

Tallensi

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Entry tags: African Religions, Religion

The Tallensi are agriculturalists living in scattered groupings across northern Ghana. "They constitute a homogenous group both culturally and linguistically, but do not show strong political unity as an ethnic group in the sense ethnicity is commonly manifested and experienced. A majority of the Tallensi live in the basin of the Volta River in northern Ghana. But they have no fixed territorial boundaries, nor are they precisely marked off from neighboring groups by cultural or linguistic usages" (Adem, 2010). The Tallensi religion consists of a system of ancestor worship, and includes ritual practices and divination. Each lineage possesses a group of ancestor spirits, and ritual activities are led by a lineage head. Multiple lineages occasionally come together as a clan for activities such as harvest rituals, but religion is generally practiced at the individual lineage level. The society is best described as coterminous with the religion. This entry focuses on the Volta River basin of Northern Ghana, ca. 1934. At this time, British rule had recently ended, and the administration was changed to Indirect Rule.



Date Range: 1915 CE - 1940 CE

Region: Volta River basin of Northern Ghana

Region tags: Africa, Western Africa, Ghana

Volta River basin of Northern Ghana, ca. 1934

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Murdock, G.P. & Wilson, S.F. (Jul., 1972). Settlement patterns and community organization: Cross-Cultural Codes 3. *Ethnology*, 11(3), 254-295.
- Source 2: Murdock, G.P. & Morrow, D.O. (Jul., 1970). Subsistence economy and supportive practices: Cross-cultural codes 1. *Ethnology*, 9(3), 302-330.
- Source 3: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. *World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research*.
- Source 1: Murdock, G.P. (1967). *Ethnographic Atlas*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fe11-002>
- Source 1 Description: Fortes, M. (1945). Dynamics Of Clanship Among The Tallensi: Being The First Part Of

An Analysis Of The Social Structure Of A Trans-Volta Tribe. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute.

– Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fe11-011>

– Source 2 Description: Fortes, M., & Goody, J. (1987). Religion, Morality, And The Person: Essays On Tallensi Religion. Essays In Social Anthropology. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press.

– Source 3 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fe11-010>

– Source 3 Description: Fortes, M. (1955). Names Among The Tallensi Of The Gold Coast. Afrikanistische Studien, Herausgegeben Von J. Lukas. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

– Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fe11-003>

– Source 1 Description: Fortes, M. (1949). Web Of Kinship Among The Tallensi: The Second Part Of An Analysis Of The Social Structure Of A Trans-Volta Tribe. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: "Literacy and Christianity had, until 1936, barely touched the Tallensi. A few children had been sent to school reluctantly in deference to the commands of the District Commissioners... The nearest mission station to the Tallensi is that of the White Fathers at Bol(ə)ga, outside Taleland. Up to 1936 the missionaries had made only an occasional visit of reconnaissance to the nearby Tale settlements. They had succeeded in attracting only two or three Tale youths to their school...The only one of these youths who achieved a fair degree of literacy and accepted the Christian faith was in Government employment" (Fortes, 1954:12).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1654 (Pacification) indicates that the society was "pacified before the twenty-five-year ethnographic present", and consequently, no warfare is present (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1654 (Pacification) indicates that the society was "pacified before the twenty-five-year ethnographic present", and consequently, no warfare is present (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– No

Notes: Individuals are born into lineages with ancestral cults.

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

— No

Notes: To be apart of the religious practices of the Tallensi, an individual must be born into a lineage and have children. There is no concept of recruiting new members to the Tallensi religion.

Does the religion have official political support

— Yes

Notes: The Tallensi are organized by lineages, which are led by a patriarchal figure (a chief, or a Tendaana). These leaders have social and ritual duties as the head of the lineage, but are not actually political figures. Because the Tallensi social, political, and religious spheres of life are not distinguished from one another, the religion can be considered to have political support.

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

— I don't know

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

— Estimated population, numeric: 35000

Notes: "Their country, which, for convenience of reference may be called Taleland, embraces most of the southern half of the district between the two Voltas and the western boundary. On the north it can be demarcated only by an arbitrary boundary which extends in a wavy line from Zuarungu due east to the river. A typical section of the district, Taleland includes the Tong Hills, the vicinity of which harbours the densest and oldest settlements of the country. Its total population, according to the 1931 census, numbers about 35,000. Nearly a third of it is concentrated within a radius of two or three miles of the Hills. I estimate the total area of Taleland at about 300 square miles, which would imply an average population density of approximately 100 to the square mile, though the actual density of settlement in the inhabited areas must be considerably higher" (Fortes, 1945:4).

