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## MOHAVE WARFARE<sup>1</sup>

KENNETH M. STEWART

THE MOHAVE INDIANS of the Colorado River valley are by reputation a warlike tribe, although my informants insisted that the people as a whole were pacifically inclined. It was asserted that, while war was disliked by a majority of the Mohave, battle was the dominant concern of the kwanamis ("brave men"), who were responsible for the recurrent hostilities and over whom there was no effective control. Whether or not the mass of the population was averse to warfare, it is clear that the frequent warring expeditions were primarily the result of the existence among the Mohave of a distinct class of warriors with whom warfare was an obsession, who were set apart from other men by the nature of their dreams, and who were continually eager to join a war party to exercise the military powers conferred upon them by the spirits in those dreams. The Mohave were constant aggressors, and since they seldom plundered, economic motivation for war was inconsiderable. Prisoners were taken, but were a secondary objective in battle. Nor was territorial aggrandizement normally the reason for a military campaign, though it impelled the Mohave to drive the Halchidhoma out of what is now the Colorado River Indian Reservation.<sup>2</sup>

The Mohave, in alliance with the Yuma, made a number of incursions into Maricopa territory, the Pima on occasion coming to the aid of the Maricopa. Similarly, the Yuma were at chronic enmity with the Cocopa, and they repeatedly called upon the Mohave to join them in expeditions against the latter tribe. The Halchidhoma are remembered as "Maricopa" who were driven out of the Parker region by the concerted efforts of Yuma and Mohave, but my informants knew nothing of hostilities with the Kohuana or Halyikwamai.<sup>3</sup> There was no

<sup>1</sup> This material was obtained on a field trip to the Mohave sponsored by the Department of Anthropology of the University of California in March and April, 1946. Informants were Chief Pete Lambert, 80, at Needles, California, and Lute Wilson, 67, Tom Black, 62, and Mrs Abraham Lincoln (whose grandfather was a war chief), 77, at Parker, Arizona.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Lincoln: "It seems like the Mohave wanted Parker valley pretty bad. It was rich, and they wanted to get rid of the Maricopa, although they spoke a related language. I don't know why the Mohave did it—I guess they wanted to hog everything like the Whites."

<sup>3</sup> For accounts of Mohave hostilities with these peoples see Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, pp. 799-802, and Spier, *Yuman Tribes of the Gila River*, pp. 11-18 and p. 42.

fighting with the Cahuilla or other Southern California Shoshoneans, and the Kamia, Diegueño, Akwa'ala, and Kiliwa were regarded as distant, rather unimportant tribes who were not enemies of the Mohave.

Relations with the Yuman tribes of Upland Arizona were on the whole friendly, with trade and some intermarriage. The Mohave never fought the Havasupai or Yavapai,<sup>4</sup> and conflict with the Walapai was limited to a few minor encounters.<sup>5</sup> The Shoshonean Chemehuevi were friends until after the establishment of Fort Mohave, when on several occasions they attacked the Mohave. The Paiute, likewise, were normally not enemies, but they joined the Chemehuevi in these forays, and there were isolated skirmishes between Mohave and Paiute in earlier times.<sup>6</sup>

The following narrative of fighting with the Chemehuevi was told by Pete Lambert.

I heard of only two fights with the Chemehuevi. When the Whites were at Fort Mohave they gave the Mohave and Chemehuevi liquor. Before that time the Mohave and Chemehuevi were relations and friends. But then they started to kill one another in drunken fights. The Chemehuevi lost quite a few men that way, and they got sore at the Mohave. A bunch of Chemehuevi warriors came down early in the morning and killed several Mohave near Fort Mohave, and then the Chemehuevi ran to Sand Hill. The Mohave chased them and killed quite a few Chemehuevi at Sand Hill.

The other war with the Chemehuevi was also when the American troop was already here [1867]. The Mormons in Nevada wanted some Mohave women for wives, so they gave guns to about fifty Ute [?], Paiute, and Chemehuevi, and told them to go down and kidnap some Mohave girls for them. They came through up at Forty Nine Road, the old military road up above Ghost Mountain (Avikwame). They went through on the south side of the big wash by Hardyville. Then they came to a place called Moss Mine (Kawačuthomb). A lot of Mohave were gathered to fight over a piece of land at a place called Sand Hill (Anikočkwamb). So there were lots of Mohave there. They were camped and big dances were going on, singing nearly all night and day. At daylight the enemy attacked. Most of the Mohave were unarmed; so the Chemehuevi shot their guns and killed quite a few. They were old-time guns, and shot rocks, not lead. They never cleaned the barrels, and they shot so fast that the guns were not working so good. So they started to

<sup>4</sup> Mohave warriors served as scouts with the United States Army against the Yavapai and Apache.

<sup>5</sup> When some American miners were killed by the Walapai in 1867, the Mohave war chief sent warriors to escort the Whites and to pacify the Walapai.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson: "Sometimes we didn't have much tobacco, and a man might go up around Moapa or Las Vegas and be killed by the Paiute. This led to a fight. Sometimes they came down here, and sometimes we went up there".

run. An unarmed Mohave kwanami ran after the Chemehuevi leader, and the Chemehuevi shot him through the shoulder, but he went right on. He grabbed the Chemehuevi by the hair and threw him down and broke his neck and killed him.

One man lost several relatives in the battle, and that made him reckless for revenge; so he chased after the retreating Chemehuevi all by himself. He caught up with them, and he killed five Chemehuevi by himself, and then the others killed him. When they killed him, they cut him into pieces, and set up poles and strung his flesh out.

