of population groups listed in Table 6.1 were of quite short distances and were often quite recent. The migrations of the *agwendele* minimal lineage from Plata Kapa to Plata Dumlelai, and of the *du sheleñ* segment in the opposite direction, are good examples of this type of short-range migration. These are really no different than the common micro-migrations which occur within 'ethnic'/linguistic territories and which have been ably analyzed by Juillerat (1971) and other researchers. Indeed, it could be argued that migrations by lineage segments within Plata territory are, in fact, micro-migrations of this sort. However, the two Plata medial lineage segments, Kapa and Dumlelai, each exercise independent political authority and were historically often at conflict with one another; the movements by ancestors of the *du sheleñ* and *agwendele* minimal lineages are thus similar to other such movements between territories, albeit facilitated by kinship linkages that are extremely well-known to the groups involved. In addition, these minimal lineages are now integrated within the Kapa and Dumlelai units in much the same way as immigrant groups are incorporated within the territories of other, larger groups.

My point is that the migrations of groups of people within and around the study area have had widely varying results, but that despite this they should not be viewed as qualitatively different. It may be profitable to view this whole range of migrations as a continuum of social interactions. At one end of this continuum, the migration of people from Ngolélé or from around Waza, or the eastward expansion of the Wandala, have been of large magnitude and have had important effects upon the cultural composition of the massif and the lands around it. At the other extreme, short-range movements of individuals or families within one 'ethnic'/linguistic territory, often impelled by resource limitations and/or inheritance problems (the two frequently amounting to the same thing), have had much more local and limited effects. Most of the migrations listed in Table 6.1 probably fall somewhere between these two extremes. They have resulted in the establishment of significant local groups, lineages at different scales, which are important enough to be recognized as

'separate' groupings, often by outsiders. An examination of major traditions of migration in this area will drastically underestimate the true extent of population movement. Montagnard society was in constant flux, with individuals and groups always moving to find better conditions with remarkably little concern for 'ethnic' or linguistic boundaries. I know of no element which can reliably be used to differentiate 'micro'-migrations from 'macro'-migrations within the study area.

That being said, the results of these movements do apparently vary widely. The migration of the ancestors of the *du ngolélé* has obviously had more important consequences than did the more recent *agwendele* and *du sheleñ* movements. There are a number of possible reasons for this.

In the first place, it is probable that differences in the sizes of immigrant groups would have a bearing on the later success of those groups. There are, unfortunately, no available and reliable data on the different sizes of such groups. Informants are always vague on this issue and, indeed, we should not expect this sort of precise information to be accurately transferred through time, especially given the importance accorded in the study area (and beyond it) to individual culture heroes. The actual immigrant groups were probably not often large, probably maximally a few families in most cases.

The time elapsed since migration occurred may also affect the distinctiveness of the immigrant groups. Groups that immigrated quite recently will not necessarily be more distinctive and obvious than earlier immigrants, as one might expect. The relationships between autochthonous groups, earlier settlers and later immigrants are exceedingly complex; I have alluded to them in earlier sections of this work and will expand on this in Chapter 7. This complexity was not limited to the relations between autochthonous groups and immigrants, the former ritual experts and the latter political leaders. Earlier and later immigrants also had to be organized within local hierarchies of power, as discussed by Kopytoff (1987:49-61). Kopytoff's analysis is concerned with the frontier phenomenon in African history; in practice, frontiers are in this

context defined so loosely that the pre-colonial northern Mandara mountains may be so included.

His discussion of the tactics used by firstcomers to a territory to ensure their political dominance over later immigrants implies that, under some circumstances, successful latecomers may challenge that dominance and usurp earlier groups' power, or at least gain greater autonomy and power. Within the study area, informants say that this happened in Uldemé, Mada and Podokwo territories at least. In all of these cases, later immigrants' power increased at the expense of earlier immigrant groups. Thus, the visibility and distinctiveness of immigrant groups may vary according to the vagaries of fortune in their new homes.

A new immigrant group, arriving small and weak in a region, may begin its settlement under the protection of more powerful, established inhabitants. The historical and cultural distinctiveness of such a group would be suppressed, not particularly visible. In the difficult human and natural environment of the Mandara massif, episodes like local rains or locust infestations, diseases or raids, might have very drastic effects for good or ill on the fortunes of such a group. If those fortunes were good, that group might become stronger and thus acquire more autonomy and visibility. If they were bad, then that same group might eventually disappear, through absorption by neighbours and/or, in the most drastic cases, physical elimination.

The cultural strategies used to cope with the mountain environment were very diverse and included many elements which might affect the distinctiveness and autonomy of their practitioners. Small, suppressed groups seen today may potentially become important players on the north Cameroonian landscape in the future, assuming, of course, that the processes which have worked in the area for hundreds of years are still in operation. They may well be irrelevant, if the constitution of modern societies weakens traditional groupings.

## Conclusions

The recent ethnic situation in the study area has been one where Muslim states occupied the plains and small-scale 'pagan' societies inhabited the mountains. There are few exceptions, and they involve occupation of plains territory by non-Muslim groups in the west. Archaeological, historical and ethnohistorical data suggest that this situation is relatively recent, that before a few hundred years ago the mountains were only sparsely inhabited and the plains were occupied by non-Muslim communities -- perhaps at a higher population density than in more recent times.

I believe that the catalyst which transformed this earlier situation into the one we see today was the increase in influence of state-level societies in the study area and the related development of a slaving economy. The establishment of the state of Bornu to the southwest of Lake Chad began this process, but the Wandala became more locally important by the sixteenth century at least. In earlier periods, the Wandala do not seem to have been differentiated politically from small neighbouring polities like that of the Marghi (and possibly like Kuva, at a later period and on a small scale), and they both may well have owed their origins to the stimulus of Bornu to the north; numerous traditions speak of a time when montagnards did not have to be afraid of the Wandala, and could live in peace on the plains. At Keroua the Wandala were, however, well-placed to control the trade of iron to Bornu and to reap the material benefits of that trade -- horses and later firearms and other artefacts. They seem to have done so.

Iron was the first important export from the country around the Mandara Mountains. Slaves were the second, and eventually surpassed iron in significance. The first raids in the area were by the Kanuri, in the context of territorial expansion and then consolidation as well as slaving, but the southern plains may have been too far from the centres of Bornu to allow continuous control to be exercised. Kanuri difficulties would have been increased by the progressive abandonment of vulnerable plains sites by the Sao and related groups, and their movement toward the massif;

people who did not move were eventually absorbed by the incoming groups, as montagnards say. Thus the slaving frontier moved away from Bornu.

That frontier was, however, still well within reach of the Wandala. Their political organization and acquisition of horses (which, with ponies, do not seem to have been used in this area before) gave them a distinct tactical advantage, while developed iron-trading networks with Bornu would have made them familiar with that market. The image that montagnards' hold of themselves is that of refugees, of people who fled to the mountains to escape becoming 'slaves of the Wandala'. It appears that Wandala depredations emptied the plains north of the massif of non-Wandala -- and later of non-Muslim -- populations during the period between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries A.D. During that period, the slaving frontier moved further to the east and to the south, as the Wandala began to exploit the populations of the Diamaré and the borders of the Logone.

These developments set in train a complex series of migrations from the plains to the massif and inselbergs surrounding it. There have also been an extensive set of migrations within the confines of the massif itself, most probably due to the effects of widespread and intensive settlement. These have included high population densities and pressures on scarce resources, with the conflicts and crises which attend these problems. Immigrants met autochthonous peoples in different parts of the massif. These native populations were not numerous and they seem to have mostly occupied the peripheries of the mountains. Settlement by early immigrants was, by all accounts, quite peaceful, especially in comparison with the continual montagnard conflicts of later times.

Much of the migration from plains to mountains in the study area has come from the north, as one would expect. Donor communities in this case were the Sao and Maya, whose ancestors had probably inhabited the area through much of the Iron Age and who almost certainly spoke Chadic languages and were related to the Wandala. (It is interesting that Mouchet [1947b, c] says that the original language of a number of these groups was '*adowa*', persistently connecting this with the Melgwa

dialect of *wandala*.) Much of the northeastern edge of the massif is populated by groups claiming an origin at Waza or in the territory around there.

The other important migration tradition in the northeastern massif is that of the groups which hold in common a tradition of migration from the west, and more specifically from Ngolélé and the massif west of Keroua. These groups have inhabited their present territories since the beginning of the nineteenth century at least, since the names of those territories are given in Denham's account of his trip to Wandala. They retain strong traditions of conflict with the Wandala, and also of earlier kinship with those people. Their traditions of kinship may or may not be historically accurate; there are other data which suggest that perhaps they are.

They say that they left Ngolélé because of a famine. That might be the case; it should be noted, though, that if Wandala expansionism pushed other plains-dwelling groups into the massif, populations around Keroua would be among the first to be affected. Groups seeking to emigrate from the area around Keroua would have relatively few alternatives for movement. Travel to the north or further west would have been on to the plains, which would not be very useful. Movement to the south would be possible, but the current of migration in the northwestern extension of the massif was from south to north; Mafa, Gevoko, Guduf and Dghwede seem to have moved in that direction. The analogy of 'swimming against the current' is too facile and obvious to be accepted without demur, but there are no other traditions that I am aware of which speak of groups moving from north to south in the northwestern Mandara massif. Restrictions to movement in that direction may have involved the probably concurrent northward Mafa expansion around the Koza Plain and possibly the presence of small political units like Kuva in the mountains west of that plain. These problems would increase the attractiveness of an eastward movement to groups wishing to escape the region around Ngolélé and Keroua; there would still be the Koza Plain to cross, but the mountains on the other side might provide refuge. Other groups which cannot at present be connected with the Ngolélé migration, such as the DakaDaô-Wasa (Juillerat 1971) seem to have also used this route.

Other migrations into the survey area came from the south. Migrations from the Diamaré were almost certainly impelled by the disruptions in that region caused by the Giziga and then the Fulbe. Immigration further to the west seems to have originated in Mafa territory; the reasons for northward expansion from the country around Souledé remain at present obscure.

Almost no traditions speak of migration from the east, from the northern Diamaré and the Logone. The Zaré and 'Musgum' Urza groups mentioned by Mouchet (1947b), who are said to have come from Balda and Girvidig -- and of whom I could find no trace -- may be the sole exceptions. (There are at present numbers of people living on the plains surrounding the massif whose ancestors came from territories close to the Logone, or who came themselves, but these movements were relatively recent. I speak now of lineages incorporated within montagnard groups in the more distant past.) This is curious, given the extremely important and well-documented east-west migration from the Logone to the southern Diamaré by different groups. Groups like the Murgur, which arrived in the area from the southeast, and the Zumaya trace their origins to the country around the Logone, but they do not seem to have arrived there directly.

It is difficult to conceive of reasons for this absence of westward migration, given that people seem to have travelled in almost every other conceivable direction in the area. There are no obvious physical or political barriers to movement between the Logone and the massif at, say, the latitude of Mora. The flooded *yaéré* in what is now Waza Park might have offered seasonal difficulties, but not permanent ones. Musgum populations were targeted for slave raids by the Wandala, Kanuri and others. It is possible that the riverine environment and large populations along the Logone itself offered some protection from raids, although not as much as did the Mandara massif. The presence of reserves of iron and slaves later exploited by the Wandala in the southern Diamaré may be a partial reason for east-west movement there.

This situation may also be reflected in Iron Age archaeological remains found on sites on the plains. It appears that materials from Salak, near Maroua, are in some

ways more similar to artefacts from Mdaga, much further north near the Logone in Chad, than are artefacts from Mehé Djiddere, much closer and east of Mora (see Chapter 5). Present-day populations along the Logone occupy territories stretching for long distances bordering that river, but their settlements do not extend far into the plains hinterlands to the east and the west. If prehistoric east-west movement has tended to occur at the latitude of Maroua and not that of Mora -- as the migration traditions certainly seem to suggest -- we would expect just such a pattern to occur, given material traditions held by groups living along the river. In that case, cultural elements might well move down the Logone, across to the massif around Maroua and then north toward Mora again.

## CHAPTER 7 -- ETHNIC GROUP FORMATION PROCESSES IN THE STUDY AREA

Language shift of any kind...is an indicator of dislocation. It implies the breakdown of a previously established societal allocation of functions; the alteration of previously recognized role-relationships, situations and domains, so that these no longer imply or call for the language with which they were previously associated. Such dislocation is to be expected among intruders, be they immigrants or occupants.

Joshua Fishman, 1980

### **Introduction**

There are fundamental inconsistencies in the reconstruction of culture history provided by different disciplines used in the study area. These lie between linguistic models on the one hand and archaeological and ethnohistorical models on the other. Briefly, the variety and differentiation of the small linguistic units found in the mountains of the study area (see Chapter 3) strongly indicate that the massif has been settled for long periods of time by fairly stable populations. On the other hand, the archaeological and ethnohistorical data summarized in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 indicate a relatively recent occupation by present-day groups, at least at anything like the population density and exploitation intensity seen in the massif today. (By recent, I mean perhaps 200 to, maximally, 400/500 years, instead of the 750 years to 1000 years or more indicated by admittedly rough glottochronological estimates.) I have alluded to this problem in Chapter 3. In the first section of this chapter, I will endeavour to examine its implications for models of settlement in and around the massif, and finally advance an explanation for the inconsistencies.

The great linguistic diversity of this area has obvious implications for models of 'ethnic group' diversification and of interaction between such groups. The

possession of a common language or dialect is accepted to be one of the most general and important elements used to distinguish ethnic groups from one another. It is now widely recognized, however, that ethnic identification is a multivariate phenomenon and that neither language nor any other specific cultural element can be regarded as universal definers of ethnicity (Barth 1969; .de Vos and Romanucci-Ross 1975; .Fishman 1977, 1989; .Haarmann 198339-42, 198638; .Laponce 198746-48). Perhaps the only defining principle so privileged is that of self-perception; an ethnic group is defined by the identification of its members with the group (Barth 1969; Fishman 1986). There are, however, two problems here: (1) usually such self-identification is grounded in the individual's perception of common unifying factors which are themselves not privileged, not universal; and (2) this self-identification is by definition personal and 'psychological', and so is not very amenable to historical or anthropological analysis.

Language is, then, not a universal definer of ethnicity, nor will it always affect cultural relations across ethnic frontiers. It is, however, probably the most ubiquitous of such defining factors. It is through language that groups affirm their common history and continuity, that they define and reify their common culture, that they solidify their identification as a unit. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the means of communication itself often becomes a vital element in the solidarity that it makes possible (see Fishman 1989:32). Indeed, I will argue that, in the context of the present study, the possession of a shared language is often the most important cultural element operating at the level of the 'ethnic group' as commonly defined.

The communal possession of other cultural elements which peoples in the study area might use to express and reinforce ethnic solidarity is in a great number of cases either confined to social groups at a lower organizational level than the 'ethnic group' -- lineages of various sizes, or territorial lineage groups -- or shared over a region larger than that occupied by the 'ethnic group'. In Fishman's (1977, 1989) terms, 'paternity' (the assumption of shared ancestry) and 'phenomenology' (crudely, self-identification) are most often localized at the lineage level, while many elements

of 'patrimony' (shared cultural characteristics) are found within so far ill-defined regions larger than the 'ethnic group'. Important similarities over these larger territories have been recognized by a number of researchers in the area (see for example Hallaire 1965:15; Lembezat 1961; .Pontié 1984; Sterner 1990).

Minimally, 'true' ethnic groups in the study area should share a tradition of common ancestry and/or (usually 'and') a definite consciousness of ethnicity. Relatively few of the 'ethnic groups' in the area -- Muraha, Podokwo, Urza, 'Vamé-Mbremé' and so on -- would so qualify. Mada might be an exception, as would a few other cases where the patrilineage and the 'ethnic group' as usually defined are more or less coterminous. Throughout this dissertation, I have (as I explained in Chapter 3) commonly used the term "'ethnic'/linguistic group" to designate those entities often referred to in literature concerning the area as 'ethnic groups'. I have done so in order to emphasize the importance of the linguistic element in their definition.

It might be argued that 'ethnic'/linguistic frontiers in the study area do have, if not cultural, then social effects, since mutual incomprehension will tend to increase the difficulty of social interaction across such frontiers. In this way, the populations enclosed within these frontiers might eventually develop a sense of group solidarity and so ultimately become an ethnic unit. This is undoubtedly the case, but the process could be considerably slowed by mechanisms which allow easier cross-border interaction. One such mechanism is multilinguality. In the second section of this chapter, I will examine the ways in which multilingualism can minimize the importance of linguistic -- and so, more importantly, 'ethnic' -- diversity within and around the Mandara Mountains.

## Linguistics, History and their Inconsistencies

### *Linguistic diversification and stability*

The linguistic diversity of the northern Mandara massif is very great. Not only are there a large number of different small linguistic units in this part of the study area, but there is also a large amount of differentiation between even many of these close neighbours (Barreteau 1987). I can subjectively confirm this through my own conversations about language with different informants. Montagnard informants tend to classify speakers of different languages ('mutually unintelligible speech') and dialects ('mutually intelligible, but differentiated, speech') in ways very similar to Barreteau's classification, at least in the area around Mora. The languages spoken are in most cases mutually unintelligible.

This extreme differentiation has a number of implications. In the first place, it seems to imply weak intensity of communication between linguistic groups (Laponce 1987:56). Intense communication would probably have led to assimilation and the disappearance of some languages. Weak intensity of communication is just what is not found in most of the massif today; the high population densities and very restricted linguistic territories there mean that levels of communication and multilinguality are high (see below). This indicates that montagnard populations were considerably more isolated -- and thus most likely much smaller -- in the not-too-distant past. Areas where natural or cultural obstacles to communication between groups exist today are also areas of linguistic diversification. For example, the five dialects of *pelasla* (*pelasla*, *ndreme*, *mberem*, *dumwa* and *hurza*) are divided into at least three, and probably four, geographically separate areas -- the Urza inselberg, Plata territory on the Uldemé massif and the 'Vamé-Mbremé' and Dumwa territories further to the north (Figure 1.2).

In addition, the form that the area's linguistic diversity takes is interesting. Most of the languages spoken lie in the geographical relationship to one another that

their linguistic relationship would indicate -- that is, languages which are genetically closely related mostly also lie close to one another (Barreteau 1987:70-77). This tends to indicate that the original linguistic groups have been stable in space over time. We would not expect a set of migrating groups randomly to occupy such positions when their locations were more or less 'fixed' by colonial officials concerned with orderly taxation and production and the prevention of violence. This may seem self-evident, but it is certainly not what is implied by all the migration traditions examined in the last chapter.

There are exceptions to this, of course. Many of these exceptions can be traced to known historical events. To the south of the study area, speakers of the languages *giziga-sud* and *giziga-nord* are separated from each other by Fulbe occupation along the Mayo Tsanaga. These languages are very closely related (Barreteau 1987:70), almost to the point of being dialects of a single language. Their separation is almost certainly due to the Fulbe incursions of the late eighteenth century. The isolation of *baldamu*, now almost extinct, from the nearest related *giziga* languages may stem from similar processes, but possibly from earlier Wandala or Kanuri, not Fulbe, influence over the northern Diamaré (Seignobos and Tourneux 1984:19).

Other geographical disjunctions between related languages look as if they were caused by similar processes, but we do not have the necessary historical information to say for sure. For example, speakers of the *shugule* dialect of *mefe* is separated from speakers of the other dialects of this language by a population of *mafa*-speakers (albeit a very patchy one). Similarly, the *pelasla* and *mbuko* languages are related to one another, and it looks as if they were separated by a population made up of the ancestors of the *mada*, *wuzlam* and *muyang*-speaking communities found in that region today. The significant differences between *pelasla* and *mbuko* suggest that such a separation, if it occurred, took place in the relatively distant past.

In most cases, though, there is broad agreement between genetic relationships and geographical positioning. This positioning tends to be territorial, with linguistic groups occupying large geographical features. Along the eastern edge of the massif,

these are often inselberg complexes; in the massif itself, they are usually distinct mountains or highlands, or sets of these. This is not, of itself, a guide to the original territories of these languages, which may obviously have expanded and contracted a great deal over time.

### *Linguistics and chronology in the study area*

The relationship between linguistic variation and length of occupation of an area is commonly accepted within historical linguistics. It is a basic assumption of the least-moves principle, which posits that the original territory of a language group will be found in that area where the linguistic diversity of the group is greatest (Ehret 1982; .Greenberg 1955). There are certainly many cases where the principle should be and has been challenged, at times on archaeological grounds (see for example David 1982), but, like Occam's Razor, it serves as a good general guide for action, to be discarded when contradicting data or formulations become evident.

It would obviously be of great interest if we could accurately estimate the time-depth of differentiation of these languages, through glottochronological analysis. This technique has been dogged by controversy since it was first developed (Chretien 1962; .Fleming 1968; .Hymes 1960; .Lees 1953; .Swadesh 1955), although Ehret (1982:19) points out that such opposition is often more *a priori* than empirical. It has often shown itself to be useful in generating approximate chronologies. However, in an ethnic situation like that found today in the massif, we would expect any estimate of linguistic differentiation used in such an investigation to be an underestimate. High population densities, intermarriage and generally intense interaction over short distances would certainly tend to maximize borrowing and assimilation of elements between languages in contact. Thus, Barreteau and Dieu's (in press) estimates of 700- to 1000-year separations between languages must be treated with caution.

This only sharpens the contrast with ethnohistorical and archaeological data generated by research in and around the Mandara Mountains. These have been examined in the preceding chapters. Briefly, there appears to be no evidence from

these sources of stable, intensive occupation of the massif during the period indicated by the linguistic data. Earlier Iron Age archaeological remains are remarkable in their absence, and the oral histories of different groups portray the massif (mostly its peripheries) as occupied by scattered groups of autochthones before the arrival of the various groups of immigrants whose descendants make up the most important element of the massif's population. These sources do not help us to estimate the rates of forest clearing and terrace construction which were probably necessary to produce the domesticated landscape of the area today, but the few data available (Chief of Gadua quarter, Gemjek, 31/5/1986; Tlevu Augla, 7/8/1986; Michel Kourdapaye and others 26/5/1986; Mala Mbaluda, 5/8/1986; Ajangwa, 22/5/1989; Maukwé, 23/5/1989 -- see also Ferrandi [1928], Lemoigne [1918] for contrasts between the [mostly plains] landscapes of the early twentieth century and those of today) suggest that major changes in the landscape could occur very quickly indeed.

In any case, for the results of linguistics to agree with those of archaeology and ethnohistory, mechanisms would have to exist which would increase the rate of language divergence through time. If languages diverged very quickly over time, we could posit more recent separations for related montagnard languages. The mechanisms which would allow this to happen are not obvious. Instead, the high levels of interaction between speakers of different languages which do exist would tend to increase borrowing and assimilation and so slow down rates of divergence (see below). In that case, we must posit older separations than linguistic data themselves indicate, thus increasing the discordance between the different data types. Linguistics and archaeology/ethnohistory continue to disagree.

#### *Autochthonous groups and language acquisition*

The demographic conditions encountered on the massif today, and since the later precolonial period at least, are not those which would originally give rise to the present-day montagnard linguistic milieu. Population densities and rates of interaction are too great to allow uninterrupted linguistic diversification (Laponce 1987). On the

other hand, the migration traditions of many early, dominant montagnard groups insist that when they arrived at the massif, they encountered relatively few, small communities already living there. In some cases, traditions say that the land was empty when the immigrants arrived. In other cases, indigenous groups (or earlier immigrants) only inhabited certain areas, sometimes at the foot of the mountains. There are no traditions which indicate that indigenous settlement was dense. There also seems to have been an absence of conflict during these early immigrations and settlements on the mountains, although this was certainly not the case later on. In sum, traditions of settlement in the mountains by the ancestors of most of the present lineages indicate that the autochthonous groups encountered there were living in a demographic milieu similar to that which would have been necessary to produce the linguistic diversity found there today. It appears logical to postulate that the autochthonous groups encountered by the immigrants were speaking earlier versions of the languages spoken in the massif today, and in the same territories where those languages are now spoken.

If this was indeed the case, then the constituent lineages of the present 'ethnic'/linguistic groups must have in some way 'inherited' the preexisting linguistic milieu that they encountered when they reached the massif or nearby inselbergs. In other words, they must have adopted the languages spoken by indigenous groups in the territories where they happened to arrive. Again, the immigration traditions described in the last chapter offer clues to the processes which might have allowed this to happen.

In virtually all of the migration traditions examined, people did not move in large numbers. In many instances, only one person, male or female, travelled to a new territory; in others, a group of brothers moved; in some cases, a small number of families made the journey. It is true, as Mohammadou (1982) points out, that named individuals in such traditions would often serve only as representations of larger groups which actually did the moving. It is certainly also true that the widespread disruption of life around the massif which I have posited for the period between the

sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries would have probably generated large numbers of refugees.

It is probable, however, that movements by these people would have been gradual and uncoordinated, much as have been many of the later migrations and the movements from the mountains on to the plains in this century. This seems to have been the case for the small-scale migrations within Muktelé territory noted by Juillerat (1971:62, 69-72 -- see also, for example, Richard [1977:46-48]); even further to the south on the borders of the Diamaré, where population movements may have been of larger scale, Seignobos (1986<sup>34</sup>, 1988) does not give the impression that Maya or Murgur migration, for example, involved large groups of people. The limited resources of areas of the massif and the time necessary to provide the infrastructure (reservoirs, terracing, etc.) necessary to support additional people would also have tended to restrain the rate of immigration. They certainly do so now. It is probable, of course, that specific events, such as the seizure of Doulo or the official adoption of Islam by the Wandala, would have increased the flow into the massif of people unwilling to accept the changes that the Wandala had wrought, and afraid of being captured as slaves or killed. In sum, the immigration rate into any particular area would probably not be very high, although the total number of immigrants over time could be quite large.

Another common feature of these traditions is the initial peaceful conditions which obtained between the autochthones and the newcomers (see Chapter 6). In many cases, this involved marriage between the two. In some cases, the immigrants were at first politically and ritually subordinate to the indigenes, and only later usurped power, often leaving care of ritual relations with the earth to the descendants of the autochthones. In other instances, the superiority of the newcomer(s) was quickly recognized and they were accorded that control voluntarily. Relations between the original occupants of the massif and the people leaving the plains seem to have been initially quite close.

In the beginning, indigenous groups living in and on the peripheries of the massif would have had an advantage over refugees fleeing Kanuri and Wandala raiding and persecution. Already settled, they would have controlled the best land and water supplies, with their exploitation systems -- which may or may not have included elaborate terracing -- already in place. The newcomers' positions would most likely have been much more precarious. Materially, they might well have lost a great deal in the move. If the present-day conceptual systems of montagnard groups have any bearing on this, the indigenes would also have had a considerable ritual advantage over the immigrant groups, since they would have already established relations with the powers of the earth in their territory and would also have had their ancestors available for help. The immigrant's access to supernatural assistance would have been more tenuous, given that they had abandoned their ancestral territory and by extension the powers so closely tied to that territory. Their connection with their own (patrilineage) histories would have been much attenuated.

The resulting processes of accommodation and struggles for power in different parts of Africa are extensively treated, by Fairley (1987:99), Kopytoff (1987:52-61) and Lancaster (1987) among others. It would not be surprising if small bands of such refugees, arriving at a competitive disadvantage in the territory of already-settled groups, were to some extent assimilated to those groups. It is unlikely that this would have meant actual absorption of refugee lineages by the autochthones. In the study area, these kinship units are extraordinarily resistant to such attacks; they do not disappear except over long periods and in extreme circumstances. Maya, Murgur and Zumaya lineages do exist, as does the remnant of the Dibilikwer lineage, almost wiped out by a coordinated Wandala-montagnard attack and only saved when a few of its members managed to flee from Miyaw ridge to Uldemé territory (see Chapter 3).

### *Linguistic assimilation*

Refugee lineages would not disappear, but they might well become subordinated to some larger -- and probably quite unrelated -- autochthonous kinship unit (see for example de Colombel 1986). Most of the maximal and medial lineages in the massif today are actually hybrid units of this sort, containing within themselves smaller medial or minimal lineages of altogether different origins. In any case, accommodation with autochthonous groups would certainly have required communication. Under the circumstances I have described, it is more likely that immigrants would have learned the language(s) of already-established groups rather than the other way around.

This is not a topic which is often mentioned in montagnard migration stories, since informants usually claim that their lineage has spoken their language 'forever'. A consciousness of linguistic diversity and of differentiation process certainly exists, however. Many men were able to give sophisticated descriptions of linguistic patterning in the region they lived in and, in some cases, this was complex enough that I confess that I still cannot follow it (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 29/10/1986 and 13/11/1986). Plata informants are conscious of the fact that their ancestors could not speak Uldemé, but this seems to refer to an period early in the occupation of their present territory and not a time before they arrived there -- although the one certainly implies the other (Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication; Gskai Augla, 6/8/1986; Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986). The Plata now exist in a situation of increasing bilingualism and assimilation to Uldemé norms, and it is probable that they will eventually be truly incorporated into the Uldemé group, albeit as an independent lineage or as two separate lineages (Dumlelai and Kapa -- see below).

In the case of the Plata and, I think, in many cases during the immigration of refugee groups into the Mandara Mountains, similar process of linguistic assimilation took place. If an immigrant group settles in or beside the territory of another group which also speaks a different language and they enter into close social and cultural relations, several linguistic results are possible. The two languages may exist together

in one social milieu, in the institutionalized situation known as social diglossia (Ferguson 1959; Fishman 1967, 1989). Fishman (1989:184-189) examines a number of different variants of this phenomenon and indicates that situations of social diglossia can be stable over time. However, these cases all involve comparatively complex and large-scale societies, and it is doubtful that the extremely small, acephalous societies of the northern Mandara Mountains could sustain the sociocultural compartmentalization necessary to make diglossia work over long periods, especially since such diglossia can itself cause social strains (Fishman 1980:243).

The alternative to diglossia is the disappearance of one or the other of the languages involved, that of the indigenes or that of the immigrants. Adoption of the language spoken by the immigrants has historically occurred when the immigrant group was strong enough to dislocate and replace indigenous societies (Fishman 1980). This seems to have occurred with the Zumaya living in the Diamaré, who were conquered and assimilated by the Fulbe and whose language has virtually disappeared (Barreteau et al. 1984:43; Seignobos 1986), and, of course, with the Maya living in what is now Wandala territory.. Replacement of the language and culture of an indigenous group by that of an immigrant group seems in the study area to be essentially a plains phenomenon, one in which organized, war-like polities conquered large areas.

The third possibility is replacement of the immigrant's language by that of the indigenous population. This seems to have been the dominant process in the massif, where there are no traditions of incoming groups arriving as conquerors. It would be hastened by the necessity of marriage outside the small group of immigrants and probably also by the power and prestige of the ritual positions held by the indigenous groups. The fact that widespread traditions exist that members of immigrant groups usurped the ritual and political powers of their predecessors, and did not merely replace those cultural elements with equivalents of their own, indicates very strongly that the newcomers were subordinated in these spheres at least.

Language loss does not necessarily proceed at the same rate as cultural assimilation, however. In most cases examined by Fishman (1989:207), the former process occurs considerably more rapidly. This is the case even in the United States, where we would not expect immigrants to bring with them kinship units as closely articulated with the history and identity of the individual as are the patrilineages of the northern Mandara Mountains. Under Cameroonian conditions, we would expect functioning, well-differentiated patrilineages to persist for considerably longer than would the language that the people of those patrilineages originally spoke. This is, of course, exactly the situation that exists in the Mandara Mountains today.

This model of immigrant language acquisition in the Mandara Mountains leaves one obvious question unanswered: why did so many immigrant groups, and so few autochthonous groups, become dominant in the territory of their 'ethnic'/linguistic group? All of the dominant lineages in the northeastern part of the massif are today descended from immigrant ancestors, as are many of those to the northeast around Keroua. We do not, at this point, have sufficient data available to speculate on the cultural or linguistic differences between immigrants and autochthones. It may well be that repeated movements of small groups of refugees into the massif at different times resulted in the establishment of a large number of immigrant lineages. In the struggles for power which seem to have been endemic in the study area (see Chapter 3), it would thus be more likely that a victorious group would be descended from immigrants than that they would be descended from the less numerous autochthonous groups. The presence of some dominant autochthonous groups near Keroua (the Glavda, for example) may be due to their closer proximity to the center of the Wandala state; if Wandala pressure had fixed them in the mountains long enough, they might assume autochthonous traditions. In some cases, specific events on the plains, such as the taking of Doulo by the Wandala, would have increased the number of people taking refuge in the mountains and dominant lineages may have been established by such groups.

