CHAPTER 3

Ruvu Societies and Worldview

When Christian missionaries disembarked on African shores they may have had their first awakening. Reading reports of their encounters with Africa's people, one often senses that nobody in their homelands thought to tell them that Africa was home to indigenous religions. In 1888, Reverend A. N. Wood experienced his first "itinerating tour" in Tanzania's Usagala region.[1] Writing for *The Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record* in 1889, he chronicled his meetings with Usagala's people. He was particularly mindful of describing the way they expressed their beliefs. Among his observations he explained that "Their idea of praying to God is simply dancing around a little fetish hut to the beating of a drum. How different it will be when they can look up to heaven, and say, 'Our Father, in spirit and in truth.'" He also added that he "saw a woman doing what she called praying to the dead, or to God on their behalf. She had two calabashes of flour and water each side of the door, and then poured it on the ground."[2] Though Wood likely believed he was reporting on Sagala religious naiveté, he managed to paint a picture that elucidated important Northeast-Coastal Bantu religious expressions. Moreover, the people he scrutinized were articulating religious beliefs that sprang in some cases from enduring Niger-Congo and Bantu worldviews. But he, similar to missionary and colonial affiliates that preceded and followed him in Africa, likely never understood that there were deep-seated logics underpinning such ceremonies. 1

When early Northeast-Coastal Bantu people began settling into central-east Tanzania in the early centuries of the first millennium CE, the religious tenets they carried were far more ancient than those of nascent Christianity. Just as modern-day Christianity is expressed in diverse ways owing to the passing of nearly two millennia, so too were early Northeast-Coastal Bantu religious expressions varied because they were deeply rooted in Niger-Congo and Bantu history. Yet for all the past and present variation in expression among Christian and Northeast-Coastal Bantu religious practitioners, each often exudes discernible commonalities because they emerged from common historical contexts and sets of principles. This variation occurs because the way people articulate their religious beliefs—their religious practices—are commonly far more pliable than their epistemological premises. Because those enduring premises represent a constituent part of inherited knowledge and religious expression, religious history is important for understanding the histories of societies generally. Working from this proposition, this chapter centers on recovering aspects of Ruvu religious history with an understanding that while its epistemological roots are sometimes as ancient as the early Niger-Congo periods, its day-to-day expressions were continuously reinterpreted.[3] 2

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The goal is to provide an epistemological and sociocultural context for chapters that follow. This chapter tells the story of what early Ruvu people presumed was true about the world they lived in. It suggests that in Ruvu views key precepts informed and guided the way they expressed their religion and set up their communities. Fundamental to the Ruvu community outlook, as well as Bantu-derived societies more generally, was that they saw themselves as part of a world in which overall social wellness depended on maintaining relationships of reciprocity between two spheres of potential power. One comprised the corporeal world of everyday lived experience and the other was an ethereal realm that encompassed various spirit forces. Together the two realms, incubators of power, had the potential to bring about desired or unwanted experiences for people in the physical world. Based on this perspective, Bantu people had a firm understanding that sheer will was not the sole glue that held communities together.[4] They believed *all* people, spirit forces, and social institutions were engaged in ongoing dialectical exchanges that crossed the two realms.

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It may be because the physical world is the only one to which we are privy that exchanges between the physical and ethereal appear to play out only on earth's surface. Though it is important to recognize that this perception may be wholly inaccurate, it is unavoidable. With possible limitations acknowledged, the way those relationships are witnessed is through observances based upon religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices, what I term religio-ritual ceremonies. They are the physical and occasionally routine ways that people participate in customs expressive of religious premises. In Ruvu communities religio-ritual ceremonies were typically expressed through, among others, dancing, drumming, sacred offering and libation, initiation rites, art, medicine, spoken words (prayer), and song. These were the ways corporeal players communicated with the world of spirit. In return, Ruvu peoples believed those ethereal forces would bestow on their communities the capacity for regeneration in the material world. Indeed, people expected desired outcomes would be their reward. We can thus say that those relationships were seemingly cyclic, because Ruvu people knew such ceremonial communications were important avenues for maintaining overall wellness. They were, as we will see, constituent elements comprising their sociocultural institutions.

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Yet for as much as Bantu-derived religious expression was central to community stability, we must submit that, as far as we can tell, early Bantu-speaking people did not innovate a word or concept equivalent in meaning to that which contemporary societies call religion. Nevertheless, I propose that because of the way normative definitions of religion have of late included the idea of the ethereal or spiritual in a diversity of forms, I think it is suitable, though perhaps not wholly complete, to consider those moments when people conscientiously seek out or interact with—tangibly or cognitively—the ethereal world to be instances of religious practice. Using this understanding as the lens through which we examine Ruvu history, it becomes clear that ancient precepts concerning the power of spirit forces, those that sustained their Niger-Congo ancestors, were carried forward throughout myriad Bantu

diasporas. Ruvu people harkened back to an overarching worldview that for millennia had provided their Bantu ancestors the broad parameters through which to create sustainable societies.

Worldview and Religion

If understanding worldview and religious matters is key to recovering Ruvu history in central-east Tanzania, then we need a conceptual framework that explicates the cognitive-level assumptions that guided Ruvu religio-ritual expression. The reconstruction of vocabulary histories central to religious beliefs provides us with the most productive epistemological evidence for the underpinning beliefs and practices that most likely shaped the way Ruvu people established, lived in, and maintained their communities. In an effort to retrieve those beliefs, we begin with an examination of the way Ruvu-speaking people conceptualized the physical cosmos, its ethereal forces, and the reasons for solace and suffering, as well as the ways they maintained communications with the ethereal realm. **6**

If the definition of religion rested solely on the idea that people needed to believe in a foremost creative force—something Christians name God or Muslims Allah, for example—then Ruvu people had religion. Since the proto-Ruvu period of the middle of the first millennium CE, Ruvu-speaking people by and large believed that the force responsible for creating the cosmos was **Mulungu*. It is a word not easily translated because it cradles nuances that do not have an obvious synonym in the English language. I hesitate to refer to it as God because to do so would attach myriad epistemological notions onto a concept that predated Christianity and Islam, and was altogether independently imagined. In light of this, it is more constructive to use what may seem initially to be more cumbersome explanations to convey its broad meaning. **7**

Early Ruvu speakers viewed **Mulungu* as a first cause or force responsible for creating and properly ordering the cosmos. However, Ruvu speakers were not the first or only Bantu speakers to conceptualize such a force. Up through present times, **Mulungu* is used widely by extant Kati and Rufiji-Ruvuma speakers. This indicates that its origins lay at least in the historical period when clusters of Southern Kaskazi speakers first adopted it up with that meaning in the late centuries of the last millennium BCE. Presuming this is accurate, by the time proto-Ruvu speech communities emerged in the middle of the first millennium CE, **Mulungu*, both the term and concept, was already at least one thousand years old.[5] To glean what meaning **Mulungu* likely carried in those early-period languages, we turn to its etymological root. It derives from a proto-Bantu verb that loosely meant "to become fitting, straight, or right." Such an underlying verb intimates that **Mulungu* in all probability conveyed the idea of a force responsible for ordering things in a right or good way. But **8**

**Mulungu*'s meaning carried an additional subtlety, namely, that of first cause or creator. Although this aspect of its meaning is not explicit in the root verb from which **Mulungu* derives, the reason behind this added nuance is explicable.