While the fight was going on in the morning, the Mohave sent a messenger south to Topock for reinforcements. The kwanamis coming up from Topock did not go to the battlefield, but cut across the mesa to head off the Chemehuevi, and they got up to Hardyville about noon. Meanwhile the Chemehuevi kept on going, but they were exhausted from lack of food or sleep. Some of them fell down and died. The Mohave from Topock gave up the pursuit, or they could have caught and killed them all. The Chemehuevi crossed over to Nevada at a place called Avidunyor, a place where there are high cliffs with Indian designs on the rocks and a lot of bed-rock mortars.

After that the soldiers gave the Mohave a gun apiece to protect themselves. They never fought the Chemehuevi again.

The wasauwič ("all the warriors") was an informal association of the kwanamis. Kwanamis, of whom there were forty or fifty in the tribe, were men who had received the proper dreams (sumač ahot) for power in war,<sup>7</sup> and they constituted an amorphous warrior class. They were men of prestige, perhaps outranking even the tribal chief in this respect. The kwanamis were not the only men who went to war, since a war party of forty might include as few as six or seven kwanamis; but men who had unlucky dreams (sumač ačim) remained at home and served as guards during the absence of the warriors.

The dreams of a kwanami began at birth, or even while the unborn child was still in his mother's womb. In his dreams spirits appeared to him, conferring power, instructing him in proper modes of fighting, and teaching him how to avoid injury in combat. The kwanami dreamed of the hawk, a predatory bird whom he would later emulate in battle; and he dreamed of going through dust, which signified that he would come through war unscathed. He dreamed of

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<sup>7</sup> Kroeber has characterized Mohave culture as a dream culture, in which all conspicuous success is dependent upon dreaming (*Handbook*, Chapter 51). The situation is neatly epitomized on page 754: "The Mohave adhere to a belief in dreams as the basis for everything in life, with an insistence equalled only by the Yurok devotion to the pursuit of wealth. Not only shamanistic power but most myths and songs, bravery and fortune in war, success with women or in gaming, every special ability are dreamed. Knowledge is not a thing to be learned, the Mohave declare, but to be acquired by each man according to his dreams. For 'luck' they say sumach ahot, 'good dreaming', and 'ill starred' is 'bad dreams'."

fighting and killing such ferocious animals as mountain lions and bears. In his dreams he seized the animals by the legs and split them in two.

Kwanamis were unlike other Mohave. Their mode of living was Spartan: they were relatively insensible to cold and heat and were unconcerned about going four or five days without food. They ate little, taking only one meal a day, and they ate alone. They were uninterested in women and sex, few of them marrying until they had grown too old for combat. A kwanami did not farm, although he might hunt or fish, and he spent most of his time reclining in a secluded spot while meditating on the subject of warfare. The kwanamis are described as even-tempered, little given to levity, and silent but not bashful. They "looked tough," but they were not necessarily large men, because "a small man might be a better fighter than a big man." The people believed that the eye of the kwanami was like the morning star, enabling him to discern the enemy in the distance. A kwanami was totally indifferent to death; his thinking was continually dominated by his supreme concern of battling the enemy.

In war the kwanamis competed among themselves to kill the first enemy. Certain honors accrued to the man who was the first to kill, though I am not sure that the emoluments were of a tangible nature. Mrs Lincoln stated that only kwanamis who had killed first were entitled to wear eagle feathers.

Two or three men in the tribe ranked as head kwanamis or war chiefs, for whom there was no name other than kwanami. Like other kwanamis, they theoretically attained their positions through proper dreaming. Each war party was conducted by a head kwanami, whose powers were minimal and not clearly formulated, although he was not responsible to the tribal chief. The head kwanami acted as a leader and officer on the war party, and when the party approached an enemy camp he stopped the warriors and gave them instructions relative to the attack. The tribal chief was not a kwanami and did not go to war.

Since boys learned what they needed to know in dreams, special training for war was regarded as superfluous. Boys between the ages of four and six were subjected to a series of tests or ordeals to determine whether or not they possessed sufficient fortitude to become kwanamis, which meant, in effect, to determine whether or not they were having the necessary dreams for power in war. A kwanami might push a boy into a bee's nest, or he might draw blood by sticking his fingernail into a boy's forehead. He might pinch the boy, or pull his ears, or lash him across the bare back with a switch. The boy who did not exhibit stoicism was not dreaming properly; but the boy who did not cry, but who fought back

or merely stared unconcernedly at his tormenter, was the boy who would become a *kwanami*.<sup>8</sup>

Boys who passed the ordeals became *humar kwanamis* ("half-grown warriors"). Between the ages of eight and ten they were taught to use bows and arrows, and they went hunting for practice in marksmanship. For conditioning they ran long distances, but they neither practised dodging arrows, as did the Yuma boys,<sup>9</sup> nor did they engage in sham battles.

The "brave boy" carried a warrior's bow rather than a hunting bow, and he seldom joined the other boys in archery games, since he thought only of going out to kill the enemy. If a brave boy entered an archery contest, he would put his war bow aside and tell the other boys not to touch it, and he would use a hunting bow. He would participate only for a short while, and other boys did not like to play with him, "he was too rough."

Four arrows were conferred upon the brave boy in his dreams, and these were named in sequence, enemy arrow, brave arrow, doctor arrow, and unbrave arrow. The boy preserved them carefully and shot them at the enemy in the above order on his first war party.