I must emphasize that this stands, for now, as only a general model of prehistoric linguistic (and cultural) accommodation in the study area. Scores of distinct lineages preserve traditions of immigration into the massif and in many cases of subsequent movement within the mountains. This in turn translates into a very large number of encounters between immigrants and indigenes, and so almost certainly into a great variety of linguistic and cultural responses to these encounters. We can expect, for example, large variations in the persistence of the languages of immigrant groups; some elements of the Maya language were remembered in the colonial period, according to Mouchet (1947c, d), and similar memories exist in Zulé lineage of 'Vamé-Mbremé' (Mala Amatsa, 26/7/1986). In general, though, the progress of specifically 'cultural' interactions and acculturation within the northern massif -- which have been much more intensively studied than has linguistic interactions -- appears to be fairly consistent. We might expect language shift, as a cultural subset, to work in generally similar ways.

#### *Uldemé and Plata cultural and linguistic diversification and assimilation*

Examination of the relationship between the Plata maximal lineage and the diverse lineages of the Uldemé 'ethnic'/linguistic group inhabiting the Uldemé massif south of Mora may help us appreciate the complex ways in which a montagnard lineage may negotiate its own identity in response to external pressures. The Plata Dumlelai and Plata Kapa are, of course, *pelasla*-speakers, thinking of themselves as descendants of an ancestor or ancestors who came from Ngolélé. The other Uldemé lineages speak *wuzlam*, a language not closely related to *pelasla*. Their origins are diverse, but the largest maximal lineage comprises groups of descendants of Agzavrinja, who may or may not also have come from around Ngolélé (see the preceding chapter).

Most researchers, even specialists on the area, have in their work lumped the Plata with the other, Uldemé lineages of this massif, even when they were aware that the Plata spoke a different language and that certain of their cultural elements were

distinct (see for example de Colombel 1986, Hallaire 1971, Mouchet 1947d). They often referred to the Plata as Gwendélé, the name given them by the Uldemé (and also a minimal lineage in Plata Kapa). They appear to assume that, since the Plata inhabit the same mountain bloc as the Uldemé and since all of this bloc is now subsumed within the same administrative canton, the Plata are, with all the other lineages of that bloc, members of the Uldemé 'ethnic group'.

The Plata do not agree with this amalgamation. No Plata whom I asked during fieldwork in 1986 considered himself or herself to be Uldemé first and Plata second; all considered themselves to be Plata (Michel Kourdapaye, personal communications; Gauya Shilibé, personal communications; Daugza, personal communications; Tekwela, 19/4/1986; Gwozda, 6/5/1986; Aboñ, 7/6/1986; Tlevu Augla, 18/6/1986, 5/10/1986; Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986; Abokwa Baje, 26/10/1986; Hlaba, 16/5/1989; Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989). They were certainly aware of their extremely close ties to the Uldemé lineages, with whom they marry and very closely interact, but their primary identification certainly seemed to be to their own lineages. It is interesting to note that they did not tend to speak of 'the Uldemé' as a whole; if they referred to them, they spoke of particular lineages. Thus they do not marry Uldemé, but rather marry people of the Sama, Vindelar, Dibon and other lineages. There are also Uldemé lineages, such as Bister, that they will not tend to marry into for ritual reasons -- this latter group causes diseases and it is said to be unhealthy to marry them (Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986).

In most cases, Plata informants were not able to tell me much about the history of their dealings with the Uldemé. Those who could (Gskai Augla, 6/8/1986; Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986) say that after their arrival the Plata could not speak the language of the Uldemé, although they lived on the same mountain bloc. (It should be noted that no definite priority for the arrival of Plata and the 'people of Agzavrinja' is given.) At that time, they fought with the Uldemé lineages, apparently making heavy use of magical means of attack which are now mostly associated with the Plata Kapa. These involved entrapment of their enemies' souls in jars; this ability is related to the

perceived Plata expertise in treating people whose souls have been so stolen through the use of the magical vine *mawndi sarai* (*Cissus quadrangularis*), a facility apparently bestowed upon the Plata at Ngolélé (Tlevu Augla, 16/6/1986; Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986; Hlaba, 16/5/1989). Even Plata say that they were 'evil' at that point. During that period, they married among the various 'Vamé-Mbremé' (in *pelasla*, Dgala-Kapa), Dumwa and Urza lineages.

Their ancestors eventually saw that this was an evil thing, and decided that they should stop attacking the Uldemé (particularly their spirits, a practice almost certain to put one in bad odor with one's neighbours) and seek to marry them instead. This decision seems to have been made and enforced (through ritual sanctions) by the old men of the Plata. Lineage elders appear to take the lead in arranging truces and in mediating between the lineage and outsiders throughout the massif, often trying to enforce the peace through ritual threats against the more turbulent younger men of the lineage. A decision to marry people of the Uldemé lineages was also thoroughly in order, since one important channel through which disputes are mediated in the study area is the relation between members of one patrilineage and their in-laws in others in the region. Montagnards recognize that these relationships are extremely important, ascribing the high levels of conflict between Plata Dumlelai and Plata Kapa, between Gudul and Kudangala and between the three Dumwa lineage segments (all of which are closely enough related for the incest taboo to be invoked between them) to the fact that there are no fathers-in-law in those lineages to mediate between them (Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986; Zake Kwetcheriké, 27/9/1986).

The Plata did finally heed the advice of their elders, to such a degree that they marry more people among the Uldemé lineages than among any other group, primarily due to the geographical and economic convenience of the arrangement and the possibilities for political and economic alliances that it opens up. This has not eliminated warfare between the Plata and the Uldemé lineages (Michel Kourdapaye, personal communication; Tlevu Augla, 2/7/1986, 25/7/1986; Abokwa Baja, 8/7/1986,

27/7/1986; Mezele Sheelebé, 28/7/1986; Gskai Augla, 28/7/1986, 6/8/1986; Augulaw Kulemdia, 13/6/1989), but it has probably moderated it. Conflict between all of the lineages within Mayo Uldemé canton was endemic; the Plata partook fully of that element of their lives.

In the recent past, then, the Plata have retained their own language and many elements of cultural, both material and non-material, separate from the Uldemé lineages -- in particular, ceramics and festivals/religious observances, especially those concerned with their ancestry at Ngolélé (see above -- also Michel Kourdapaye, personal communications; Michel Kourdapaye and Ahlama, 25/5/1989; Tlevu Augla, 18/6/1989; Gskai Augla, 7/10/1986; see also Mouchet 1947d; de Colombel 1986:17-18). They also have closer ties with the *du ngolélé* lineages than do the Uldemé and, as I have said, they have a Plata self-identification.

The makeup of Plata 'ethnicity' -- if one can use the term -- is today more equivocal than this, however. Besides the very high level of Plata-Uldemé intermarriage, *wuzlam-pelasla* bilingualism is nearly universal among adult Plata and rarer, although still not really uncommon, among adult Uldemé. Plata men marrying Uldemé women now often learn and speak Uldemé (Gskai Augla, 7/10/1986). The advantages to the Plata of being able to speak the language of more numerous neighbours who live in such close proximity are obvious. The head of local government is Uldemé, questions of land ownership require cooperation between the groups, the Uldemé constitute a market for Plata ceramics and so on. There is obviously a danger that this situation will decrease the importance of *pelasla* within the community (see Fishman [1980] on the processes by which an introduced language may be lost), particularly at present, when many Plata children will at some point go to a local school in which *wuzlam* is the vernacular language spoken.

In addition, some Plata festivals and rituals appear to be less used today, replaced by their Uldemé equivalents. Distinctive Plata architectural styles have mostly disappeared (personal observation; de Colombel 1986:18). Plata ceramic types have shown greater persistence, since they are part of a ceramic tradition shared with

other groups around Mora which has been more successful in the local markets than have Uldemé and related (Mada, Muyan) styles. The disappearance of these Plata cultural features is not really surprising, given the high levels of intermarriage and social interchange and the fact that there are seven or eight times as many Uldemé in the territory as there are Plata.

This gradual assimilation of Plata to Uldemé is probably inevitable and may serve as a model for similar processes which have over time incorporated disparate lineages into the 'ethnic'/linguistic units that we see in the mountains today. (It is interesting that the assimilation is working in the opposite direction for Uldemé and Plata ceramic suites; this appears, however, to be due to the operation of market forces on a regional level -- see Chapter 8.) I believe that this phenomenon has been encouraged by processes of Wandala and European colonialism, and by the later actions of the national government, which have occurred over at least the last 100 to 150 years. For purposes of taxation and control, both colonizing powers divided those parts of the massif which they were able to dominate into administrative units (Beauvilain 1989:386-398; Mohammadou 1982:125-167, 180-183; Morrissey 1984). Responsibility for those units was held by individuals living on the plains: Wandala *blama*, *chima* or local vassals, or European administrators as the case might be. (Obviously, the technical and bureaucratic advantages held by the French and British allowed them much more complete control over these regions than did Wandala administration.)

Under European control, this resulted in the establishment of cantons or districts, which were supposed to correspond roughly to indigenous montagnard social units. In some cases, they did; in many, they did not (see for example Beauvilain [1989:386-398]). Taxation and control varied widely over time and space, but both imply that groups within an district would be treated as one, that good or poor administration would affect them in similar ways and thus that their responses to the outside world would be correspondingly homogenized. Such processes can create ethnic groups where none existed before. This may be occurring among Mofu to the

south of the survey area today (see Vincent 1981:273). (For examples of comparable occurrences in eastern Africa, see Southall [1970, 1973]). If people are treated as a group, the chances are increased that they will react as a group.

A good illustration of this occurred recently in Mayo Uldemé canton. The Wandala chief of the neighbouring plains canton of Ouarba instituted a legal action against the Mayo Uldemé chief, and thus indirectly against all the Uldemé and Plata, in the mid-1980s (Michel Kourdapaye, Daugza, Gauya Shelibé, Père G. Truchot, personal communications). He claimed that control of the plains land up to the physical edge of the massif was the responsibility of his canton. Uldemé territory was originally a part of a larger canton centred at Ouarba (Beauvilain 1989:398), and the Wandala chief there wished to reassert his control. This would have placed a number of Uldemé, Mada and Plata communities, along with farmlands belonging to people of those groups, under Wandala authority -- an occurrence definitely to be resisted by members of these groups. This lawsuit was contested by the Uldemé chief of Mayo Uldemé canton, citing traditional precedents, and was eventually settled in favour of the montagnards in 1989.

The effect of this lawsuit upon the Plata was noticeable. In 1986, I spoke extensively with three Plata men (Michel Kourdapaye, Daugza and Gauya Shelibé) about their ethnic affiliations. They were unanimous (as were the other Plata I spoke to) in saying that they were indeed Plata, members of a group of people decisively different from the other lineages inhabiting Mayo Uldemé canton. In 1989, my fieldwork commenced just after the conclusion of the lawsuit brought by the Ouarba chief, and I discussed that suit with the same three Plata men. They were all extremely relieved that their communities would not come under Wandala control, and it was noticeable that their affiliations to the Uldemé group were much stronger than they had been in 1986. They still said that they were Plata, and of different origins than the Uldemé, so in terms of 'phenomenology' and 'paternity' their primary unit of identification had not really changed. However, they emphasized that the Uldemé

"...were their brothers...", even sometimes saying that they were Uldemé as well as being Plata (Gauya Shelibé, 13/5/1989; Michel Kourdapaye, 12/5/1989).

There was definitely a stronger feeling of cantonal solidarity among the Plata in 1989 than in 1986. It is also my impression, although I cannot prove this, that Plata were producing more Uldemé-type ceramics in the latter year than they had been three years earlier. These ceramics were not usually popular with Plata women, both for aesthetic and functional reasons, and because they could not as easily be sold in the markets. A survey of ceramic distributions in 1986 (see Chapter 8) indicated that relatively few women among the Plata produced Uldemé ceramics. I had no opportunity to duplicate this survey in 1989, but it certainly seemed that the usage of these pots among Plata women had increased. I was even told -- in direct contradiction to my 1986 interviews -- that the Plata and Uldemé had always produced the same ceramic types and that these were actually of the Uldemé/Mada/Muyan tradition.

Knowledge of the Wandala lawsuit and of its successful -- for the montagnards -- conclusion was greater among the younger Plata and Uldemé than among their elders, many of whom still live on the slopes within the massif and who thus had less to lose if the Ouarba chief had won. Of course, consciousness of ethnic affiliation can change between generations, and it may well be that younger Plata will grow up with a greater identification with the Uldemé than did their fathers and grandfathers, who were raised on stories of the historical animosities between the two groups. To an extent, the younger people are propelled into this consciousness by the existence of the national polity and by its attitude toward them.

#### *Ethnicity and ethnic identification*

It may thus be that, in 50 or 100 years, the Plata will have lost their cultural and linguistic badges of uniqueness, and it will then be more difficult to argue that they are an ethnic unit distinct from the Uldemé. Judging from the history of other montagnard groups, however, they will retain their separate traditions of lineage

origins. In terms of Fishman's (1977, 1989) 'patrimony', they will have lost their distinctiveness; in terms of 'paternity', they will almost certainly retain it; within the 'phenomenological' realm of group attitudes about their neighbours and themselves, future events will play their roles. Judging from the example I have given above, they may well feel more of an allegiance to a larger 'Uldemé' or other montagnard ethnic grouping. This, of course, again raises the fundamental question of what we speak of when we talk about 'ethnic groups' in the northern Mandara Mountains. What exactly are 'the Plata', and what are 'the Uldemé' that they are 'assimilating to'?

Over the course of this work, I have referred to 'the Plata', 'the Uldemé', 'the Urza', as if these were coherent entities, albeit perhaps entities at different organizational levels. This is a convenient practice for the investigator and is, in fact, almost impossible to avoid, particularly when all previous research in a study area is organized according to the same general plan. Conceptual maps are laid down at the beginning of research and are extraordinarily resistant to modification.

As I have previously emphasized, it would be as useful -- but rather more difficult -- for anthropologists to think of the study area as inhabited by scores of patrilineages (Figure 3.2), or by much larger, ill-defined groups which share elements of material culture and social organization (see Chapter 8 -- Figures 8.1, 8.2), than to hold to a model of 'ethnic'/linguistic groups which seems more adapted to the usage of linguists or administrators (Figure 1.2) than to anthropological requirements. The Uldemé lineages as a unit do have important common and unique characteristics, but other such characteristics also exist at these other organizational levels. I would argue that, for a man of Plata patrilineage, 'Plata' and 'montagnard' -- labels at small and large scales -- are more evocative, and better define his identity, than does the label 'Uldemé'. I think that this would also be the case for a Plata woman, even given any possible conflict between the demands of her own lineage and those of the lineage of her husband.

None of these categories are exclusive, however. In the mountains, where broad similarities in culture exist and where kinship relationships are known, a man or

woman's Plata identity -- and so by implication their relationship to the *du ngolélé* and to other lineages with which ties of friendship or enmity exist -- will probably be most important. Outside of that milieu, on the plains and possibly in opposition to the Wandala or other such groups (as with the Ouarba-Mayo Uldemé lawsuit), that same person's identity as an Uldemé or simply as someone from the Mandara Mountains will be more conspicuous and important, both to that person and to the people with whom they interact. In an even broader context, their Cameroonian identity might be paramount -- perhaps if they go to Nigeria and must operate as a foreign national there, affected by language, political customs and the contemporary diplomatic relationships between the two countries in question.

In no case do any of these identifications disappear; they do, however, become more or less important and obtrusive. Ethnicity is thus statistical and contingent, situationally variable. We cannot reduce any person's ethnic identity to one particular concept, although we can make judgements about the possible importance of different identifications in different situations. There does not seem to be any reason to think that this would not have been the case in the pre-colonial period as well. The units of identification would obviously have been different. It is easy to envisage a time when conflict between the Plata and the Uldemé lineages was endemic and when identification with the group of *du ngolélé* lineages was more important to a Plata, for example. At the same time, historical and ethnohistorical sources make it obvious that 'Plata' and 'montagnard' (or perhaps more accurately, in that non-secular period and even today, 'pagan') identification would also have been of great importance. We fit ourselves, and our neighbours, in the world through the use of complicated, and often conflicting, ideas like ethnicity.

## Multilingualism and Ethnicity in the Study Area

### *Sociocultural contact and linguistic comprehension*

In the previous section, I mentioned the possible social implications of the linguistic diversity of the northern Mandara massif. Is it possible that frontiers between groups speaking different languages could themselves act as boundaries to social relations between groups that otherwise might be expected to enter into such relations? Interaction between groups is obviously difficult when the languages that are spoken by those groups are mutually incomprehensible. This has cultural implications, too. Groups isolated from their neighbours by linguistic barriers are much more likely to have developed some kind of social solidarity than are, say, groups thrown together by external, administrative fiat. The former case implies real barriers to social intercourse, the latter often only theoretical or legal ones. Conversely, social intercourse is a necessity for the adoption of a common language.

This may not just be a truism in the study area, given the importance of migrations. If a group of immigrants moved into a region where a very different language was spoken, and especially if they were not part of a larger group which moved at the same time, the social contacts that they forged with the indigenous group whose language they adopted might well be much closer than if there were other groups nearby with which they might easily communicate and/or with whom they felt a sense of shared ancestry and solidarity. Thus the 'Zaré' and 'Musgum' groups from the Logone region that Mouchet (1947b) found among the Urza -- which seem to have now disappeared as corporate units -- would have come from a very different linguistic and cultural milieu, and would have done so as isolated units. Such groups might well be less able to resist assimilation than would the Gudul and Kudangala lineages, who live at Urza with a consciousness of shared ancestry in the *du ngolélé* lineages and whose members can easily communicate with people from a wide variety of related and unrelated lineages.

This may not always be the case. The small Murgur lineages, isolated to an extent among other groups, have preserved their distinctiveness in large part because of the special status accorded their vocation of blacksmithing (Seignobos 1986, 1988). All other things being equal, however, we can probably say that linguistic incomprehension or comprehension will encourage their cultural equivalents. The question then becomes: to what extent was linguistic segregation characteristic of the study area in pre-colonial times?

#### *Multilingualism in the study area*

As I have stated earlier, I did not conduct extensive research on this question while engaged in fieldwork in Cameroon. I did not realize the potential importance of extensive multilingualism until my period of work in Cameroon was over. As a result, I can only offer some preliminary observations concerning this question, but I think that it is relevant to a consideration of the processes of group formation and maintenance.

Linguistic isolation between groups can be affected by a number of factors. Geographical separation may be important and has played a role in different parts of the massif. In particular, communication between inselbergs and between inselbergs and the massif could be quite dangerous at times when the Wandala or other Muslims controlled various parts of the plains, especially for individuals as opposed to larger groups (Tlevu Augla, 7/8/1986; Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986; Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986). This does not seem to have prevented linguistic and social interchange, but it probably decreased its frequency and intensity. In general, though, the small size and high population densities found within the northern massif meant that most individuals lived in close proximity to members of a number of other groups. The pressures that these conditions placed on scarce resources also demanded frequent interactions between members of these groups.

Economic differentiation between groups might also affect opportunities for linguistic interaction. If neighbouring groups are dependent upon each other for materials or specialized functions, we might expect them to interact more heavily than would groups where these conditions did not exist. As indicated above, the constrained nature of montagnard resources led to frequent encounters.

There are a multitude of other factors which might affect the nature of linguistic (and so social) interaction between different groups, but one of the most important of these is the manner in which such interaction occurs -- that is, which people speak which language, and how well they speak it. This lies at the base of the question of multilingualism in the study area, and also implies different considerations of power relationships between groups.

There has been very little consideration of the rates of multilingualism in and around the northern Mandara Mountains, which is surprising given the cultural and linguistic diversity and the high population densities found there. One exception is an article by Barreteau, Breton and Dieu, which includes a useful section on *lingua francas* and multilingualism (Barreteau et al. 1984:177-180) in northern Cameroon. They conclude that multilingualism is most common in areas where indigenous languages are small and unimportant, where many groups are in contact, where *lingua francas* are of lesser importance and/or where indigenous languages are more or less closely related. This includes most of the study area.

Facility in different languages may vary according to a number of factors. One such is gender. A woman marrying into another lineage where a different language is spoken would usually be expected to learn that language. This is a common occurrence, for example between the Uldemé and Plata groups. The fact that Plata men marrying Uldemé women may commence speaking *wuzlam* at home (see above) is due to gradual Plata assimilation, and is uncommon regionally. Since Plata men, for example, also marry Mada, Urza, 'Vamé-Mbremé', Dumwa, Muktelé, Podokwo and even Wandala women (Ana, 19/5/1986; Tyedyak, 19/5/1986; Dukché, 3/7/1986; Gskai Augla, 6/8/1986, 7/10/1986; Maryam, 10/10/1986; Marie Shéyé, 11/10/1986;

Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986; Kacheke Chokfem, 23/5/1989), since this seems accurately to reflect rates of outmarriage among other linguistic groupings and since divorce rates in the area appear to be generally high (see Chapter 3), it would appear that a significant proportion of women would be expected to learn at least a second language during their adult life.

During the last century, the establishment of markets on the plains and the resulting involvement of montagnards has meant that many montagnard women have also acquired some capability in at least one of the trade languages spoken in the study area, especially Wandala and Fulbe (personal observation). Indeed, the functioning of markets today, in which large numbers of women sell ceramics and food items directly to passers-by, is such that many women probably have a greater facility in these languages than do most of their male relations.

Male language acquisition and usage may vary slightly from that of women, but we should not expect it to be dramatically different. Men would not ordinarily have to acquire another language with marriage, although the frequent migrations referred to in the last chapter might in many cases have the same effect. On the other hand, they might well find it politic to acquire some facility in the language(s) spoken by people of neighbouring lineages. This would be useful in marriage negotiations, in trade, in political interaction and so on. Since geographical proximity seems to be an extremely important factor in deciding the closeness of all of these relationships (see Chapter 3), female language acquisition in the course of marriage(s) and economic pursuits and male language acquisition gained through general social interaction would likely have been broadly similar.

Facility in the use of different languages in the region would of necessity vary widely. Most montagnard men whom I asked claimed and could demonstrate some ability in between three and six different languages (Tacha Dia, Jacob Metchidezek, Daugza, Michel Kourdapaye, personal communications; Gskai Augla, 6/8/1986; Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986; Ngaiya Sali, 4/11/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986; Mala Mbaluda, 28/5/1989; Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986), but there were great

differences in this ability from person to person. Besides their birth language, these men could usually speak the language of at least one neighbouring group, as well as at least one language spoken on the plains -- occasionally Kanuri or Fulbe but much more frequently Wandala. In addition, nearly all of them could speak or understand other montagnard languages with varying degrees of ease. Some of the younger men have some command of French (and/or, among the Glavda/Valé on the Cameroon/Nigeria border at least, English) learned in primary school.

Multilingualism seems to be less developed among larger, less diverse groups, such as the Mafa (Barreteau et al. 1984:179; N. David, personal communication).

Some examples will help to give some idea of the variation in linguistic facility found today in the study area, particularly in the areas south of Mora and Keroua. This may provide clues to prehistoric patterns. My interpreter, Michel Kourdapaye, is a Plata Dumlelai man in his mid-twenties. He speaks *pelasla*, *wuzlam* and French fluently. He also speaks *mada*, *wandala* and Fulbe with varying levels of efficiency; as is usual, he can understand the latter languages rather better than he can speak them. He can also understand some *muyan*. He insists that his linguistic facility is not very unusual in the region. A number of these young men are at present employed in mission clinics and in similar posts.

Multilingualism does not appear to be so marked among older men. Trilingualism or quadrilingualism (usually in montagnard languages and/or Wandala) seems to be about the norm (Gskai Augla, 6/8/1986; Abokwa Baja, 26/10/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986). Modernization in Cameroon has in this century considerably expanded the realm of social, political and economic discourse, but taking advantage of these changes requires that one uses languages rather outside the experience of traditional montagnard life. French and English are the most obvious examples, but Fulbe, Kanuri, Hausa and possibly some languages of southern Cameroon could also be both novel and important, depending on the area. Addition of these 'administrative languages' to the repertoire is primarily the province of younger men. It is thus

probable that trilingualism or quadrilingualism was the norm during the pre-colonial period.

A mere listing of languages in which men claim an ability will tell us very little about the nature of pre-colonial multilingualism in the study area. In the first place, distinctions must be made between languages spoken well and languages spoken badly, between languages spoken and languages only (perfectly or imperfectly) understood, between languages spoken every day and those spoken only occasionally or in specialized contexts. The utility of language command will obviously vary according to its desired use. For example, only a very basic command of lexicon and grammar may be sufficient for functioning in a market situation, but effective integration into another culture will require a much more complete knowledge of and facility in the new language. This latter situation of biculturalism is unstable and will tend to result in the loss of the individual to his or her ancestral group as they enter the new group (Fishman 1989:191).

Situations of stable cultural identity combined with native or near-native fluency in more than one language seem to be very rare. There are limits to the number of languages that humans can easily work in, and use of languages other than one's first language in social situations often imposes difficulties and limitations on the users (Laponce 1987:6, 11-15, 21, 34; Myers and Vry 19778). Widespread multilingualism may also be inimical to the survival of a particular language. It is thus extremely unlikely that many of the people in the study area who claim that they can 'speak' four, or six, or eight, languages mean that they can actually use all of those languages with equal efficiency. It is also unlikely that, in these circumstances, acquisition of multiple languages would occur without there being good reason for it.

At the same time, facility in different languages is obviously widespread in the Mandara Mountains -- more widespread than on the plains around them (Barreteau et al. 1984:179) and considerably more common than in many other parts of the world. Utilization of the languages of plains polities is related to the traditional power relationships between montagnard groups and those polities, accelerated to an extent

by processes of modernization during the last eighty years (Barreteau et al. 1984:178; Fishman 1989:240-241). Acquisition of other montagnard languages may in some cases be due to such power relationships, but most often this is not the case. A man from Uldemé canton will not learn *parekwa* or *mada* because of Podokwo or Mada domination over the area he lives in; no such domination exists. He will do this because trade, marriage and war and other political interaction are facilitated by such communication.

### *Linguistic barriers and social groups*

Throughout this work, I have emphasized the importance of small -- lineage -- and large -- regional -- sociocultural groupings in the study area, at the expense of the medium-sized linguistic groupings which are usually held to be the prime repositories of 'ethnicity'. However, linguistic uniformity implies social cohesion of some sort in the past. Languages are constructed by interacting groups, and in most cases by corporate groups of some sort; the primary exceptions are trade languages and other lingua francas. In addition, linguistic frontiers may generate barriers to social/cultural intercourse. This would appear to suggest that linguistic groups are, in fact, also important social entities, thus validating the traditional model of 'ethnic'/linguistic groups.

In some cases this may be true, but I have tried to show that it does not necessarily follow. If the linguistic milieu found in the study area today was substantially in place before the immigration of the ancestors/founders of most of the present-day lineages in the area, as I think was the case, then the present 'ethnic'/linguistic groups are groups of lineages which have adopted a common language over time. This has very different implications than would their participation in an ancestral linguistic community. Similarly, widespread multilingualism and ancestral relationships which crossed 'ethnic'/linguistic lines (such as the relations between the *du ngolélé* lineages) would have done a great deal to hinder later development of an ethnic consciousness at the 'ethnic'/linguistic group level. Such

development might occur over time, and events in this century have probably encouraged it, but this is by no means an automatic process.

## **Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have offered some tentative solutions to certain problems which exist in the investigation of the recent prehistory of the study area. These problems concern language and ethnic identification, and the part that they play in constructing human groups that are detectable through historical and ethnographic research.

The languages spoken in and around the Mandara Mountains today seem to have ancient roots in their present locations. Most of the people who speak them do not, if we can believe the evidence of archaeology and oral history. This paradox can be resolved through an examination of the conditions of migration and settlement that montagnard traditions indicate were in place. These traditions say that the mountains were sparsely settled by autochthonous groups, and that immigration was small-scale. In addition, prior possession gave autochthones certain ritual and political advantages. It is not surprising that immigrant groups were initially somewhat subordinate, and that they tended to adopt the languages of the people among whom they settled. As the plains became more dangerous and the mountains more intensely settled, such processes became more and more likely. In the later, pervasive struggles for power in the mountains, autochthonous lineages often lost out.

The relationship between the Plata maximal lineage and the other lineages in Uldemé territory may provide an example of this process at work. It certainly serves as a good illustration of the ambiguities which become obvious in any consideration of ethnic identity in the study area. Ethnicity is, in this area at least, both multivariate and situationally contingent. Montagnard ethnic identity today encompasses a huge number of potential states -- lineage identity, religion, language, identification as a montagnard, as a northerner, as a Cameroonian and so on. These states intersect and

interact; identity depends both upon how individuals construct themselves at any time and upon how other people accept and modify this construction. There is no reason to think that this was not also the case in the past.

The Plata are becoming linguistically and to some extent culturally assimilated to the dominant traditions of the territory, but they retain a distinct Plata identity. Their assimilation has probably been accelerated by the imposition of European colonial and national administrative units. These were often established on the basis of very distorted ideas about the cultural milieu in the area, as they were throughout Africa. They frequently have the effect of reifying groups which previously existed primarily in the minds of administrators.

Over time, we might expect that a shared language would have the effect of reinforcing the solidarity of its speakers taken as a group, particularly in small-scale montagnard societies. However, the small size and high population densities of these groups made frequent interaction with people of other groups inevitable, for economic and political reasons and for reasons of kinship and marriage. It appears that this situation has been ameliorated by high rates of multilingualism. A command of different languages may thus have retarded development of ethnic consciousness at the level of the 'ethnic'/linguistic group.

## CHAPTER 8 -- REGIONAL VARIATION IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE STUDY AREA

### Introduction

Cultural variation in the widest sense of the term works in the Mandara Mountains on a number of different scales. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, and in this chapter, I have examined three of these. I associate *lineage* organization -- the smallest of these scales -- primarily with ancestry, traditional political organization and corporateness; these three elements combine to greatly determine what Fishman (1977, 1989) calls 'paternity' and 'phenomenology'. *Ethnic/linguistic groups* operate at a middle scale. Language acquisition and use and some cultural elements work at this level (see below). In addition, it has probably become more important in colonial and post-colonial situations.

A great deal of cultural variation in the study area occurs at a *regional* level. In many cases, sets of neighbouring 'ethnic'/linguistic groups share cultural features in a structured fashion. These can be material items, such as pots, technologies, such as sets of iron-working techniques, or non-material cultural elements. The extent and importance of such regional variations are difficult to investigate, in part because anthropological research is usually carried out at smaller scales and in part because such variations often are not strongly correlated with one another. This implies that historical contingency has played a part in producing this cultural patterning.

In this chapter I will examine some aspects of variation on this largest, and in many ways most ill-defined, level. Analysis of such variation has benefitted considerably from the regional, comparative approach taken by members of the Mandara Archaeological Project in the course of research. I will first examine variation in certain elements of social structure and culture throughout the survey area and to its south; these will include the occurrence/nonoccurrence of 'blacksmith' castes and beliefs associated with smithing, of the set of ceremonies known among

the Mafa as *marai*, of the ritual positions of 'masters of the rains' and of nature in general and of specialized ceramic suites with ritual importance. My consideration of these cultural elements will of necessity be rather cursory, since variation in these highly complex and important elements occurs over a large area and among a number of groups. In addition, there are almost no data on the development of these complexes -- in part, I think, because they are not confined to single groups.

I will, instead, then focus upon a more prosaic topic -- ceramic variation in the eastern part of the study area. The ubiquity, cultural and ritual importance and durability of ceramics render them very important for assessment of cultural change in this area. They are fundamental to archaeological research.

### **Regional Variation**

There are certain cultural complexes which change from region to region in and around the northern Mandara Mountains and which have become obvious in the course of Mandara Archaeological Project research. Certain of these complexes -- for example, those concerned with 'blacksmith' castes or with the use of specialized ceramics in ceremonies -- may be detectable archaeologically; it is unlikely that others would be. I will examine them here primarily as examples of how such regional patterning works, and as avenues to consideration of the possibility of defining regional cultural groupings.

#### *'The transformers' blacksmith/specialist castes in the Mandara massif*

*The extent and role of caste systems.* Among a number of montagnard groups in the south of the survey area (including the Mafa, the Mofu [of Gudur and Durum at least], Bulahay, Cuvok, Wula, Higi/Kapsiki, Sukur and Marghi, among others), endogamous social units occur which are usually referred to as 'blacksmiths' castes (Barreteau and Sorin-Barreteau 1988:288-289; .David et al. 1988; .Genest 1974; Kirk-Greene 1960; .Martin 1970; .van Beek 1987; Vaughan 1970, 1973). In Mafa territory,

these people are called *nngwazla*, in Kapsiki, *rerhe*, in Marghi, *eñkyagu*. This caste forms a minority within these societies, probably usually between about two and five percent of the population (Genest 1974:495; Podlewski 1966:108; van Beek 1987:22; Vaughan 1970:78); it is the only such 'technical' caste (besides that of cultivators), although some of these societies are otherwise stratified. In some cases, these endogamous units are incorporated within the lineages of the society; in others, they form separate groupings.