9 The first cause or creator facet of its meaning represents a widespread ancient idea carried over from the proto-Bantu peoples' Niger-Congo ancestors who, by the sixth millennium BCE, believed a foremost creator was responsible for forming the material world. In early Bantu periods the proto-Bantu word for that creator was **Nyàmbé*. It is likely that proto-Bantu **Nyàmbé* and the word *Nyame* in the Akan language spoken in Ghana are cognate. If so, and more research is required to establish this point, it would suggest that this root word was in use even earlier than the proto-Bantu period, perhaps as early as the time of their common Benue-Kwa-period ancestors who lived in the rainforest belt in the fifth millennium BCE.[6] In either case, the underlying verb at play in proto-Bantu **Nyàmbé* was probably **-àmb-*, meaning to "begin" which connected the Creator with the beginning or creation of the cosmos. Since at least those early periods, then, there has been a widespread belief in such a creator that has persisted among Bantu-speaking descendants.[7] And yet, not all Bantu-descendant people retained the term **Nyàmbé* to name that force. Because of the various historical turns societies took, they sometimes acquired or innovated different words to convey the idea of the ancient Niger-Congo Creator, and they now and again added new nuances to it. The development of the word **Mulungu* as the "right" Creator in the Southern Kaskazi period is one such example. So, prior to the innovation of **Mulungu* in the late last millennium BCE, the notion of a force responsible for the universe's composition had prevailed as a worldview precept for at least five thousand years among Niger-Congo and earlier Bantu speaking descendants.

10 To sum up, by the late last millennium BCE there remained a widespread cognitive worldview that at minimum conceived of a world that began as a result of a creator force. But early-Southern-Kaskazi language speakers added a new sense to that core idea, which resulted in an understanding that a first Creator organized things in a right and good way. It was this idea that then spread with Kati and Rufiji-Ruvuma language descendents into central and southern Tanzania. As Kati language descendants, proto-Northeast-Coastal Bantu speakers entrenched this religious understanding in the central-east-Tanzanian hinter-coastal milieu. Subsequently, their Ruvu descendents maintained **Mulungu* as a core principle of their religious beliefs right up to current times.[8]

11 Now that it is established that a Creator comprised an aspect of the proto-Ruvu religious outlook, it is valuable to consider what **Mulungu* may have meant in the day-to-day lives of Ruvu people, and perhaps for early Northeast-Coastal Bantu-speaking people more generally. The best avenue for this is to turn to the published ethnographic data. Fortunately, it was common for ethnographers to center on describing African religious "thought," so many

examples are available. However, two points about the limitations of this approach must be acknowledged up front. As concerns the recorded ethnography, it is important to remind ourselves that ethnographic accounts taken by missionaries reflect their reading of Ruvu peoples' practices through a Christian—often evangelical—lens. Secondly, our reliance on the ethnography should not be presumed exact renditions of how Ruvu people of long ago ruminated on **Mulungu*. Rather they provide a basis for hypothesizing the way early Ruvu people may have envisaged **Mulungu*.

12 A principal observation that Tanzanian missionary workers made was that people living in the region were generally uninterested in relationships with **Mulungu*. Wood, for example, highlighted throughout his 1888 report that getting people in Usagala to accept the core idea that God was the Creator did not pose a challenge. Though he did not know it, that was because NECB descendants already had the equivalent concept in **Mulungu*. What was tricky, he found, was getting Usagala inhabitants to understand the importance of having sustained, meaningful relationships with God. He reported that while people were willing to listen attentively to his messages about God, they "seemed to look upon the idea of God being their father as a new one." And when it came to the idea of sin as an offense against God, he lamented, "these people, and I think all Natives generally here, look upon sin as between man and man, and not as between man and God."[9] Similarly, in Kwele-speaking regions, anthropologist J. L. Brain witnessed that Kwere believed "in a Creator named *Morungu* [sic], who in a general sort of way was responsible for all creation, but there was not worship of him or sacrifice to him."[10] And among Zaramo speakers, anthropologist Lloyd Swantz found that God was believed to be the "creator of the earth and sky." For Zaramo, God was invisible and had power over the living and the dead, but "no *dawa*, medicine, or other means could be used against him."[11] Finally, a telling example of how Kagulu understood the Creator is demonstrated by the way missionaries attempted to reframe through direct translation local thinking about **Mulungu*. Anthropologist T. O. Beidelman reports that when the Church Missionary Society translated the Christian God into the Kagulu language they emphasized that **Mulungu* should be viewed as the Kagulu *baba* (father), *mundewa* (leader), and *muganga* (physician/diviner). And that Jesus should be thought of as a *mudimi* (shepherd).[12]

13 The reason that translating **Mulungu* precisely, and moreover, convincingly, mattered was that the Christian God carried an epistemological assumption that was not shared in Ruvu or NECB or even earlier Bantu understandings. For them **Mulungu* was a distant and powerful force over which they had no control or influence. This perception was intimated by the Zaramo belief that their medicine (Swahili *dawa*) was ineffective on **Mulungu*. In their view, **Mulungu* was a powerful entity but they did not engage it because to do so was unproductive. The epistemological distinction between the Bantu-derived notion of the Creator and of the Christian God highlights a long-enduring idea in Niger-Congo history; that is, that the Creator

was viewed as a distant figure and not one with whom people interacted.[13] At the same time, in their more comprehensive religious outlook, there were other ethereal forces that would respond to their *dawa* and, in fact, demanded relationships.

14 When scholars across academic disciplines examine Bantu religious ideas they often note the emphasis that people give to the centrality of spirit entities across much of sub-Saharan Africa. From the coasts of West Africa to the southern coasts of South Africa, references to the preeminence of what are termed ancestral spirits are familiar in the scholarly literature. Like the idea of the Creator, the reasons for their prevalence across the region is rooted in supple yet enduring epistemologies deriving from early Niger-Congo history. In those times, people believed their communities were guided and influenced by spirit forces of antecedent generations. Understanding this aspect of their religion reveals much about the ways in which Bantu-descendant groups over millennia depended on and used the power of previous generations to create and recreate social institutions capable of sustaining their communities.

15 Two spirit types predominated in early Niger-Congo people's consciousness. The academic literature usually refers to them as territory/nature spirits and ancestral spirits. Niger-Congo-descended people believed that territory/nature spirits resided in and had influence within specific geographic zones. Such spirits were often associated with caves, rivers, floodplains, termite mounds, mountaintops, escarpments, or other designated sacred sites. For people living in, moving into, or otherwise vested in those areas, such sites and their associated spirits were important because they could impede or inspire community well-being. One way people managed such possibilities was through negotiation led by their community leaders, who they believed had the power to intercede with such spirits on the behalf of their constituents. For instance, it was probably commonplace for leaders to have appealed to spirit forces to end difficulties in times of famine, disease, or war that plagued an area. A second spirit category—those of familial ancestors—likely played a more immediate, personal role in the peoples' lives.