Occasionally a brave boy would go on a war party when he had reached the age of thirteen or fifteen. Such boys are said to have been cleverer in battle than older men. Once they had been to war, they became possessed with the desire to go out and fight again. Pete Lambert said that these boys were continually "keyed-up" like race horses; they slept little and were constantly straining to go out and kill. The majority of boys, however, did not go on a war party until they were nineteen or twenty, when they became known as *mahai'* *kwanamis* ("young warriors"). Fighting men were in their prime between the ages of twenty and thirty, and they continued to go to war until they were forty.

Members of a war party were naked save for breechclout and sandals. The long hair of the warriors was wrapped up and bound at the back of the head with rawhide. Just prior to the attack warriors applied war paint, delineating on their bodies red, black, and white designs identifying them as Mohave. The hair was painted red. Face paint was always black for war: usually the entire face was blackened, although sometimes a black stripe was painted across the eyes. Horses were not painted.

Eagle feathers were attached singly to the hair of men who had killed first

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<sup>8</sup> Lambert: "From the start, when he was a boy, they knew he was a *kwanami* and was going to be a warrior when he got old enough to go out and fight. The Mohave knew that he was dreaming about war."

<sup>9</sup> Forde, *Ethnography of the Yuma Indians*, p. 173.

in battle; the other warriors wore feather headdresses (*hal'kwe*). The headdress had a four-ply netting foundation made from black-eyed bean fibers, and a cord was tied under the chin to hold it in place. Wing and tail feathers of the hawk radiated from a central knot, projecting vertically and hanging down at the sides.

Each warrior carried a gourd canteen, five to eight inches in diameter, with a fiber stopper. The canteen was wrapped with ropes of willow fiber. There were horizontal ropes at the top, bottom, and in the middle, four vertical ropes, and a loop at the top by means of which the canteen was attached to the warrior's belt.

The principle weapons of the Mohave were long self bows (*otisa*) and mallet headed "potato-masher" clubs (*halyawhai*), the latter being the more lethal. The club, carved from a single piece of green mesquite or screw-bean wood, was used to advantage in hand-to-hand combat. Its over-all length was approximately one foot, although a stronger warrior might carry a club of greater size. The handle measured seven or eight inches in length and two and a quarter inches in diameter, and the length of the cylindrical head averaged four or five inches, with a diameter of four inches across the top surface. A slight hollow was sometimes burned in the upper surface, leaving sharp edges which were made sharper still by carving. The top surface was painted red, and the remainder of the head and the handle were black. A wrist loop of buckskin or willow bark fiber was passed through a hole three-eighths of an inch from the tip of the handle. Contrary to Yuma and Cocopa custom, the handle was not sharpened for stabbing.

The club was grasped near the cylinder rather than at the end of the handle, and it was usually smashed into the chin or face with an upward stroke. Occasionally the warrior struck downward at the enemy's temple. A warrior might seize an enemy by the hair and club him, then throwing the foe over his shoulder to men armed with heavy straight clubs (*tokyeta*), with which they cracked his skull.

Both hunting and war bows were plain self bows with a simple curve, and they were usually made of willow. Mesquite was sometimes used for war bows and as regarded as a superior material. The length of the bow varied with the height of the man who carried it, the ideal length being from the ground to the chin. Hunting bows were shorter than war bows, averaging from three and a half to four feet in length. The depth from string to belly averaged six inches, and the grip measured one inch by one and a half inches. Bowstrings were four-ply, and were made of horse or deer sinew. Fiber bowstrings were sometimes used

on hunting bows, but never on war bows. The hunting bow was unpainted, while war bows were painted black on each end and red in the middle. The tips of the war bow were sometimes wrapped in sinew.

Each man made his own bow by the following process. A length of green willow, after drying in the sun, was split lengthwise and worked with stone knives. Willow bark which had been soaked in water was wrapped around half of the bow, and the wrapped end was thrust into a damp pile of earth on top of which a fire had been built. The bow was left in the hot earth for thirty minutes, after which the procedure was repeated with the other half of the bow. Next, the bow was bent back and forth over the knee to give even leverage and to ensure flexibility, and this resulted in a curving of the ends of the bow. Immediately after flexing, the bow was strung.

The Mohave occasionally reinforced their war bows by tying deer sinew on the back of the bow at the grip.

Bows were unstrung when not in use, since the Mohave had little fear of an enemy attack, and the bows could be strung in a matter of seconds. Warriors strung their bows only when nearing enemy country.

Warriors normally stood erect while shooting, holding the bow vertically. Hunters sometimes held the bow in a horizontal position. The bow was held in the left hand and grasped in the middle, although there were some lefthanded and ambidextrous archers. The Mohave knew the secondary arrow release, but the primary release was usually employed.

Arrows (ipa) were of arrow-weed (*Pluchea*), although some use may also have been made of cane arrows: at least the latter were known for tribes to the south. Foreshafted arrows were denied, and Mohave arrows were invariably un-tipped. No arrow poison was used. The arrow was three-eighths of an inch in diameter and nearly three feet in length. The shaft was painted either red or black. War arrows were provided with three feathers; hunting arrows had four, and the arrows of children two feathers. The feathers of any kind of big bird, except the eagle or buzzard, were used, with those of the hawk and crane the most common. The feather was split in two with the teeth, the outer edges were trimmed, and the halves placed on the same arrow. No gum was used in fastening the feathers to the arrow; rather, sinew was wrapped around the top of the feather, brought down to the bottom, and tied. To identify the arrow as that of a Mohave, the shaft between the feathers was painted black on one side and red on the other.

Green arrow-weeds destined for use as arrows were pulled up by the roots



and placed in the sun to dry. The arrow was then heated, the bark was scraped off with a stone knife, and the end was whittled to a sharp point. The point was moistened and put in hot ashes for hardening.