It is incorrect to call these people 'blacksmiths', both because the male members of this caste also perform a number of other tasks which are uniquely theirs and because there are also a whole set of roles which are the province of the female members of the caste, roles which have little to do with smithing on the surface. The tasks of caste members may vary from region to region, but men can function as blacksmiths and smelters, makers of specialized clothing, diviners, curers, musicians, morticians, barbers and, in general, ritual experts. Women act as potters, midwives, ritual experts and curers. Nicholas David and Judy Sterner (personal communication) have pointed out that a number of their primary, technical functions -- smiths, potters, midwives, morticians -- involve transformations of materials and of human beings, and have labelled this caste the 'transformers' (see also David and Robertson, in press). They provide important insights into montagnard world views in this area.

More generally, these people may be regarded as specialists, professionals who undertake numerous important and difficult tasks. Van Beek (1987:22) has commented that this is the case for the Kapsiki/Higi, as has Vaughan (1970:80) for the Marghi. It must be emphasized that, although ideas of ambivalence, impurity and/or danger may be associated with members of this group, they are not despised nor are they subjugated. In many ways, they are treated with the same mixture of respect and suspicion as are, say, computer programmers or lawyers in our own society.

Such caste groups do not exist in the northern part of the study area (Figure 8.1). The Minéo, Zulgo, Gemjek and groups further to the north in Cameroon are not

casted, and neither are the northern montagnard groups in Nigeria -- the Glavda/Valé, Laamang and their neighbours. Among these groups, some of these specializations may exist at the level of the lineage. Thus, men of the Plata Kapa and Madavar lineages provide blacksmithing services for the region around Mayo Uldemé, as does the Makdaf lineage in Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:31) and the Dghwede (Johode), Chikide and Jogvada lineages living in the northeastern massif (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986). Similarly, some lineages are well-known for their potting abilities. Other lineages (for example, Bister among the Uldemé and Zulé in 'Vamé-Mbremé' territory) may perform various ritual or magical functions (see below).

These northern lineages are not themselves systematically differentiated from their neighbours, however. They are not endogamous, and it is often possible for individual members of other groups to practice these specialties. In other cases, such specializations may be the province of members of certain families, or they may be entirely open. This latter is often the case for mortuary practice, midwifery and the production of ceramics. Ritual specializations are more restricted, since specific ritual powers are often inherent in one's paternity.

The caste systems further to the south appear to be indigenous developments, not derived from contact with Muslim groups further to the north. There at least seems to be no direct model for them there (Vaughan 1970:62-67), given that castes in the Mandara Mountains are not despised, 'outcast' groups. Wandala society is not casted but retains analogous cultural elements. Wandala smiths are organized into a guild system, one with economic, political and ritual ties to the state apparatus; they are involved, for example, in the legitimation of a new *tlikse*. Smiths also resisted the Wandala conversion to Islam and are even said to have been of Maya origin (Seignobos 1986:34). This guild system is not closed, but in fact the vast majority of smiths come from smithing families, probably because so much of the production and distribution of tools depends upon networks of cooperating and related men (David and Robertson, in press).

It is interesting that castes are associated with the more complex non-Islamic polities of Sukur, Marghi and the southern Mofu. In these cases, members of this caste play important roles in the political organization of these territories, roles which are said to have been intimately connected with the increase in social complexity seen there. Wandala origins around Keroua and the past importance of the Marghi just to the south indicate that the connection between specialists and rulers has been important in that region for a long time.

Caste systems probably predate stratification and centralization; the evidence of oral histories (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986; see also Genest 1974; Mohammadou 1982; Podlewski 1966) and the presence of non-stratified, acephalous casted societies support this contention. On the other hand, these castes inherently contribute to increases in complexity and stratification. With their introduction, craft specialization of course occurs, and so much knowledge and power is concentrated in specialists' hands that these castes become very important. These specialists have a different status than their 'ordinary' neighbours, although it is often hard to decide whether their status is higher (as their possession of technical skills and their nutritional status/wealth might indicate) or lower (as marriage interdicts and widespread beliefs in their lack of cleanliness by other members of the society might suggest -- Nicholas David, personal communication; van Beek 1987:30-31). Such development of status differentiation could have predisposed groups toward the development of further complexity. Contact with states on the plains to the north, especially Bornu, might well have added a further impetus, even if Kanuri sociopolitical institutions were not themselves utilized.

*The prehistory of caste systems in the study area.* Vaughan (1970:89) regards the chief role of the *eñkyagu* caste in Marghi society to be simply the recruitment of technological specialists, but he admits that this is no explanation of why a caste system, rather than one of the less organized lineage-based systems found among groups in the eastern edge of the massif or some other system entirely, was chosen.

He states himself that he is less interested in history than in functioning. In an archaeological dissertation, I cannot allow myself that luxury.

There is, unfortunately, very little extant information on oral traditions concerning the origins of the specialist castes. We must note, however, that all of the elements which define the caste system -- technological and ritual specialization based on paternity, ritual relations and avoidance, marriage restrictions -- are found in at least a nascent form among the northern and northeastern groups where the system itself is not present. I have already described the technological specializations, which are less strict than in caste societies probably because ritual prohibitions do not exist.

On the other hand, some restrictions based on parentage do exist for specific ritual specializations, and in certain cases these are accompanied by rules of avoidance and marriage restrictions. For example, senior members of Bister lineage are responsible for certain sacrifices concerning the fertility of crops within Uldemé territory. They also control a disease called *meleshek*, which seems to have symptoms akin to those of the nutritional disease kwashiorkor. Their powers are in some ways akin to those of the Zulé 'Master of the Crops' among the 'Vamé-Mbremé' to the north (Nyssens 1986). People from Bister are not sorcerers, but they are supposed to be close to this status; there is an implication that, like twins, they have power they cannot fully control. Plata cannot safely marry people from Bister, for fear of contracting this disease, but Uldemé related to the Bister by association with the founder-hero Agzavrinja can, as long as they take medicines to protect themselves (Gskai Augla, 7/10/1986; Michel Kourdapaye and Abokwa Baje, 26/10/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/11/1986).

Among these northern and northeastern groups, specialization in technical tasks therefore exists, but it is not coordinated. Different lineages carry out specialized functions and some tasks are not restricted at all. If circumstances arose by which performance of all of these tasks became more and more the province of specific groups, caste systems might well result in a fairly straightforward manner.

The question then becomes: why does this seem to have happened in the south, and not in the north?

These areas differ in a number of ways. The northern montagnard 'ethnic'/linguistic communities, those which make up by far the greater part of the population within the study area, are smaller than their southern equivalents. It is also my impression that they are ethnically and culturally rather more diverse than some southern groups, particularly the Mafa, Mofu and Marghi. This may be a result of repeated immigrations from the plains in the north (see Chapter 6). It is possible that this may have affected the development of caste systems in some way. The creation of an inter-ethnic endogamous caste would of course be possible and, indeed, members of the 'specialist' caste often marry across ethnic boundaries among southern groups (N. David, personal communication).

We should also remember that important traditional ties exist between all of the casted groups, primarily in their traditional relations with Gudur and Sukur (Jouaux n.d.; Kirk-Greene 1960:70; Martin 1981:224; Seignobos 1988; Vaughan 1970:75; Wente-Lukas 1985:158). Mafa (and to a lesser extent Kapsiki/Higi) territory lies on the lines of communication between these two regions. It would not be surprising if an innovation developed among one of these groups became dispersed among the others. These historical relations were probably most important in establishing the extent of caste systems.

The specific reasons for the development of caste systems in the northern Mandara Mountains are at present unknown. I cannot suggest any new explanations. However, it is profitable to view these systems as a rearrangement of social and cultural elements already present in the area, elements which in the south are combined into a new and highly significant form. (One could equally argue that the social system found among the more northern groups represents a dislocation of southern cultural practices. There is no way to choose between these two hypotheses.) It is likely that this form played some role in the development of indigenous complex societies in and around the massif. In addition, traditional relationships between

groups are such that castes might quickly spread among groups once they were developed. Their importance as a regional social variant is hard to overstate.

*Masters of nature ritual specialists in the northern massif*

Members of specialist castes in societies that have such statuses engage in matters of a technical nature, and these have an important ritual/magical content. These individuals may also take part in important lineage rituals, because this is a duty of all senior lineage members. They generally do not, however, take the lead in performing important rituals simply on the basis of their specialist status; the exception is mortuary and post-mortuary ritual. This is particularly true when applied to those rituals which affect large groups -- maximal lineages ('the people of Agzavrinja', the Mada lineages), territorial lineage groups, 'ethnic'/linguistic groups or even larger entities. Performance of these latter rituals may be the task of senior lineage members or of particular members of certain lineages.

Among many of the communities of the northern massif -- particularly among the Muktelé, Podokwo, Murahā, 'Vamé-Mbremé', Urza, Uldemé, Muyan, Mada, Molkwo and Mboku -- men of certain lines of parentage occupy roles involving cultural controls over various aspects of nature. These controls work over areas larger than the lineage. The best-known of these roles is usually translated as 'Master of the rain' (*bai sheviñ* among the Plata and neighbouring groups, *bai s-ivén* among the Mboku, *zik i ver* in Uldemé territory, *ba uvar ta* in Mada, *bai g'avur* in Muyan and so on). Its holder is credited with special powers to call and direct the rains which are so vital to an intensely agricultural community in a semi-arid environment (Cuingnet 1968:1115; de Colombel 1986:41-45; Froelich 1968:215; Juillerat 1971:117; Lembezat 1952:50-54; Mouchet 1947a, b, d; Nyssens 1986; Pontié 1984:217; Richard 1977:145-147; Siran n.d.). Even the Wandala, nominally Muslims, seem to have peripherally involved themselves in the actions of the Murahā Master of the rain (Mouchet 1947c). In general, power over the rains flows from the familial/lineage possession of stones (*kwar i yam* in *wuzlam*) imbued with a power which allows

control over that element; numerous traditions about conflict over possession of these stones exist. In most cases, the role was originally limited to one of the autochthonous groups found in the northern massif.

Other, similar roles exist; they include the 'Master of the crops' (*méskle*) among the 'Vamé-Mbremé' and their neighbours, for example, and equivalents among other groups. In addition, certain other leaders played similar roles. For example, the chiefs at Gudur (Jouaux n.d.; Seignobos 1988), Sukur (Kirk-Greene 1960) and the Marghi polities (Vaughan 1970) wielded immense ritual, as well as political, power; indeed, any attempts to separate the two would be futile. Again, this ritual/political authority extended in a number of cases over members of neighbouring communities. These roles are also important further to the south among Adamawa-speaking groups (Barley 1983). I have no record of their presence among the smaller groups living in the northwestern extremity of the mountains.

These statuses are interesting for two reasons. In the first place, they form one of the only widespread montagnard authority systems which may act over a number of different 'ethnic'/linguistic groups -- that is, roles exist which may be recognized as preeminent by members of different groups (see below concerning the *marai* rituals). Thus, the Uldemé rain master, a descendant of Agzavrinja of Sama lineage, is also resorted to by the Plata, the Muktelé (Juillerat 1971:117) and the Mada (Cuingnet 1968:1115), and men of Uldemé descent perform religious functions among the Muyan (Richard 1977:38), who also may appeal to the Molkwo rain master (Richard 1977:146).

Secondly, crucial differences exist in the characteristics of these statuses. In the north, the *authority* of the men who hold these positions depends to a great extent upon their personality and their perceived success, and so may wax and wane both within and outside of the group, depending on the individual. To the south and west, in Mofu and among the Sukur and Marghi (and, to a lesser extent, the Mafa), the *power* of such ritual experts is coercive and extends into the secular realm. This

power is also more strongly -- but not completely -- attached to the status, rather than to the individual.

*The marai ceremony among montagnard groups*

The *marai* rituals are a set of ceremonies carried out in a fixed cycle every few years among a number of groups in the southern part of the study area and further to the south (Figure 8.2). The rituals are known by various names among the different peoples, but the Mafa and Mofu term *marai* is so widespread in the ethnographic literature that I will continue to use it here. At the core of these ceremonies is the sacrifice of a bull, which is bought especially and kept in a special chamber in the compound.

*Marai* is celebrated by the Mada, Zulgo, Gemjek, Minéo, Mofu, Molkwo, Mboku, Mafa, Hidé, Ngosi, Mabas and Bulahay, and by some Wula and Kapsiki, in Cameroon and, in generally similar form, among the Marghi, Sukur, Guduf and *laamang*-speaking groups in Nigeria. It is not celebrated among the Uldemé, the Muyan and more northeasterly montagnard groups in Cameroon. Charlotte von Graffenried (1984, 1987) has provided a very thorough account of the ritual among the Zulgo and Gemjek; some other available sources are Cuingnet (1968:1117), Mouchet (1948) and Richard (1977:149-152) for the Mada, Martin (1970:126-128) for the Mafa, Mouchet (1947a) for the Mboku, and Kirk-Greene (1960:87-88), Lukas (1973:423), Meek (1931:1:322), Vaughan (1964:392); and .White (1943) for the Nigerian groups.

*Marai* ceremonies are both religious and extremely social in nature. This elaborate set of rituals, which is often spread over a number of days and which usually climaxes in the ritualized pursuit of the bull through the community, is designed to honour the ancestors of individuals (and thus, indirectly, of the lineage). It also seems to play a role in reaffirming kinship ties both within and between lineages. In addition, the individuals who buy, keep and sacrifice the animal gain recognition and honour for themselves and, secondarily, for their families and their ancestors.

There is often much familial assistance in bearing the cost of sacrificing a bull at *marai* -- and frequently some derision of those who cannot afford to do so. It should be noted that purchase of the animals used in the *marai* ceremony is often from plains-dwelling groups, including Fulbe.

*Marai* celebrations occur over a set of multi-year cycles, probably the most elaborate of which is the three-year cycle celebrated by groups between Mboku and eastern Mafa territories (von Graffenried 1984:105). Another cycle involves the Molkwo and various Mofu and Mafa groups; von Graffenried says that this occurs every four years, but Mouchet (1947a) states that it happens yearly (which seems less likely purely from a financial and logistical viewpoint).

Celebration of *marai* takes place in an elaborate succession, both within and between groups. For example, in the three-year cycle studied by von Graffenried (see above), the ritual is initiated in January by the head of the dominant Takwo lineage in Cocof territory of Zulgo and then, in a prescribed order, by the heads of the other territorial lineage groups in Zulgo. It is then begun by their Gemjek equivalents, and then by Minéo and Meri, the latter 'passing' it to the Mboku and some Mafa groups -- in an order of lineage groups in each case. According to von Graffenried (1984:110), the head of Cocof territory and its lineage group is recognized as the ritual leader for these ceremonies by all of the populations who take part in it, although he does not take any active role in their performance of the ceremonies.

Different authors provide conflicting information about the way this cycle works. Mouchet (1947a, 1949, 1956) corroborates von Graffenried's account in general, but says that the cycle is Mada-Zulgo-Gemjek-Meri-Mboku-Mofu and makes no mention of the authority of the Zulgo chief. Cuingnet (1968:1070) and Richard (1977:149-152) describe the Mada ritual and make it clear that a lineage cycle exists within the group, but make no mention of any multi-ethnic cycle at all. The progress of the cycle may be more equivocal than von Graffenried believes. Kirk-Greene's (1960:90) account makes it obvious that Sukur celebrates on its own, and this is

implied in Vaughan's (1964) account. The inter-ethnic importance of *marai* seems to be quite variable.

*Marai* does however provide another of the very limited sets of circumstances in which authority may be ceded to a member of a different group by montagnards in and around the study area. The influence of the Cocof territorial head is at once broader and more specific than that of an important 'Master of the rain'. He fills a ritual position which affects a number of groups, and that position is probably more autonomous and permanent, less dependent upon the qualities of its holder, than is that of rain master. On the other hand, the role brings with it no real power, especially over the other group. Investigators never mention attempts to delay or deny the *marai* rituals.

If the cycles found to the southeast of the study area are accurately described by researchers there, then obviously some rule has been used at some point to determine the succession of the ceremony among the different 'ethnic'/linguistic groups and the lineages within them. These cycles for the Gemjek and Zulgo are described by von Graffenried (1984:107-108), for the Mboku by Mouchet and by Richard (in general) for the Mada. In all cases, the progression is north to south, but eastern lineages generally precede western ones; this results in a roughly clockwise progression around the territories involved. If Mada was involved in such a cycle, it would in fact precede Zulgo to the south, as Mouchet says.

Among the Mada at least, this may be grounded in cosmological assumptions about the qualities of the cardinal points (Richard 1977:136-137, 149). For Plata territory, such a clockwise movement would also reflect the motion of a calabash of beer being passed around a circle of men (personal observation). It is probable that some similar rationale has structured precedence within the other groups nearby; there is no need to posit some sort of organization which decided this. Given the adoption of this system by populations in the area, such a cycle might well be established. Communities do adopt and discard *marai*; immigrant clans in Mboku are said to have done the former (Mouchet 1947a), while the Muyan have stopped celebrating the

ritual (Richard 1977:70, 149). The cycle that the Zulgo and their neighbours participate in might derive at least in part from precedence in its adoption.

Like the caste system, *marai* is essentially a southern cultural element. Its range extends further to the north than does the former, however; the Zulgo, Gemjek, Mada and northern Mofu groups, and a number of the Nigerian groups, celebrate *marai* but are not caste. The possible historical significance of these distributions will be examined below.

#### *Ritual ceramic suites in the Mandara massif*

Among a number of montagnard groups living to the south of the study area, including the Mafa, the Bulahay and, to some extent at least, the Mofu, there exists a large suite of specialized ceramic vessels with primary uses in various ritual and social contexts (Barreteau and Sorin-Barreteau 1988; David et al. 1988; Sterner 1989). These contexts can be grouped; such ceramics are used: (1) to hold the souls of individuals and of certain of their ancestors, (2) to represent the achieved status of a living individual, (3) to hold spirits, and for use in sacrifices connected with those spirits and (4) for single rituals which provide long-term protection for the individual and possibly his or her relations (Sterner 1989:454). At least 21 such vessel types are used by the Sirak Bulahay, a similar number by the Mafa and perhaps 13 by the Mofu of Gudur. They are specially made and are differentiated functionally and usually in terms of shape and decoration from more utilitarian vessels. (Even these latter, workaday pots are produced throughout the study area with a strong consciousness of the importance of the sacred; one function of the decoration on most vessels is to protect the contents of the vessel -- and thus indirectly its user[s] -- from dangerous spirits. I will discuss everyday ceramics in the next section of this chapter.)

Ritual ceramics are kept and disposed of within specific contexts which are intimately related to the magical functioning of the vessel. Certain among them are kept in particular areas of the compound or in different locations around it; others, particularly those concerned with spirits of the land, will be placed at specific places

in the landscape. The possible archaeological implications of this are obvious. Although Sterner (1989:458) points out that taphonomic processes will make the generation of hypotheses specifically linking the vessels to cultural practices almost impossible, it should at least theoretically be possible to detect the presence of this ritual complex if it existed, given the different patterning in vessel morphology and decoration associated with it.

Mandara Archaeological Project and other researchers have not as yet fully delineated the extent of this elaborate ceramic complex in and around the northern Mandara massif. The quite understandable reluctance of people to discuss and display items which are traditional, magical and often meant to be hidden means that detection and evaluations of such sets of ceramics is a long-term process, one probably best carried out in the context of other research. These pots do not at present appear to exist in the same number and variety among the Muraha, the 'Vamé-Mbremé', the Dumwa, the Urza, the Uldemé, the Plata, the Mada or the Muyan 'ethnic'/linguistic groups (personal observation; Diane Lyons, personal communication; Richard 1977). The conversion to Christianity of many of the Plata I worked with may have reduced their use of ritual ceramics, but my informants -- including some non-Christians and a large number of people in whom Christianity coexisted with traditional beliefs -- told me that this was not the case.

Among the Podokwo, numerous vessels containing the spirits of dead ancestors certainly do exist (Lembezat 1952:125-128) but no mention is made of pots fulfilling the other functions described by Sterner (see above). The same tradition of 'ancestor pots' appears to exist among the Muktelé, although it is not perhaps pursued with such enthusiasm (Juillerat 1971:86). I do not know whether they are found among the peoples of the Nigerian part of the study area; my own investigations in that region were not detailed enough to allow me to make any judgements on the question.

This does not mean that the ritual roles discussed by Sterner were not realized among the groups in the northeastern part of the study area, nor even that in some

cases they were not realized through the use of pottery. In fact, the use of pots to contain the souls of ancestors is widespread throughout the area, as is the ritual association with pots or a set of pots with the birth of twins. These appear, however, to be the only common, specifically ritual pots used among these most northern montagnard groups. In a number of other cases, pots which are neither morphologically, decoratively nor linguistically differentiated from everyday ceramics are used in ritual contexts, or calabashes or other containers will be used, but sets of dozens of specific ritual pot types do not seem to exist.

The existence of these ritual ceramic suites is similar to that of specialist castes (see above). This may not be surprising; in these groups, women of the occupational caste tend to be the only potters in the society, and they thus spend more time involved in that pursuit than would be the case if most women followed. In addition, their own ritual interests might impel them to tailor ceramics more closely to the demands of the ritual contexts involved. We might expect that specialized potters would be more able and more likely to develop a large number of distinctive, uncommon pot types than would women who were less intensively involved in these activities.

### *Conclusions*

The distributions of a number of these regional, distinctive cultural elements may have some historical significance. Briefly, specialist castes, ritual ceramic suites and the *marai* rituals all have distributions weighted to the south and west of the study area, while 'Masters of the rain' tend to be more important -- if not, perhaps, more widespread -- to the north and east, among the small groups living south of Mora. The latter roles may be more important even further to the south, among Adamawa-speakers. Caste systems and specialized ritual ceramic suites may be functionally related and so perhaps should be considered together. The boundaries between regions with these cultural characteristics and regions without them are not coordinate.

There are a number of possible explanations for this pattern of regional cultural variation. It is conceivable, for example, that some characteristics of the cultures of the Mafa and their neighbours have encouraged the development or adoption of these adaptations, and/or that certain features of the northeastern groups have prevented this from happening. I have already mentioned the possibility that the greater social and cultural variation in the northeastern part of the massif might inhibit the development of caste systems there -- and thus, perhaps, also help explain the lack of ritual ceramics. It would not, however, explain the absence of the *marai* ritual.

It would be a mistake to limit consideration of these elements to the study area and other territories close by. Ritual ceramic suites, caste systems and ritual specialization are found among montagnard and other 'pagan' groups considerably further to the south and west. This opens up two possibilities. Was there a gradual northward diffusion of these (and perhaps other) traits within the Mandara Mountains, a diffusion which has not as yet reached the northeastern extremity of the massif? Alternatively, were these traits once universal within the mountains, afterwards being disrupted by some event(s) in the north -- perhaps the establishment of the Wandala state and/or immigrations of refugee groups from the surrounding plains?

At this point, these questions cannot be definitively answered, but there are a number of things which can be said. In the first place, there are many traditions which talk about migration, both internal to the massif and external to it, among casted groups living in areas to the south of the study area. In these cases, migration does not seem to have disrupted the caste system. On the other hand, there is evidence of cultural similarities connected with these features in the northern part of the massif. The Muyan used to celebrate *marai*, until perhaps 25 years ago (Richard 1977:70), and that is quite far north. There is, so far as I am aware, not even the memory of this set of rituals among the neighbours of the Muyan.

The same is true for caste systems. I have noted, however, that the Wandala smiths, although not casted, do seem to have a very strongly developed guild system and close ritual relations to the ruler of the state. They thus resemble in some ways

their technical equivalents in Marghi and Sukur. At least some of them claim ties to the preceding Maya population (Seignobos 1986:34).

Caste systems may not be incompatible with Sunni Islam -- there are too many caste Muslim societies in Africa to argue that -- but it is probable that, before the widespread adoption of Islam by the Wandala and before the state bureaucratization of the nineteenth century, Wandala resembled other, pagan states more than it does now. A caste system might well have been part of that.

Smiths seem to have resisted the processes of Islamization, bureaucratization and centralization which were at work in Wandala society during the nineteenth century at least (see Chapter 3). It might have been in the Wandala's interest to limit and disrupt their power, both within Wandala society and among neighbouring montagnard groups, particularly given the trading relations between Wandala smiths and montagnards (Ian Robertson, personal communication; Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986; Chemchem Dauwaka, 16/5/1989; Mandyak and Amiké, 16/5/1989; Ahlama Maganwé, 17/5/1989; Gadeva, 23/5/1989; Baje Maugjeta, 12/6/1989; Augulaw Kulemdia, 13/6/1989). The Wandala towns of Mora, Doulo and Manaouatchi are bordered by montagnard communities (Urza, Muraha, Dumwa, Podokwo) where smelting and smithing either are not or are very rarely practiced. Only near the inselberg of Keroua, the traditional capital, do montagnard blacksmiths still work -- and even then, they do so close to the mountains and so some miles away, after the traditional 'pagan' smiths of the area, the Geblegé, had been coopted and converted to Islam (Zadeva Kumbaw and others, 13/11/1986).

Disruption of smithing castes could have increased the technical and political security of the Wandala. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that sometimes-multiethnic rituals like *marai* would be treated the same way, given that they might have some potential in encouraging the establishment of interethnic ties for other purposes. The Wandala have probably always been outnumbered by their montagnard neighbours; organization was a very important advantage for them. At present, the

possibility can not be confirmed. Such confirmation awaits further investigation of montagnard-Wandala relations.

## **Ceramic Technologies Around Mayo Uldemé**

### *Introduction*

During the 1986 field season, I conducted a survey of the ceramics produced and in use in the montagnard communities around Mora, in the northeastern part of the study area. Eventually, this study encompassed ceramics produced by Kanuri, emigrant Mafa (at Mora), Urza, Muraha, Plata, Uldemé, Mada, 'Vamé-Mbremé' and also Glavda potters. In addition, Diane Lyons (Simon Fraser University) has kindly provided me with data on ceramics produced by women of the Kwawvré lineage of the Muraha group in Doulo; I also have some data on Podokwo and Muktelé ceramics. I originally gathered these data for use in an ethnoarchaeological study of material flows across ethnic boundaries and have, in fact, used them for that purpose. They also have historical significance.

In this section, I will briefly describe the context of ceramic production in this part of the study area, the regional variation in ceramic suites found and the possible consequences of this variation. I will use the data on ceramic variation that I have gathered to illustrate the differences in the vessels used by different groups. I found in the field that collection of four metric variables -- vessel height, height at maximum diameter, maximum circumference and rim diameter -- allowed an efficient description of pot morphology, especially when combined with sketches and photographs; additional metric data were rarely needed.

There is a great deal of variation in the details of pot decoration used by the different groups in question, but some consistent rules do exist. A limited number of decorative techniques were employed on the various types of vessels and were generally arranged in concentric bands which occurred at predictable locations. I was

thus able to divide vessels into a number of zones -- inside, rim, upper, upper middle, middle, lower middle, bottom and handle -- and assign codes for the decoration of each band. This arrangement is illustrated in Figure 8.3; the decoration codes used are given in Table 8.1.

### *Description of ceramic production*

Pottery is produced by many women in this region; there is no restriction to the wives of blacksmiths. There are, today, two primary reasons for pottery production: one traditional, which involves making pots for oneself, for gifts, or for trade with neighbours of any ethnic group; and one more modern, in which ceramics are produced for sale in the local weekly markets. This latter seems to have grown up in the colonial and post-colonial period and differs from traditional production in that production and sale are restricted to large numbers of only a few pottery types and that the buyers are most often Wandala. Wandala do not at present make ceramics themselves.

The ceramics produced by montagnard women may be classified within four functional categories: (1) those used for carrying and storing water; (2) those used to store, cook and serve food; (3) those used to produce, store and serve beer; and (4) those used in rituals, for the maintenance of proper relations within the natural and human worlds. Each of these classes is sub-divided into a limited number of functional pot types. (The different 'mundane' vessel types, the codes assigned to them in my analysis and the names given these different vessel types by different groups are given in Table 8.2). Well over ninety-five percent of montagnard vessels may be included in these four classes, and most are of only a few types (Tables 8.3 - 8.6). The remaining two to five percent of vessels were: (1) copies of Kanuri or Mafa pots, or specialized vessels made to be sold in the markets of Mora, Mémé and Magdemé; (2) lids for pots and granaries; (3) watering troughs; and (4) idiosyncratic vessels made by particularly creative potters. These vessels are interesting in their own right, but they do not tell us much about traditional regional variation in ceramic production.

Beer pots are the most numerous and most diverse class. Within a sample of over 1000 pots, nearly half are connected with beer production and consumption. Beer plays a central part in montagnard ritual and social life, although the institutionalization of weekly markets and a cash economy have increased alcohol consumption and its harmful effects. People living near markets have increased the number of beer brewing and serving pots that they own, because they can make money selling to people at or in transit to or from markets. At the other end of the scale, ritual pots were rather rare, and I was not able to gather data on Mada and Afam examples.

Although these pot types have different names within each linguistic group, people generally agree on what the main types are. It is evident from Table 8.2 that three kinds of pots for beer preparation (B3/4/5), storage (B1) and storage/serving (B2) are used by each of the groups studied, as are three types used pots in preparing and serving the sorghum and sauces that are the staple of the montagnard diet (C1, C2 and C3) and two types for water carriage (W1) and storage (W2). More specialized types do exist beyond this core range in each group (for example, B6 and C6); they have been excluded from this analysis. Thus, although these types are etically defined, they correspond, I believe, to categories recognized by local people within the region.

A number of functional types listed in Table 8.2 have multiple numbers associated with them -- for example, B3/4/5 is a large pot used for brewing beer and called *chekwé* or *moduk daw mhai* in *pelasla*. In my initial research, I applied these numbers to what I thought were three different brewing vessels (B3, B4 and B5), each of which was named differently. I eventually learned that various non-morphological factors go into the naming of pots; in this case, different names are given to the vessels used in each day of brewing. I accordingly collapsed the three categories to one for the purpose of this analysis.

There is a one-to-one correspondence between the main ceramic types used by all the montagnard groups in the northeastern part of the study area. This is not the

case when these systems are compared with those of the Wandala or Kanuri, or with those of montagnard groups to the south and southwest, such as the Mafa. Among these latter groups, the complex system of ritual ceramics described in the previous section has no obvious correlates around Mayo Plata. The Islamic faith of the Wandala and Kanuri removes the largest ceramic category, the vessels used for the preparation and serving of beer, from their inventory at a stroke, and other differences in their lifeways often mean that they use montagnard pots in different ways. In addition, several vessel types cannot be easily differentiated between a number of these groups; this is true, for example, of certain pot types used in the preparation and serving of food. The decorations and proportions of these vessels are generally similar (see below).

The ceramic survey carried out in 1986 was concentrated in Mada, Uldemé, Plata and Afam 'ethnic'/linguistic group territories. Analysis is complicated by the greater success enjoyed by the ceramics made by the more northern groups in the local markets. It is widely accepted that Uldemé, Muyan and Mada ceramics are neither as functional nor as attractive as Plata, Afam, Muraha and (often especially) Urza pots. In some cases, for example, Mada and Uldemé women have started producing and selling pots similar to Plata and Afam types, in order to break into markets which are now closed to them (Tyedyak, 19/5/1986; Añgwajek, 28/5/1986; Aboñ, 7/6/1986; Déya Trelye, 9/6/1986; Dapono, 13/6/1986; Maryam, 10/10/1986; Marie Shéyé, 11/11/1986). In-marrying Plata and Afam women will often teach their new relatives how to make these vessels; this contrasts with the usual situation, in which a woman marrying into a group will learn to make the ceramics traditionally used in that community.

*Ceramic traditions in the northeastern survey area.*

Differences in ceramic suites do occur in this region. In the first Mandara Archaeological Project field season, in 1984, the survey crew remarked upon the presence of two different types of water-carrying pots used by members of

montagnard groups. These have slightly different proportions, different patterns of decoration and -- most obviously when one is on archaeological survey -- different types of handles (Figures 8.5 and 8.6). It became evident in 1986 that these water-carrying pots serve as markers for the existence of two more general ceramic traditions in the region, one localized around Mora and just to its south, the other found further south, among the Mada, the Uldemé and neighbouring groups. The boundary between the two traditions is not sharp. Today, Mada ceramics belong to the southern tradition, and Plata, 'Vamé-Mbremé', Dumwa, Muraha and Urza ceramics to the northern. It is probable that Uldemé pots were originally part of the southern tradition, and so more like Mada vessels; today, certain of their vessels may preserve this relationship (see below).

Use of the terms 'northern tradition' and 'southern tradition' is both cumbersome and imprecise. I will accordingly refer to the first of these as the *Maslava tradition* and to the second as the *Tokombéré tradition*. 'Maslava' is a term used by a number of lineages around Mayo Plata to refer to the 'Vamé-Mbremé' and Dumwa groups and to some Muraha lineages. It probably comes closest to being a general term for all of the groups who make this type of ceramics; no more inclusive term exists in this culturally fragmented region. No such term exists at all to the south, but the Uldemé, Mada, Muyan and Molkwo groups, all of which belong to the southern tradition, live on the massif and inselbergs which surround the Tokombéré plain. Their ceramics have distinct similarities to those of other groups further to the south.