16 Often referenced as ancestral spirits, these entities were considered central to community livelihood. In the academic literature, ancestors are commonly referenced in discussions related to ceremonies centered on agriculture, young adult initiation, and medicine. However, contrary to the way that these ceremonies sometimes are described—as a form of ancestor worship (read: primal/pagan ritual)—they were instead ceremonies demonstrative of remembering and paying homage to antecedent generations because antecedent generations held the power to affect the lives of their corporeal descendants. Because Niger-Congo people believed that their ancestors influenced the regenerative potential of their societies at many levels, they knew it was necessary to make offerings of goods and prayer to them, particularly in seeking help in times of need brought about by crises, but also as messages of gratitude in times of good fortune.[14]

17 As inheritors of enduring beliefs centered on the power of ethereal forces, Ruvu people acknowledged and revered both spirit types. Proto-Ruvu used the term **-zimu* to name ancestral spirits. But like **Mulungu*, **-zimu* had deep-seated etymological origins. In the proto-Bantu period of the late fourth or early third millennium BCE, speakers innovated the word from a verb that meant "to extinguish or become extinguished," but they used it specifically to name the "spirit of a dead person" or "ancestral spirit."[15] Effectively, such spirits were "extinguished people."[16] As Bantu-speaking descendents diverged, they carried this idea across much of the continent, and eventually into central-east Tanzania with early Northeast-Coastal Bantu speaking communities. The idea *and* noun in this case are thus at least five thousand years old. But even though we can say belief in ancestor spirit forces represents a religious continuity, the way people conceptualized those who had departed varied over time. For example, historian Jan Vansina has argued that among early western Bantu speakers the term referred "to the spirit of a long-deceased leader, whose personality and perhaps even whose name had been forgotten and then rediscovered when he wrought wonders."[17] Because of this their descendants probably remembered them as heroes of long ago rather than as personally familiar members of their recent lineage. But in Bantu descendant languages from the later proto-Mashariki period and later, it appears that people had broad conceptualizations of those spirits, often identifying particular spirit types. Some, among other possibilities, were associated with wreaking havoc on people or communities, while others protected homesteads. It is in such senses that Ruvu speakers thought of **-zimu* spirits.

18 Moreover, ancestor spirits were not limited only to an ethereal realm. It was understood that they could move in and out of the land of the living. They could return as embodied animate beings.[18] This belief, too, represents an aspect of an early-Bantu worldview. The ancestors in Bantu-speaking areas were also imagined as powerful forces. And they were not neutral in temperament. They might, among other possibilities, have been envious, happy, or disappointed. If neglected, deserted, or otherwise forgotten by their descendants, it was believed that they likely would inflict calamity upon the living. The larger context for this centered on the premise that ancestors "owned" the land on which descendants lived.[19] They were guardians of the land. Their power to interact with the living thus played an important role in society's ability to sustain its communities. If ancestors were not pleased, they could, for instance, intervene in life by impeding female and male fertility or by damaging sowed fields. On the flipside of this was the understanding that proper ancestor veneration resulted in desired outcomes, a conceptualization which highlights the reason for the emphasis on placating ancestors that prevails widely in the Bantu-speaking world.[20]

19 Bantu people took at least two broad approaches to communicating with ancestors. Using what might be deemed a preventative tactic, some people presented gifts to ancestors with the hopes that they would keep them from inflicting suffering. If calamity were already being

experienced, then communication through gifts was done with the hope that suffering would cease. The observances made by Wood, cited at the chapter's start, provide cogent examples. You will recall that in one observation he noted that Usagara people thought they were "praying" when they beat their drums and danced around, as he characterized it, a "little hut."[21] What he witnessed was likely an altar or shrine that housed an important ancestral spirit. The erection of such shrines represents a practice found widely in the Bantu-speaking world.[22] And the dancing and drumming he mentioned would have been honorific acts of communication with associated spirits. Such drumming and dancing, too, was demonstrative of additional, widespread Bantu religio-ritual customs.[23] In a second example, Wood noted that a woman was praying to ancestors "or God on their behalf" when pouring flour and water on to the ground. Because of his epistemological bias, we recognize that he misread what was happening when he presumed she was praying to **Mulungu*. Based on what is known, the expectation would not be that the woman was praying to **Mulungu* because in Ruvu religious understandings, **Mulungu* did not answer to people or anyone else. Instead, the woman was likely making an offering directly to the spirit forces associated with the area she was in, probably her lineage ancestors. Furthermore, calabashes were familiar medicinal containers. Their contents (which Wood described as "flour and water") were probably prepared medicine used to stave off negative forces or to insure protection of the structure or area.[24]

Other examples of ancestor supplication have been noted throughout Ruvu-speaking areas. **20**
Theologian Gasper Bombwe, who collected information about Lugulu religious ceremonies writes, "the Lugulu are essentially a religious people. They live their religion and celebrate it daily."[25] But he notes how little external evidence of religion there was, with the exception of small, grass-covered huts that could be easily overlooked unless people pointed out their religious significance.[26] Of course, those structures were important spirit shrines, similar to those Wood observed nearly a century before Bombwe did. Although Bombwe's comments seem to contrast the prevalence of great churches or temples attached to other religious traditions with those of Lugulu people, he, unlike many other observers, appears less invested in commenting on the legitimacy (or lack thereof) of Lugulu religious expression. Rather, his investigation was centered on the use of words—prayers—spoken in honor of and in communication with Lugulu ancestors.

In early Bantu worldviews, words activated medicine and inspired other powerful forces.[27] **21**
Bombwe found that the force of words was thought important in beseeching ancestors for healthy harvests, when sowing, when calling for beneficial rain, when suffering from illness, and when searching for new home sites. In the case of prospecting for new settlement areas, he wrote that Lugulu speakers commonly prayed: "you our ancestors . . . wherever you are. Please, we are doing what you yourselves used to do. So you know what we are doing. If this spot is good to live in, may this thorn or needle pass through [the ear]. And if it is not good let it not go through."[28] As is common throughout much of Bantu-speaking Africa, Ruvu

descendants sent messages forth to ethereal forces and awaited their replies to guide decision-making processes. Of Lugulu religion, Bombwe concluded that Lugulu people perceived God as the owner of the universe and that if they conceived of a way of communicating with said God it is through ancestors, who in their understanding were "nearer" to God.[29] For Ruvu speakers and their ancient ancestors, it was the world of ancestors that formed the basis of, perhaps, the most important and customary relationships between the ethereal and corporeal realms.