No arrow-straightener was used for arrow-weed arrows, which were straightened only once. The arrow was heated over a fire to soften it, and it was straightened with the hands and teeth, the maker sighting along the shaft to determine degree of straightness. Cane arrows were sometimes straightened on a plain heated stone.<sup>10</sup> War arrows were not decorated with pyrographic designs, although boys would peel the bark off of green arrow-weeds, twine the bark around the arrow, and set it afire. The bark burned away, leaving a spiralling black design on the arrow.

The maximum flight of an arrow was two hundred yards, but no damage was inflicted at that distance. Arrow penetration varied from two to four inches, depending upon the distance from which the arrow was shot. The arrow was said to be painful if shot from about fifty yards, and at ten yards a direct hit on the heart could be fatal.

Warriors wore a deerhide bowguard on the wrist of the bow-hand; sometimes the guard extended halfway up the arm. The hide was split on the ends and tied. Bark bowguards, braided and tied at each end, were worn by hunters and were discarded after they had been worn a few times.

Quivers (kupet) were usually of the whole skin of a fox, with the hair on the outside and the tail at the top. Coyote and wildcat skins were also used, and Mrs Lincoln mentioned deerskin quivers. An arrow-weed stick served as a reinforcing rod, with a sinew cord attached to each end of the stick so that the quiver could be slung over the back. The quiver was three feet long and three or four inches across, and it contained fifteen or twenty arrows. In battle, in order that arrows might be readily plucked out, the quiver was sometimes put under the arm and held in place with a willow bark cloth wrapped around the torso.

The tokyeta, a heavy straight club of mesquite wood, approximately two feet in length and two inches thick, was used for cracking skulls.<sup>11</sup> Men with tokyetas followed the archers in battle formation, dispatching enemies who had been felled but not slain by warriors with halyawhai (the "potato-masher" club).

10 Kroeber pictures a Mohave pottery arrow-straightener (*Handbook*, plate 49).

11 A model of a Mohave tokyeta in the University of California Museum of Anthropology (UC-1-4316) is two feet long, tapering from a thickness of one inch at the grip to a thickness of two inches at the far end. The club is provided with a wrist loop, and the upper half of the club is painted red.

Warriors wielded the tokyeta with one hand, beating the foe over the head until he died. The tokyeta was sometimes carried over the shoulder, suspended by a cord passing through a hole at the end of the club, and halyawhai-bearers might have as additional weapons tokyetas thrust through the belt.

Two or three warriors in a party of forty or fifty might carry spears (otat). These were five foot lengths of mesquite wood, sharpened at both ends, with a single feather attached to each end. They were ordinarily borne by horsemen.

Archers carried circular shields (sakol<sup>7</sup>) of horsehide or deerskin, about two feet in circumference. These were used to protect the heart only. Two forms seem to have been in use: one with a rim of mesquite or screwbean wood over which a hide was stretched, the other rimless, with two hide disks sewn together around the peripheries with sinew. Two holes were punched in the middle of the shield, about four inches apart, with a sinew thong through which the hand was passed to hold the shield. The shield was not feathered, but was painted solidly in red or black. The Mohave did not paint the shield in four quarters as did the Maricopa and Cocopa.

Neither the sling nor the stone-headed club was used in battle. Occasionally a sharp bone or sharpened mesquite stick was used as a dagger, and stone knives (kemadj) were carried to battle but were seldom employed as weapons. The knife was a foot in length, unhafted, and sharpened on one edge only.

The Mohave lacked the curtain shield, and the strip of horsehide to protect the stomach was denied. Mrs Lincoln said that warriors sometimes braided the vines of black-eyed beans and wrapped them around their stomachs for protection.

The feathered pike (okwil<sup>7</sup>) was a three or four foot length of mesquite or willow wood, pointed at both ends, with chicken-hawk feathers tied onto the shaft in pairs. According to Lute Wilson, the usual number of feathers was forty.<sup>12</sup> Usually an okwil<sup>7</sup> was adorned with white feathers only,<sup>13</sup> although occasionally one with black feathers was carried. The shaft of the okwil<sup>7</sup> was painted either red or black.

The okwil<sup>7</sup> functioned as a flag or standard, and no war party was without one. All informants insisted that there was ordinarily only one standard-bearer on a war party, although if several groups of warriors were attacking from different directions, each group would have an okwil<sup>7</sup>. The okwil<sup>7</sup>-bearer went

<sup>12</sup> A ceremonial specimen of an okwil<sup>7</sup> seen at Needles was three feet in length and had thirteen pairs of black and white feathers.

<sup>13</sup> White crane feathers, which were believed efficacious in locating water, were sometimes attached to the okwil<sup>7</sup>.

into battle in front of the other warriors, going into the middle of the enemy and fighting with the pointed ends of the *okwil'*. He carried no other weapons and no shield. He had non-flight obligations, and if he were killed the *okwil'* was immediately picked up by another *kwanami*. There was a tendency, but not a rigid rule, for the same man to carry the *okwil'* on each war party. The *okwil'* might be borne by any *kwanami*, but the bearer was normally a man who had dreamed about feathers and carrying the *okwil'*.

The *huktharhueta*, which has not been reported for other Yuman tribes, was infrequently substituted for the *okwil'*, and it had an identical function. Both types of standard were not carried on the same war party. A *huktharhueta* in Pete Lambert's possession is a three foot shaft of screw-bean wood, unpointed at the ends, with a single fox tail pendant from each end and one from the middle of the shaft.