*Water-carrying pots* (Figures 8.4 - 8.6, Table 8.5). Vessels for the carriage and storage of water form an important part of the ceramic assemblage (217 of 1033 vessels). Of these, the pots used to carry water from wells, reservoirs and water-holes to homes (type W1 -- Table 8.2) are of particular importance, because they are easily the most visible of all local ceramics. Even today, when many montagnards have moved onto the plains, the daily trips to a water source may involve a long walk through the countryside. In the past, when people were restricted to a limited number

of water sources in the mountains, the water pot served -- for good or ill -- as a visible marker of the affiliation of the woman who bore it. These pots would also be among the most visible archaeologically; their handles are distinctive and compact, and so resistant to breakage, and both these and water-storage pots tend to be heavily decorated.

Plata and Afam water-carrying (W1) pots resemble one another, and differ in morphology and decoration from their Uldemé and Mada equivalents (Figure 8.4). In terms of morphology, the difference between the northern and southern pots in the ratio of height to rim diameter is statistically significant ( $t=11.02$ , critical value=1.97); Plata and Afam pots have wider mouths in proportion to their total height. In addition, the ratio of height-at-maximum-diameter to height is significantly lower for the northern water-carrying pots ( $t=4.66$ , critical value=3.19); the Afam and Plata pots thus tend to look squatter than do their Uldemé and Mada equivalents. Handles are attached at the point of maximum diameter and so are carried lower on northern water-carrying pots, resulting in slight postural changes among the carriers. Mada *zaugwan* sometimes have short necks, a feature common among Mofu and other groups further to the south. Finally, Uldemé pots traditionally had a clay head rest molded into their bottoms -- an unpopular feature with women of other groups, who complain that they hurt the head more than the fibre head rests used by those other people (Tagaiyo, 7/4/1986; Tefwa, 8/4/1986; Aboñ, 7/6/1986).

It should be noted that, while these metric differences are statistically significant -- that is, the proportions of the pot populations as a whole are actually different -- it is often impossible to tell from measurements alone whether a particular vessel belongs to one population or the other; there is a considerable amount of overlap in the characteristics of the populations. This implies that the proportions alone would be neither efficient nor significant in signalling ethnic information (Wobst 1977), since there is so much ambiguity in the signal. These differences are probably examples of isochrestic variation (Sackett 1982, 1985). Such differences are often relatively unconscious among members of the group, and so less open to

conscious manipulation; for that reason, I view them as likely to have developed in a context of interaction within groups over time.

The decoration found on Mada, Uldemé, Plata and Afam water-carrying (W1) pots is very different. The handles are strikingly different; Plata and Afam pots, as well as those of their northern neighbours in the Maslava tradition, have molded, cup-shaped handles, while the water-carrying pots of the Mada and Uldemé are made by the joining of two horn-shaped pieces of clay (Figures 8.5, 8.6). In addition, the arrangement of decoration on the vessels themselves is very different. The northern pots are much more likely to be decorated with twisted string roulettes (Table 8.1, decoration code 3), southern pots with twisted strip roulettes (decoration code 4) (Soper 1985).

This decoration also varies in the different zones that I have described above (Table 8.7). Mada water-carrying pots exhibit decreasing percentages of decoration from the top to the bottom of the pot, because their vessels tend to be divided into two wide bands, the upper decorated and the lower undecorated. Uldemé water-carrying pots are encircled by a decorated appliqué band at the level of handle attachment, and this band is usually bordered by decoration on both sides or only at the top. The vessel extremities are often undecorated. In other cases, Uldemé water-carrying pots will be decorated in a similar fashion to their Plata and Afam equivalents, which tend to have alternating bands of rouletted and plain/burnished areas running from the top to the lower-middle part of the vessel, often with additional incision and/or appliques on top of that (Figure 8.4). These variations in decoration make the vessels easily distinguishable at some tens of meters.

*Water-storage pots* (Figure 8.7, Table 8.5). These vessels (type W2 -- Table 8.2) are much less visible in this region, since they are kept in shady areas within the compound. They are also less numerous; a compound may often contain six to eight water-carrying pots, but usually each wife in the household will have only one storage pot. This means that conclusions about Afam and Uldemé water storage pots should be treated with some reserve, given the small sample size.

There is considerable variation in construction of these pots. The Afam, Plata and Uldemé examples are spherical to ovoid in shape; this is sometimes surmounted by a short, straight neck with a flaring rim. Mada water-storage (W2) vessels have a similar shape, but the neck of the vessel is proportionately much wider than in the northern examples and the coils of clay used in making it are either unsmoothed so that the individual coils used in construction are left visible, or are smoothed and then horizontally incised to give the same effect (Figure 8.7).

Besides this lack of smoothing/incision, Mada water storage pots are minimally decorated. They have an appliqué band decorated with a twisted strip roulette at the body neck junction, but the body of the vessel itself is almost always plain. This is in contrast to the Plata, Afam and Uldemé *dedyau/dedyo*, which are abundantly decorated with alternating concentric string-rouletted and plain/burnished bands, which are often in turn incised or adorned with appliqué buttons and/or bands. In addition, like a number of other large pots made by these latter groups (see below), an appliqué band of wet clay is sometimes added to these pots around the vessel's midpoint in the course of manufacture and the lower edge of this band is then smoothed down, leaving a flange of clay; this is then rouletted.

These water-storage (W2) pots present a paradox for those who believe that the main function of ceramic stylistic variation is information exchange. They are very heavily decorated, but remain immobile in dark areas of the compound. In contrast, their Mada equivalents are not heavily decorated. Informants gave different reasons for the decoration of vessels; some people appealed to aesthetics ('it looks nice'), others to function ('stucco [a gravelly wash -- SME] makes the pot strong'), others to the requirements of protection and magical propriety, saying that undecorated vessels were only for the dead, old widows and other marginal people (Elizabeth Bashwé, 13/3/1986; Susan and Zawmba Maizanye, 3-4/4/1986; Ashi, 7/4/1986; Tagaiyo, 7/4/1986; Tefwa, 8/4/1986; Marie Jaté, 10/4/1986; Lamisé Sama, 19/4/1986; Nda Kache, 2/5/1986; Deumba, 9/5/1986; Kwawdéhé, 21/5/1986; Aboñ, 7/7/1986; Dukché, 3/7/1986; Lamisé, 3/7/1986; Tlevu Augla, 5/10/1986; Maryam,

10/10/1986; Marie Shéyé, 11/10/1986; Vijeñ, 13/10/1986; wife of Zadeva Kumbaw, 13/11/1986). The first explanation was by far the most common, but the last was usually given by older people who might on the whole be expected to have a better knowledge of traditional beliefs. The decoration on these vessels was probably originally protective in nature, but there is no reason to think that the greater amount of decoration on northern water storage pots means that these people were more preoccupied with protection than are the Mada.

*Large beer preparation/storage pots* (Figure 8.8, Table 8.4). Almost exactly half of the identifiable vessels in the ceramic sample (515 of 1033) are in some way connected with the production and/or consumption of beer (Table 8.4). Note the differences in the numbers of different pot types per group. Groups in the Maslava tradition tend to keep beer in very large storage pots (type B1 -- Table 8.2) or in smaller vessels called *hwulawm* (type B7/8) among the Plata, while the Mada more often keep it in the large number of still smaller storage/serving vessels (type B2) that they use. This technological differentiation again serves to emphasize the differences between (especially) Mada and Maslava ceramics.

Among the northern groups, the vessels used for the preparation for beer (types B3, 4 and 5) may be considered along with the beer storage pots (type B1 -- Table 8.2) mentioned above; the construction and decoration of these two vessel types are similar, and one is often pressed into service in the place of the other. This is not the case among the Mada, where the vessels are quite different (Figure 8.8). These pots are kept in the kitchen hut of each wife in a household, although in practice there is a good deal of sharing of these and other facilities between wives. In no case were there significant differences in the proportions of these vessels.

Among the Maslava tradition groups, the decoration on these beer preparation (B3/4/5) and storage (B1) does not vary a great deal. The rim and the area immediately below it are left plain or burnished. The upper half of the vessel is decorated with a band of twisted string rouletting above a plain or burnished band. A smoothed appliqué band applied at the midpoint (as with the water storage pots,

above) is again rouletted, and it lies above another plain band. The bottom of the vessel is usually covered with 'stucco', the gravelly wash described above. This appears to be the basic decorative/protective array associated with these vessels. There will sometimes, but not often, be incised or applied decoration added usually on the rouletted bands, I believe for aesthetic reasons.

Mada beer preparation and storage pots are more variable. The storage vessels (B1 -- *gea/gea hu zawm*) are usually very similar to the water storage (W2) vessels, as is indicated by their name ('jar for beer', as opposed to *gea hai yam*, 'jar for water'). Their *dogwokwo* (B3/4/5) beer preparation pots are in most cases smaller versions of the same vessel; in others, they are more globular vessels with no necks and with a twisted strip-rouletted appliqué band placed around the vessel at between one-third and one-half way down the body. The rest of the vessel is undecorated, although the bottom third is often covered with 'stucco'. Plata and Uldemé beer preparation pots are now often copied by the Mada because of the popularity of this vessel type in local market. Because of this, there is a large amount of variation in Mada pots used in this function.

*Small beer storage/serving pots* (Figure 8.9, Tables 8.4, 8.8). Unlike the large beer storage and preparation pots, which are kept immobile in dark kitchens, the smaller beer storage and serving pots (types B2, 7 and 8) are used to pour beer for family members, visitors and ancestral and other spirits on ritual and important social occasions. They are thus highly visible artifacts, perhaps only exceeded in social visibility by water-carrying pots. Their form and decoration reflect their importance.

The form of Mada beer-serving vessels (B2 -- *erwa/klerwa*) is very different from that of the equivalent vessels among the groups to their north (Figure 8.9). They have egg-shaped to globular bodies, long straight necks and no handles. The Uldemé also occasionally make use of a similar pot, calling it an *arwa*; it can be differentiated from the Mada vessels by its flaring, as opposed to straight, neck. In some cases, the long necks on Mada *erwa* are built with a distinct bulge in them, and the vessel is called *erwa du dulo*. This beer serving pot is used only for special ritual occasions,

when the bulge offers a place of refuge to attending ancestor spirits (Marie Shéyé, 11/10/1986). This feature is also found among Mofu and Gemjek groups further to the south. The Plata and Afam vessels (both B2 [*dumbek*] and B7/8 [*hwulawm*]) are wide-mouthed, short-necked jars with (for type B2) a single wide vertical handle usually attached to the upper part of the vessel's body (Figure 8.9). *Hwulawm* are usually larger. Afam *dumbek* will occasionally be made with two cup-shaped handles, as with water-carrying pots.

The approach to decoration of Mada vessels of this type is similar to that for Mada water-carrying pots; the neck is undecorated or simply burnished, the upper half of the body is covered with twisted strip roulettes, and the lower half is undecorated (Table 8.8). However, more incised and appliqué decoration (most often rows of appliqué buttons) are added to the rouletted areas than is the case with the water pots. The northern pots are decorated in the same general fashion, except that twisted string rouletting is used instead of strip rouletting and the neck and bottoms of the vessels are often burnished -- a labour-intensive decorative technique compared to the use of roulettes, incisions and appliqués (Figure 8.9).

*Yeast-storage vessels* (Table 8.4). The other important vessel category used in montagnard beer-making technology in this region is a rare vessel; only nine were found throughout the course of the survey. These are small vessels used to store small amounts of yeasty sediment taken from the bottom of the beer preparation vessels between the weekly beer-making; it is believed that this substance (*dibek* [Plata]) increases fermentation. They are also used to serve beer to old and important people (and especially old men) at religious ceremonies.

This vessel type (B6 -- Table 8.2) is known variously as *bembetch togwai* ('the heart of the *togwai* pot') and *hwulawm ngujé* to the Plata and Afam and as *muhkshu/mawkshu* to Mada. The number of pots is too small to allow meaningful size comparisons to be made. In general, Mada *muhkshu* are small pots with restricted mouths and no or very short necks, with the usual Mada band of twisted strip rouletting around the upper/middle body; they much resemble Mada cooking vessels

(see below). Their northern equivalents are slightly smaller versions of the *dumbek* (B2) beer-serving pots found among the same groups, jars with short necks and single vertical handles. They are, however, more heavily decorated, always with a panel of twisted string rouletting on the upper body, but also usually with incisions and punctates on and around that panel and often with burnishing and the use of a red slip on the neck and lower vessel body.

*Pots for cooking and serving food* (Figure 8.10, Table 8.3). Compared to the profusion of montagnard beer pots, their food preparation and serving vessels are few and quite simple. They are of three basic types: pots for cooking the stiff sorghum porridge which is the staple food (type C2), pots for cooking the sauce which supplements the porridge (type C1) and serving bowls (type C3). In addition, there are very rare pots used to cook mixtures of beans, corn and millet sometimes served in place of a sauce (type C4/5); these latter are usually slightly larger versions of the pot used to cook sauces. With water-carrying pots and the smaller beer preparation pots, these cooking pots and bowls are the most common vessels sold by montagnard women at local markets.

The cooking pots are kept in the compound's kitchen(s) and are heavily blackened with soot from the fire, making any decoration very difficult to see. The rouletting and appliqué bands which decorate them thus could not serve any emblematic function; they are probably protective in nature. Serving bowls are cleaner and are often seen by visitors to a compound; they are thus much more visible in the community.

The sorghum cooking pot (C2) is variously called *gihlde daf* (Mada), *ohwi daf* (Uldemé) and *moduk dafka/moduk dafkwa* (Plata and Afam). The *daf*(-) root is a common term for sorghum porridge. These vessels are globular pots with relatively unrestricted mouths; the Mada and Uldemé examples have significantly more open mouths than do their Plata counterparts (Plata/Mada,  $t=4.286$ , critical value=3.26; Plata/Uldemé,  $t=2.51$ , critical value=1.59). The Mada pot's sole decoration is an appliqué band applied around the middle of the pot; this band is decorated with

twisted strip roulettes (Figure 8.10a). Afam, Plata and Uldemé examples are decorated with a wide band of twisted string rouletting which, again, usually is placed around the middle of the pot. It can, however, be higher and occasionally will stretch from the rim to below the midpoint. A 'stucco' wash will sometimes be added to the bottoms of these pots.

All montagnard groups depend on vegetable and meat sauces to add extra nutrients and variety to their diets. These sauces are cooked in different pots than is the sorghum. The pots (type C1 -- Table 8.2) in which these dishes are cooked are called *mishiñge ilé* (Afam), *moduk ilé* (Plata), *ohwilé* (Uldemé) and *meshek ilé* (Mada); (-)ilé is, as one might expect, a common term for the various sauces. None of these groups have special pots in which meat is cooked for men, as do the Mafa and other montagnards to the south and west, but the terms *mishiñge ilé* and *meshek ilé* are probably related to the words *shengele* (Gemjek), *nshengelek* (Mafa) and *mejengjeng* (Sirak) used for those meat-cooking vessels.

Among the Plata, Afam and Uldemé, pots for cooking sauces (C1) are very similar to those used for sorghum (C2) (Figure 8.10b). There are two main differences. Among the Plata, the former have slightly more restricted mouths and among all of these groups they almost always have burnished interiors and upper exteriors. Often the lower exterior, below the belt of rouletting, is also burnished and this burnishing is sometimes accompanied by the use of black or red pigments. The reason given for this burnishing was always functional; it is said to be done to prevent the sauce from sticking to the pot during cooking. This is not as important for cooking sorghum, said one woman (Deumba, 9/5/1986), because the pieces of burned-on sorghum stuck to the interior of the pot are popular snacks, especially with children. Mada sauce-cooking (C1) pots are dimensionally similar to northern examples and are also similarly decorated, albeit with a twisted strip roulette and often with no exterior burnishing. They are thus quite different from their sorghum-cooking pots, which have a rouletted appliqué band around their midpoint.

The final major vessel type in this category is the open bowl used to serve foods -- most often sauces (type C3). These vessels are quite rare; only 29 were included in the sample, and many households had none. For that reason, it is impossible to make conclusions about size variation between the different ethnic groups; their sizes seem to vary within wide tolerances. They are produced primarily for sale in the markets.

These open, rimless bowls are remarkable in that they are the only vessel regularly used by the Plata, Afam and Uldemé which is consistently not rouletted; they are, instead, blackened and burnished to a high gloss both inside and out, with rare examples being decorated with a single line of comb-stamping on the exterior surface just below the rim (Figure 8.10c). Mada examples are also often burnished, but they tend to have a narrow band of string or strip rouletting in the same position. This vessel type is very widely encountered within the study area and to the south. We might expect that such bowls had been introduced recently as trade items, but this is not the case; they are encountered in the earliest levels of the Mehé Djiddere site (Wahome 1989:Table 4.15).

#### *Conclusions ceramic variability and prehistoric regional ceramic traditions*

Variations in the pottery used by people in the region around Mayo Uldemé and Mayo Plata occur on a number of levels. There appears to be considerable scope for individual variation and innovation. There is also considerable functional variation within groups. Variation also occurs on the 'ethnic'/linguistic group level; for example, there are particular morphological variations between Plata and Afam pottery, although their ceramic suites are in general quite similar. Finally, there appear to be two widespread ceramic traditions in this region, both of which encompass a number of different groups.

*Intragroup variation.* Some of the internal variation is fairly easy to understand. Women continually marry into different groups, with a fine disregard for 'ethnic' boundaries. This ensures a great deal of exposure to different styles of

ceramics, and women do produce vessels of different styles when they see fit. In the normal course of affairs, they eventually produce vessels primarily in the styles used by the women of their new community. During the time they spend learning to do this, they will probably make pots in the style of their home community and later in a curious melange, until they learn the proper ways of their new home. This virtually ensures the presence of diverse pottery styles in any community. Archaeologists often assume that ceramics are imbued with ethnic and other cultural information; it is interesting that, in these patrilineal societies, these artefacts are very often produced by women -- people initially external to the group.

The degree of innovation exercised by women producing pottery in this region should not be underestimated. I encountered a number of vessels which did not fit in any traditional taxonomy, and was told that they were new products. It is probable that both in-group heterogeneity in ceramic suites and innovation in ceramic production have been increased by the presence of local markets. The increased acceptance of vessels made in the Maslava tradition has led to the incorporation of these vessel types in the Uldemé and Mada repertoires; women marrying in to these groups teach their new relations how to make the more successful pottery, rather than the other way around. Data on traditional Uldemé ceramics is equivocal, but it appears that their pots were originally more like those of the Mada -- that is, that they were part of the Tokombéré tradition -- than they are today, when only certain vessels (especially water-carrying pots and beer pots) preserve this relationship.

It may be significant that the Maslava pot types most frequently encountered in use in Mada households are water-carrying pots (W1), beer preparation pots (B3/4) and pots for cooking sauces (C1). These are also the most popular montagnard pots in local markets. It is possible that such processes of borrowing and innovation took place in pre-colonial times, but they were probably less frequent. The relative stability seen in archaeological ceramic samples recovered from sites like Mehé Djiddere bears this out (Chapter 5).

*The ideological context of decoration.* When members of one community in this region produce pottery characteristic of another community, they usually borrow both morphology and decoration *in toto*. There are some limitations to this. Motor skills attuned to the production of one vessel configuration may stubbornly impose elements of that configuration on attempts to produce foreign vessels. Even decoration may be affected this way. Women accustomed to making and using twisted string roulettes may, for example, find twisted strip roulettes difficult to make, and vice versa (Marie Shéyé, 11/10/1986). Nevertheless, in general the morphology and decoration of a borrowed pot are copied as closely as the capability of the borrower allows. This implies that form and decoration are an organic whole, intimately related.

There is no doubt that the decoration on these vessels is ethnically significant. It is universally said to be so by makers and users and potters say that transplantation of Maslava decorative schema on to, say, a traditional Mada pot would result in a deformed, 'ugly' vessel (Nda Katcha, 2/5/1986; Kwawdéhé, 21/5/1986; Ergwa, 26/5/1986; Marie Shéyé, 11/10/1986). However, decoration is obviously fulfilling some other role beyond that of signalling ethnic identity. Some of the least visible pots are also highly decorated; these include water-storage pots and *bembetch togwai*, the small vessels used to store beer residues. It is also the function of decoration, and especially rouletting, to guard the pot contents -- and so ultimately the users -- against external natural forces or, in a few cases, to keep such forces safely contained within the pot. The cosmological principles underlying these beliefs seem similar over much of the region, but they are translated into very different patterns of decoration in different communities.

Decorative elements appear to act simultaneously to reinforce group identity (both within and outside the group) and to provide spiritual protection for the users of the pots. This should not be a new concept to Westerners; the essentially religious connotations of cross, crescent and hammer-and-sickle on various national flags -- which are quintessential emblems of political/ethnic units -- spring immediately to

mind. This illustrates not only that single artefacts may be imbued with multiple messages, but also that single messages can have multiple dimensions, especially in smaller, more homogeneous societies. Members of such societies may not have distinct ethnic and religious identities, for example, because the one necessarily defines and complements the other. In our own secular, heterogeneous culture, this is not the case.

It is difficult to see how we can give precedence to one of these functions, ethnic reinforcement or religious protection, over the other. It has recently been said of the ceramics used by montagnard groups to the south, "What the outsider reads as ethnicity is the incidental byproduct of the interplay of Mafa and Bulahay cognition and society" (David et al. 1988). In the area around Mayo Plata and Mayo Uldemé the two appear to operate on a more or less equal footing.

*Regional variation.* Variation in ceramic suites does not exist only at the level of the 'ethnic'/linguistic group in this region. It is convenient to compare, say, Plata with Mada pottery in order to illuminate similarities and differences and to examine the effects of movement of pottery producers from one group to the other. However, both groups are included in regional ceramic traditions and very significant similarities between pots produced by different groups within these various traditions exist. In the case of Maslava ceramics at least, the homogeneity with the traditions is more striking than is any 'ethnic'/linguistic group differentiation.

The best-defined of the traditions in the study area is the Maslava tradition found around and south of Mora. Dumwa, Muraha, Urza, 'Vamé-Mbremé' and Plata women produce pots that are very similar. This is most obvious with the conspicuous water-carrying pots that these groups use, but is true for the other vessels in their ceramic suites as well. On the other hand, Mada, Muyan and Molkwo women produce very similar pottery and their vessels are more generally similar to those used by northern Mofu, Zulgo and Gemjek communities. I have not had the opportunity to systematically extend my ceramic survey to any of these groups except the Mada, but I have examined vessels used by all of these groups and feel quite confident that they

can be grouped into the Tokombéré ceramic tradition, although this may well be more loosely defined than its northern counterpart.

The Uldemé occupy a curious position between these two traditions. Different pot types within Uldemé assemblages are similar to examples from either of the two, but it appears that their indigenous types were most often similar to vessels from the Tokombéré tradition. Adoption of northern vessel types may be the result of a number of processes: extensive intermarriage with Plata and 'Vamé-Mbremé' lineages to the north; long-standing conflicts with the Mada to the south and south-west; and the recent influence of market demand. All would favour the adoption of Maslava pottery types.

The affiliations of the pots produced by other montagnard groups in the region are more problematic. Podokwo pottery is not similar to that made by their Maslava-tradition neighbours (personal observation; Lembezat 1952:79, 127). It appears more similar to the pottery made by the Mada and their neighbours to the south and west, and ultimately to Mafa vessel types. In particular, Podokwo water-carrying pots are globular with small, narrow necks and are carried on the shoulder rather than the head. This is similar to the habit of some Mafa, and quite dissimilar to the technique used by groups in either the Maslava or Tokombéré traditions. However, the shapes of beer-serving vessels and the use of certain decorative techniques (twisted strip roulettes, wide fields of decoration instead of bands, unsmoothed appliqué bands around the mid-point of a vessel's body) increase the similarity of these pots to vessels of the southern Tokombéré tradition as I have defined it. Muktelé ceramic appear to be generally similar to Podokwo ones, but I have much less information on these types. Even Glavda pottery seems to be generally more similar to Tokombéré tradition vessels than the northern ceramics produced by the Maslava groups around Mora; there is also a significant Kanuri influence on at least some of these vessels (wife of Zadeva Kumbaw, 13/11/1986).

It thus appears that the pottery made by the Plata and their montagnard neighbours -- the Maslava tradition -- is very different from that produced by most

other groups within the study area. Tokombéré tradition pottery exhibits many more similarities to that of other montagnard groups. This of course raises questions concerning the implications of these differences for culture history in the region.

We should first note that membership of different groups in ceramic traditions does in general follow linguistic lines. Most of the Maslava tradition groups are *pelasla*-speakers and this language is quite different from most of the other languages in the Mafa grouping of Biu-Mandara Chadic to which it belongs; the sole exception is *mbuko*. The Muraha lineages, which speak *wandala*, also make pots in the Maslava tradition; it is interesting that the Podokwo, speaking a very closely related language, use totally different pottery. The Uldemé speak a language closely related to those of the Mada and other producers of Tokombéré tradition ceramics but it seems likely that they have adopted elements of Maslava ceramics relatively recently.

A comparison of the ceramics produced by these different traditions with the ceramics recovered from the Iron Age site of Mehé Djiddere (see Chapter 5) is quite significant. I have stressed that there is continuity between the pottery remains found at Mehé Djiddere and the vessels produced by local montagnard groups today. Mehé Djiddere pottery is most similar to that produced by Maslava tradition groups. This is strikingly illustrated by examination of the proportions of different types of roulettes used in decorating ceramics from the site. Maslava tradition pottery is decorated almost exclusively with twisted string roulettes, while the Mada and other Tokombéré tradition groups usually use twisted strip roulettes. Over ninety percent of the roulette-decorated sherds from Mehé Djiddere were decorated with twisted string roulettes (Wahome 1989:Table 4.12). It is my impression that decoration on pots at this site was applied in bands rather than wide panels, although this cannot be determined exactly from Wahome's (1989) analysis. Bands of decoration are, again, a feature of the Maslava tradition.

Handle types, particularly the handles on water-carrying pots, are also different in the two present-day traditions. It is nearly impossible to determine the relative proportions of Maslava-type and Tokombéré-type handles from Wahome's

(1989:87, Table 4.6, Figure 4.10) work. They both appear to be subsumed under his morphological category 'pointed loop handles', which are quite rare in the sample; this rarity might be expected, given that these vessels are probably broken away from the habitation site more than are any other pot type. Photographs in his work (Wahome 1989:Plate IIa-e) show handles of both types. Tokombéré-type handles are used by the Plata in one application, at any rate; they are placed on the *mashembek mahola* ('twin spoons'), ritual spoons produced as part of a set of ritual vessels when twins are born in a family (Asheñ, 7/6/1986; Michel Kourdapaye, 17/6/1986; Gskai Augla, 30/10/1986).

The 'simple loop handles' that also occur at Mehé Djiddere are today encountered on some Maslava-tradition beer-serving pots (types B2/7/8 -- see above). Wahome's (1989:85, Table 4.4, Figure 4.9) 'bottles' are equivalent to Tokombéré tradition beer-serving pots (Mada *erwa*), but these are found on the site in quite low frequencies. Tripod legs are relatively common on the site, but they form only a restricted element in the northeastern massif today, confined to ritual uses. They are considerably more commonly used in everyday tasks by montagnard groups to the southwest (Mofu, Mafa and so on) and data from Mehé Djiddere indicates that their restriction to ritual may be quite recent.

In general, pottery from Mehé Djiddere looks most similar to Maslava pottery, with low frequencies of Tokombéré elements also present. This is what we would expect to see in a Maslava-tradition community today, particularly if that community was reasonably close to Tokombéré-tradition settlements. Under those circumstances, any intermarriage which took place would introduce women who potted in one tradition into a different pottery-making milieu. Eventually, they would probably assimilate to the tradition of their new home, but not before producing some vessels in the style of their parental community (see above). It is quite probable that additional alien pottery would be introduced by trade, especially if -- as seems almost certain -- travel in the plains was less dangerous for members of those prehistoric plains

communities before the rise of predatory state societies than it was for montagnards in the recent past.

Mehé Djiddere lies about 15 km northwest from what is now the territory of the Muyan, who produce pottery in the Tokombéré tradition. It is quite possible that women from somewhere around the Muyan inselberg complex were responsible for some of the variant ceramics found at Mehé Djiddere. This has implications for any reconstructions of culture history in the region. It implies that some cultural elements have been stable in the plains for some hundreds of years at least, which is also implied by the linguistic data. It also may imply that social relations between groups were in some ways similar to such relations today, if women were moving between groups and produced vessels more or less in the style of their parental community for some time after they married in to a new community.

This does not necessarily imply, however, that the actual human populations in the region have been so stable over time. Indeed, this is impossible around Mehé Djiddere; the population of the area is primarily Fulbe today, and it is quite certain that Fulbe are recent immigrants, and not the inhabitants of the Iron Age site. Immigrant populations may adopt indigenous technologies, including the making of indigenous ceramic types, with as much facility as they can adopt indigenous languages (Chapter 7). In other cases, migrants do introduce elements of their own material culture into their new homes. Thus, for example, recent Mafa immigrants to Mora produce and sell pottery in an interesting mixture of Mafa, Maslava and Kanuri styles. Recent Mada immigrants to Memé, at the foot of the Urza inselberg complex, live among Urza and most often produce Maslava tradition ceramics, instead of the Tokombéré ceramics that one might expect (personal observation).

It is probable that the later Iron Age inhabitants of both the plains and the massif edge around Mora shared in the production of Maslava tradition pottery. Both Podokwo and Muktelé acknowledge influences from Mafa territory; the dominant 'Majewi' lineages in Muktelé claim to have immigrated from there, as do some of the

earliest Podokwo lineages (see Chapter 6). The resemblance of Podokwo and Muktelé pottery to that of the Mafa may be related to that claimed movement.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have examined a number of different aspects of culture and technology in which significant variation exists in the study area. These cultural elements are of a very disparate nature, but there may be some relationships between some of them -- between caste systems and ritual ceramic suites, for example. Two questions are obvious. In the first place, what does such variation tell us about social and cultural interaction between different montagnard groups in the study area? Secondly, can this variation throw some light on the prehistory of the northern Mandara Mountains?

One of the end results of this regional variation has been the establishment of ties between lineages of the same and of different 'ethnic'/linguistic groups over large territories, especially in areas of culture where certain groups are recognized as having particular expertise or ritual power. The efficacy of intervention by the Sama Uldemé 'Master of the rains' is recognized by people of a number of neighbouring groups, and other practitioners have become similarly well known in other areas. Cycles of *marai* ceremonies depend upon agreement about ritual precedence among large numbers of lineages. Although I have not treated it in this chapter, the importance of the chiefs and ritual experts of Gudur have been widely recognized throughout the massif. Ceramic design elements and innovations are carried by women into different ethnic groups, to be copied when copying seems advantageous.

I have throughout this work emphasized the importance of units at the smaller end of the social hierarchy -- lineages of various sorts, and territorial lineage groups -- as a necessary corrective to assumptions about the primacy of 'ethnic'/linguistic groups. This does not mean that the montagnard social universe is or was atomized, made up of many small, isolated units interacting only to the extent that biology and

economics demand. It seems obvious that, in the recent past at least, relationships of many types -- blood ties, economic, social and ritual relations -- extended throughout large areas of the northern Mandara massif. These united large areas of that massif into social units, albeit loosely-articulated and extremely fractious ones.

The patterns of regional variation themselves are equally worthy of attention. There are certainly many cultural elements which are held in common by montagnard groups living in all parts of the study area. However, cultural complexes like *marai* or caste systems are important in their own right, and should not be ignored. They are not found among the highly diverse montagnard groups living in the northeastern part of the study area, but are found among the larger groups in the southwest and to the south and west of that area. The groups in between -- the Zulgo, Gemjek, Minéo, Mada and so on -- occupy an intermediate status. They generally celebrate *marai*, but do not have caste systems; some appear to have sets of ritual ceramics, while others do not. Groups in the north seem to accord more importance to their 'Masters of the rain' and other such ritual specialists than do the Mafa and other southwestern groups -- although this status becomes increasingly more important even further to the south.

This southwest-to-northeast continuum of variation also exists in the languages found in the study area and in ceramic production. The northern and northeastern languages belong primarily to two sets of Chadic languages, the Wandala group (*wandala*, *parekwa*, the northern montagnard languages of Nigeria) and the northern (*matal*) and northeastern (*pelasla*, *mbuko*) sub-groups of the Mafa group (Table 3.2). All of the other montagnard languages to their south belong to the southern sub-group of the Mafa language group. The Maslava ceramic tradition is very nearly coordinate with the use of *pelasla*; only the Muraha producers of this pottery speak *wandala* and not *pelasla*. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Maslava tradition has existed for some hundreds of years at least; it would, of course, be preferable if we had some idea of the actual extent of this tradition over space, as well as time.