22 In the tradition of an early Niger-Congo worldview, however, Ruvu people also believed that spirit forces inhabited tracts of land and other territories.[30] The oldest and most continuous force of this sort thus far identified in early Ruvu history is **mulungu*, a spirit force associated with forested and vacated areas. It is important to note that it is homonymous with Ruvu's **Mulungu*, "Creator" and its likeness has resulted in some wrinkles in the ethnographic record because investigators commonly did not recognize the distinction between **mulungu* the "potentially evil spirit" versus **Mulungu* "Creator." The result being that they sometimes concluded erroneously that **Mulungu* committed evil acts against people. On top of that, because **mulungu* spirits demanded supplication in the places in which they dwelled, many times Africans are characterized as having "worshipped" God in the "bush" when their propitiatory ceremonies were in reality supplicating forest-dwelling spirits that could cause havoc and were wholly distinct from **Mulungu*, the Creator.[31]

23 Turning to **mulungu*'s etymology, we look to its prevalence in distinct Bantu language subgroups. Based on its distribution, belief in **mulungu* is likely rooted in the proto-Kaskazi period of the middle of the last millennium BCE.[32] Though its definitions within descendent linguistic communities vary **mulungu* can be broadly characterized as having covered large, unsettled areas, and is known for having a disposition that could create calamity but did not always do so. It was not, therefore, conceptualized as altogether evil or good. Turning to some Kaskazi examples, in historian David Schoenbrun's view, proto-Great-Lakes Bantu speakers likely thought of **mulungu* as a "dispersed territorial spiritual force" that came to the aide of hunters.[33] In contrast, among proto-Ruvu speakers, **mulungu* appears to have been "a potentially malevolent spirit" that moved within unsettled, neglected, wilderness areas. When people moved into its domain, it was understood that **mulungu* expected formal honoring or it might have responded by causing problems for trespassers. Recent Ruvu speakers frequently characterized **mulungu* as sick or hot in nature, and they often implicated it in periods of regional disease and death.[34]

24 Whereas ancestors were considered linked to the personal histories of early Ruvu people, **mulungu* were not conceptualized as close relatives, although it is possible that they were considered ancestors who long ago lived in the area. In the course of Ruvu history other nature-affiliated spirits emerged as significant forces in their communities. However, they

likely originated no earlier than the proto-NECB period. While these other spirits will be discussed in upcoming chapters, it is important to note that the belief in nature/territory spirits draws attention to the complexity of the spirit realm Ruvu and Bantu people considered to be important in their lives. It therefore underscores the need to consider them in the overall framework of historical analysis.

25 The preceding discussions have suggested the way that Ruvu may have explained some causes of negative or harmful experiences. However, to understand how they explained maleficence, it is helpful to delve further into their worldview understandings. As we have seen, keeping things right depended greatly on supplicating spirits in Ruvu communities. An additional understanding in Ruvu religious history included an idea that Wood broached when he described Sagala people as conceptualizing sin as "man against man."[35] What he alluded to was the Bantu-wide concept of witchcraft as the etiology of illness and other states of unwellness, including death, which likely originated in Niger-Congo worldviews. For early Bantu peoples, some suffering was explained as the work of malicious, envious, or spiteful living people who used medicine and medicinal implements, both material objects and spoken incantations, to make harmful witchcraft.[36] This epistemological assumption has persisted in recent Bantu history. Like the idea of a first Creator, the cognitive understanding was constant, even though the word used to identify it sometimes changed.

26 As inheritors of a worldview in which affliction could be conjured, proto-Ruvu speakers believed people with the capacity and propensity for malice sometimes lived among them. Proto-Ruvu speakers referred to witchcraft and sorcery as **uhawi*, which derives from an underlying verb that meant "to heat, to boil." In Kaskazi descendant languages, including Ruvu, it usually is the root for words that identify "witches, witchcraft, and evil."[37] When someone was victimized by the works of people performing such evil-doing, proto-Ruvu speakers called that action **kuloga*. **Kuloga*, like many previous ideas, represents a direct retention of a proto-Bantu verb that meant "to bewitch."[38]

27 From these etymological bases we can suggest that a common Kaskazi understanding maintained that states of affliction could reflect the workings of an evildoer's bewitchment *and* that affliction was thought linked to the infliction of a "heated" state. It followed in their thinking that healing witchcraft depended on returning people to a state of neutrality through transformative acts, both medicinal and spiritual, that cooled. And that, as we will see in following chapters, is just how they dealt with remedying states of unwellness. The idea of heat as a feature of and metaphor for unwellness, both individual and social, was associated with more than witchcraft since, for example, malaise associated with **mulungu* spirits were

also tied etiologically to heat at a cognitive and physical level. Though this ideology characterized early Ruvu societies, it is rooted at least as far back as the proto-Kaskazi period of the middle of the last millennium BCE.

28 This broad framework of Niger-Congo and Bantu-anchored epistemology functions as a backdrop for understanding what may have guided Bantu-descended Ruvu-speaking people in central-east Tanzania. The expressions of these common underlying beliefs were not, however, homogenous or rigidly delimited. Instead, it is clear that as proto-Ruvu descendent communities moved into new geographic spaces, met with unique sociopolitical circumstances, and engaged in new social exchanges and relationships, they built on these inherited precepts while continually reinterpreting their expression. This was as true for them as it was for their proto-NECB and earlier Bantu-speaking ancestors.

Examining Ruvu Societies in the Early Hinter-Coastal Milieu

29 This next section of the chapter moves on to consider the ways in which newly-arrived Ruvu-speaking descendants settled into and refashioned the central-east Tanzanian milieu. Its focus is on the characteristics of their societies, and its aim is to give the reader a sense of how their community members were likely to have lived. To accomplish this goal, it seeks, when applicable, to draw attention to the entwined character of political, religious, and domestic (homestead-centered) concerns. Particular attention is given to the ways Ruvu people tapped into Niger-Congo and Bantu-derived knowledge to structure their lives in their new homelands. At the same time, this section equally seeks to uncover how these NECB descendants integrated themselves within their new environs. I am interested, for example, in the compromises they may have made through the incorporation of distinct language speakers and in their cultural adaptations. Ultimately, I seek to glimpse some of the dynamic choices they certainly made as they set up their sociocultural institutions and strove to meet their day-to-day needs.