There was a definite distinction between the small raiding party (*hunyu*), consisting of ten or twelve *kwanamis*, and the larger war party (*kwanatme*), which engaged in a pitched battle. Raiders went out whenever seized with the desire to fight. They departed secretly; there was no meeting or dance of incitement, nor were they obliged to ask the permission of the chief before leaving. They surprised outlying Maricopa camps, killed a few people, and ran away with corn, watermelons, and horses. The horses were killed on the way home; the meat was not eaten, but the hide was saved for sandals and bowstrings.

The war party, an undertaking of the tribe as a whole, had an average strength of forty or fifty men, although on rare occasions it comprised over a hundred warriors. A war party might go out once or twice a year, although usually the intervals between expeditions were longer.

War parties were invariably preceded by one or two scouts, who reconnoitered in the enemy country, locating trails, water holes, and hostile settlements. With his hair done up in a mud plaster as a disguise, a scout sometimes went among the Maricopa at night, even entering the houses and sitting among the enemy. The scout usually succeeded in slipping away before dawn undetected.

Several months often elapsed after the return of the scouts before a war party set out. A few days before the party was scheduled to leave the head *kwanami* would call a meeting, at which song cycles were sung, and at which warriors were given an opportunity to volunteer for the campaign. If the expedition was to be a joint undertaking with the Yuma, a messenger ran to a prearranged place near Parker, where he left for the Yuma messenger arrows on which were painted black and red signs designating the place and date of attack. Sometimes a

knotted string identical with one retained by the Mohave was substituted for the painted arrows, the messenger carrying it all the way to Yuma. The war parties of both Yuma and Mohave untied a knot each morning, and a simultaneous attack was thus ensured on the morning when the last knot was untied.

A dance of incitement was sometimes held prior to the departure of a war party. (The statements of my informants on the subject were vague and contradictory.) The dance lasted for one day and one night; the women dancing around scalps taken in previous battles; the men singing to the accompaniment of the gourd rattle. After the dance the warriors departed, leaving the women weeping.

There was no prohibition on sexual intercourse before a war party, nor were there food restrictions, although the warriors ate little. They carried with them a mere handful of ground parched wheat, which they consumed over a period of approximately two weeks.

The journey to the Maricopa country required six days. The party was guided by a scout who had previously made a reconnaissance of the territory to be traversed. The warriors at first traveled by day, walking along quietly in a group, talking little, but "feeling no sad feelings." A piece of willow or greasewood was chewed to keep the mouth from getting dry, and warriors could smoke if they wished. Nearing the country of the enemy, the warriors traveled by night and slept in concealment during the day. A sentry, posted about twenty yards from the sleeping warriors, investigated all noises, and he was said to be able to hear footsteps over a hundred yards away. It was an evil omen and a sign that the Mohave would lose the battle if an animal came into camp, but since kwanamis were indifferent to death the party did not turn back.

At home the people watched the sky at night for meteors; the direction in which a meteor fell foretold the winner of a battle. Those left behind were under no special restrictions, but it was deemed harmful to the warriors to think of them except on the day when it was known that they would have joined battle.

Some war parties included one or two women. Such women were from brave families; their fathers or brothers were kwanamis. They functioned chiefly as morale-builders,<sup>14</sup> and they ordinarily did not enter the fray, although they were sometimes provided with tokyetas for self-defense. A number of women accompanied the warriors when the Mohave drove the Halchidhoma out of the Parker region, entering the fight and finishing off wounded enemies with their tokyetas.

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<sup>14</sup> Pets Lambert: "She eggs them on; gives some kind of a speech to never do this or that. Makes a noise like a preacher."

On each war party there was at least one shaman. A doctor for arrow wounds (ipa sumadj) was always included in a party. There was sometimes a rattlesnake bite doctor, and Lute Wilson mentioned a third specialist, a doctor for club wounds. En route the shaman made speeches to the warriors, relating his dreams, and admonishing them to conduct themselves with valor in battle. He attempted also to work magic against the enemy, trying to hypnotize them from a distance, so that they would go to sleep or fall unconscious. The rattlesnake doctor was able to locate drinking water.

The wounded were treated at the first night's encampment after the battle; the doctor singing and bathing the wounds. A rattlesnake shaman cured by singing and the laying on of hands, but neither he nor the wound doctor sucked or blew on the wound.

Informants without exception maintained that attacks were always by surprise; the enemy was never challenged or notified of an attack in advance. The Mohave crept up on an outlying enemy settlement under cover of darkness and fell upon the enemy at dawn, shrieking and whooping, with annihilation of the foe the aim. A man might escape and rouse other Maricopa settlements, in which case, if the Mohave advanced, they would find the foe drawn up in battle array, and a major engagement would commence.

Mohave warriors were divided in battle formation according to the weapons they bore. The bearer of the feathered pike went first, followed in that order by men with halyawhai, archers, and tokyeta-bearers. In some war parties from two to five horsemen, carrying bows and arrows or spears, rode on the flanks.<sup>15</sup> A general mêlée ensued once the fray began, and the formation became confused. Warriors were not segregated according to their physical size, nor were there special names for the bearers of different weapons.

Warriors were sometimes separated into three or four groups, approximately equal in numerical strength, each group attacking from a different direction.

The head kwanami at times acted as a challenger before a pitched battle, hurling insults and imprecations at the enemy as he paraded up and down before the warriors. Single combat by champions was denied by all informants.