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

— Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 100

Notes: 100% of the population is estimated to adhere to the religious group because the society is coterminous with the religion.

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "The Tallensi recognized two types of ritual headmen, namely tangdana or 'custodians of the earth,' and na'am or chiefs. The first are descendants of the original Talli who inherited the position through seniority. Believed to have deep spiritual ties with the land, the tangdana are responsible for ensuring the prosperity of people mostly by observing taboos and presiding over sacrifices and rituals. By contrast, the na'am or chiefs are elected by the community for their good standing. Some chiefs

enjoyed great prestige in communities beyond their own, but their functions were limited to their own kin group" (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945, 12). "Their clan heads are the ritual custodians of the Earth in its non-material mystical aspects and with regard to its occult powers..." (Fortes and Goody, 1987:43). "The sanction of a lineage head's position is the ancestor cult. Even a chief has, in the native social order, no judicial or economic sanctions to support his authority. A tangdana has, in addition, the sanction of the Earth. The role of the lineage head in corporate affairs, his duties, responsibilities, and privileges all arise from the fact that he has custody of the lineage b(ɔ)□ar" (Fortes, 1945:227).

↳ Is there a hierarchy among these leaders:

– No

Notes: The leaders are only in charge of individual lineages.

↳ Are leaders believed to possess supernatural powers or qualities:

– Yes

Notes: "An elaborate system of ancestor worship is followed in both sets of clans with the additional cosmological slant that the chiefly ancestors are supposed to have supernatural powers to influence the rain whereas the ancestors of the tendaana clans are bound up with the Earth shrines and sacred groves which govern the fertility of the material earth and have power over such earth creatures as locusts that might damage crops" (Fortes, 1987:43).

↳ Powers are inherited:

– Yes

Notes: Yes, in the sense that the position is inherited (Fortes, 1987:43)

↳ Powers are associated with leadership office they assume:

– Yes

Notes: (Fortes, 1987:43)

↳ Are religious leaders chosen:

– No

Notes: Lineage heads are hereditary positions.

– Yes

Notes: "...the na'am or chiefs are elected by the community for their good standing. Some chiefs enjoyed great prestige in communities beyond their own, but their functions were limited to their own kin group" (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945, 12).

↳ A leader chooses his/her own replacement:

– No

Notes: (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945, 12)

↳ A political leader chooses the leader:

– No

Notes: The Tallensi do not have recognized political leaders.

↳ Other members of the leader's congregation choose the leader:

– Yes

Notes: (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945, 12)

↳ All members of the religious group in the sample region participate in choosing the leader:

– No

Notes: (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945, 12)

↳ Are leaders considered fallible:

– I don't know

↳ Are close followers or disciples of a religious leader required to obediently and unquestionably accept the leader's pronouncements on all matters:

– I don't know

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– No

Notes: "They have no esoteric or liturgical language reserved for ritual occasions, as is to be expected in the absence of a church organization or a professional priesthood, or a written scripture in their religious system" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:23).

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– No

Notes: Murdock and Wilson (Column 6; 1972) indicate that among the Tallensi, "there are no structures in the community that are appreciably larger or more impressive than the usual residential dwellings."

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below.

↳ Cemeteries:

– Yes

Notes: "The dead are buried in small cemeteries. Each settlement or main segment of a lineage has its own burial site, often marked by sacred groves. Each burial site serves as a spiritual center where members of the local community interact with ancestral spirits" (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945:220).

↳ Temples:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of temples.

↳ Altars:

– Yes

Notes: "What regulates Tallensi prayers in their incidence, style, and general shape, is their normal association with sacrifice (ka□ab(ə)) and altars (baghar). The beings or powers to whom prayers are addressed are invoked to attend at a particular shrine or place of sacrifice and the invocation is aimed, as it were, at this visible and tangible material focus, and not launched towards heaven or into space. An audience is assumed to be present, and the postures and attitudes of the officiants and participants reflect this situation" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:26).

Are pilgrimages present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of pilgrimages among the Tallensi.

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer "no" only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: "Thus the critical change when life ends for the individual is said to be the severance of the bond between his sii [soul] and his body. Tallensi have no precise doctrines to explain how the change occurs or to account for the post-mortem immortality which their ancestor cult seems, to the outside observer, to presuppose. But some informants conjecture that it must be the sii that, in some way not understood by them, persists after death and is eventually re-incorporated in an ancestor shrine" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:268).

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: "The dead without descendants vanish into oblivion. Tallensi do not think of their worshipped dead — the ancestors — as denizens of a supernatural world. They are in and of this world, accessible at all times by the right ritual in the shrines set up for them in their descendants' homes" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:xi).