30 For approximately five hundred years after the turning of the first millennium CE, communities descended from proto-Northeast-Coastal Bantu speakers settled within the areas of central-east and northeastern Tanzania as well as southeastern Kenya, an area bordered loosely by the Sabaki and Rufiji Rivers. If the linguistic and archaeological data suggestive of settlement and material culture are representative of communities that took up residence in the region, then it is likely that when NECB people arrived, distinct linguistic and cultural groups already lived in or at least made use of lands in that broad zone. Furthermore, it is with such groups, and others that later moved into the region, that NECB people coexisted and intermingled. Based on the linguistic evidence, the groups on the scene at the turn of the first

millennium likely spoke Southern Cushitic- and Bantu-derived languages. Additionally, as the last chapter highlighted, ancient documents coupled with evidence of imported goods turned up by archaeologists suggest that it is likely that people arriving via established Indian Ocean trade routes also converged on the area. In short, two thousand years ago the region was in flux and was most surely home to people of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

31 Ruvu peoples in central-east Tanzania, like many places in Africa leading up to the middle of the first millennium CE, lived in a cultural environment in which relocating was probably normative. The understanding that moving was an anticipated aspect of society was likely an awareness that accompanied the three-millennia-long Bantu expansions across the southern third of the African continent and perhaps even back to earlier Niger-Congo times. Our understanding of migratory movements as a steadfast aspect of Bantu societies, as well as of people of non-Bantu origins, led one scholar to propose that the continent, at least in the last 3,000–4,000 years, might be conceptualized as "a frontier continent." For people living in this period, moving into new areas, creating new spaces, and organizing incipient societies was perhaps not only normalized, conceivably it was a widespread expectation in early Bantu culture. Within such sociocultural environments the practice of creating new borders as well as redefining established ones in all likelihood shaped a "frontier conditioned ideology" that comprised at least part of the political consciousness Bantu people carried with them.[39]

32 And yet, while Bantu-speaking people may have had a sense of geographical movement and migration as part of their culture, there is a caveat to the idea of an incessant frontier that must be acknowledged. It is that frontier people were not ordinarily creators of wholly new or reinvented societies in Bantu history. On the one hand it is conceivable that there was room for new interpretation in nascent community-building, but on the other these new communities in all likelihood did not radically reinvent their social and cultural heritage. They thus should be viewed not so much as "inventors" of new societies so much as they were refiners of them. As historian and anthropologist Feierman suggests, this way "[t]he historic agent can both continue and modify cultural categories."[40] But to be sure, it must be made clear that this point has nothing to do with Bantu people's ability or aptitude for social organizing or invention. Instead, it has to do with the reality, not just in a Bantu context, that emergent societies and their leaders were expected to confirm or establish their legitimacy in the eyes of their communities. This is because their societies were a reflection of widespread ideologies rooted in local worldviews, which were the cognitive substance from which meanings and expressions were formed.[41]

33 Organizing societies on terms expected by members or potential members was an important practical matter and those terms were inextricably linked to their worldview understandings. Somewhere between the cognitive idea that leaders were good for communities and the act of leader instatement, people decided what constituted legitimate leadership. So when would-be

frontier, nascent leaders looked to establish themselves as legitimate *and* effective, they at minimum carried an awareness that their leadership needed to reflect in part a historically legitimate way of doing things within a range of acceptable possibilities.[42] That people might then be inclined to remain in or join their communities was the potential reward.

34 Recognition of the condition that new communities had to be built with regard for the ideological principles people carried meant that even though physical boundaries and borders themselves were fluid, contentious, and negotiated spaces, emergent leaders were mindful that they were concurrently part of a broad culture area where people held varied though often similar ideas and opinions.[43] Based on the comparative linguistic and ethnographic evidence, it appears that Ruvu people were confident that the way their ancestors previously organized their communities reflected a viable starting point. In their emergent eras, they often followed the precedents set by their predecessors in organizing their societies. This is why, when proto-Ruvu communities forged new paths, creating opportunities for descendant, nascent communities of speakers to emerge, each society in its beliefs and practices broadly reflected the culture of the expanding Northeast-Coastal Culture Zone.[44]

35 For Bantu-speaking people power was a delicate matter. Since early times they recognized that the material and social power people in authority held helped bring about community prosperity. Leaders had powers or could access power sources in ways not available to all people. Power was not taken for granted, nor was it bestowed inherently. The ability to control and influence worldly outcomes depended on dialectical exchanges that often times required engagement with both realms (ethereal and material) of what they understood was a twofold cosmos. Stemming from their worldview were ideologies that supported the idea that people with access to both specialized knowledge and spiritual collateral synergistically brought together power-wielding forces to produce either beneficial or detrimental outcomes. In their understandings of the world around them, these societies embodied a constant tension between a condition of wellness and its opposite. For them, maintaining "the order of things" depended on human agents who effectively guided their communities.[45] If people were doing well in the community, it reflected the efficacy of their leaders. If life was prosperous—if harvests were abundant, if people were fertile, if technologies were productive, if bodies were healthy—it could be read as a manifest sign that important ethereal forces supported them, which in turn suggested that people in leadership roles did their jobs well and thus merited their positions.[46] The other side of the coin was that inadequate leaders were thought to lack or to have lost the elements necessary for leading their communities toward desired outcomes. Such circumstances might be attributed to a knowledge deficit, to having fallen out of favor with influential spirit forces, or to their having damaged important relationships with the spirit forces. Because of this, ineffective leaders could be relieved of their duties to make room for new leadership.[47]

36 Beyond the fact that leaders could not take their positions for granted, it is important to acknowledge that there was variability in leadership. Leaders were not necessarily conceived of solely within the domain of politics. Instead, leadership roles cut across myriad sociocultural institutions. Some roles were long enduring, but there also were people who moved in and out of assigned roles on an as-needed basis.[48] It was common, for instance, that women of a certain age or experience served as birth attendants (midwives), or that people with exceptional leverage with influential spirit forces could be rain mediators, or that perhaps people of extraordinary knowledge about plant-derived therapies could doctor those who fell ill. There were, of course, additional possible scenarios. Beyond that, over the long run of Bantu history—as well as in Ruvu-Bantu descendant communities in particular—societies occasionally innovated new leadership roles, while concurrently keeping enduring positions that had served successfully structural-organizational purposes in Bantu communities for millennia past. All the while they consistently, it appears, looked to the core elements often needed to achieve stability—knowledge and ancestry—as they set up and organized their communities.

Ancestresses, Matriclans, and Spiritual Authority

37 In Ruvu communities, and indeed since early Bantu times, one's kinship ties—namely, lineage and clan affiliation—have mattered because they were at once the nexus of important knowledge about the past, a source of ancestral power, and one avenue through which sociopolitical cohesion was established. In the physical world, one's kin group was a safety net. It determined how people fit into society's networks. Without kinship affiliation people could be likened to outsiders, which meant being vulnerable and disempowered. But beyond kinship mattering for purposes of determining one's belonging and supporting social cohesion, it was also the place from which people claimed social status. For example, lineages represented ties to inheritable or possessed wealth and influence in both material and abstract forms. To be an elder of one's lineage carried prestige in society, and this was particularly enhanced if a person had many descendants. As part of the physical world people comprised the living lineage but one's lineage was attached inherently to antecedent members. And we have recognized that in Bantu worldviews ancestry and spirituality were reservoirs of potential power.[49] But in Ruvu societies more specifically, the matrilineal line commanded the most influence and power.