The duration of a battle was variable: it might last for an hour or two, for half a day, or rarely, an entire day. Lute Wilson said that occasionally the warriors would continue fighting without intermission for two days and nights, until

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<sup>15</sup> The few horses possessed by the Mohave were well-trained, and were ridden in battle by their owners. Pete Lambert said that the horses knew just what to do in a battle; they knew the formations and could dodge arrows. If a warrior captured a woman he had merely to throw her over the horse's back and the animal would gallop away.

one side was annihilated or until an agreement to suspend hostilities was reached. The Mohave head kwanami would talk to the enemy "face to face," saying, "Now we are returning. You don't have to be afraid of us tonight," and the enemy would reply, "You can go home, and you don't have to be afraid of us chasing you. We won't fight any more until the next time."

Pete Lambert estimated that in an average battle from five to seven Mohave were killed: fifteen dead was a great loss. Eight or ten Mohave might be wounded, some of them succumbing on the arduous return journey, but the majority recovered to fight again.

Time permitting, the dead were cremated on the field of battle, but frequently the bodies were left for the buzzards. A funeral was later held for the deceased; the houses and possessions of the dead warriors were burned and their horses slain.

Mohave warriors feared the magical potency of an enemy scalp; if a man should touch it he would go insane and "holler in the night." Consequently, scalping was performed only by a special scalper, the ahwe somadj ("dream[er] of foes"), who was a shaman rather than a warrior, and who, provided he underwent purification, was unharmed by contact with the scalp. The ahwe somadj, who dreamed his power to scalp, also doctored warriors who had fallen ill due to contact with the enemy.

The scalper went into battle with the warriors and watched for an enemy with "nice, long, heavy hair." There was no preference for the scalp of an enemy war leader. When the scalper spied an enemy with a desirable head of hair, he would knock him down, break his neck, and cut off the head with a stone knife. He ran off with the head to a nearby gulch, where he might hide and scalp undisturbed while the battle was still raging. The scalper made an incision at the outer edge of each eyebrow with a sharp stick of greasewood, and he cut back under the ears. He then made a cut down the face from the bridge of the nose, and ripped off the scalp, which included the ears.<sup>16</sup> Only rarely did he go back into battle to obtain a second scalp. On the homeward journey the scalper would go off by himself at night and "tan" the scalp by rubbing in adobe.

The scalper fasted on the way home, and upon arrival he relinquished the trophy to its permanent keeper, the kohota (dance leader). Then, like the warriors, he purified himself by abstaining from meat and salt and bathing each morning for four days.

Not only enemy slayers but all members of a war party had to undergo puri-

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<sup>16</sup> Wilson: "The ear is the hardest part, so he bites and trims it with his teeth."

fiction, lest the maleficent influence of the enemy drive them insane. Those who had killed were not separated from the others on the return journey, but all the warriors slept little, drank little water, and fasted. When they reached home they immediately bathed in the river and the ablutions were repeated each morning for a period of either four or eight days. The four day period was ordinarily observed, but it was considered more efficacious to undergo purification for eight days. During this time the warriors abstained from meat and salt, and they ate only a little cornmeal mush. Those undergoing lustration were not separated from their families, since relatives were likewise obliged to observe the food restrictions and to bathe each morning.

Now and then a warrior would be taken ill on the homeward journey as a result of the evil influence of the enemy, and he was doctored by the *ahwe somadj*. But he was regarded as potentially dangerous to his companions while in this condition, and if he were unable to walk the other warriors would not carry him.

After the battle a swift runner (*konawowem*) was sent ahead to bring tidings of casualties and to tell of the return of the warriors. The *kohota* then scheduled the scalp dance, fixing a date a day or two after the anticipated arrival of the fighting men. Word was sent to all the Mohave, for the scalp dance was a time of rejoicing and celebration, and since many marriages resulted from meetings of young people on such occasions, the ceremony was regarded as beneficial to the fertility of the tribe.

The *kohota* dressed and painted the scalp, and mounted it on a long cottonwood pole, which was planted in the ground for the dance. Four or five old scalps were brought out and prepared in like manner.<sup>17</sup> For four days and nights men sang song cycles and women danced around the scalps. Although old women played a major role in the scalp dance, the aged were not the sole participants, since even little boys, painted like warriors and wearing feathers, were permitted to dance. The warriors did not take part in the festivities, but retired to their dwellings.

Women wore eagle feathers in their hair and were painted like *kwanamis*, with black paint on the face and red paint on the hair. While dancing around the scalp, they mimicked the actions of warriors, yelling and screaming, running and dodging with weapons, and shooting arrows at the scalps. They reviled the scalps; they talked "face to face" like rival challengers. They narrated their war exploits, telling how they had killed and scalped.

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<sup>17</sup> Pete Lambert insisted that the scalps were tied at intervals on a single pole, but the other informants said that each scalp was on a separate pole.

Prisoners were required to be present at the scalp dance, but were neither compelled nor permitted to dance. They were not tortured, though they might be insulted and recipient of an occasional blow.

After the dance the scalps passed into the keeping of their permanent custodian, the kohota (also called kohot kusuman<sup>7</sup>, or ahwe kusuman<sup>7</sup>), who, like the scalper, was immune to the maleficent power of the scalp. The kohota had as many as fourteen or fifteen scalps sealed up with greasewood or arrow-weed gum in a large gourd or olla which he kept in a corner of his dwelling.

The scalp dance was repeated at harvest time, the person with the largest crop announcing a dance and feast. The kohota prepared the scalps, washing and brushing them, dyeing the hair with boiled mesquite bark, and plastering it with mud, after which he painted the scalps and set them up on poles. The dance was the same as that following a battle, again lasting for four days and nights. After the dance the kohota and his family once more purified themselves by bathing and abstaining from salt for four days.