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

— Yes

↳ Afterlife located in "other" space:

— Yes [specify]: Among the living

Notes: "the [Page 195] ancestors are felt to be close because they are not relegated to an extra-human world of the dead. Their graves and the shrines dedicated to them are beside and inside the homesteads of their descendants, objectifying their accessibility to and perpetual presence among their descendants. So, though dead and gone, the ancestors yet have their place in the world of the living, invisible but effective, and accessible through the special medium of religious ritual" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:194).

Reincarnation in this world:

— No

Notes: "The Tallensi have no belief in reincarnation" (Fortes, 1955:344).

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

— Field doesn't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of co-sacrifices in tomb/burial.

Are grave goods present:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of grave goods.

Are formal burials present:

— Yes

Notes: See questions below for available details regarding formal burials among the Tallensi.

↳ In cemetery:

— Yes

Notes: "The dead are buried in small cemeteries. Each settlement or main segment of a lineage has its own burial site, often marked by sacred groves. Each burial site serves as a spiritual center where members of the local community interact with ancestral spirits" (Adem, 2010; Fortes, 1945:220).

↳ Other formal burial type:

— Yes [specify]: Beside the homestead

Notes: "Those who die normal deaths are buried beside the homestead and, as we know, reinstated within it as ancestors" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:206).

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

— Yes

Notes: The Tallensi religion centers around ancestral spirits and the Earth spirit. See questions below for details.

↳ A supreme high god is present:

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 238 (Religion: High gods) indicates that a "high god absent or not reported in substantial descriptions of religious beliefs" (Murdock, 1962-1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

— Yes

Notes: "An ancestor is a named, dead forbear who has living descendants of a designated genealogical class representing his continued structural relevance. In ancestor worship such an ancestor receives ritual service and tendance directed specially to him by the proper class of his descendants" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:68).

↳ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

— Yes

Notes: "Ancestors are supposed to be always watchful; and they are apprised of all significant family or clan events" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:195).

↳ Human spirits know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

— Yes

Notes: "Their onnipotence is most decisively displayed in their power over life and death. For the ancestors have the sole prerogative of ensuring life and of

inflicting normal death" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:193).

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "Their [the ancestors'] presence is known from what are experienced as their importunities on their descendants, the signs of which are on the one hand – and most conspicuously – the illness, misfortune and death as well as minor accidents and frustrations which they inflict, and on the other – but less conspicuously – the births, the good health, success and long life for which they claim the credit" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:12).

↳ Human spirits can reward:

— Yes

Notes: Fortes and Goody, 1987:12

↳ Human spirits can punish:

— Yes

Notes: Fortes and Goody, 1987:12

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "An elaborate system of ancestor worship is followed in both sets of clans with the additional cosmological slant that the chiefly ancestors are supposed to have supernatural powers to influence the rain whereas the ancestors of the tendaana [custodian of the Earth] clans are bound up with the Earth shrines and sacred groves which govern the fertility of the material earth and have power over such earth creatures as locusts that might damage crops" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:43).

↳ Human spirits have memory of life:

— Field doesn't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

— Yes

Notes: "For the Chiefs, the Tendaanas [leaders, similar to chiefs] and the elders, however, the significance of the festivals lies primarily in the ritual activities. They stress the obligatory co-operation required for these rituals, their imperative necessity to ensure the well-being of the land and its people. Most of all they stress the commemoration of the ancestors and the homage offered to them in prayers and in sacrifices in order to enlist their benevolence for the coming year" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:51).

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:

– Yes

Notes: "They [the ancestors] are enshrined and worshipped individually, by name, never anonymously, and they are thought of as eating and drinking in the homes of their descendants" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:12).

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

– Yes

Notes: Diviners are used to communicate with the ancestors. See Fortes, 1987, pages 10-15 for a discussion on the divination process.

↳ Through divination processes:

– Yes

Notes: Diviners are used to communicate with the ancestors. See Fortes, 1987, pages 10-15 for a discussion on the divination process.

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

Notes: A monarch is not present among the Tallensi.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: "Besides the ancestors, there is the complementary mystical power lodged in the Earth" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:193). Limited information is available concerning the detailed aspects of the Earth spirit.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "...Earth can punish sins against its own sanctity, it cannot kill without ancestral consent" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:193).

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

– Yes

Notes: "...Earth can punish sins against its own sanctity, it cannot kill without ancestral consent" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:193).

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it

relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

— Yes

Notes: "...the ancestors are felt to be forever watchful, ready to seize on any action that can be interpreted as transgressing the moral order" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:210).