38 In Ruvu history the matriclan, composed of the association of linked matrilineages, stemmed from an enduring ideological institution rooted at least as far back as the late-Mashariki-Bantu period. Historian Chris Ehret, arguing from the linguistic evidence and from the

comparative ethnographic evidence compiled by G. P. Murdock,[50] makes the case that matriliny as the basis of social relations and organization dates to the period before proto-Bantu to the still-earlier periods of Niger-Congo history.[51]

39 In recent times, the significance of Ruvu matriliny can be linked to the way their Kaskazi Bantu ancestors regarded descent. In Kaskazi societies lineage along both male and female lines was acknowledged, but the two were not considered equal. Like many of their Bantu ancestors, they appear to have given emphasis to the predominance of one's mother's matriclan. Ehret has proposed that in the middle of the last millennium BCE, northern and central clusters of Kaskazi speakers innovated the word *-*kolo* to name their mother's matriclan. In his view, its use may be tied to a historical period when they borrowed a widespread Central-Sudanian metaphor in which a tree's trunk or base stump was symbolically associated with one's matriclan.[52] Kati and Northeast-Coastal Bantu-speaking peoples retained this word. Originally, it appears, *-*kolo* named the matriclan along the mother's line, but only in the Ruvu subgroup of languages did it retain this narrow meaning over the long run of history. In contrast, in other Kaskazi-descended groups the term was subsequently used to name a "clan" in a general sense.

40 Paralleling an apparent early Bantu precedent, in Ruvu communities, the mother's clan governed the way people connected themselves to other matrilineages, the way they managed inheritance and land rights, and the way they tapped into the powers their ancestors wielded.[53] Although Ruvu descendants continued to emphasize explicitly a mother's matriclan, they also recognized a patrilineal level of affiliation. But it appears that their patrilineal affiliations did not ultimately comprise patriclans. In the Ruvu language subgroups a relict designation for patrilineage, *-*lòngò*, represents a continuity of an idea that proto-Savanna Bantu speakers innovated in the second millennium BCE. *-*Lòngò* builds on a proto-Bantu word that meant "line of objects." In fact, in many Bantu languages it still carries that meaning. But in the Savanna period it came to mean the sequence of generations, the line of descent connecting related people.[54]

41 While *-*lòngò* named the male lineage line, this was not the line through which inheritance and the like were passed, though there have been occasions where the patrilineage, over time, took the position of primacy. In Ruvu communities we find one such example among Gogo descendants. In their communities, one's *-*lòngò* eventually dominated in society. It is likely that this came to pass as a consequence of interactions that most likely involved marriage between their communities and surrounding patrilineal neighbors, such as Njombe and Parakuyu speakers, after the first millennium CE. Since then the Gogo term *-*lòngò* has named one's patrilineal line within the patriclan. The incorporation of food taboos linked distinctly to one's patrilineage, an institution not customary among matrilineal Bantu people but subscribed to by many Gogo speakers, probably also resulted from this intermingling. The

adoption of such cultural practices intimates, as suggested in chapter 2, that relationships with groups that upheld such cultural practices lead to important societal transformations. The distribution of patrilineage associated food taboos suggests that such beliefs, where they occur among Northeast-Coastal Bantu speakers, represent post proto-NECB borrowings into their descendant societies resulting from interactions with external populations. Other food avoidance taboos notable among Kaguru speakers do exist, though they, unlike the Gogo, are not attached to the idea of a predominant patrilineage and are instead commonly connected to beliefs that can, for example, compromise pregnancy.[55]

42 Returning to the significance of the matrilineage and the matriclan in Ruvu history we gain insight into the way those institutions were understood by examining more recent oral and ethnographic sources. For example, Kaguru oral traditions suggest that the greatest emphasis was attached to one's matriliclan, though the presence of an acknowledged male lineage was not wholly disregarded. Anthropologist T. O. Beidelman, who did extensive work in Kaguru and other matrilineal societies in East Africa, asked a Kaguru speaker to explain the meaning of lineage and clanship. He was told that a matriclan was like a gourd vine that crept along continuously while ultimately tied to an essential root. In contrast, the narrator likened the gourd itself to a man/fruit on the vine. It was viewed as the vine's product but the narrator pointed out that they ended in themselves because they fundamentally could not send anything beyond themselves in space and time. The narrator then went on to say that this is why male prosperity depends on the power wielded over a man's sister's children, a common view and associated practice in matrilineal societies. At the same time, in an effort to communicate how the patrilineage was of some potential leverage in society, and thus why it likely persisted, he explained that in the face of abuse by matrilineal relatives, men sometimes use the patrilineage to counter their maltreatment.[56]

43 Power associated with a mother's lineage and ancestors is also highlighted in a history shared by three Kaguru clans, Sindugu, Nghangafu, and Tegeta, who recognize a common founding ancestress. Though the legend in its entirety is primarily concerned with clan origins, it summarily conveys the way lineage may have been thought about in earlier times. In the following passage the speaker discussed what he termed "payment of property at marriage."

> These three clans all have one ancestress who bore three children, all of them daughters. Ever since long ago the offsprings who are counted as being in a clan are female children. Kaguru mothers have more strength than fathers because before the time we lived at Irangi there was no payment of property at marriage the way there is now. Then men married women after getting acquainted a bit and making propitiation to the ancestral ghosts. Then when they had children these were not the man's but the wife's because they were following the rules of the mother.[57]

In this selection a contrast is made between marriages legitimized by ancestors whose offspring belonged to the matriclan and more recent methods that include exchange of property, which in the speaker's view appears to have weakened earlier traditions. It also expressed the significance of the matrilineage and its spiritual and physical link to a common first female.

Interestingly, in recent assessments of Ruvu communities, rights over children have often hinged on ideas about control of wealth, but that view is likely limiting because it ignores the view that children represented more than potential labor or bridewealth. More accurately, each new daughter was a potential new "gourd vine" that expanded the lineage. And the expansion of the lineage meant that particular lineages held increasing sociopolitical and religious leverage in society. With each birth the founding ancestress became increasingly influential over the lives of an expanding community. 44

The power of the founding ancestor among the Kaguru and other Ruvu language groups was initially significant because those who were founders set down first roots and they wielded power over the surviving community. But later ancestors were also important at the level of the local family because they held power over their living descendants. Because generation upon generation of ancestral spirits had the power to intervene in the lives of their descendants, remembering ancestors through veneration was important. This helps to explain why, for example, when a calamity afflicted an entire region composed of people belonging to a common clan, all propitiatory religio-ritual ceremonies were directed to the founding ancestress. The responsibility for this undertaking usually fell upon the oldest living clan member. Similarly, when adversity occurred within an isolated family unit, the family's eldest member could be called upon to lead ceremonial offerings. 45

Sociopolitical Innovations and Adaptations in the Second Millennium CE

After the proto-Ruvu period of the middle of the first millennium CE, a subset of Ruvu language groups began identifying a new sociopolitical unit, a kin group larger than a matriclan. Based on its occurrence, it seems that either proto-West Ruvu speakers or ancestral Kaguru speakers first acknowledged the institution that later spread among them. The new word and institution identified a group of related clans, **ikungugo*. This term, **ikungugo*, comes from a much older Bantu verb **-kung-*, meaning "to tie together."[58] Metaphorically, the **ikungugo* was a tying together of several **-kolo* to comprise a wider unit. The early presence of this larger unit among ancestral Sagala, Kagulu, Vidunda, and Gogo, who were the Ruvu peoples most in contact with other, culturally different peoples, suggests that the creation of this kin grouping might have been the strategy used to incorporate outsiders into 46

their communities. On the other hand, the development of a wider kin group may simply have been a response to population growth and resultant growth in the population sizes of matriclans. Within those wider kin groups it appears that its eldest known living member may have had an important religio-ritual role. Among the Vidunda, that person, male or female, led religio-ritual ceremonies in honor of the founding ancestor. This suggests that in at least some of the societies that recognized the wider grouping, the ritual role that had long been the responsibility of the clan head was moved to the acknowledged **ikungugo* elder.[59]