All of these data imply that the northeastern part of the study area has followed a different trajectory of development in the recent past than have the territories of the Mafa, Mofu, Higi/Kapsiki, Marghi and other groups who live further to the south and west. There is simply not enough information available to allow even such impertinent generalizations to be made about the northwestern groups in Nigeria. Maslava tradition ceramics at least were in use on the plains near the massif over a long period of time, and a number of lineages from this northeastern area claim origins among plains groups, including the Maya. At this point, I think it most likely that at least some of these regional differences can be traced to characteristics of the Sao/Maya groups which were occupying the northern plains before the expansion of the Wandala state, and to the disruptions caused by that predatory state, which forced these groups to take refuge in the Mandara Mountains.

## CHAPTER 9 -- CONCLUSIONS PREHISTORY AND ETHNICITY IN THE MANDARA MOUNTAINS

No one is too much our enemy or our friend.

Tlevu Augla, 1986

### **Introduction**

I have had two main goals in this dissertation. They are closely related. First, I wanted to construct a very preliminary cultural and historical framework for the recent prehistory of northern Mandara Mountains and the plains around them. Data from the varying disciplines that might contribute to such a framework -- archaeology, history, ethnohistory, linguistics -- are all deficient to differing degrees and in some cases are contradictory. The inadequacy of these data demands that all reliable sources of information be used. Their conflicts make this difficult. Ideally, a multidisciplinary reconstruction of prehistory and the historical period should allow reconciliation of data from these sources.

A research area cannot be treated as an isolated unit. This is particularly the case when migration is such a common occurrence. Accordingly, the boundaries of my study area were porous, and I moved across them as I saw fit. This was most necessary when considering the relations between montagnard groups, which make up the greater part of the total population of my study area, and their plains neighbours. The most important of these latter populations, at least as far as the montagnards were concerned, is the Wandala, whose Muslim, Sudanic state occupies most of the plains north and east of the massif itself. The linguistic and cultural relationships and the proximity of the Wandala and nearby mountain populations meant that an assessment of Wandala social development is crucial to this work. In the event, it appears that Wandala state formation and expansion was one of the engines of social and cultural change in the study area, and was fundamental in the definition of montagnard society as it exists at present.

I wanted, in the second place, to use this historical framework to try to account for certain characteristics of the montagnard groups that are most important within my study area today. These groups are often quite small, and they exist as constellations of even smaller corporate units. They also often exist in a state which seems extremely anomalous to Westerners, one where relations to neighbouring groups are made up of equal parts cooperation and aggression. (Westerners are quite comfortable with this idea at the rather abstract level of the nation-state, where it may be dignified with labels like *Realpolitik*, but are much more uneasy with it at the neighbourhood level.)

My main interests in these groups lie in the ways that they work as corporate, self-perpetuating social units and the various loyalties that group members bestow on them. I wanted to see how ethnic self-identification developed and functioned in such a milieu. This led me into a consideration of social and cultural -- and so ultimately 'ethnic' -- variation at smaller and larger scales, at various lineage levels and the level of the regional cultural group.

## **The Historical Framework**

### *Recapitulation of the problem*

The northern Mandara Mountains are very heavily populated today, to the extent that most of the landscape in and around the massif may usefully be thought of as 'domesticated'. Not only do many of the plant and animal species found there exist only by human sufferance, but the terrain itself has been greatly modified by the construction of terraces and other architectural features. Nevertheless, archaeological and ethnohistorical data indicate that this is a relatively recent condition, one which has probably existed for only some hundreds of years.

Neolithic and Iron Age sites are extremely rarely preserved within the massif, and only slightly more common along its peripheries. More tellingly, given the

extremely high level of disturbance caused by intensive cultivation and terracing, is the relative scarcity of 'off-site' artefact occurrences. If the present very high intensity of occupation had been the norm in the northern Mandara Mountains for a long time, we should expect to find terrace walls crammed with stone, ceramic and metal artefacts and internal drainages filled with the same types of material. What we do find is a relatively meager scattering of material, nearly all of which looks fairly recent.

If the mountains were inhabited in prehistoric times, they would appear to have been sparsely occupied, and that mostly along their peripheries. Ethnohistorical accounts support this. The origin stories of the montagnards are primarily traditions of migration; only rare groups claim autochthonous origins. Immigrant traditions also indicate that the massif was not heavily populated when immigration occurred.

Information derived from linguistic research contradicts this picture of only relatively recent settlement at high population densities. The northern Mandara Mountains are the home of populations speaking a large number of related, but quite different languages, all of the Biu-Mandara (Central) branch of Chadic. Admittedly nonstandard glottochronological calculations indicate that differentiation of many of these languages took place between 500 and over 1000 years ago. The high population densities and intense social interaction across 'ethnic'/linguistic group boundaries found there today would maximize linguistic interaction and assimilation, so any glottochronological estimates for this area should be regarded as minimum values. Moreover, these montagnard languages are generally found in locations reflecting their genetic relationships to one another -- that is, the most closely related languages are usually found in closest proximity. This indicates that differentiation has occurred in place, that linguistic groups have not moved from other areas. Finally, such linguistic differentiation seems inherently incompatible with high population densities and intense interaction; it would be more likely to be due to relative isolation of the linguistic groups in question.

Other cultural similarities shared by different montagnard groups support linguistic data in indicating some time-depth of occupation among montagnard groups. Many of these groups have similar political structures and relations to autochthonous groups, similar rituals and similar artefact suites. No one has ever attempted to quantify rates of adoption and loss of such cultural elements as do practitioners of glottochronology, which is wise. Cultural borrowing between groups has no doubt been frequent, but similarities between groups do make any attempt to portray the mountains as merely islands of refuge for unrelated immigrant groups rather unsatisfying.

I have tried to produce a model that can reconcile these disparate data. I believe that substantial immigration into the mountains did occur. However, I have also tried to emphasize the importance of continuing social and cultural interactions between autochthones and immigrants, between different groups of immigrants, and between immigrants and plainsmen, in determining the character of montagnard groups as they existed in the recent past and today. The study area is an exceedingly complex place, and there is every reason to think that the factors which affected the development of communities living there were equally complex. It will never be possible to account for all such influences, but we may be able to identify some of the more important.

### *Conflict on the plains*

Archaeological and ethnohistorical data indicate that, before 400-500 years ago, the plains around the Mandara Mountains were relatively heavily populated, while occupation of the mountains was quite sparse and mostly confined to the peripheries. These are the conditions that we would expect the present-day linguistic situation in the mountains to evolve in. I posit that the Iron Age populations of the Mandara Mountains in the early part of this millennium were the ancestors of the autochthonous groups found there today, and that those people were speaking precursors of most of the languages spoken in the northern Mandara massif today.

It would not be surprising that the mountains would not be heavily occupied; there is nothing 'natural' about the recent montagnard occupation. Resources are limited and life very hard in these mountain communities. The forces that impelled such occupation will be considered below. We should also note that the vegetation of the mountain slopes and plateaux would be very different than that seen there today, particularly under the probable wetter climates of the end of the last millennium and beginning of the present one. It is quite probable that the massif would have been covered with a dense Sudanic woodland at that time -- in itself a formidable barrier to occupation.

Historical and ethnohistorical sources state that 500 years ago the plains north of the massif were occupied by the Sao and Maya, sedentary agriculturalists living in nucleated villages and 'towns'. Different groups in the mountains and on the plains still claim Sao and Maya ancestry today. These two ethnonyms are not well differentiated in the study area; 'Maya' is used to designate plains groups living around Mora, while 'Sao' is a term of much wider applicability. It is probable that they were linguistically, and to some extent culturally, related to the scattered groups living along the edge of the massif. Archaeological investigation of sites which were almost certainly occupied by Sao or Maya shows that there has been continuity in material culture in this area since the early Iron Age at least, and so since at least the early part of the first millennium A.D. Political organization among these groups probably existed maximally at the chiefdom level.

Ancestors of the present Wandala and Marghi lived further to the west, still on the plains but depending on the shelter of the mountains for protection from raids by the Kanuri, who moved their capital to the southwest of Lake Chad in the fifteenth century. The Wandala and Marghi seem to have developed some sort of centralized polities by the sixteenth century at least, perhaps only at the level of a large chiefdom and possibly in reaction to contact with the Kanuri. It is also possible that a ritual centre existed at Gudur, in Mofu territory to the south of the survey area, by that time.

This cultural milieu is obviously totally unlike the conditions found in and around the Mandara Mountains today. The establishment of centralized, aggressive Islamic polities in Bornu and (much later) Fulbe Adamawa provided a catalyst which decisively changed the lives of the non-Muslim peoples living on the plains around the massif. Around the northern massif, in areas subject to Kanuri attacks, slave raids and invasions became common during the sixteenth century. The Sao, Maya and Wandala (along, almost certainly, with other groups whose names are now lost to us) adapted to the new conditions in varying ways.

Some people assimilated. Numerous Kanuri groups claim Sao origins, for example, and Podokwo informants said that people who stayed at Waza became Kanuri. The Wandala responded very differently. During the sixteenth century, they became known for their export of iron to markets in Bornu. In this, they were probably aided by the advantageous location of their capital, Keroua, at the northwestern extremity of the Mandara Mountains, in a good position to control export of that commodity.

Slave raids by the Kanuri began a process of depopulation of the plains just north of the massif. However, this region was relatively far removed from the Kanuri capital at Birni Gazargamo, making extended operations difficult, and the inselbergs and the massif itself offered refuge to people living in plains communities. The slaving frontier had been pushed close to the massif, and could not easily be pushed further by the Kanuri.

Raiding could, however, be prosecuted by the Wandala. They had already established relations with Bornu through the sale of iron. The proceeds from the sale of iron would allow them to buy horses from the Kanuri. Horses, and proximity, would give them the ability to move rapidly across the plains to raid and occupy other communities, as they are said to have done at Mora and Gréa. Proximity would give them the tactical persistence needed to starve out groups which had taken refuge in the hills (as *mai* Idris Aloma did to the Wandala themselves near Keroua). It is unlikely that Bornu ever formally sub-contracted slave-raiding around the Mandara

Mountains to the Wandala, much more likely that the Wandala stepped into an economic niche that the Kanuri could not easily fill.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Wandala changed from a vassal group which hid in the hills at the approach of the Kanuri to an actively predatory state. During this period, they greatly expanded the territory of their state, conquering Maya lands in the plains north of Mora and then expanding to the north and south. By the eighteenth century, the Wandala army could defeat Kanuri forces in battle on the plains outside Doulo. During these centuries, slaves became an extremely important source of income to the Wandala, possibly supplanting iron in export value. Nineteenth century travellers' reports make it clear that slaves were a preoccupation of the Wandala court.

The traditions of immigration told by different montagnard groups in the northern Mandara massif today tell of movement from different areas. Many groups say that their ancestors came from the north, from the plains on both sides of the Bama Ridge. Some of these people claim Maya ancestry; others do not. Waza is often identified as the origin point of groups claiming to have come from the *firki* plains. Another important migration is said to have been from the west, from the region around the old Wandala capital at Keroua. These are regions from which we would expect emigration in response to Kanuri raids and Wandala expansionism.

Other immigration seems to have been due to other factors. Movement from the central Diamaré appears to have been a response to Fulbe and earlier Giziga conquests in that region, while migration from territory now occupied by Mafa may be a response to expansion by that group. The near-total lack of traditions of movement directly from the east is interesting; most such migration appears to have taken place a little further to the south, at around the latitude of Maroua. It may be possible to relate this latter movement to the archaeological affiliations of the material recovered from the Salak site near Maroua. This does not explain why such population movements took place from the Logone and points east to Maroua, rather

than to around Mora (see above, p. 232) , but it does raise the possibility that this pattern of movement is of some antiquity in the area.

#### *Autochthones, immigrants and assimilation*

Kanuri and Wandala slave raiding, and Wandala territorial expansion, were the causes of a transferral of population from the non-Muslim Sao/Maya communities around the massif into the mountains themselves, as people from these groups attempted to evade the slavers/conquerors. This would certainly not have taken place all at once, and large parts of these populations were probably assimilated into the Wandala state. Relationships between Wandala and montagnard in a number of cultural elements can still be seen today, and were probably much more important in the past, particularly before the Islamization of the Wandala in the eighteenth century. That process probably increased the number of the refugees fleeing to the massif.

Traditions state that population movements from the plains to the mountains were by individuals or small groups of people. An emphasis on individual culture heroes may be a characteristic of such traditions, but the low level of political integration and the small scale of individual slave raids (in historical times, at least) make it more likely that movements would be piecemeal. Large movements may have taken place, but they were almost certainly rare.

Under these circumstances, we might expect that immigrants to the massif would find themselves in a position of relatively little power *vis-a-vis* the autochthonous groups or earlier immigrants that they found there. They would arrive in a new territory, one where agriculture is difficult and demands the mastery of techniques not used on the plains. They would also tend to be cut off or at least distanced from the ritual support derived from connection with their own ancestral territory, and thus with their ancestors. It is probable that structured relationships between mountains and plains populations did exist, if only involving trade, and such relations might ameliorate the plight of the immigrants in some cases. In addition, any movements of larger groups, or of groups into territories less settled by indigenous

peoples, might work to the advantage of the immigrants; this could be the case in parts of Podokwo or Muraha territory, for example.

Refugees moving in to the massif would not have been assimilated into indigenous groups, but would rather form smaller kinship-based units affiliated with those groups. This has certainly been the pattern in more recent times. I do not discount the probability of extensive manipulation of kinship relationships for economic or political advantage; this again seems to have been a common phenomenon among montagnard groups. Such units are extremely durable in this region and, while it is quite possible that some immigrant groups were in fact eventually assimilated to pre-existing groups, the majority would probably exist for long periods of time as separate, ritually and politically subordinate groups.

Of the three possible linguistic outcomes of such a contact situation (diglossia, language acquisition by the indigenous group or language acquisition by the immigrant group), the last is by far the most likely to have occurred in the mountains. Demands of economic, social and political interaction would probably necessitate that subordinate groups acquire the language(s) of the autochthonous groups living around them. The second of these alternatives appears to be the outcome when (especially Muslim) plains groups conquered other plains groups. Diglossia is probably not a stable outcome in such small-scale societies. This seems to be illustrated by the example of the Plata lineage living in Uldemé territory, where a situation of transient diglossia is giving way to linguistic (and cultural) assimilation to Uldemé norms.

Linguistic assimilation would probably eventually be followed by cultural assimilation. This would happen most quickly in cultural areas which were not heavily involved in the expression of group corporateness. Because many important corporate units in the northern Mandara Mountains are at least theoretically organized on the basis of kinship -- lineages at various levels are the most obvious example -- cultural elements which were important to the expression of kinship relations would probably be more resistant to change and assimilation than would elements of lesser importance in this realm.

These elements could change from group to group. In all groups, traditions concerning the history of the kinship group -- origin stories, stories about culture heroes, migration traditions -- would probably be protected. Material items or technological complexes important in the groups' self-image would also tend to be preserved. For example, the iron-working tools and techniques of the Murgur are still accorded considerable importance among those people, although the economic importance of smelting and smithing has decreased considerably (Seignobos 1988). The horses, armor and weapons of the Wandala occupy a similar position.

On the other hand, assimilation could probably occur quite quickly in many material realms. This is illustrated by the examples of immigrant Mada and Mafa potters in the study area today. It seems to me that ceramic decoration and morphology are in some ways expressions of a fundamental world-view which is held in common by a number of groups in the northern Mandara massif. The same decorative or morphological elements -- rouletting, the use of appliqué bands, the provision of bulges in the necks of beer pots -- perform basically the same non-utilitarian function(s) among different groups, although the ways in which these elements are arranged vary from group to group. This may facilitate assimilation in these cultural items; people may feel themselves to be foreigners or exiles, but they will not necessarily be apostates. This common fund of elements has been identified as a 'symbolic reservoir' by Sterner (1990). Items in other realms of material culture might be lost equally quickly.

We may thus expect that immigrant groups arriving in the massif would adopt the practices of groups already established there at varying rates. Variation would depend upon the particular cultural elements involved and the importance of those elements for relationships with indigenous groups and for the maintenance of immigrant group corporateness. Linguistic assimilation appears to occur rather quickly, but traditions of origin, for example, are far more resistant to loss. In this way, immigrant groups would 'inherit' those already-established linguistic and other cultural patterns evolved by autochthonous and earlier immigrant groups to varying

degrees, depending on the amount of time elapsed since they immigrated and particular cultural characteristics of their own (for example, the blacksmithing orientation of the Murgur). This eventually gave rise to the very complex constellation of lineage groups, related in some elements of culture but not in others and nearly all claiming immigrant origins in different places, that we find in the northern massif today.

### *Populations and war*

Local traditions assert that relations between autochthones and immigrants were originally peaceful. This did not continue. In most areas of the massif, ritual and political power was eventually, and often violently, assumed by the descendants of immigrants, although autochthonous groups have often retained some ritual importance and usually have a reputation for being somewhat uncanny.

Immigration over long periods and the threat of attack by plainsmen might well tend to place local population increases at a premium, since at the very least a group of reasonable size would be needed to defend a community. The demands of agriculture would probably have the same effect, in an equation all too well known in many countries today. Such population increases would then multiply the chances of conflict between montagnard groups over scarce resources, leading to a need for larger groups and adding to a population spiral. The existence of a large number of fighting men is a locally-recognized factor in the success of some montagnard groups, such as the Sama and Mukuléhé, today. Such conflicts, at different social levels, would also drive the continuous small-scale migrations that have occurred in and around the massif until the present day, which would again add to the complexity of the social, cultural and 'ethnic' milieu of the study area.

### *Paradoxes of defence*

Eventual domination of the plains by the Wandala, and movement into the massif by large parts of the former Maya/Sao populations, did not remove the necessity of interaction by those two groups. Neither could make the other go away. The Wandala had decisive advantages of organization and technology on the plains, but these could not be extended to the mountains. Montagnard groups could defend the mountains, but could not control the plains. The very different nature and the different goals of these groups virtually mandated conflict between Wandala and montagnards, but at the same time made it unlikely that either side could obtain 'victory' -- whatever that might mean in such a situation. In addition, montagnard groups engaged in conflict with neighbouring highland peoples, in many cases because of land and other scarce resources.

Each population also controlled resources vital to other groups. The Wandala needed refuge, slaves and iron, but this raised the problem that shelter and iron ore were controlled by the targets of slave raids. Montagnard groups needed salt and fish or other types of protein, and depended upon the existence of Wandala trading networks to obtain these commodities. In addition, montagnard groups depended on other such groups for different resources, things as different as wives and stone for blacksmiths' hammers.

This situation ensured that the various populations of the massif and surrounding plains were forced to exist within a highly paradoxical set of relationships to other groups living around them. The very nature of precolonial relationships meant that deadly conflict and suspicious cooperation always operated in the finest of balances, one changing to the other with a careless word or the rumour of an external threat. Various mechanisms were brought into play to mediate the inevitable conflicts engendered by such a situation, but pressures on resources, ideological differences and the decentralized nature of authority within the mountains, and to a certain extent within the Wandala state, meant that such initiatives usually failed.

## **History and the Development of Ethnic Identity in the Northern Mandara Mountains**

Two main themes run through this account. Small groups of refugees moved into the mountains, bringing their own ways of doing things with them but at the same time adopting some montagnard cultural elements in order to make evident their incorporation in that new human environment. The exigencies of life in the mountains meant that both cooperation and conflict with neighbouring groups were inevitable. Under such conditions, social and cultural identification could hardly fail to be highly structured, highly contingent and very manipulable.

### *The lineage*

In these acephalous societies, considerations of kinship are fundamental to the structuring of corporate groups. Migrations from the plains to the mountains and within the massif itself have resulted in the continuous establishment of kinship-based groups in new territories. In some cases, these groups have remained small, while in others they have expanded considerably. Smaller, less powerful groups and/or later immigrants have in many cases attached themselves to such larger units, to the extent that many such corporate groups in the mountains are political units as much as kinship-based ones. I have followed traditional practice by lumping these groups together under the term 'lineage', and even a subsequent division into minimal, medial and maximal lineages does not fully reflect the diversity of these groups.

Lineages were traditionally fundamental groups of self-identification for montagnards living in the study area. Two main areas of ambiguity exist, both relating to the extent to which lineage and community were coterminous. Generally, we would expect male self-identification with the lineage to have been more unambiguous than that for females, who would in many cases have to leave lineage-based communities and live in their husband's community. This would be very difficult to prove or disprove; I cannot do either. In the second place, communities in some areas were

organized on the basis of territorial lineage groups. In these cases as well, necessary cooperation with people of other lineages would tend to establish ties which would make lineage loyalties more contingent than in cases where community and lineage were one and the same. Even in most of these cases, however, lineage groups' territories were usually dominated by certain lineages.

### *'Ethnic'/linguistic groups*

Lineages are in most cases marshalled together into 'ethnic'/linguistic groups, named groups by which they are best known to the outside world. An assumption is often made that these groupings are the most significant units of self-identification for individuals. I have tried to prove that this is not necessarily the case, that linguistic identity does not necessarily imply ethnic identity even in these very small-scale societies. It may take a very long time for a language acquired by necessity to become fundamental to an immigrant group's sense of identity, even when after some generations the language is the mother tongue of the descendants of such immigrants and they speak it fluently and without effort. It may in fact only do so when that group's members decisively embrace the larger society of which they are a part. I would argue that this has not happened in many of the montagnard 'ethnic'/linguistic groups found in the northern Mandara Mountains.

This does not necessarily imply that such 'ethnic'/linguistic groups have no reality or cultural importance at all. I believe that they do, and that they can be important in two realms. Immigrant groups tend to adopt some cultural elements already in place in the area into which they immigrate (including the language[s] spoken there), and other elements evolve over time as immigrant lineages adapt to their new surroundings. These elements may be artefacts, such as certain types of ceramics, or they may be non-material. All the lineages in a territory will participate in local ritual, for example; such involvement flows from recognition of the connections of earlier groups with spirits and powers of the land.

Cultural elements like these incorporate individuals into local groups which are often -- but by no means always -- the 'ethnic'/linguistic groups beloved of anthropologists. At the same time, I do not believe that they often generate groups of self-identification as do lineages. I have not spent a great deal of time examining groups at this level, because I believe that cultural variation at smaller and larger levels is just as important and much less studied.

### *Regional groupings*

Individuals living in the Mandara Mountains are also involved in cultural structures that vary at a regional level. These are not at present well-defined, primarily because nearly all the anthropological research in this area has taken place at the level of the 'ethnic'/linguistic group. As a result, only certain rather obtrusive cultural complexes have revealed significant regional variation. These include the presence and absence of caste systems, ritual ceramic complexes and the *marai* ceremony. In addition, regional ceramic traditions appear to exist.

Elements like these can be of great importance in the determination of large-scale social structure, and can thus play a role in ethnic determination. A Mafa, asking in horror how burial of the dead can take place among groups without undertakers of the *ngwalda* caste, might realize that his or her own neighbours, although not Mafa, are at least civilized enough to have such individuals in their society. To that extent, their sense of self and group, and so of 'ethnicity', has been modified.

These cultural complexes appear to have a significant antiquity within the Mandara Mountains as a whole, but the extent to which borrowing between groups takes place should not be underestimated. Their existence can tell us a great deal about how group interaction at a large scale has occurred, and this would be a valuable corrective to a viewpoint which itself has some time-depth in the region -- the view that montagnard society can be completely defined in terms of interaction between anarchic, atomized social units. They demand further research.

## *Ethnicity*

Membership in other types of groups will certainly also be important to any individual living in the mountains. These include, of course, culturally-determined age and gender groups; others, such as occupational groups, may well also play a role. The aggregate of all such group identities, and the individual's attitude toward them, are vital in the determination of that individual's sense of location in relation to the rest of the human world. This set of perceived connections of individual and social and cultural milieu are vital in determining an individual's sense of ethnicity.

I do not mean to imply that perceptions of ethnic identity are idiosyncratic; that would be nonsensical and is certainly not the case. The fact that group membership can be negotiated shows that society is involved in the determination of ethnicity. Humans live and function in groups, and become fully human through enculturation and acculturation in such groups. These latter processes place individuals in sets of groups appropriate to their statuses and roles, so that a good deal of agreement on proper group identification exists.

At the same time, it is highly probable that some degree of incongruence in attitudes toward group membership will occur. Different people may have slightly different loyalties, depending upon their circumstances, their upbringing and so on. A blacksmith/specialist in a caste society may be aware of his kinship to other smiths in other caste societies, for example. Humans define their identity in terms of the other humans around them, and so ethnic identity is endlessly contingent and manipulable. These factors ensure that the determination of ethnicity will never be easy or straightforward.

The study area is a difficult place to live, and was so in at least the recent past. They have dealt with their environment by working in groups, a trait which also implies that other such groups exist and that choices about group membership must be made. Lineages usually operated as the primary corporate group in these small-scale societies, and so furnished a primary group of self-identification -- an ethnic group. Other groups, on larger scales, have also been important in certain places and at

certain times, which is what we would expect in a territory as diverse as the northern Mandara Mountains.

In this dissertation, I have presented a picture of cultural developments during the recent past of a part of Africa that I find extremely interesting, one whose people have excited my admiration on a general, and often also on a personal, level. I have also tried to indicate certain ways in which social structures in that area may reflect those past developments. This is not the sort of effort that can easily be summarized in a few lines, and so I will not attempt to do so. I would, however, like to emphasize three things. The first is the importance of multidisciplinary research, vital in an area where research into culture history is only recent. The second is the importance of examining the actual organization of indigenous groups, and not merely those elements of that organization which may be conveniently investigated, archaeologically or otherwise. The third is the crucial relevance of ethnoarchaeological and ethnohistorical research to archaeological investigation. This relevance does not lie only in the production of testable hypotheses about people's use of artefacts. Such research immerses archaeologists in the functioning of another culture, and so can help prevent them from becoming insulated from the interest and challenges inherent in the history of the communities they examine.

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## APPENDIX 1 -- SURVEY DESIGN

### *Introduction*

I originally went to Cameroon in 1986 with the intention of carrying out a study of artefact stylistic variation in a region of great ethnic and cultural diversity, one where acephalous societies and centralized states coexisted and interacted. The eastern peripheries of the Mandara massif seemed very well suited for such a study. Given the importance of ceramic remains in the study of north Cameroonian prehistory, research on ceramic variation within and between local groups was obviously central to this work.

It was during the course of this 'ceramic census', which I centered on the Mayo Plata - Mayo Ouldemé region, that I became interested in the oral histories of groups in this region, and particularly in the history of the Plata. I continued this latter work in 1989, and was also involved in joint research, with Dr. Nicholas David and David Killick, on traditional Plata iron production.

I have thus accumulated three different sets of interviews, carried out in the pursuit of different goals and with somewhat different characteristics. The first set of interviews was conducted with local women (both potters and non-potters) in conjunction with my survey of the pottery inventory of households of different montagnard groups. (In the context of this dissertation, data from these first interviews mostly appears in the last section of Chapter 8, although I also used them in other chapters where relevant.) The second set of interviews was conducted with (usually old) men of various groups, with the object of eliciting information on the traditional histories of those groups. The third set concerned Plata production of iron tools, and had some elements in common with both of the first two sets; I often asked about iron production, relations with the Wandala and origin traditions in the same interview. These latter interviews were often conducted over a period of some hours

spent in blacksmiths' forges, as I made records of iron-working techniques, raw material usage and the output of finished tools.

### *Interview methodology*

In the course of this work, I conducted interviews with people from a number of different 'ethnic'/linguistic groups (see Chapter 1), using different translators. I have some very limited knowledge of *pelasla*, but I cannot understand the other languages used. It was thus not feasible for me to tape-record interviews and translate them at my leisure, as is standard anthropological practice. My records of interviews are in all cases derived from detailed paraphrases which I wrote on the spot and later reanalyzed, most often with the assistance of my translator(s). I regret the absence of verbatim transcripts, but I hope that the rather wider scope that my methods made possible may to an extent make up for this.

I felt (and still feel) very uncomfortable with the idea of carrying a questionnaire into a home where I am a stranger and demanding mechanical answers to a set list of questions. The social dislocations of anthropological research, for researcher and 'subject', are great enough as it is. In talking to women about ceramics, I therefore endeavored to gain the information I needed in the course of conversations with people who were producing pots or who had them in their houses. These conversations sometimes took place over a number of visits; at other times, one visit sufficed.

### *The ceramic survey*

I was primarily interested in the contexts of production and acquisition of pottery. This required a standardized body of information concerning the people who made these vessels and the households in which they are used. At the beginning of such research, this particularly included social information -- such basic data as the ethnic affiliation of the household, the ethnic affiliation of the woman/women of the

household before marriage, and so on. I also tried to gather information about the mechanisms of ceramic dispersal (through gifts, direct sales, markets, etc.) and about beliefs in the reasons for variation in pot morphology and decoration. This latter information was elicited in conjunction with work done by other members of the Mandara Archaeological Project.

I chose respondents on the basis of a number of factors. It was necessary that they speak a language also spoken by my translator(s) and, for comparative purposes, that they live relatively close to Mayo Plata - Mayo Ouldémé. I began the survey by going to markets and talking to women there. In some cases, I was invited by certain women selling pots to watch them producing pots at home, and I gained a great deal of information on production techniques by doing this.

A survey which concentrated on the homes of commercial potters would obviously not be of much use; it was necessary that I assemble a more representative ceramic sample. I did not know the Mayo Plata - Mayo Ouldémé region well at the beginning of my survey. Because of that, Michel Kourdapaye and I began by visiting the homes of his relatives and acquaintances among the Dibon, Plata and Afam. I had told him that I needed to talk to a variety of people in different households -- young and old women, experienced and inexperienced potters and non-potters, and so on -- and he responded admirably. I eventually expanded my survey to include other ethnic groups (particularly the Mada) but, in a society as compact as that around Mayo Plata, Kourdapaye's personal contacts inevitably played a part in our introductions. I tried to make sure that respondents for the survey were as varied as possible, and I think that I succeeded.

Women were, throughout the survey, much less willing to talk to me in the public context of the market than they were in their homes, even when I arrived uninvited there. Very few women refused to be interviewed at home, although some were certainly much more reticent than others. In some cases, women who were not averse to allowing me to examine the ceramic inventory of their household did not wish to answer personal questions. I was refused access to four households. In one of

these cases (Wuha, 1/10/1986), the husband of the household held an important ritual position in Uldemé society and it would have been inappropriate for me to enter her house. However, she was kind enough to bring a variety of pots out for me to examine and to provide information about her potting experience. In another case, a woman thought that I was a taxation officer. In general, people were very helpful to me.

The information that I sought from each woman I interviewed was as follows: (1) name; (2) age; (3) lineage affiliation of the household; (4) lineage into which the woman was born; (5) lineage affiliation of her mother; (6) lineage affiliation of the woman/women who taught her to pot (if not her mother); (7) whether or not she has taught other women to pot; (8) names and lineage affiliations of other women in the household; (9) technique used in learning to pot (none, simple observation, instruction by another woman, etc.); (10) age at which she learned to pot; (11) whether or not she is still an active potter; (12) whether or not her pots are found in other households; (13) how her pots are distributed, if indeed they are (through gifts, sale in certain markets, sale from her home, and so on); (14) what 'ethnic groups' and lineages her pots are distributed to; (15) whether there are certain groups or lineages to which she would not or could not sell pots (because of inter-group conflict, ritual prohibitions, different usage of ceramics, simple dislike, or for other reasons); (16) the range of pots she makes; and (17) the reasons for making and decorating pots in the way that she does, if she is a producer of ceramic vessels, and the significance of particular design elements. Of course, I drew, measured and photographed all of the pots in the household at the same time.

I interviewed 32 women in this way, most from the Plata, Mada and Uldemé groups. In addition, in five cases I examined the household pottery and asked some of these questions of women in circumstances where it was only possible to gather a few of these data. My coverage of these questions is not totally complete for each woman, but it is nearly so. In some cases, I was unable to complete my questioning at a planned second interview; as 1986 progressed, I became more and more involved in ethnohistorical research.

My interviews with men were very different, particularly when I was trying to elicit oral histories in 1986. I gathered the same basic biographical data about these informants -- name, age, lineage, wife's lineage of origin and so on -- usually over several interviews. I also asked for genealogies from them. At the beginning of this research, I specifically asked to talk to people who had a reputation for historical knowledge. These were usually, but not always, old men; Ngaiya Sali, my main Urza Gudul informant, was only about 30 in 1986, but has been crippled at birth and so spent a lot of time listening to stories told by his elders. As time went on, I interviewed men with no such reputation, who usually recounted less detailed versions of traditions to me or professed ignorance about the history of their people.