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously "moral" or "ethical" norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

— Yes

Notes: "Ancestors cause trouble, as Tallensi see it, in order to assert the claims to the offerings (which Tallensi say are their food and drink) and the submission they are entitled to. But they act thus under provocation, in requital Tallensi believe, for beneficence that has been ignored or to punish ritual or moral wrongdoing such as flouting kinship norms" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:195).

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

— Yes

Notes: "...homicide, among the Tallensi, must be ritually expiated whether or not it is deliberate or unintentional. This is done not because it is wicked to kill a man, but because it is sinful to pollute the Earth with human blood or to commit such an outrage against the supreme law of kinship amity" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:78).

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

— Yes

Notes: "...if they had not co-operated in these rites and ceremonies according to custom, the ancestors who had instituted the festivals, and the Earth which is the source of man's food and security, and which provides the surface and the site for the dance, would have been angry and this would have brought famine, sickness and death to all" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

— Yes

Notes: "...if they had not co-operated in these rites and ceremonies according to custom, the ancestors who had instituted the festivals, and the Earth which is the source of man's food and security, and which provides the surface and the site for the dance, would have been angry and this would have brought famine, sickness and death to all" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

— Yes [specify]: Cooperation

Notes: (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more details on supernatural punishment.



Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: "...ancestors are deemed to be equally the source of misfortunes interpreted as retribution for failure in religious submission and service, whether this failure is witting or unwitting" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:78).



Done only by high god:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 238 (Religion: High gods) indicates that a "high god absent or not reported in substantial descriptions of religious beliefs" (Murdock, 1962-1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: Done by ancestors and the Earth (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).



Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for specific reasons for supernatural punishment.



Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

Notes: "...if they had not co-operated in these rites and ceremonies according to custom, the ancestors who had instituted the festivals, and the Earth which is the source of man's food and security, and which provides the surface and the site for the dance, would have been angry and this would have brought famine, sickness and death to all" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).



Done randomly:

– Yes

Notes: "In the religious practice of the Tallensi the ancestors exercise their powers without compunction. They punish and slay as arbitrarily as they bless" (Fortes, 1949:173).



Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– No

Notes: "...it is evident that a lore or doctrine of an after-life in which rewards and punishments

are meted out to the dead according to their moral deserts in life, concerns a different sector of religious thought and behaviour than does ancestor worship, as we find it among people like the Tallensi" (Fortes, 1987:77).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:

– Yes

Notes: "...if they had not co-operated in these rites and ceremonies according to custom, the ancestors who had instituted the festivals, and the Earth which is the source of man's food and security, and which provides the surface and the site for the dance, would have been angry and this would have brought famine, sickness and death to all" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).

↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

– Yes

Notes: "...if they had not co-operated in these rites and ceremonies according to custom, the ancestors who had instituted the festivals, and the Earth which is the source of man's food and security, and which provides the surface and the site for the dance, would have been angry and this would have brought famine, sickness and death to all" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:45).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

Notes: Supernatural rewards seem to occur in indirect forms, such as overall well-being and ancestor benevolence. "For the Chiefs, the Tendaanas [leaders, similar to chiefs] and the elders, however, the significance of the festivals lies primarily in the ritual activities. They stress the obligatory co-operation required for these rituals, their imperative necessity to ensure the well-being of the land and its people. Most of all they stress the commemoration of the ancestors and the homage offered to them in prayers and in sacrifices in order to enlist their benevolence for the coming year" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:51).

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– Yes

Notes: Done by ancestral spirits.

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 238 (Religion: High gods) indicates that a "high god absent or not reported in substantial descriptions of religious beliefs" (Murdock, 1962-1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

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↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– No

Notes: "...it is evident that a lore or doctrine of an after-life in which rewards and punishments are meted out to the dead according to their moral deserts in life, concerns a different sector of religious thought and behaviour than does ancestor worship, as we find it among people like the Tallensi" (Fortes, 1987:77).

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: Rewards consist of general health and well-being, as well as successful crops and weather.

↳ Reward in this life consists of healthy crops or good weather:

– Yes

Notes: (Fortes and Goody, 1987:51)

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:

– Yes

Notes: An important reward for a Tallensi is to bear children and to continue the lineage (Fortes and Goody, 1987:51).

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of messianic beliefs.

Norms and Moral Realism

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: The ancestors are the source and explanation of moral norms among the Tallensi (Fortes, 1987:122).