47 The effectiveness of the **ikungugo* caught the eye of outsiders. In 1883, the organizational features of Sagala society struck J. T. Last, a geographer on assignment with the Royal Geographical Society. In describing the Sagala "nation" he explained that the major "tribes" comprising Sagala were divided up into houses or families called **ikungugo*. The Wa-ijumbe represented a ruling family of one **ikungugo* while the Wa-isongo were a ruling family of another. He explained that when you examined its subdivisions, the **-kolo* comprised the **ikungugo*. Each **-kolo* was assigned a distinct "crest."[60] Turning to Vidunda speech communities, Sagala neighbors and linguistic siblings, we find another example of the **ikungugo* among the records of early-twentieth–century-colonial ethnographers, who as part of their assignments commented on the organizational structures of Tanzanian societies. They noted that in Vidunda social structures the **ikungugo* is transmitted through the mother and forms the basis of a "matriarchy."[61]

48 A number of points are evident in these observations and conclusions. Firstly, we must take Last's characterization of the Sagala as a "nation" as an example of his imposing European-derived categories onto Sagala society. His inclination to do that at the time of his excursions and writings are not exceptional because in 1883 European *nations* were in the throes of trying to parse Africa into such entities. But we have no indication that this was how Sagala self-addressed. While they likely acknowledged a common language among them, the evidence suggests that the largest cohesive unit they acknowledged was the **ikungugo* as a collection or group of related **-kolo*. What this intimates is that they were distinguishing themselves by their particular **ikungugo*, which both records clearly suggest were inherited affiliations linked to one's matriclan. The assumption made by the colonial ethnographer about their societies having been "matriarchal" in composition is potentially misleading because matrilineality, while perhaps giving the preponderance of importance for purposes of inheritance to the female line, is not necessarily commensurate with female governance or domination. Within a Ruvu context what likely was being described was the recognition that descent and inheritance passed along the female line.[62]

49 These developments among westerly-lying Ruvu descendant communities draws particular attention to the ways communities may have reconfigured their sociopolitical groupings in light of increased interactions among distinct Njombe and Eastern Sahelian populations from

about the end of the first millennium CE.[63] But larger-scale **ikungugo* groupings were not the only type of social institution newly innovated by Ruvu communities. Contemporaneously, closer to the coastal regions of central Tanzania, a distinct development came about in proto-East Ruvu communities. They took to organizing their societies in ways that may have increased the attention given to one's father's matrilineage.

50 In proto-Northeast-Coastal Bantu and into the proto-Ruvu period, communities identified **mitala* as areas within a village where men who had more than one wife maintained homesteads.[64] By definition, it seems, polygynous households comprised **mitala*. This sociocultural feature was resilient among Northeast-Coastal communities, but some shifts in meaning arose over time. About the end of the first millennium CE or sometime thereafter, Swahili speakers of the Sabaki branch of proto-NECB, for instance, used the word *mtaa*, which shares a common root to the former, to name a section of a neighborhood or village without reference to marriage. This shift in meaning likely occurred during or shortly after the proto-Sabaki period. However, it is possible that with more research on Sabaki-descended languages we might find the word was inclusive of ideas of polygyny as it is in the wider Mashariki environs and only later took on the narrower meaning of neighborhood.

51 Along the central Tanzanian coast, however, the proto-East Ruvu innovation involved a shift from the **mitala* designation as a section of a polygynous village to the way to identify one's matrilineage on one's father's side.[65] It is plausible that near the end of the first millennium CE, when these coastal-lying East Ruvu communities interacted increasingly with Swahili-speaking communities along the central Tanzanian coast, there may have been a cultural influence imparted in which the importance of the father's matrilineal line was increased. This designation may have to do with East Ruvu speakers' attempts to identify with economically successful and socially prestigious Swahili, who began to have a presence among them along the coasts in then-budding Swahili towns. An interesting point among the Swahili should be noted. That is, **mitala* was adopted into Swahili with the meaning "polygynous marriage" during the second millennium CE. This incorporation suggests Swahili speakers may have picked up from Ruvu the identification of a polygynous marriage that stood in contrast to Swahili *mtaa* and/or that Ruvu themselves who became Swahili speakers maintained the word because it was sociopolitically significant. These possibilities are obviously not mutually exclusive but instead touch upon the complexity of cultural exchange that likely transpired as Swahili speakers entered the central-east Tanzania zones in the second millennium CE.

52 Though the significance of a child's father's matrilineage may have grown in sociocultural importance in East Ruvu communities, it did not supplant the predominance of one's mother's matrilineal **-kolo*. Anthropologist Lloyd Swantz, who began researching Zaramo societies as early as the 1960s, postulated that the intermingling of Swahili societies with an

emphasis on patriliny might have influenced Zaramo societies. However, he pointed out that even though children carried the name of the father's lineage it is "only to show from which father they are born." He explained that the mother's line was the *lukolo* and that the "children always belong to the mother's clan, never to the father's."[66]

In a case concerning Kagulu speakers, a British provincial commissioner in 1944 determined after substantial investigation that "it is evident that tribal custom of the Kaguru has in the past favored matrilineal descent but that this was amended in an arbitrary manner by the German authorities appointing chiefs of their selection." He thus ruled to reinstate, as the Kagulu had petitioned, the deposed chief, Maranda, son of Mhonya, who was " . . . a descendant on the female side of former rulers of some generations ago."[67] What the history of the lineage system suggests was surmised by anthropologist Marja-Liisa Swantz when she explained that "the Zaramo system was matrilineal and largely uxorilocal, but it had a clear bilineal emphasis, which made it highly adaptable."[68] Indeed, while the predominant social organizing principles have changed to accommodate the changing sociocultural circumstances, both along the coasts and among the westerly-situated Ruvu communities, these peoples spearheaded transformations we can see in the incorporation of terms like **mitala* and **ikungugo* while not compromising the importance of the mother's line of descent, particularly for establishing the determinants of legitimate leadership and inheritance. **53**

Accoutrements of Domesticity

When Northeast-Coastal Bantu communities reached central-east Tanzania they carried forward a long-standing Mashariki-Bantu architectural tradition in home building. Like their Mashariki ancestors of the early part of the last millennium BCE, they designed their homes, **-kaya*, rectangular in shape with gabled roofs.[69] But instead of constructing woven palm roofs like their early Mashariki ancestors had, they and other Mashariki-descended Kaskazi- and Kusi-speaking people assembled thatched roofs.[70] However, their physical homes comprised only one aspect of their residential plan. **54**

Proto-Ruvu-speaking people laid out their homestead, **-bululu*,[71] areas mindful of maintaining open areas they termed **-bùgà* within its boundaries.[72] A homestead's physical acreage was likely figured with a level of anticipation for the growth of families that resulted from the addition of co-wives and from the addition of offspring of succeeding generations. And the **-bùgà* areas served as an important work and social space within the homestead perimeter. For instance, for Kaguru speakers it was where household-related duties were completed. Beidelman reported, "here women shuck maize cobs, winnow, flail, and soak grain, pound and sift flour and sort and clean vegetables." Additionally, the **-bùgà* was where **55**

people may have woven and manufactured important material goods.[73] And within understood homestead borders, families often maintained local gardens.[74] Rigby described Gogo women as keeping gardens of the smaller type for "vegetable crops and small cash-crops such as castor and groundnuts for sale."[75] For those communities such gardens would have been more easily accessed than their larger cultivated plots, which were often located at great distances from home, and to which people took extended trips during various periods within the agriculture cycle.