I do not pretend to have interviewed members of each of the hundreds of lineages in the study area. My coverage of the different lineages varies widely. It is virtually complete for Plata Kapa and Dumlelai, Dibon and Madavar; I think that I have interviewed most of the significant sources for these groups. I have done enough interviewing in Gudul, Dume-Kata and Mukulehé lineages and among the Glavda to ensure, I think, that I have identified the predominant traditional histories among those groups, especially given the availability of works by other researchers. For other groups -- the Muktelé, Mada, Muyan and so on, I have had to rely upon what I think are competent written sources; in some regions, particularly in the western part of the study area, these are not available.

Especially at the beginning of my research, I was not ready to constrain or channel peoples' renderings of their own history by demanding the answers to certain questions about that history. Instead, I asked very vague questions, variations on "Have your people always lived here?", "Have your people ever fought with other people around here?", "Who do you marry?", and so on. As time went on and I was able to build up a corpus of translated material, I asked more specific questions ("Have you ever heard of Ngolélé?", "Do you know of the Zelideva?") and spent more time examining inconsistencies between different accounts. Such

inconsistencies certainly do exist, but there is a good deal of consistency in the basic elements of these traditions within lineages.

### *Methodology in iron-working research*

During 1989 fieldwork, I continued my ethnohistorical research, although in that season this work was subordinated to joint research on iron smelting and smithing by the Plata Kapa and Madavar. My format in eliciting oral histories in 1989 was substantially similar to that used in 1986, although I of course already had a great deal of comparative material available and so was able to move from the general to the particular rather more quickly.

I have made little reference in this dissertation to the material on iron-working that we gathered during the 1989 field season; it will be published in other sources. I conducted interviews with active blacksmiths and with men who had participated in or observed iron smelts in the past, seeking information on the process and its integration into the montagnard economy and cultural life. I also gathered information on the trade in smelted iron, both within the massif and with the Wandala, thereby gathering a good deal of information on this unique facet of Wandala-montagnard relations. I also amassed some biographical material on montagnard smiths, although not so systematically as with housewives in 1986. My research was cut short by illness; I spent only seven weeks in the field in 1989.

### *Translators*

I depended on three translators during the 1986 and 1989 field seasons. Michel Kourdapaye Amba, a 27-year old Plata Dumlelai man, was my primary translator from April to November, 1986, and throughout my 1989 research. He now lives in the village of Adobikwo, on the plains in Mayo Ouldemé canton, but was born on the massif. He works as a farmer and as a health assistant at the Mission

Mayo Ouldémé, but has also worked as a translator/informant for Olivier Nyssens in his ethnographic work in 'Vamé-Mbremé' territory.

Tacha Dia, a man of Gagadama lineage in Muraha territory, is now in his mid-thirties and worked for me at various times during 1986. He also worked for other members of the Mandara Archaeological Project, particularly Ian Robertson. My research with him was primarily done in Muraha and Podokwo territory and around Keroua. He now works as a local bus dispatcher in Mora. Finally, Jacob Metchidezek, a Mada man of Tazañ lineage, is in his late twenties and worked with me at intervals during the first three months of 1986, again primarily around Mora. He is now a trader in Mora.

#### List of informants

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Lineage</b>	<b>Age</b>
Abdrahman Adam	Kanuri	50s	
Abokwa Baje	Plata	Dumlelai	80-85
Aboñ	Uldémé	Madavar	30-35
Ahlama Mauganwé	Plata	Dumlelai	65
Ajangwa	Plata	Kapa	45?
Ajokfa	Plata	Kapa	70-75
Amiké	Plata	Kapa	30s
Ana	Plata	Dumlelai	30-35
Angwajak	Mada	Tazañ	45
Ashi	Plata	Kapa	23
Augulaw Kulemdia	Plata	Kapa	70?
Azakat	Plata	Kapa	30
Baje Maugjeta	Uldémé	Madavar	80
Baldama Detché	Plata	Kapa	50
Chemchem Dauwaka	Uldémé	Madavar	50
Chief - Gadua	Gemjek	Gadua	65?

#### List of informants (continued)

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Lineage</b>	<b>Age</b>
Dapono	Mada	Tazañ	23
Daugwené	Urza	Gulidé	?
Degla	'Vamé-Mbremé'	Afam	38
Deumba	Plata	Kapa	45
Tacha Dia	Mora	Gagadama	30?
Dukché	Plata	Dumlelai	35-40
Dyatrellye	Mada	Tazañ	70

Ehulkwé	Plata	Kapa	40s
Elizabeth Ajé	Urza	Gudul	35-40
Elizabeth Bashwé	Mafa	20s	
Ema	Kanuri	40-45	
Ergwa	Mada	Ngermaiyo	25-30
Fugume	Plata	Kapa	40s
Gandawl Dazai	Plata	Kapa	?
Gemjek 1	Gemjek	Mambza	
Gemjek 2	Gemjek	Mambza	
Gskai Augla	Plata	Dumlelai	70
Gwozda	Plata	Dumlelai	22
Higai Medyokwa	'Vamé-Mbremé'	Afam	50s
Hlugbené	Plata	Kapa	40s
Hwañjabe	Plata	Kapa	30
Jegwevé Gwada	Podokwo	Mukulehé	55
Kaché	Plata	Dumlelai	27
Kacheka Chokfem	Plata	Kapa	70-75
Kibé Hlaba	Uldemé	Sama	40s

List of informants (continued)

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Lineage</b>	<b>Age</b>
Kwadéhé	Plata	Dumlelai	35
Kwona	Mora	Kwawvré?	20-25
Ladé	Plata	Kapa	50
Lamisé	Plata	Dumlelai	30
Lamisé Wuzeñ	Plata	Dumlelai	40-45
Lima	'Vamé-Mbremé'	Afam	35
Mala Amatsa	'Vamé-Mbremé'	Zulé	55-65
Mandyak	Plata	Kapa	38
Marie Shéyé	Mada	Tlidiné	45
Maryam	Plata	Dumlelai	20
Maryam	Mada	Tazañ	35
Masfa	'Vamé-Mbremé'	Afam	50
Maukwé	Plata	Kapa	50-60
Mejele Sheelibé	Plata	Dumlelai	80
Michel Kourdapaye	Plata	Dumlelai	23
Mtsa Gwada	Podokwo	Mukulehé	60
Ndakatcha	Plata	Dumlelai	35
Ngaiya Sali	Urza	Gudul	30
Sali Bashwé	Mafa	30?	
Tagaiyo	Plata	Kapa	50-60
Tefwa	Plata	Dumlelai	50s
Tekwela	Plata	Dumlelai	?
Teñwelé	Plata	Kapa	mid-30s
Tlevu Augla	Plata	Dumlelai	80-90
Tyedyak	Mada	Tazañ	40

List of informants (continued)

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Lineage</b>	<b>Age</b>
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Ugshé Vale	Podokwo	Tala Dabara	55?
Vidañwa	Uldemé	Dibon	40?
Vijeñ	Uldemé	Dibon	50
Wuha	Uldemé	Dibon	50
Zadeva Kumbaw	Glavda	80	
Zaké Kwetcheriké	Dumwa	Dume-Kata	60-65
Zamba Bashwé	Mafa	19-21	

## APPENDIX 2 -- TEXTS

The accounts of traditions given to me by various informants are, of course, not identical; things are remembered and presented by different people in different ways. In this appendix, I include a number of accounts of the journey of the ancestors of the *du ngolélé* from Ngolélé and of the sundering of the Wandala from their montagnard relations. Obviously, these are paraphrases taken from my written transcripts, and not verbatim accounts taken, for example, from recordings; I have chosen to leave in grammatical inconsistencies, because I think that that imparts more of the flavor of the interview. I have also included an introduction to each account, giving the context of the interview. My own interpolated remarks are included in parentheses.

### **The journey from Ngolélé**

#### *Tlevu Augla's account (18/06/1986)*

[Tlevu Augla was a Plata Dumlelai man; he was between 80 and 90 years old in 1986. Among the Plata, he was one of the few old men who could remember life before the advent of the colonial powers, and he had a reputation for knowing about the origins of the group. He died in 1988. This was my first interview with him. Over a morning, he discussed the history of the Plata, *bikwa* and various ritual techniques used against other groups, and genealogical links within Plata Dumlelai.]

Plata (Dumlelai and Kapa), along with Dumwa and Urza, all are descended from one ancestor. For seven years, the father divided his goods between them (?). All three groups are *devins* (healers and diviners -- SME). Even now they are all brothers -- they can share sacrifices, funeral ceremonies, festivals and so on.

These three came from Ngolélé, which is in Nigeria, west of Keroua. (Access to Ngolélé appears to be restricted to those three groups -- SME.) There are still

people who go there, but it is far away. It is a mountain, and is said to be climbable only by Plata, Dumwa, Urza and natives (who the Plata don't know much about -- SME). Others can't climb it. It is thus also a place of refuge. Only three old men actually live on the mountain now, to perform sacrifices; the others have all descended on to the plains.

The three brothers came here by themselves, but slowly, since they were *devins* and, if they found someone who was sick, they sacrificed for them, so they arrived later than other groups (see below -- SME). Bafa was the ancestor of the Plata who arrived here. He came and had three sons, Baja, Adhlmasa and Kapa. The first two settled on what is now Dumlelai territory, while Kapa went and settled in what is now Kapa territory. Kapa had many children; one, Agwandela, was accused of being a sorcerer and many of his people were killed, so the remnants came back and lived among the Dumlelai.

*Ajokfa's account (17/05/1989)*

[Ajokfa is a man of Plata Kapa lineage. He is about 70 years old. He is one of the last men still living in that lineage who has extensive experience in the smelting of iron from local sandy ore; he conducted a smelt for members of the Mandara Archaeological Project in 1989. This interview was conducted over an afternoon, in the context of negotiations for the 1989 smelt. We also talked about the division between the Wandala and montagnard groups and about markets and the traditional smelting of iron.]

The Plata came here from Ngolélé, with the Kudangala of Urza and the Dumwa. The big brother was Kapa, the little brother Dumlelai. It used to be that you couldn't marry any of them. The daughters of each couldn't marry them; problems occurred when a woman married out and then married back in again. He says that the Valawak clan of Urza also came with the rest from Ngolélé.

Kapa is not now powerful because they are divided from all of the other people who came from Ngolélé; if they were united they would be powerful like

Sama. Sama are the people of Agzavrinja; they come from Wandala in the west. There were three of them and this is why they are strong, the Uldemé are strong and this is the canton of Uldemé.

Famine was the reason for the migration from Ngolélé. People sowed *fanyawk*, which is a type of millet. They thought it hadn't grown, because its grains are enclosed and they couldn't see them, so they starved and fled. They thought this was because it hadn't rained enough. An old woman stayed to try it and found the grains within. She called the people, but only some came back and stayed. They now have lots of children; Plata is not even half as numerous as are the people of Ngolélé. The names of the people at Ngolélé are Uje and Mendadeva.

Marriage with the people there is very expensive. Seven cows are needed. People from Plata can't do it. They only go there sometimes for beer. If you go there with a girl, they will take her away.

...Ajokfa has been to Ngolélé once. If you go to *matal* (Muktelé territory -- SME), you can see it away to the west in Nigeria. It is close to Keroua. He knew some people there: Udowré, Ndawrere, Hlala, Kambe Ketché. He also met a great diviner there, who seemed like his grandfather Baja (Michel Kourdapaye says this is the Badza who is the ancestor of the Plata Dumlelai -- SME). He stayed there five or six days.

People came from Ngolélé through the mountains. The Plata were *devins*, so they stopped along the way to sacrifice and heal. The Sama stopped with them. The others went to their places. Later the Plata saw that the others had left, so they came to Uldemé to stay. There were four who came, altogether; one each of Plata, Dumlelai, Dumwa and Kudangala. Kapa was the oldest, second was Dumlelai, Dumwa and Kudangala were smaller. They were all brothers, but Dumwa and Kudangala had different mothers.

At one point, they were all here at once. There are still Dumwa tombs here (Ajokfa then indicated a location with tombs in Plata Kapa territory -- SME). Kapa later lived with Dumlelai in Dumlelai territory. When Dumwa went to their present

land, the Kapa came here to the empty territory. The Dumwa left because they were afraid of the Wandala. The Kapa stayed here because they got along with the Sama.

*Zaké Kwetcheriké's account (27/10/1986)*

[Zaké Kwetcheriké was a man of Dume-Kata lineage in Dumwa territory. He was about 60-65 years old when we spoke in 1986; I believe that he died in early 1989. Again, he had a reputation for knowing the traditions of Dumwa origin very well. This interview was conducted over a morning, and also covered the rupture of the Wandala and montagnard proto-group, wars fought between the Dumwa and other groups and the groups that the Dumwa could marry. We also discussed the iron trade in the region.]

Dumwa and Plata were at Ngolélé. It is near Keroua, in Nigeria. Ngolélé is a mountain there. They arrived in the mountains here and separated. These two were the only two who came here.

It was in the rainy season. They planted fonio, but there was a disease on it. There was no food, so it was necessary for them to leave. They came and stayed at Dumwa. People went up to Dumwa, the Plata went to Plata territory. Other people say that the fonio was good, but they (the Dumwa and Plata ancestors -- SME) didn't know that because they didn't know fonio.

There was no one at Dumwa mountain then, but the Vamé and the Mdala (a Muraha lineage -- SME) were at their mountain. The Urza and the people of Agzavrinja did not come at the same time. There are Zalideva -- they are people like the Mora and Podokwo, but different from the Dumwa. They live close to Ngolélé, but they are not the same village (as the people of Ngolélé -- SME). People who are related to the Dumwa and Plata still live at Ngolélé. He doesn't remember their name, but they are an ancient people.

There is a fig tree at Ngolélé, called *bikwa*. People can't come too close to it, because it is (evil?). When they are far away from it, they will stop and pray. After that they can order it to drop its leaves, become dry or sprout leaves. Only the sons of

*bikwa* can do this; they are Dumwa and Plata. Others will die if they go there. There is a *mayo* which passes in front of Ngolélé, and other people can't get past it.

There were not many people who came from Ngolélé, only two or three men and two women. The men were named Aga and Abijema.

### **The Separation of the Wandala and Montagnards**

*Zadeva Kumbaw's account (13/11/1986)*

[Zadeva Kumbaw is an 80-year old Glavda man living between Keroua and Ashigashiya, on the border between Cameroon and Nigeria. Ten other Glavda and two Valé men also participated in this interview, although Zadeva Kumbaw was the spokesman for them. His recitation of any tradition, or statement of any historical fact, was preceded and succeeded by extensive discussion between all of these men. I chose to interview him because he was at that time the oldest Glavda man living near the settlement of Gakara. We also talked about the ethnic composition of the region, about iron-workers and markets there, about wars between the Wandala and people of the mountains and about the Ngolélé tradition. I was also able to examine and measure the pottery produced by his wife.

This interview was preceded by another, on 29 October, 1986. I was told at that time that it would be wise to introduce myself to *tlipwé* Boukar, the Wandala leader at Keroua, before beginning work in that region. I did so, and was immediately assigned one of the *tlipwé's* sons as guide and minder. My earlier interview with Zadeva Kumbaw was carried out in a context of extensive Wandala interference; this is the only time that that happened. On this later visit, I avoided Keroua and was able to carry out an undisturbed interview.]

In ancient times, the men of Wandala, Gwoshé, Ngolélé and Zelideva were all neighbours and they lived in peace. They were all children of one mother. The Wandala became Muslim, and the others *kirdi*. They split because of the mother. She

took the good children and guarded them with her, and left the bad (stupid, ugly -- SME) children to the father. The father said because she did this, they would have to go to the mountains and be hunted and ruled by the bad children, who would become Muslim. He decided that they would become Muslim because he was angry, and he saw that it was the Muslims who commanded, so he wanted the ugly children to become Muslims. All of this happened on the mountain at Ngolélé. Before all of this happened, the *kirdi* could live on the plains as they liked. There were Serrata (Kanuri -- SME) here then, too. They came from Maiduguri looking for a place to live. The people of Ngolélé fought against them. The Wandala went up into the mountains, too, when they were attacked.

*Abokwa Baje's account (6/8/1986)*

[Abokwa Baje was a Plata Dumlelai man, about 80-85 years old. He died in 1987. He was a great-uncle to Michel Kourdapaye. During this interview, we also talked about wars between the Plata Dumlelai and Plata Kapa, Sama and Vindelar lineages, about the origins of the Plata and about sub-lineages in Plata Dumlelai and Plata Kapa.]

The people of Wandala, people of Agzavrinja and people of Ngolélé all had the same mother and the same father, all had the same roots. Later there was war between the Wandala and the others, and they split up. This started when the father of them all decided it would be good to circumcise his children. This was done to one group, and then the mother, who saw this, took the uncircumcised ones and hid them in caves. The father asked where they were, and the wife said that she didn't know. He asked her a number of times and she replied in the same way. They fought about it, and the mother fled to where her children were. The father said, "You must go and live with them in the caves. You and the other children will be my slaves afterward."

Later the Wandala chased, stole and killed the people of the hills. Agzavrinja managed to escape this because he was a great sorcerer. When he was being pursued, he filled a dry riverbed behind him with water and caused the Wandala to drown in it.

*Abokwa Baje's account (26/10/1986)*

[I have included this account in order to show the variation which may occur in one man's recitation of a particular tradition during two interviews some months apart. During this interview, we also talked about the traditions concerning Agzavrinja, about the Zelideva, about marriage interdictions between the Plata and other groups, particularly the Uldemé lineage of Bister, about the history of Plata language use and about markets in the region.]

There was a man who had many children. His wife chose the good ones and hid them in caves in the mountains. Their father arrived and asked, "Where are my children?" when he found that only the peculiar ones were left. His wife said she didn't know. The father said, "Why have you hidden the good children and left only the peculiar ones? I don't like that." His wife said nothing, so he said, "Go with the children, but you will have to fear the ones that are left."

The father asked Agzavrinja, who was a son of the same lineage, "It was you who told my wife to do that." They fought. The father took sorghum and said, "Take it. You go and eat with the children." He handed him some red sorghum and chased him.

Agzavrinja was a great sorcerer. When the Wandala came after him, he put a wall on the road and the Wandala couldn't pass. After he went by, the wall disappeared. The Wandala chased him again, and he put a fire in front of them, so they couldn't pass. He came and put his house on the head of Sama.

*Tlevu Augla's account (5/10/1986)*

[See the first account for biographical information. I have included this variant account as an example of the only other tradition concerning the Wandala - montagnard separation that I know of. It is possible, in fact, that this is not a shared tradition, but rather an idiosyncratic and *ad hoc* explanation. During this interview, Tlevu also talked about the Zelideva and their relations to the people of Ngolélé,

about marriage interdictions with the Bister and other groups and about the ritual uses of roulettes on pottery.]

There used to be no difference between the Wandala and the people of the mountains, but one day a person built a house on the plains and bought a horse. Before that, people were scared of horses and would run away from them. He got a horse and started to use it against the other people, hunting them, so they had to move into the mountains.

## TABLES & FIGURES

Table 3.1. Lineage organization among the Plata.

Maximum lineage	Medial lineages	Minimal lineages
Plata	Dumlelai	Treméné
		Hlabaw
		Fegemaw
		Uzheñ
		Adhlamese
		Ablam
		Vaudegwaw
		Mtsaukemaw
		Gwejelé
		Sherdyek
		Agwendele (1)
		Ginauya (2)
	Kapa	Devenwa
		Dendyau
		Sheleñ (3)
		Malaiye
		Mendé
		Kawmbelaugbaw
		Lekwaw

(1) Originates in Plata Kapa

(2) Originates in Podokwo

(3) Originates in Plata Dumlelai

Table 3.2. Languages and ethnic groups in and around the study area.

Linguistic Phylum	Language Family	Language(s)	Ethnic group
Niger-Kordofanian	West Atlantic	<i>fulfulde</i>	Fulbe
Nilo-Saharan	Saharan	<i>kanuri</i>	Kanuri
Afroasiatic	Semitic	<i>arab</i>	Shuwa Arabs
Afroasiatic	Chadic	see below	see below

Chadic languages and ethnic groups. (All languages are from the Central [Biu-Mandara] branch of Chadic.)

Sub-branch A. Combined unit Wandala-Mafa. Wandala group

Language	Dialect	Group
<i>wandala</i>	<i>wandala</i>	Wandala
	<i>mura</i>	Muraha
	<i>melgwa</i>	Melgwa
<i>parekwa</i>		Podokwo
<i>gelvaxdaxa</i>		Glavda
		Valé/(Chininé?)
<i>gwad laamang</i>	<i>laamang</i>	Zelideva
		Lughva
		Gwozo
		Hedkala
		Dligé
		Woga
	<i>xedi</i>	Vemgo
		Vizik
		Turu
<i>guduf</i>		Guduf
		Cikidé
<i>dghwédé</i>		Dghwédé/Johodé
<i>lpañ gevoko</i>		Gevoko/Ngosi
<i>mabas</i>		Mabas

**Sub-branch A. Combined unit Wandala-Mafa. Mafa group**

Language	Dialect	Group
<i>matal</i>		Muktelé
<i>pelasla</i>	<i>pelasla</i>	Plata
	<i>dumwa</i>	Dumwa
	<i>urza</i>	Urza
	<i>ndréme</i>	'Vamé-Mbremé'
	<i>mberem</i>	'Vamé-Mbremé'
<i>mbuko</i>		Mboku
<i>wuzlam</i>		Uldémé
<i>muyang</i>		Muyan
<i>mada</i>		Mada
<i>melokwo</i>		Molkwo
<i>gaduwa</i>		Zulgo
<i>zelgwa</i>	<i>zelgwa</i>	Zulgo
	<i>minew</i>	Minéo
	<i>gemzek</i>	Gemjek
<i>merey</i>		Mofu of Meri
<i>dugwor</i>		Dugwor/Mofu
<i>baldamu</i>		Baldamu (ext.?)
<i>giziga-nord</i>		Giziga
<i>giziga-sud</i>		Giziga
<i>mofu-nord</i>		Mofu of Durum
		Mofu of Wazan
		Mofu of Duvangar
<i>mofu-sud</i>		Mofu of Gudur
		Mofu of Gudal
		Mofu of Mokong
<i>cuvok</i>		Cuvok
<i>mefelé</i>		Sirak
		Mefelé
		Mohor
		Shugulé
<i>mafa</i>	3 dialects	

Sub-branch A. combined unit Marghi-Gbwata. Marghi group

Language	Dialect	Ethnic group
<i>psikye</i>	many dialects	Higi (Nigeria)
	<i>psikye</i>	Kapsiki(Cameroon)
<i>marghi</i>	many dialects	Marghi
		Sukur

Sub-branch B. Masa group

Language	Dialect	Group
<i>zumaya</i>		Zumaya

Table 4.1. List of Wandala tlikse (from Mohammadou 1982).

<b>Tlikse</b>	<b>Period of reign (where known)</b>
Mulgwa	
Kéwé/Tchéwé	
Bukar Ayssami	
Vaya	
Katalé	
Wandàla	
Davla	
Aja Makiya	
Sukda	
Gaya	
Apalakska-Jilé	
Biramshi	
Zaré	
Aldawa Barara Kanimou	
Aldawa Zaré	
Ajwa Vongola	
Ankré Yéwé	
Akotava Davla	late 16th century
Ajwa Jokwa	
Aldawa Wandala	
Akotava Kataliwé	
Sankré	ca A.D. 1600
Aldawa Psam	
Aldawa Nazariza	
Abalé	

Table 4.1 (continued)

<b>Tlikse</b>	<b>Period of reign (where known)</b>
Zaré	
Dabara	
Ajwa Kossa	
Tchivakala	
Dogrà	
Bukar Aji	1731-1753
Madi-a-makiya1753-1771	
Bladi-a-Wandala	1771-1789
Bukar Ajama1789-1845	
Elyaasa	1845-1858
Bukar Anarbana1858-1899	
May Umar Ajara	1899-1911 and 1915-1922
Bukar Afadi	1911-1915 and 1926-1942
Amada	1922-1924
(Kola Amada - not of the Wandala royal family)	1942-1945
Hamidu Umar1945-1969	
May Bichair Umar	1969-present

Table 4.2. Place-names given by Denham, with modern equivalents.

Place-name	Modern Equivalent
Vahmy	Vamé
Savah	Sava
Joggiday/Joggaday	Hodogway
Mund(a)y Vayah	Madavaré
Plata	Plata
Memay	Memé (or Mbremé?)
Moyung	Muyan
Mugba	Mougouba
Horza	Urza

Table 5.1. Radiocarbon dates from Mehe Djiddere (MAP 523).

Mound	Unit	Depth BD	Date A.D. (5568 yr half-life)	Sample
I	3	142 cm	1720 +/- 100	S-2677
	5	217	790 +/- 140	Ly-3818
	6	322	1375 +/- 175	S-2676
	8	382	350 +/- 110	Ly-3819
	9	390-437	875 +/- 165	S-2674
VII	1	(20-35)	1160 +/- 100	Ly-3817
	3	(0-15)	930 +/- 165	S-2674

Table 6.1. List of immigrant group origins and ages in the study area (where known -- excluding groups from Ngolélé and Waza). g = generations, y = years

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>References</b>
Muraha	Musgum?	'from west'?		Mouchet 1947
	Tli-Mora?	'Wandala'?		Mouchet 1947
'Vamé-Mbremé'	Zulé	Mboku	5-6 g	Nyssens 1986, Mala Amatsa
	Ndremé	Muktelé		Nyssens 1986, Mouchet 1947
	Mbremé	Muktelé		as above
	Mabar	Matsabaiyam	10- 12g	Nyssens 1986
	Afam	Mada Tazañ?	8g/ 140y	Nyssens 1986, Mouchet 1947, Higai Medyokwa
Urza	Maya	Doulo		Mouchet 1947, Ngaiya Sali
	Hodaksé	Mboku?/ Ndremé	140 y	as above
	Gulidé	as above	110 y	as above
	Tyntyn	'the east'?/ Afam		as above
	Hlimabilsa	Mada		Ngaiya Sali
	Gwedlawm	Mada	rec- ent	Mouchet 1947, Ngaiya Sali
	Zaré	Balda?	180y	Mouchet 1947
	Musgum	Guirvidig?	230y	Mouchet 1947
Podokwo	Mupé	Mafa		Mtsa Gwada
	Sukulé	Mafa		various
	Uldama	Uldemé		various

Table 6.1 (continued)

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>References</b>
Podokwo (cont.)	Skwala	Kanuri		Mtsa Gwada, Ugshé Valé
	Ujila	Mada		various
	Gwawña	Mora massif		Siran n.d., Lembezat 1952
Muktelé	Majewi lin- eages	near Mokolo	5-10 g	Juillerat 1971
	Maya	Zulgo	5g	as above
	Podoko	Podokwo	4g	as above
	Kudamaya	Mozogo	5g	as above
	Mahlkawi	Mada		as above
	Dzayao	Mofu	6g	as above
Uldemé	Gazama	Mada	5g	de Colombel 1984
	Meouré?	'near Nigeria'	15g?	as above
	Wazañrawa	Zumaya	7g	various
	Dibilikwer	Mayo Plata		various
Plata	Ginauya	Podokwo		Tlevu Augla, Abokwa Baje
	Agwendele	Plata Kapa	rec- ent	various
	Du Shelen	Plata Dumlelai	rec- ent	various
Muyan	Pabara	Molkwo		Richard 1977
	Gwadagwada	Mboku		Richard 1977
	Gabrawai	Uldemé	before Pabara	Richard 1977
Mada	Mada lineages	Wula/Mineo		various

Table 6.1 (continued)

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>References</b>
Mada (cont.)	Bzazama	Uldemé		Richard 1977
	Bjiguijër	Mboku	before Mada	Richard 1977
Mboku	Mabal	Urza	190y	Mouchet 1947
	Mishe	'Mora'		Seignobos 1988
	Murro	Mofu	190y	Mouchet 1947
	Murgur	Giziga (earlier the Logone)		Mouchet 1947 Seignobos 1988
	Madagar	Mada	recent?	Mouchet 1947
Molkwo	Mbidime	Melgwa?		Seignobos 1988
	Mokuno	Mada Tazañ		Seignobos 1988
	Ftak	Giziga		Seignobos 1988
	Murgur	Giziga (earlier the Logone)		Seignobos 1988
Zulgo	Mokla	Molkwo		von Graffen-reid 1984
	Banaba	Molkwo		as above
	Girgendav/ Sulo	Mafa		as above
	Dabua	Mafa/Mada?	150y	as above, Mouchet 1949
	Gadabak	Mafa	200y	as above
	Guge	Mafa		von Graffen-reid 1984
	Marava	Mboku via Mineo	5g?	as above, Mouchet 1949
	Takwo	Wazan (probably)	7-8g/ 175- 200y	as above

Table 6.1 (continued)

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>References</b>
Gemjek	Makabay	Maroua area	7-9g/ 150y	von Graffenreid 1984, Mouchet 1957
	Mada	Muyan	7-8g	von Graffenreid 1984
	Mosro	Mafa	7g	as above
	Haldala	Mafa		as above
Chinine		Guduf		Wente-Lukas 1985, Zadeva Kumbaw
Dghwede		Turu?		Wente-Lukas 1985
Gevoko		Rhumsiki? (Kapsiki)		as above
Glavda		Ngwoshe (10 km south?)		as above, Zadeva Kumbaw
Guduf		Kapsiki		Wente-Lukas 1985
Marghi/Sukur		Gudur, Bornu, 'the west'		Wente-Lukas 1985, Vaughan 1970, Kirke- Greene 1960
Ngosi		Mafa/Marghi?		Boulet 1984

Table 8.1. First-level codes for ceramic decoration.

Code	Description
0	Plain
1	'Smacco'
2	Burnishing
3	Twisted string rouletting
4	Twisted strip rouletting
5	Appliqué
6	Comb-stamping
7	Unsmoothed area with coil marks
9	Complex/multiple

Table 8.2. Pot types uses and names in the northeastern study area.

Pot type/use	Afam	Plata	Uldemé	Mada
B1-Beer stor- age	<i>togwai</i>	<i>togwai</i>	<i>ohoiyo</i>	<i>gea hu zawm</i>
B2-Beer stor- age/serving	<i>dumbek</i>	<i>dumbek</i>	<i>hodzogwo larwa</i>	<i>erwal klerwa</i>
B3/4/5-Beer preparation	<i>chekwé/ moduk daw mhai</i>	<i>chekwé/ moduk daw mhai</i>	<i>ohoiyukwu</i>	<i>dogwokwo</i>
B6-Beer prep- aration/serving	<i>hwulawm ngujé</i>	<i>bembetch togwai</i>		<i>muhkshu/ mawkshu</i>
B7/8-Beer stor- age/serving		<i>hwulawm</i>		
C1-Sauce preparation	<i>mishiñ ilé</i>	<i>moduk ilé</i>	<i>ohwilé</i>	<i>meshek ilé</i>
C2-Sorghum preparation	<i>moduk dafkwa</i>	<i>moduk defkwa</i>	<i>ohwi daf</i>	<i>gihlde daf</i>
C3-Food serving	<i>bahan</i>	<i>bahan</i>	<i>alaf</i>	<i>araf</i>
C4/5-Food preparation		<i>moduk da hwobaka</i>		
C6-Pot sold to Wandala		<i>bahan kwa -ndurkwa</i>		<i>gihlde kandurka</i>
W1-Water carriage	<i>gra</i>	<i>gra</i>	<i>kldad</i>	<i>zaugwan</i>
W2-Water storage	<i>dedyau</i>	<i>dedyau</i>	<i>dedyo</i>	<i>g(e)a hai yam</i>

Table 8.3. Cooking pots by type and group.

Type	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	All
Afam	6	6	1	0	0	3	0	16
Gemjek	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Muraha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mada	31	24	17	0	0	0	1	73
Mafa	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	5
Plata	48	55	9	5	3	0	0	120
Sirak	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Uldemé	17	10	0	0	0	0	0	27
All	104	98	29	5	4	6	1	247

Table 8.4. Beer pots by type and group.

Type	B1	B2	B3	B4	B6	B7	B8	All
Afam	12	2	21	0	0	1	2	38
Gemjek	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Muraha	35	27	0	84	0	0	0	145
Mada	12	58	12	21	2	4	5	114
Mafa	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	8
Plata	33	15	42	58	5	3	23	179
Sirak	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	4
Uldemé	1	8	6	7	0	0	1	23
All	99	117	81	170	7	10	31	515

Table 8.5. Water pots by type and group.

Type	W1	W2	All
Afam	15	5	20
Gemjek	1	1	2
Muraha	0	0	0
Mada	50	7	57
Mafa	1	3	4
Plata	101	19	120
Sirak	1	2	3
Uldemé	8	3	11
ALL	177	40	217

Table 8.6. Other pots by type and group.