The Mohave took numerous captives (ahwethauk). These were young women and children, and rarely, adolescent boys; older people were never taken prisoner. Captives were seldom mistreated; and while boys were made slaves and forced to perform domestic tasks, the Mohave in time came to regard them as fellow tribesmen, and "thought more of them than their own sons." Upon reaching maturity the boys might marry Mohave girls, but a Mohave girl would never marry a youth who had grown up in an enemy tribe because "she was scared of him."

Prisoners were magically dangerous, and they underwent purification immediately upon arrival. A shaman washed them for four consecutive mornings with a mixture of soaproot and arrow-weed, and during this period the captives, like returning warriors, were not permitted to eat meat and salt.

Since it was feared that such relations would cause insanity, women were not violated by their captors. Rather, they were given to old men as wives, partly as an insult to the enemy, and partly because it was felt that the old men had only a little longer to live and were indifferent to death. A child resulting from such a union was regarded as a half-breed.

Unlike the Yuma, Cocopa, and Maricopa, the Mohave did not sell prisoners to the Mexicans, and all informants denied that prisoners ever tried to escape, because "they were too well-treated."

Defensive warfare was little developed, since the Maricopa never came en masse to attack the Mohave, and only in later years were the Mohave raided by



Chemehuevi. Sentries were rarely on guard in time of peace, but they were stationed out on the mesa while a war party was away.

To sum up, Mohave warfare was in the main the responsibility of the bellicose kwanamis, who derived their power in dreams. Warfare was an obsession with the kwanamis, and beginning in late adolescence they joined frequent warring expeditions in which the Mohave were allied with the Yuma against the Maricopa and Cocopa. Raiding parties of ten or twelve kwanamis went out at any time, but larger war parties were less frequent, and since they were tribal undertakings they involved somewhat more elaborate preparations. A war party sought to surprise enemy settlements, attacking in a battle formation in which warriors were segregated according to their weapons. The belief in the dangerous magical potency of the enemy, manifested by the presence in Mohave culture of the special scalper, the lustration of warriors, the purification of captives, and the special custodian of the scalp, was the dominant motif of all post-battle activities.<sup>18</sup>

#### RIVER YUMAN COMPARISONS

I have compiled below a list of warfare elements common to the four River Yuman tribes for which detailed information is available (Mohave, Yuma, Cocopa, and Maricopa), together with lists of elements reported for one or more but not all of these peoples. The total of forty-seven traits shared by these tribes is impressive, and convincingly attests to the homogeneity of the warfare complex among the River Yumans. Such differences between the tribes as occur are not of fundamental importance, representing preponderantly variations in subordinate details. For example, while the basic weapons are the same from tribe to tribe, the Maricopa alone had feather ornaments on their shields, and the Yuma and Cocopa sharpened the handles of their "potato-masher" clubs for stabbing, while the Mohave and Maricopa did not. River Yuman warfare is essentially a unified complex in all of its phases.<sup>19</sup>

*Elements common to Mohave, Cocopa, Maricopa, and Yuma.* Frequent warfare; large numbers of warriors in war parties; tribe acts as a unit in war; long plain self bow with sinew bow string; untipped arrow-weed arrows; triple radial feathering; arrows straightened with hands and teeth; "potato-masher" clubs;

<sup>18</sup> The recent novel *Crazy Weather*, by Charles L. McNichols, contains interesting and accurate narratives of Mohave warfare, as well as engrossing portrayals of other aspects of the culture.

<sup>19</sup> This conclusion accords with Spier's finding that ". . . Maricopa culture and that of the Lower Colorado Yumans was in large part a single entity" (*Cultural Relations of the Gila River and Lower Colorado Tribes*, p. 8).

heavy straight clubs (tokyeta); short spears or pikes; feathered pikes with non-flight obligations; circular hide shields; skin of fox or coyote (with tail) as quiver; breechclout and sandals as dress of warriors; black face paint; red paint on hair; feather headdress, radiating feathers on netting foundation; feathers tied in hair of warriors; long hair wrapped and bound at back of head; dreams for power in war; office of war chief; shaman accompanies war party; formal speeches at nightly camps of warriors; warriors eat little en route to battle (ground parched corn or wheat); warriors drink little en route to battle; divided armament, including clubbers and archers; pitched battles; raids; slain enemies scalped; few only scalped, prefer those with "nice long hair"; special scalper with power from dreams; skin of whole head as scalp, including ears; scalp feared as maleficent; scalper purifies self by fasting and bathing; warriors bathe after arrival home; food restrictions on enemy slayers; enemy slayers' families under restrictions; victory dance with scalp on pole; women dance at victory dance; victory dance repeated; scalps kept in sealed olla or gourd; scalps taken out and washed at intervals; special custodian for scalps; sentries sometimes posted; young women and children taken captive; captives purified; women captives "given to old men."

*Elements common to all but one River Yuman tribe.* Hide bow guard (not reported for Yuma); secondary arrow release (not Yuma); dance of incitement (not Yuma); women go on war party (not Maricopa); challengers (not reported for Cocopa); scalp kicked in air four times (not Maricopa); enemy slayers secluded (not Mohave); all returning warriors restricted, eat and drink little (this applies only to enemy slayers among the Maricopa); scalps kept in house of custodian (Cocopa kept outside dwelling in special structure); captive children sometimes sold to Mexicans (not Mohave); "potato-masher" club wielded with upward stroke (Maricopa struck downward at temple only).

*Reported for Mohave and Yuma only.* Shield painted solidly in red or black; evil omen if animal comes into camp of outbound warriors.

*Reported for Mohave and Maricopa only.* Boys subjected to tests or ordeals to determine fortitude; warriors compete to kill first enemy; warriors attack in groups from several directions.