↳ Are specifically moral norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: "In short, the persecuting ancestor is not a supernatural being capriciously punishing wrong-doing or rewarding virtue. He is rather to be thought of as an ultimate judge and mentor whose vigilance is directed towards restoring order and discipline in compliance with the norms of right and duty, amity and piety, whenever transgressions threaten or occur. When misfortune occurs and is interpreted as a punitive, or to be more exact, corrective

intervention by the ancestors, they are believed to have acted rightfully, not wantonly" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:78).



Specifically moral norms are linked in some way to an anthropomorphic being:

— Yes

Notes: Moral norms are linked to ancestors, "...the ancestors are felt to be forever watchful, ready to seize on any action that can be interpreted as transgressing the moral order" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:210).

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the requirement of celibacy among the Tallensi.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice among the Tallensi.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice among the Tallensi.

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice among the Tallensi.

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

— Yes

Notes: "If all the lineages which are entitled and obliged to be present are not represented there the offerings will be rejected and the prayers will come to nought. Not only that. Tallensi perceive quite

clearly that ritual collaboration in these circumstances is a binding force, a symbolical burial of hatchets, through which the participants commit themselves in principle to peaceful coexistence and mutual trust" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:53). "Public divination is ritually obligatory on occasions of communal interest such as the eve of a festival, when a diviner is consulted in order to find out what sacrifices must be offered to ensure a propitious outcome" (ibid, 14).



Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

— No

Notes: "We must bear in mind that there is no priesthood or scripture to ensure uniformity or conformity in prayer" (Fortes and Goody, 1987:27).

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

— A tribe

Notes: The Tallensi do not have a political authority beyond the community, which is reflective of autonomous bands and villages (Ethnographic Atlas column 33, Murdock, 1967; retrieved from Divale, 2004). However, Murdock and Wilson (1972; Column 10: Descent) indicates that the Tallensi have patrilineal descent with dispersed sibs. Additionally, the Tallensi live in clan-communities, with patrilineal sibs and matrilineal exogamy. Source of information: Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1967), Columns 19, 20, 22. Because the Tallensi have kin ties, they are most accurately described as a tribe.

Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

— No

Notes: The Tallensi do not have a political authority beyond the community, which is reflective of autonomous bands and villages (Ethnographic Atlas column 33, Murdock, 1967; retrieved from Divale, 2004). Consequently, a formal bureaucracy is presumably not present among the Tallensi.

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

— Yes

Notes: "Food reserves are stored largely in communal warehouses or other facilities under the control of representatives of the community as a whole, or of its major segments (e.g., clans), or of its principal wielders of power" (Column 10, Murdock and Morrow, 1970).

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— I don't know

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

— No

Notes: "Land transport is done exclusively by human carriers, with at most the aid of a tumpline, a carrying pole, or the like...Routes of land transport consist exclusively (or almost so) of unimproved trails or footpaths" (Column 7, Land Transport, from Murdock and Morrow, 1970). From this information, it can be assumed that transportation infrastructure is not present.

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— No

Notes: "Land transport is done exclusively by human carriers, with at most the aid of a tumpline, a carrying pole, or the like...Routes of land transport consist exclusively (or almost so) of unimproved trails or footpaths" (Column 7, Land Transport, from Murdock and Morrow, 1970). From this information, it can be assumed that transportation infrastructure is not present.

Taxation

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: The Tallensi paid taxes to the British Administration (Fortes, 1945:13).

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 90 indicates that police are not specialized (Tuden, Arthur, and Marshall, 1972; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: The Tallensi interacted with the British Administration's police (Fortes, 1945:13).

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

— No

Notes: "Prior to the arrival of the British, the Tallensi had no judicial system. Rule of law governing

rights and obligations in property relations, person-to-person relations, and inter-group relations were enforced collectively by members of lineages and/or sub-lineages" (Adem, 2010).

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: British Administration judicial system (see Fortes, 1945:13,235).

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: Because the Tallensi interacted with the British Administration's police and judicial system, it can be assumed that they were also subject to the British Administration's legal code (Fortes, 1945:13).

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1654 (Pacification) indicates that the society was "pacified before the twenty-five-year ethnographic present", and consequently, no warfare is present (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 149 (Scale 1- Writing and Records), indicates that writing and records are absent among the Tallensi (Murdock and Provost, 1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

— I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic evidence

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

— Yes

Notes: The Tallensi are intensive agriculturalists with a secondary reliance on animal husbandry.

Gathering provides a supplementary source of subsistence. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Gathering
- Pastoralism
- Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)

Notes: The Tallensi are intensive agriculturalists with a secondary reliance on animal husbandry. Gathering provides a supplementary source of subsistence. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.