Type	Ritual pots	Miscellaneous pots
Afam	0	4
Gemjek	1	0
Muraha	2	0
Mađa	0	5
Mafa	5	0
Plata	10	20
Sirak	0	0
Uldemé	0	3
All	18	36

**Table 8.7. Decoration on water-carrying pots (W1), by zone. (For decoration codes, see Table 8.1.)**

**(a) Upper zone**

<b>Group/Code</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>All</b>
Afam	0	0	15	0	0	15
Gemjek	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mada	3	0	16	29	2	50
Plata	18	3	80	1	0	102
Uldemé	4	0	3	1	0	8
All	25	3	114	32	2	176

**(b) Upper-middle zone**

<b>Group/Code</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>All</b>
Afam	1	14	0	0	0	15
Gemjek	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mada	13	5	6	24	2	50
Plata	38	38	25	1	0	102
Uldemé	2	1	5	0	0	8
All	54	58	36	25	3	176

**(c) Mid-body zone**

<b>Group/Code</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>All</b>
Afam	0	0	15	0	0	0	15
Gemjek	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mada	18	0	13	18	0	1	50
Plata	1	5	73	2	21	0	102
Uldemé	0	0	2	1	5	0	8
All	20	5	103	21	26	1	176

(d) Lower-middle zone

Group/Code	0	2	3	4	5	All
Afam	13	0	2	0	0	15
Gemjek	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mada	47	2	0	1	0	50
Plata	52	9	40	0	1	102
Uldemé	7	0	0	1	0	8
All	120	11	42	2	1	176

(e) Bottom zone

Group/Code	0	2	All
Afam	15	0	15
Gemjek	1	0	1
Mada	48	2	50
Plata	81	21	102
Uldemé	7	1	8
All	152	24	176

(f) Handle zone

Group/Code	0	3	4	All
Afam	0	15	0	15
Gemjek	0	0	1	1
Mada	8	14	28	50
Plata	30	71	1	102
Uldemé	6	2	0	8
All	44	102	30	176

Table 8.8. Decoration on beer-serving pots (B2), by zone. (For decoration codes, see Table 8.1.)

(a) Upper zone

Code	0	2	3	4	5	9	All
Afam	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Gemjek	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mada	2	0	9	45	0	2	58
Plata	4	4	5	1	1	0	15
Uldemé	2	0	4	1	0	1	8
All	8	4	20	47	2	3	84

(b) Upper-middle zone

Group/Code	0	2	3	4	5	9	All
Afam	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Gemjek	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mada	3	0	9	44	0	2	58
Plata	1	1	7	2	4	0	15
Uldemé	0	0	7	1	0	0	8
All	5	2	24	47	4	2	84

(c) Mid-body zone

Group/Code	0	2	3	4	5	All
Afam	1	0	1	0	0	2
Gemjek	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mada	49	2	1	6	0	58
Plata	7	1	4	0	3	15
Uldemé	4	0	4	0	0	8
All	61	3	10	7	3	84

(d) Lower-middle zone

Group/Code	0	2	3	4	All
Afam	1	1	0	0	2
Gemjek	0	0	0	1	1
Mada	56	2	0	0	58
Plata	10	1	3	1	15
Uldemé	6	2	0	0	8
All	73	6	3	2	84

(e) Bottom zone

Group/Code	0	2	All
Afam	1	1	2
Gemjek	1	0	1
Mada	56	2	58
Plata	13	2	15
Uldemé	6	2	8
All	77	7	84

(f) Handle

Group/Code	0	3	4	All
Afam	0	2	0	2
Gemjek	1	0	0	1
Mada	56	1	1	58
Plata	11	4	0	15
Uldemé	6	2	0	8
All	74	9	4	84

(g) Neck

Group/Code	0	2	4	9	All
Afam	2	0	0	0	2
Gemjek	1	0	0	0	1
Mada	42	5	1	10	58
Plata	10	5	0	0	15
Uldemé	7	1	0	0	8
All	62	11	1	10	84

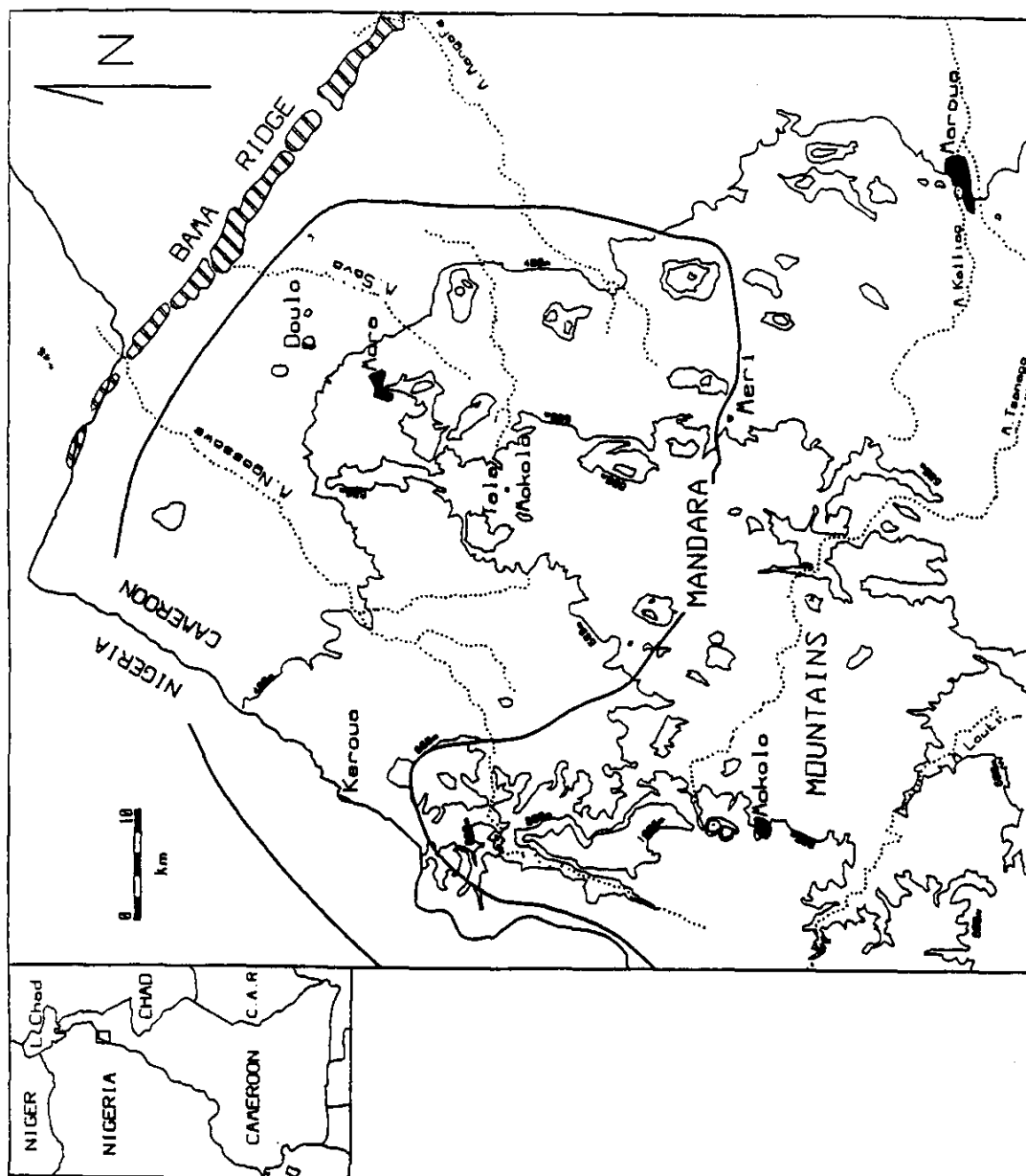
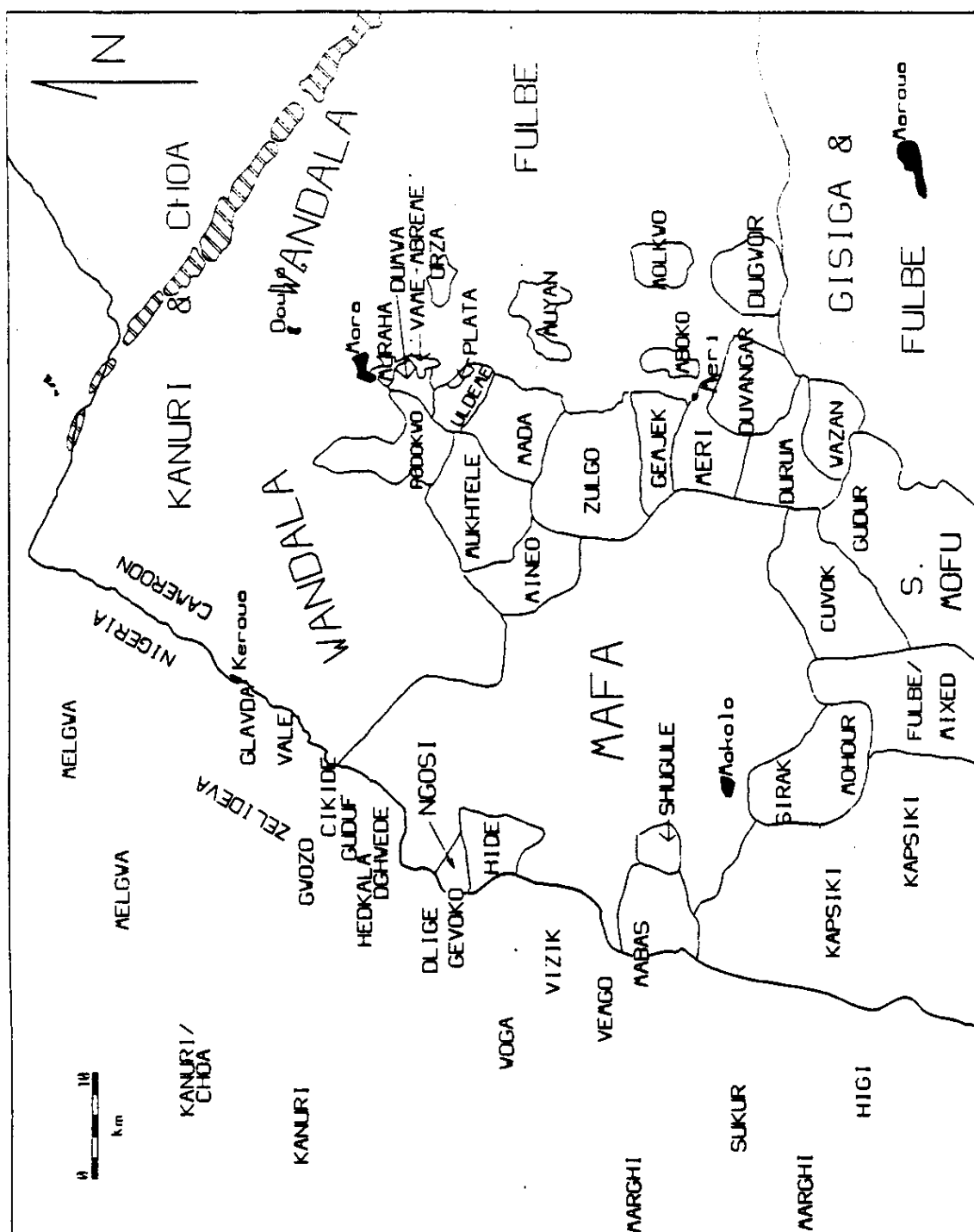


Figure 1.1. The northern Mandara Mountains of Cameroon and Nigeria and the surrounding plains. The heavy line indicates the approximate extent of the study area.



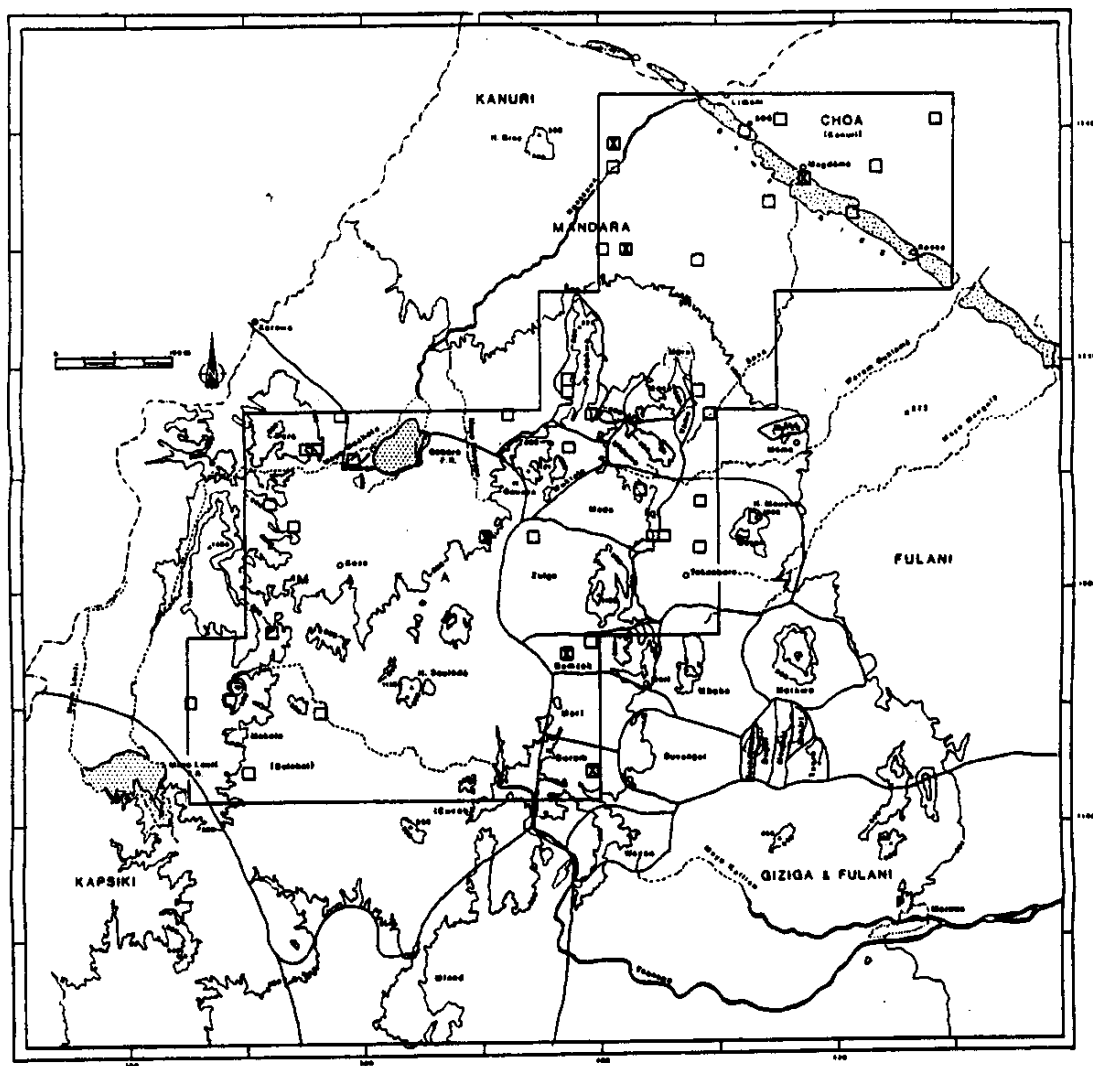
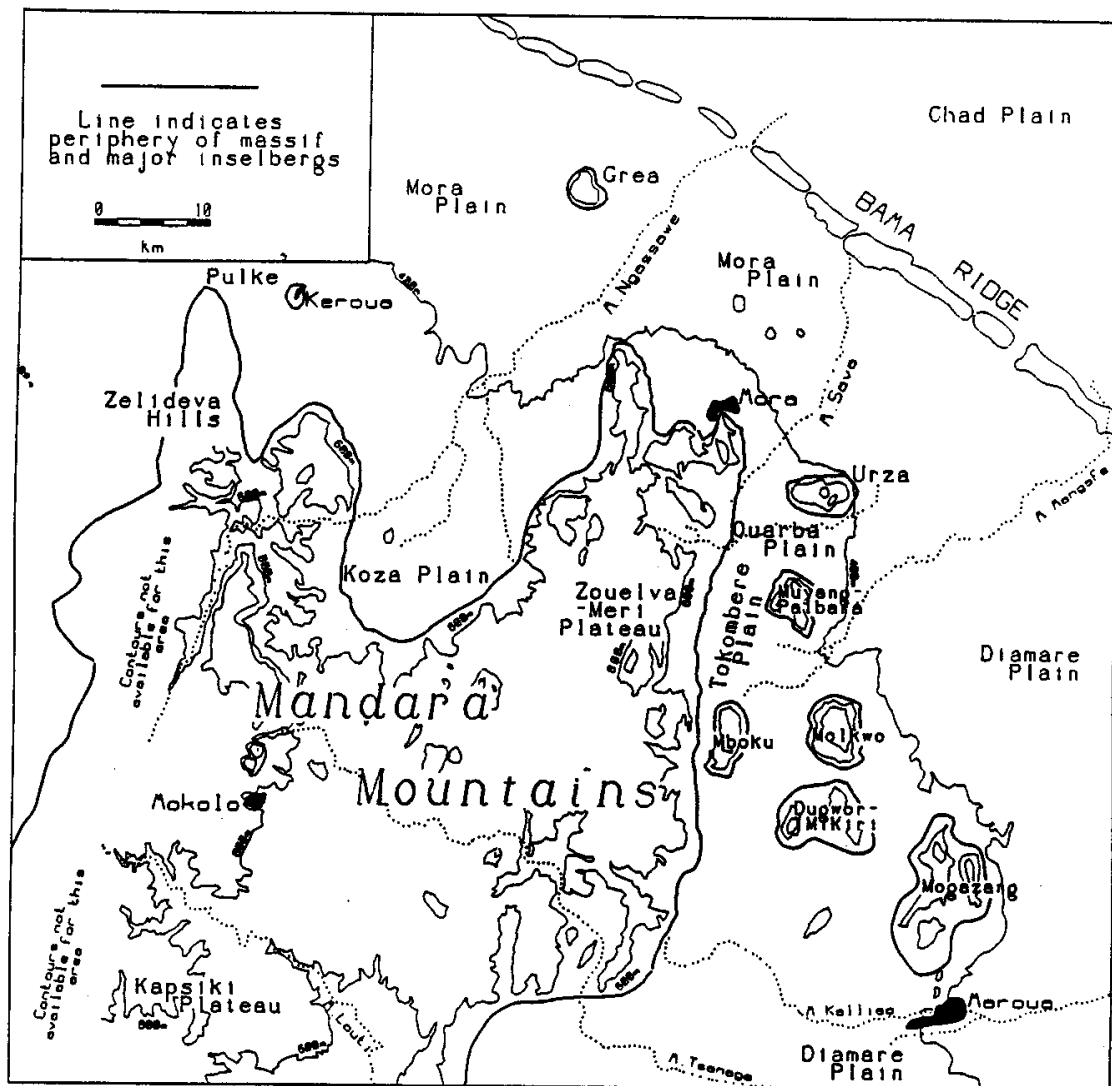


Figure 1.3. The Mandara Archaeological Project Survey area. The squares within the survey territory are 1-km<sup>2</sup> survey areas..



**Figure 2.1. Physical areas in and around the massif.**



Figure 2.2. Terraces in Plata Kapa territory.



Figure 3.1. Compounds in Plata territory.

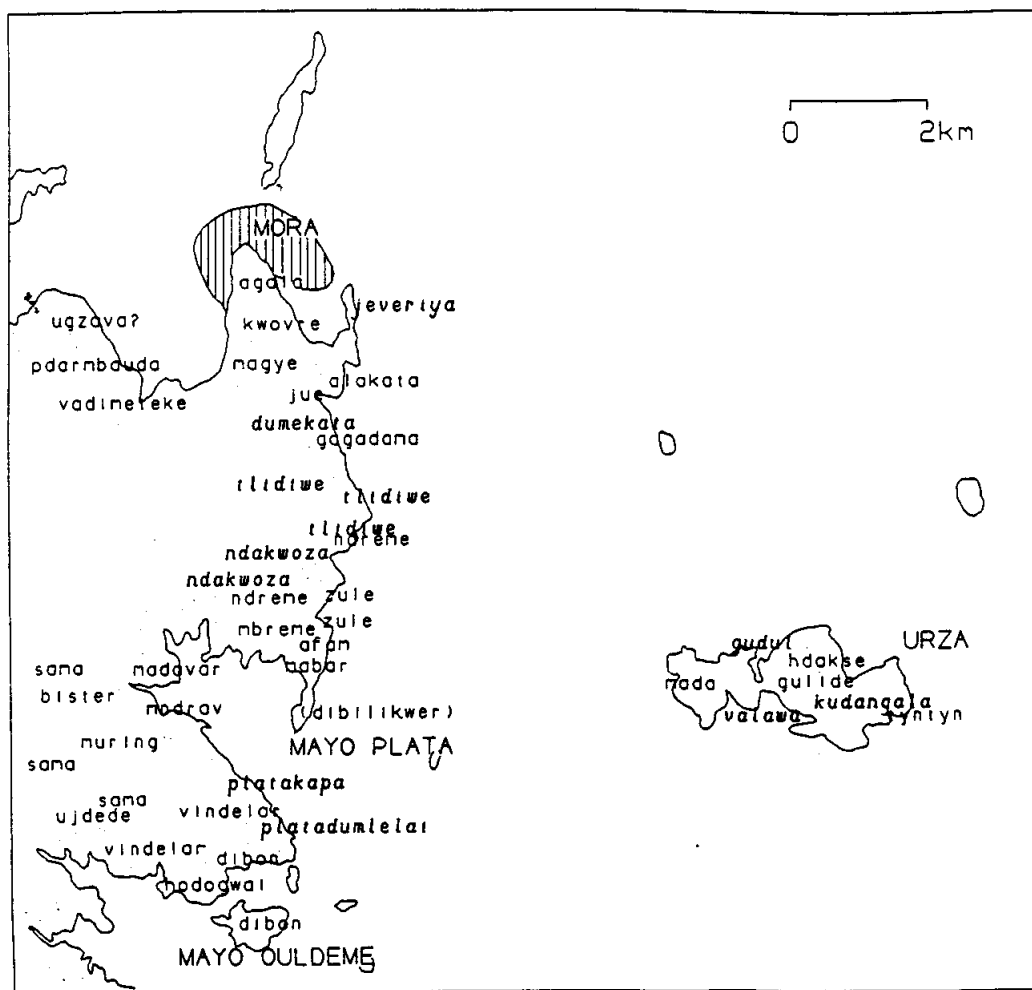
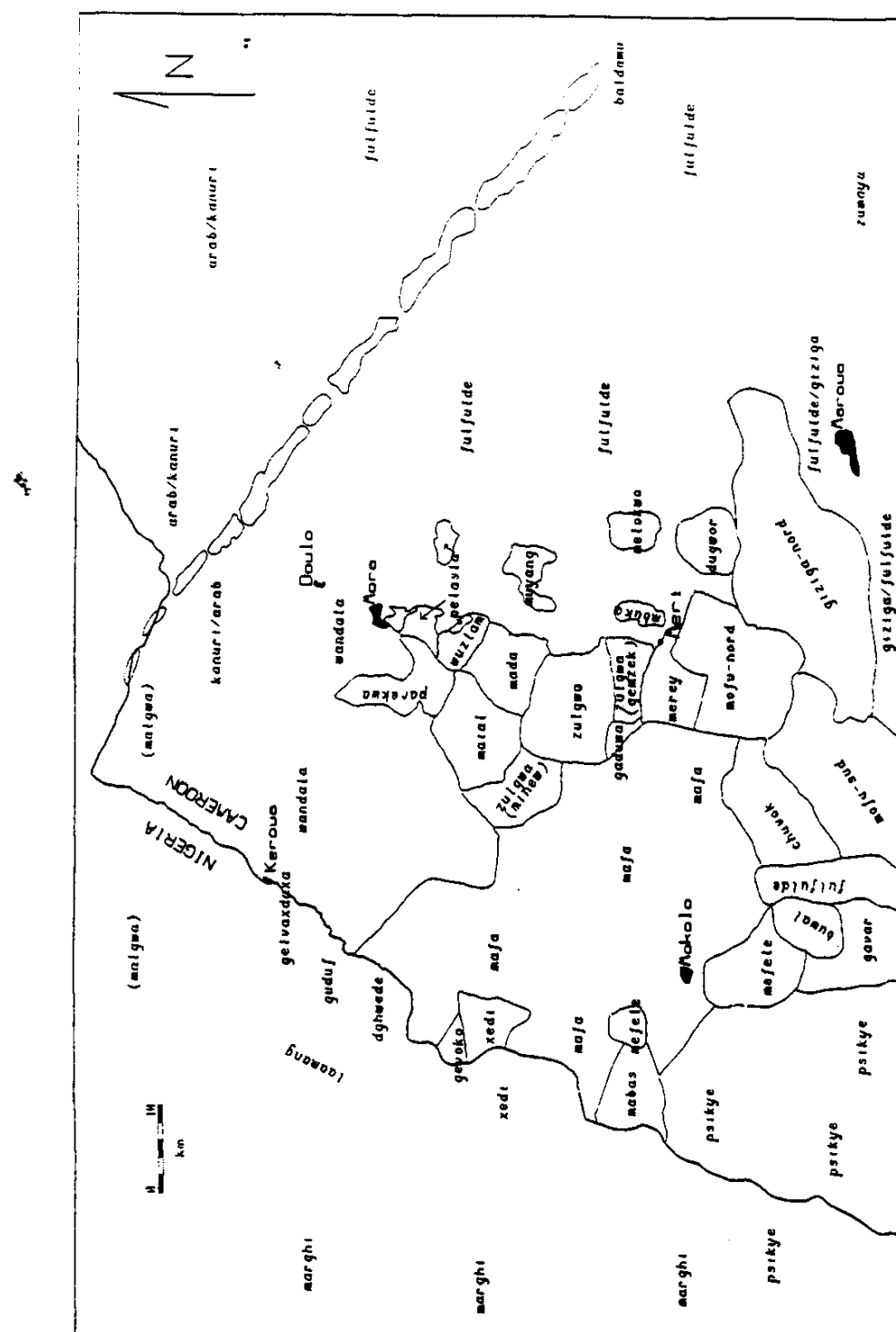


Figure 3.2. Lineages in the Mayo Plata region.



**Figure 3.3. Linguistic groups in and around the study area.**



Figure 5.1. The remains of a fortified position built by von Raben in World War I, now incorporated into terraces in the mountains at Wamakada.

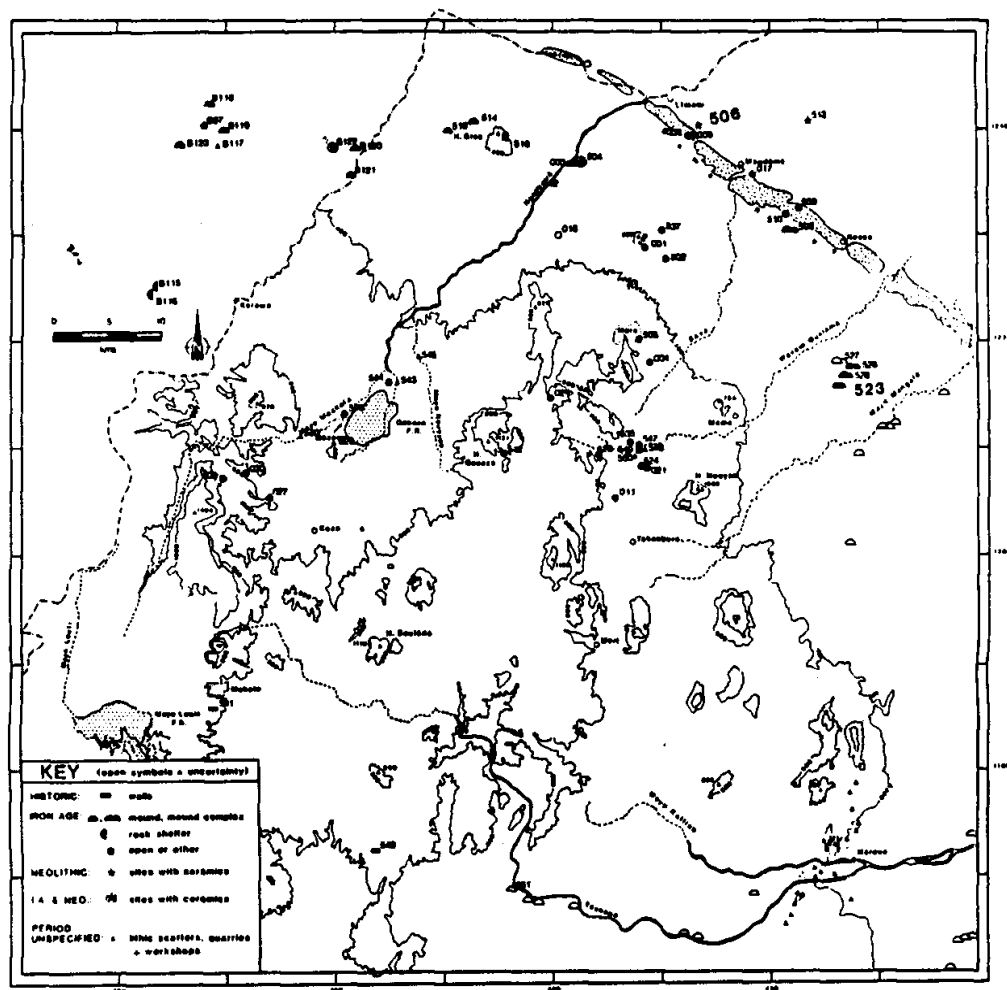


Figure 5.2. Archaeological sites in and around the study area in Cameroon.

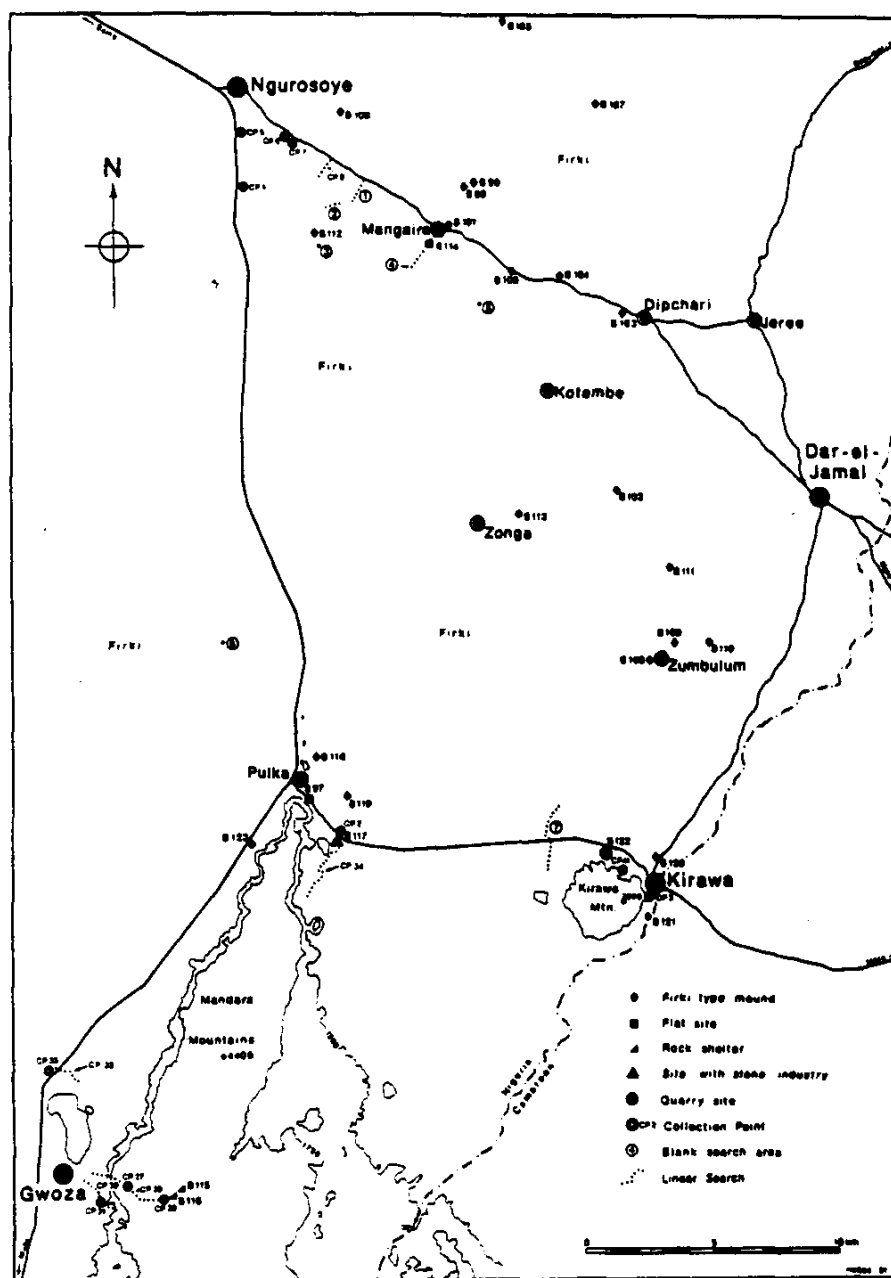


Figure 5.3. Archaeological sites in and near the study area in Nigeria (from Connah 1981).