*Reported for Mohave and Cocopa only.* Bows sometimes reinforced with sinew at grip; old scalps danced with at dance of incitement; victory dance lasts four days and four nights.

*Reported for Yuma and Maricopa only.* Captives sometimes killed.

*Reported for Yuma and Cocopa only.* Handle of "potato-masher" club

sharpened for stabbing; feast, "good time" for departing warriors; scalp dance on field of battle.

*Reported for Maricopa and Cocopa only.* Foreshafted arrows with stone points; "poisoned" arrow points; shield painted in four quarters; enemy slayers march separately on return journey from battle.

*Reported for Mohave only.* Bows unstrung when not in use; quiver sometimes put under arm and held in place by bark cloth wrapped around torso; huktharhueta (shaft with pendent foxtails) as standard; snake bite doctor accompanies warriors; head of foe cut off to scalp at leisure; scalper doctors those ill due to contact with enemy; certain warriors armed only with plain straight clubs; suspension of hostilities by mutual agreement; women imitate actions of warriors in victory dance; four "dream arrows" of boy who has war dreams; existence of a warrior class and an informal association of warriors (wasauwič).

*Reported for Yuma only.* Mediterranean arrow release; boys practise dodging arrows; smoke signals to call people together; sham battles; warriors march in single file en route to battle.

*Reported for Cocopa only.* Grooved arrow straightener; faces of warriors sometimes painted all red or half red and half black; horses painted; special victory songs at victory dance; naked woman in victory dance; people take property of greatest warrior.

*Reported for Maricopa only.* Sinew-backed bow; feather pendants on shield; white paint on hair of warriors; single combat with lone remaining foe; prefer to scalp enemy alive; enemy slayers make selves vomit.

#### RELATIONS OF THE RIVER YUMAN WARFARE COMPLEX

I have elsewhere<sup>20</sup> analyzed the distribution of forty-one elements of River Yuman warfare, tracing them through the Southwest and into adjacent areas, as part of a study intended to contribute to the elucidation of River Yuman culture history. It is not practicable to present these data in full here, but a summary of the conclusions reached in the analysis of warfare seems desirable. The strongest affiliations of the River Yuman war complex, in both its material and non-material aspects, are with northern Mexico, twelve important elements linking specifically with that area. The Cáhita war complex in particular, although richer in content, agrees with that of the River Yumans in a significant number of traits. Fundamental weapons are similar, and such non-material

<sup>20</sup> *The Cultural Affiliations of the Gila and Colorado River Yumans* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California Library). Sources for comparative statements are to be found in the bibliography at the end of the present paper.

elements are shared as emphasis on warfare, pitched battles, large armies of warriors, semi-formalized procedures, esteem of bravery, divided armament, and non-flight obligations. Thirteen elements, many of them relating to the bow and arrow, occur widely or sporadically, and these were classed as non-diagnostic. A cluster of four traits centering about the concept of the malevolence of the scalp links with the Pueblos, and the office of war chief and the accompaniment of a war party by a shaman parallel Apache traits. The cased skin quiver and the skin of the whole head as the scalp are Californian, and the secondary arrow release is the sole trait linking with the Basin. Seven elements, including the special scalper, the heavy straight club for cracking skulls, the carrying of old scalps to war, and the practice of giving female captives to old men, appear to be River Yuman specialties.

When the River Yuman war complex in its totality was compared qualitatively with the war complexes of representative tribes of contiguous areas, the most striking resemblances were again found among the Cáhita. The Upland Arizona Yumans (Walapai, Havasupai, and Yavapai) share a number of the more widely distributed traits and participate in a few River Yuman specialties, but with the exception of the Yavapai, warfare was for them mainly of a defensive nature, and was much less emphasized than by their river kinsmen. The Pima had most of the River Yuman weapons, and shared some of the non-material aspects of the Yuman war complex, but many of the latter were lacking. The feeling toward war, too, was decidedly different, the sportive character of River Yuman warfare being absent. Hostilities were usually forced upon the Pima by their belligerent neighbors, the Apache, and offensive warfare took the form of retaliatory raids. Upon occasion the Pima came to the aid of their friends the Maricopa in repulsing attacks by the Mohave and Yuma, and it was generally in such engagements that the Pima employed River Yuman tactics and weapons. Among the Papago, the River Yuman war complex appears in a greatly diluted form. The Papago were a peaceful people, warfare being primarily defensive, and there was none of the elaboration or stress on combat that distinguishes the River Yumans. The Southern Californians lacked real warfare, and their war complex remained simple and undeveloped, with a paucity of weapons and procedures, little influenced by the vigorous River Yuman complex. Basin warfare was likewise uncomplex and low-grade in character, with a few basic weapons and a minimum of formalization. Apart from the elements listed above there are few specific resemblances between River Yuman warfare and the respective war complexes of the Pueblos, Apache, and Navaho.

It was concluded that the River Yuman war complex is a blend, consisting in the main of influences from northwest Mexico<sup>21</sup> and widely distributed elements representing ancient generalized culture strata, to which were added at undetermined periods in River Yuman culture history quantitatively lesser ingredients emanating from California and from the Pueblos and Apache. In addition, certain localized specialties were developed by the River Yumans, and the resultant aggregate was invested with the distinctive cast of the River Yuman culture pattern, the elements from the several sources being incorporated and integrated into River Yuman culture, with some alterations in form or function.

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21 The possibility is recognized that the direction of flow of some of the elements shared with the Sonoran peoples may have been from north to south rather than in the opposite direction.

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