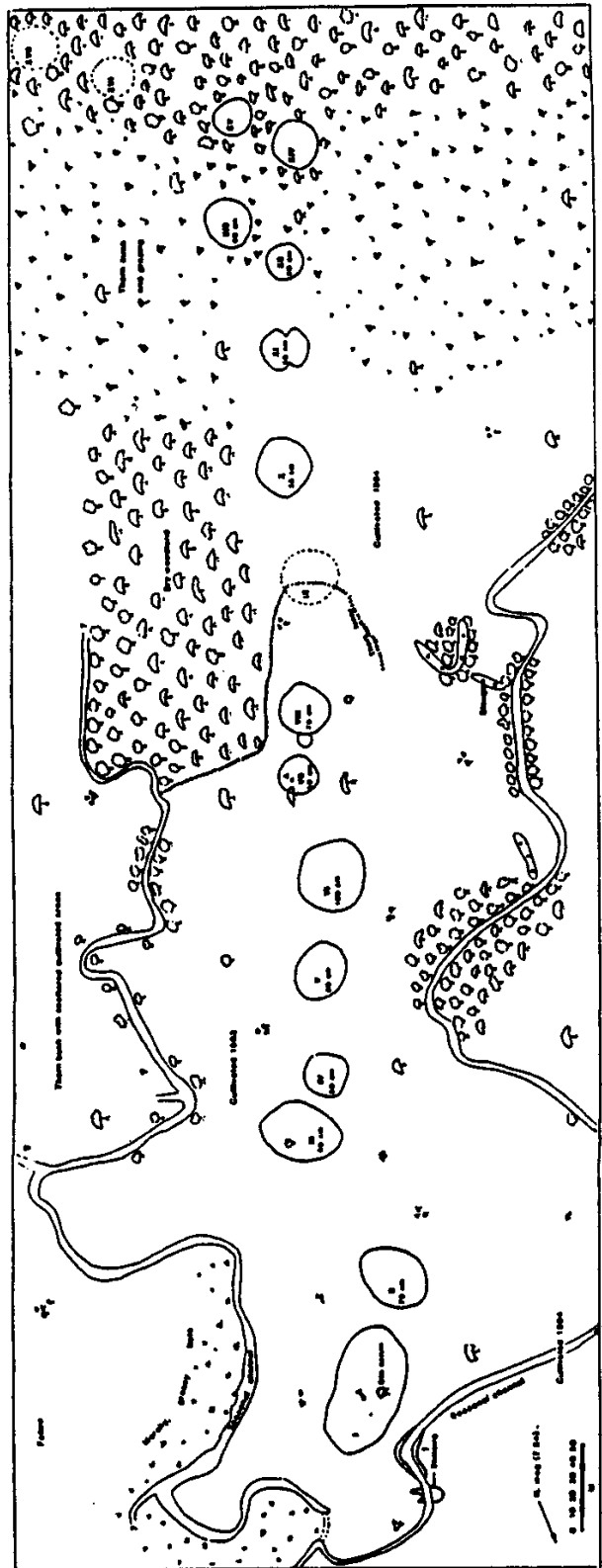


Figure 5.4. The Mehé Djiddere site (MAP 523).

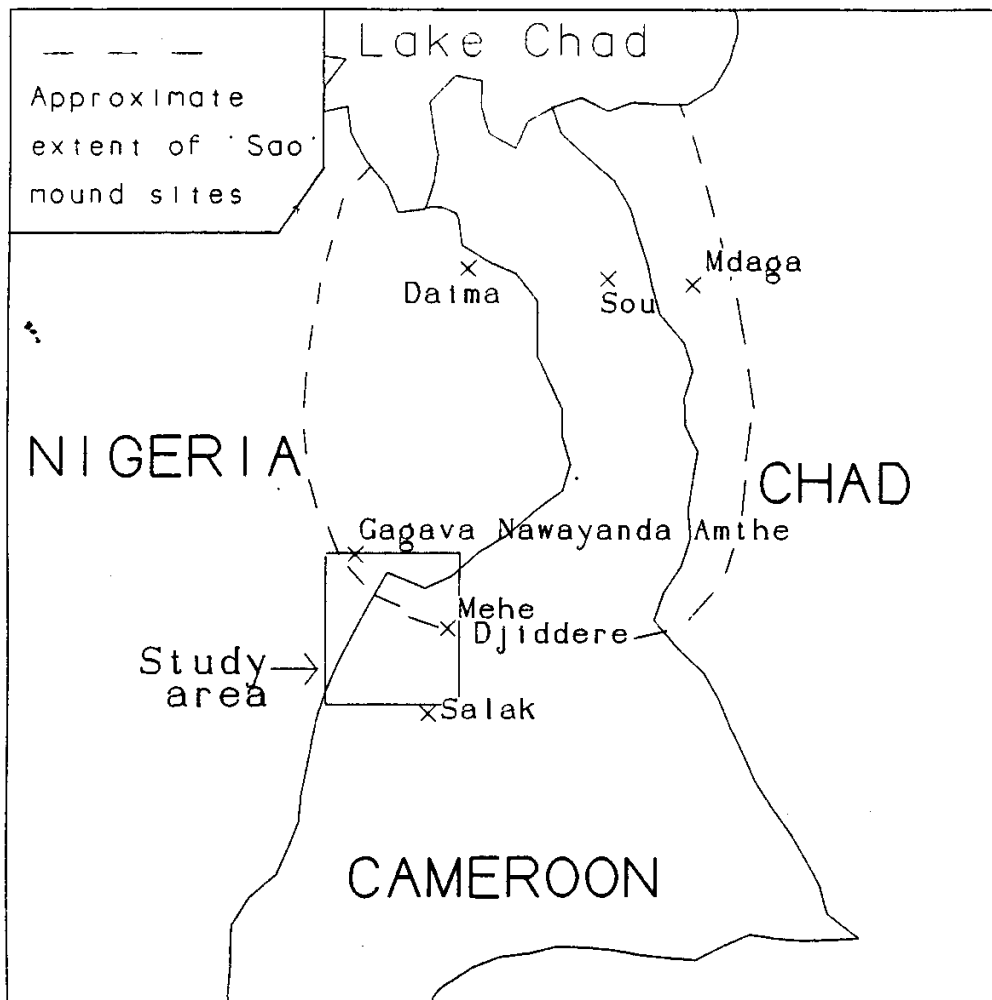


Figure 5.5. Archaeological occurrences south of Lake Chad.

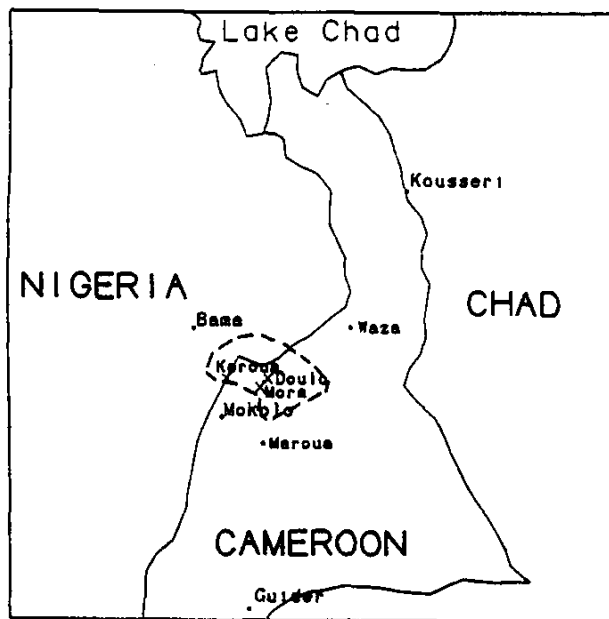
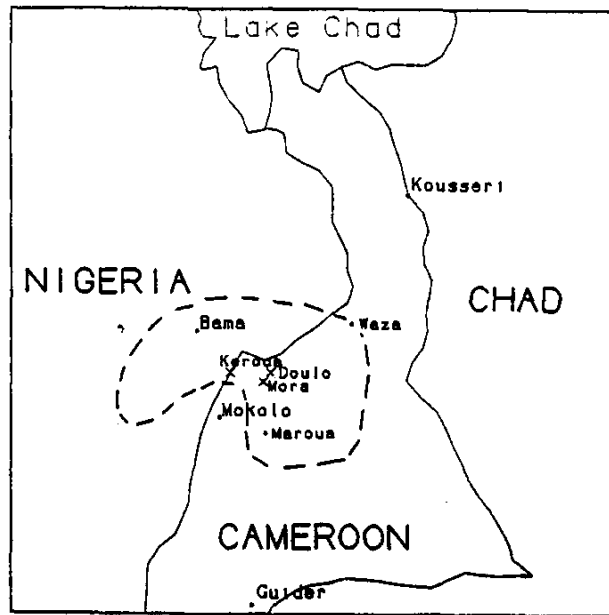


Figure 6.1. The extent of Wandala dominion at the beginning of the eighteenth century (top) and by the mid-eighteenth century (bottom). ('x' indicates Wandala capitals).

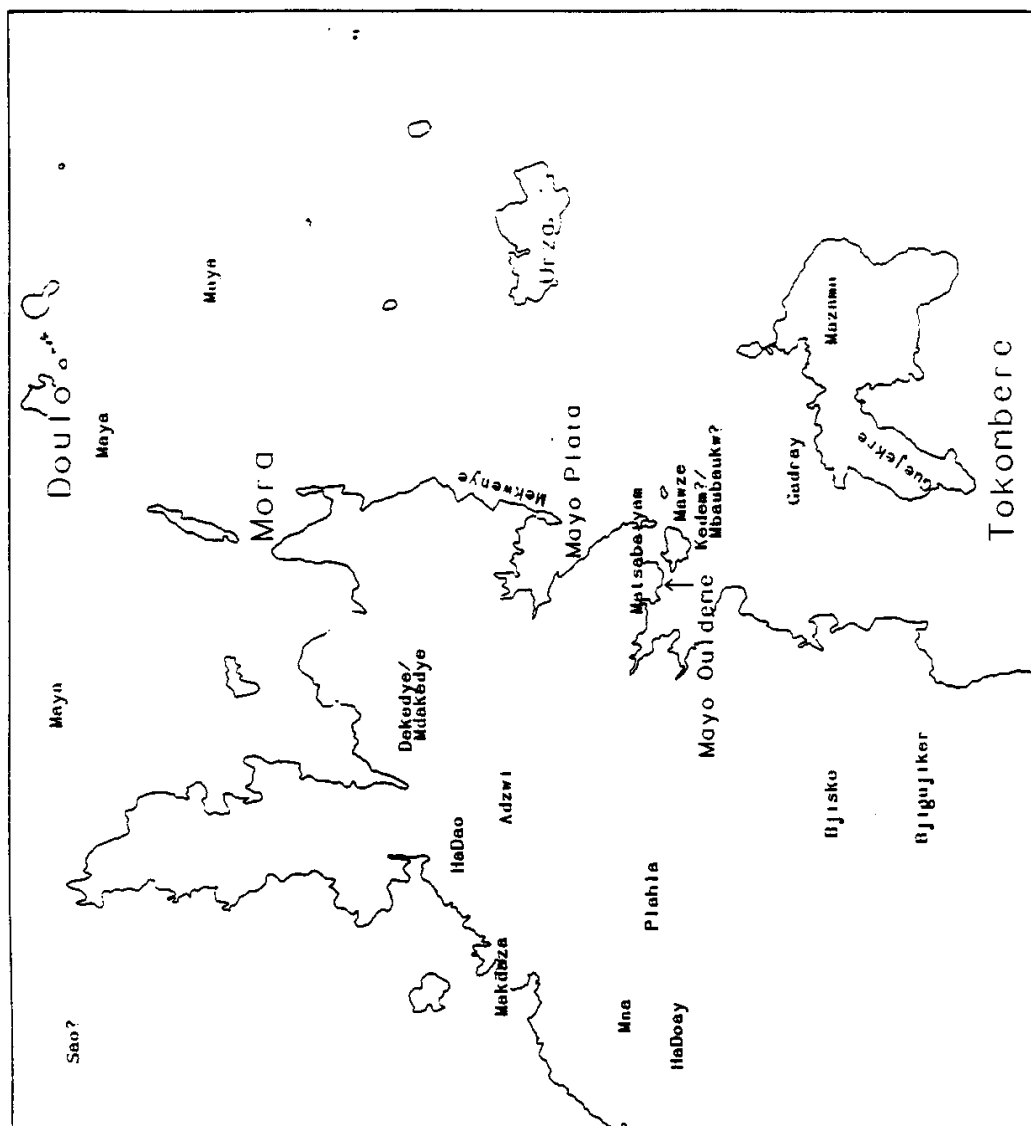
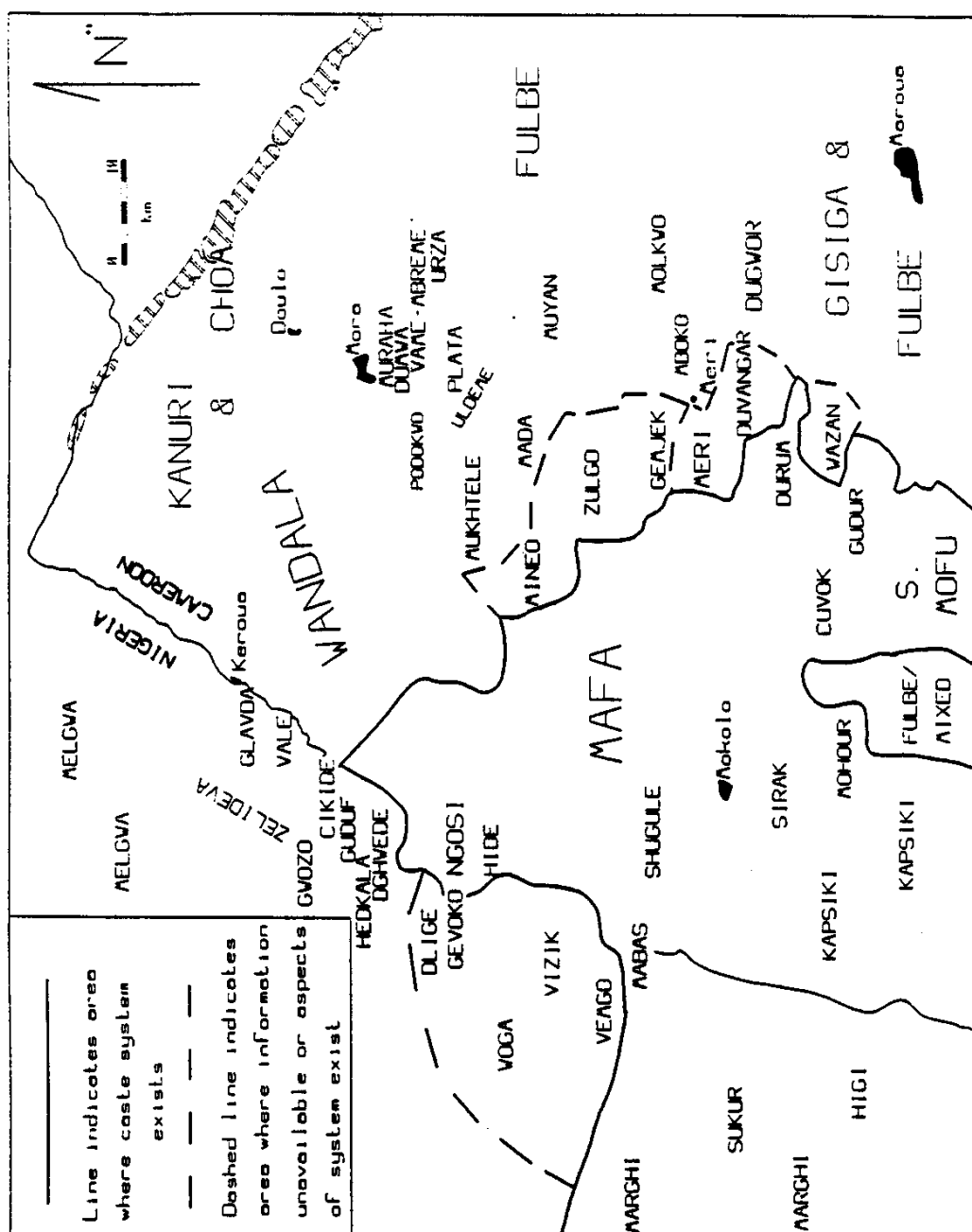
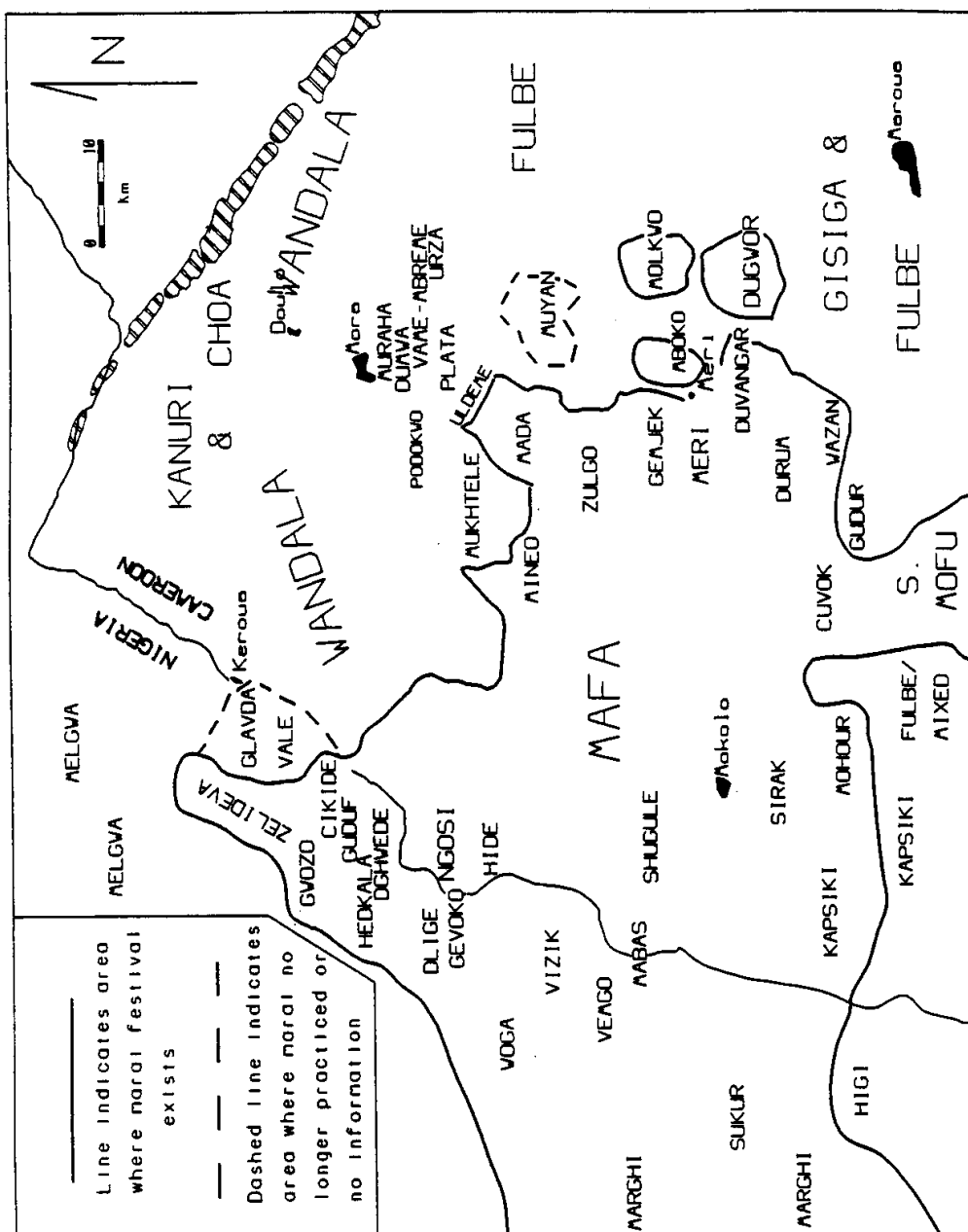


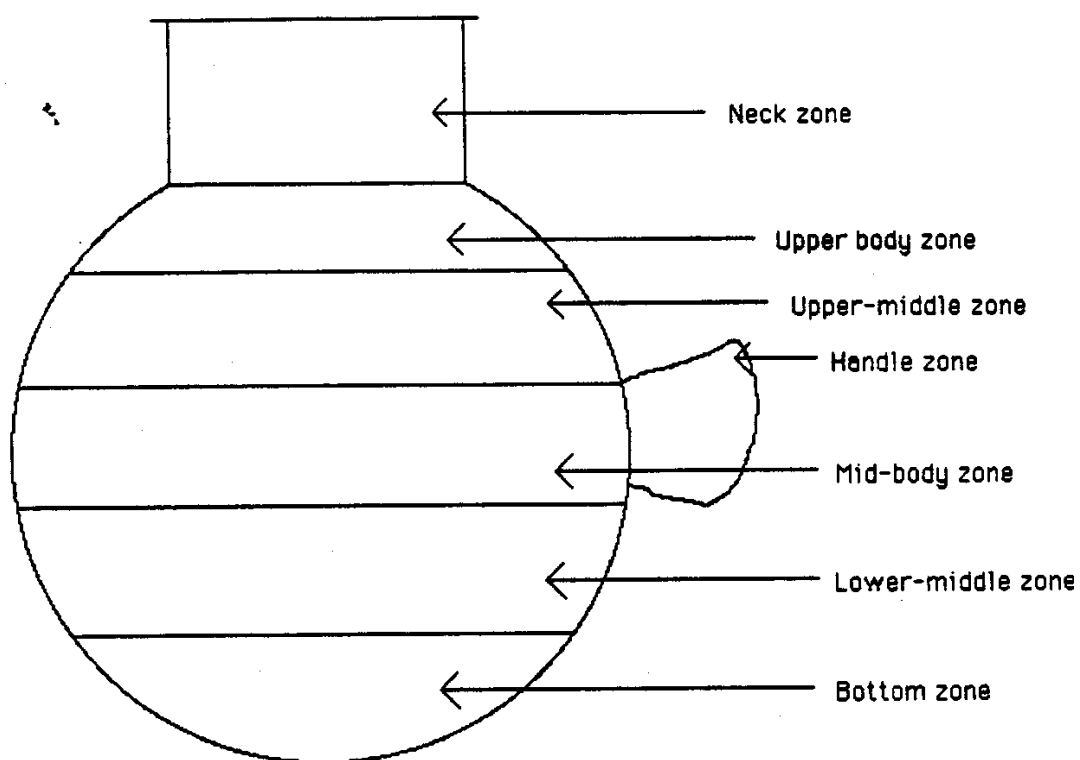
Figure 6.2. Autochthonous groups in the eastern part of the study area.



**Figure 8.1. The extent of caste systems in and around the study area.**



**Figure 8.2. The extent of practice of the *marai* ceremony in and around the study area.**



**Figure 8.3. Bands of decoration on vessels from the area around Mayo Plata.**

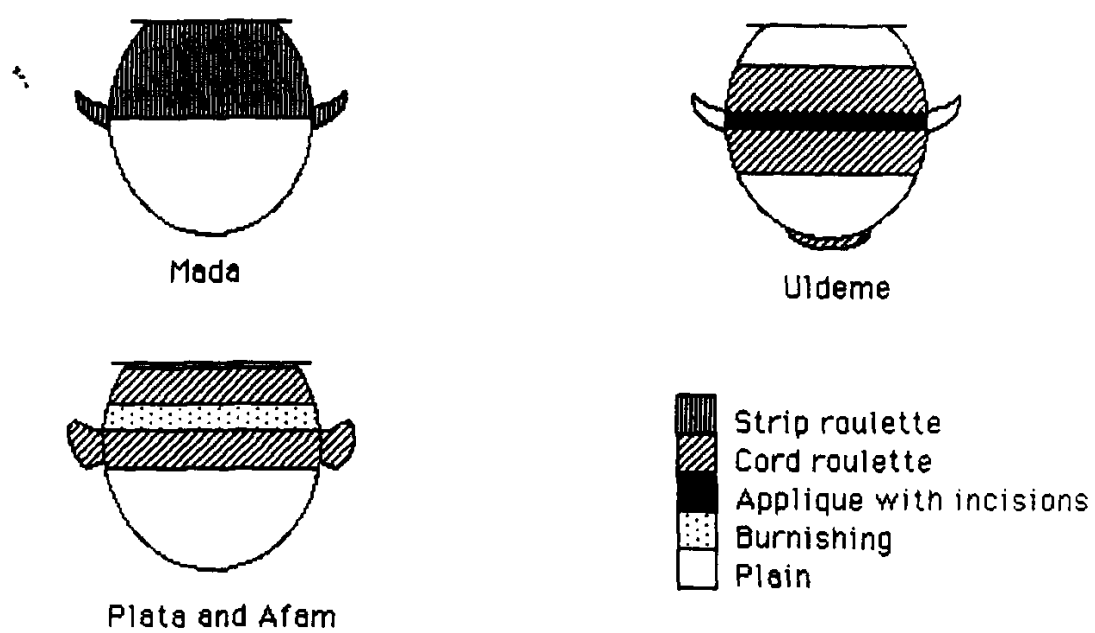


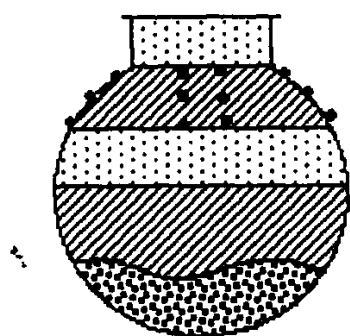
Figure 8.4. Decoration and morphologies of water-carrying (W1) pots.



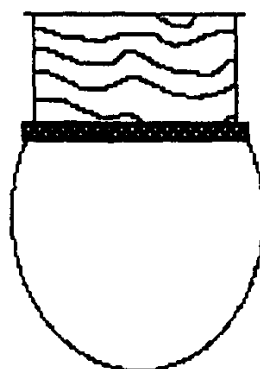
Figure 8.5. A Maslava-tradition water-carrying pot. Note the handle construction.



Figure 8.6. A Tokomberé-tradition water-carrying pot. Note the handle construction.



Plata, Afam and  
Uldeme



Mada

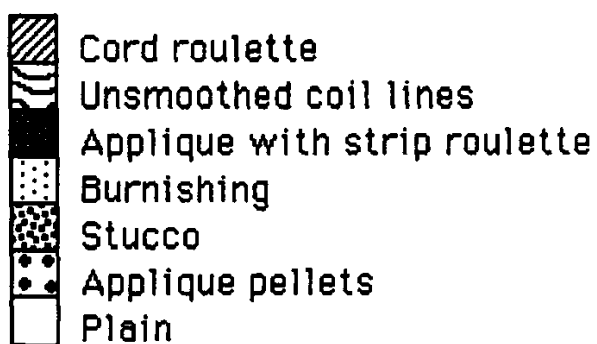
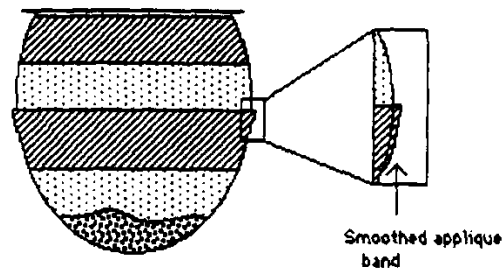
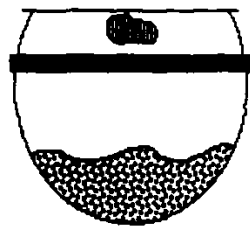


Figure 8.7. Decoration and morphologies of water storage (W2) pots.

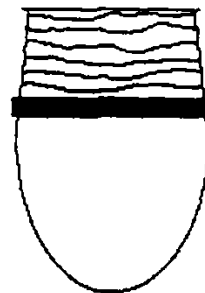
### Beer preparation pots



Plata, Afam and Uldeme

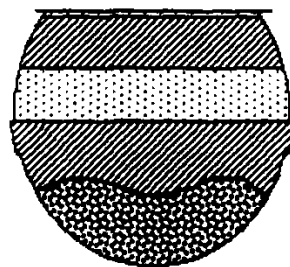


Made (type 1)

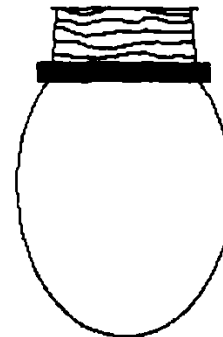


Made (type 2)

### Beer storage pots



Plata, Afam and Uldeme



Made

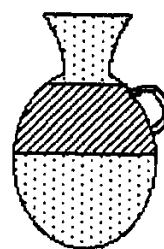
Figure 8.8. Decoration and morphologies of beer preparation (B3/4/5) and beer storage (B1) pots.



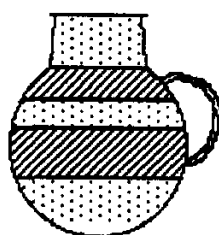
Mada



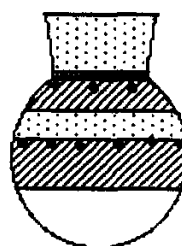
Uldeme



Uldeme (variant)



Plata, Afam and  
Uldeme (dumbek)



Plata, Afam and  
Uldeme (hwulawm)

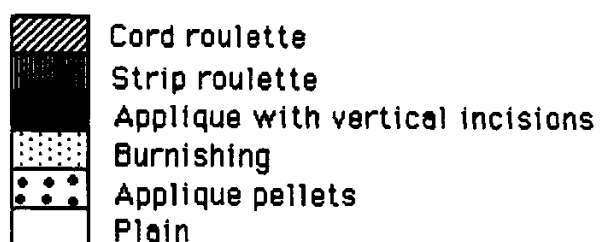
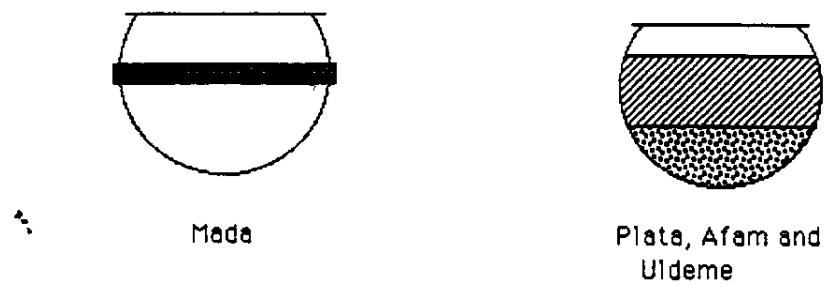
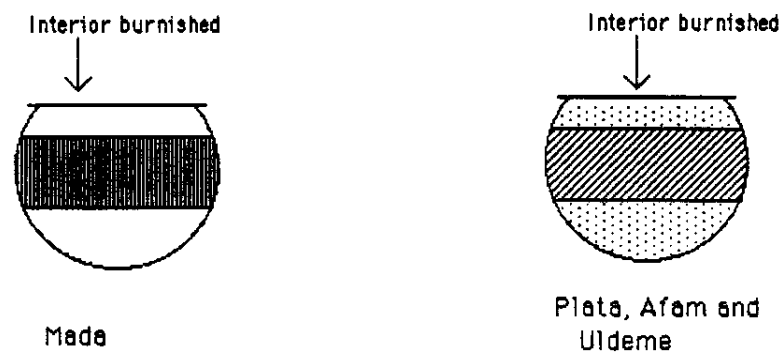


Figure 8.9. Decoration and morphologies of beer serving (B2 and B7/8) pots.

### Sorghum cooking pots



### Sauce cooking pots



### Bowls (all groups)

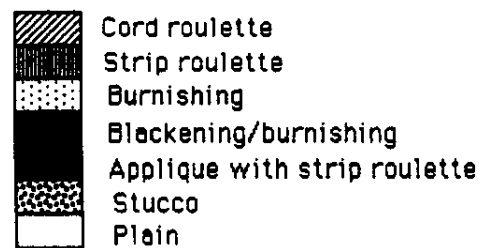


Figure 8.10. Decoration and morphologies of sauce (C1) and sorghum vessels and serving bowls (C3).

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