56 Within proto-Ruvu and later Ruvu homesteads storage facilities for food supplies were built. One such area was indoors in raised loft-like structures called **-kano*.[76] But later Ruvu descendent communities maintained a variety of additional storage units. For example, Kagulu and Gogo speakers used an indoor **-donga* "granary hut." This represents a likely word transfer introduced by Langi speakers into Gogo and Kagulu communities some time after the end of the first millennium CE.[77] Zigua, Doe, and Kwere speakers used an additional indoor storeroom termed *-gulu*. Similarly, Doe and Zigua share the term, *-hala*, for an outdoor raised storage area. The last two of these likely represent second millennium CE areal innovations shared among adjacent Zigua, Doe, and Kwere speakers. These and other structures, while demonstrating the need for allocated space within homesteads, again indicate that shared societal features and ongoing exchanges took place among neighboring communities.

57 Many of the accoutrements with which Ruvu people furnished their homesteads are also identifiable. Some of the most persistent terms for domestic wares are connected to items often thought of as meeting basic needs in any society. For example, we can reconstruct terms for furniture as well as implements used in food preparation. Proto-Ruvu furnishings included at least five distinctly named mats. The **-tándà* was probably a sleeping mat. Used today for "bed," it represents continuity in definition and furnishing rooted in the early-Kaskazi-Bantu period of the middle of the last millennium BCE.[78] Other mats may have served varied purposes. Palm mats, **-kéká*, highlight a proto-Bantu-era mat innovation.[79] And they also retained, from the Mashariki period, the use of a "reed mat," **-làgò*. Two additional mats rooted in the proto-Kaskazi area included the plaited **-hinda* and **-jamvi*.[80]

58 Such diversity in mat-making and usage represents the retention of an ancient tradition in craftsmanship, but what is also interesting is that mat-making is commonly the work of female elders.[81] These women, who have ceased to undertake vigorous agriculture or who are making good use of time in the agricultural off-season, are often found plaiting mats in homestead areas. Additionally, it was they who passed on the knowledge of mat plaiting to younger children in their society, who were often found by their sides. Mat makers were particular about the types of dyes used to color their mat materials, though in recent times they often lamented the unavailability of desired dyes. In the published ethnography there are

other examples. Swantz reports that Zaramo women were highly skilled in plaiting such items as floor mats, baskets, bags, sacks, hats, food covers, and rope. Furthermore, their mats were typically outstanding in design and color, and commonly used for sitting, sleeping on the floor or on beds, and for wrapping up clothes and belongings when traveling.[82] On other mats foodstuffs were laid out to dry. Viewed in a broad context, the history of mat making is likely an area worth further exploration, both for the ways it ensures elders and less physically able people contribute to society as well as for the ways in which it represents a trove of knowledge in plant-derived dye, quality of reed materials, and mathematics.[83]

But mats were only one category of plaited items the proto-Ruvu and later Ruvu descendants **59**
crafted. They also manufactured woven containers and trays. Baskets known in Ruvu communities included the proto-Bantu era *-*túndù*, the proto-Kaskazi period palm fiber *-*sege*, as well as small *-*kapo* baskets.[84] Furthermore, because its etymological root traces to a Forest-Savanna Bantu verb "to measure," Ruvu *-*gelo* baskets were likely used to measure goods. However, based on the prevalence of *-*gelo* across Kaskazi languages, it likely was innovated as a "measuring basket" in the Kaskazi period late in the last millennium BCE.[85]

Two proto-Ruvu era trays were used to clean gathered or cultivated fruit and grain from their **60**
hulls or in similar capacities. One tray, the *-*sele*, was innovated at least as far back as the proto-Eastern-Savanna Bantu period when it designated a "winnowing basket," while the *-*ungo* "winnowing/sifting basket" may represent a PNECB innovation from a Mashariki verb that meant "to winnow."[86] The prevalence of such trays is linked to the husked food items included in early Ruvu diets.

Each of these items, mats, baskets, and trays substantiate the hypothesis that Ruvu **61**
communities carried on weaving and plaiting traditions relevant to the domestic home space that were in some instances as ancient as early Bantu history while still innovating new items as they required them.[87]

Expressive Pots

Northeast-Coastal-Bantu pottery-making traditions represent an additional technology **62**
inherited from Bantu ancestors and transported to central-east Tanzania. As discussed in chapter 2, the bountiful potsherd evidence thus far unearthed and variously named Triangular Incised Ware (TIW) and Tana ware were in all likelihood introduced and produced by proto-Northeast Coastal Bantu speakers and their descendants when they entered central-east

Tanzania. While the abundant evidence for pottery making is materially relevant for understanding the physical presence of people in all regions, the history of pottery production and the social uses of pottery are also significant.

63 As the technological domain of women throughout most of Bantu-speaking Africa, pottery making, like mat-making, represents an as-yet-under-investigated area of indigenous technology and gender history. This point is particularly important and relevant in light of fashionable attempts to recover the histories of indigenous iron technologies—a far more recent technological innovation on the African continent than pottery—because throughout the Bantu world it seems that the methods, both empirical and sociocultural, implicated in the creation of iron borrowed heavily from the base of knowledge held by women who manufactured pottery. Additionally, as an act of creativity that depended on the careful fusion of powerful forces, pottery making and iron making each reveal evidence of the way religio-ritual ceremonies guided their production. Women involved in pottery manufacturing took certain care to tap the potential power of their ancestors, and they likely played a part in how men tapped such powers in the production of iron in later times.[88]

64 According to contemporary Ruvu recollections, potting technology was a guarded practice, though they maintained that the profession was not limited to any one clan or lineage.[89] Instead, learning to make pottery depended on knowing people willing to teach and share valuable knowledge.[90] Among the most important information pottery producers held was the whereabouts of high-quality clay. Women did not easily give away such information. Furthermore, they explained that because some highly-prized clays were sometimes located in difficult-to-reach places, it had been common for people to use young girls who could fit into small spaces to procure the clay. And, moreover, young girls posed no risk of contaminating clay, as they had not yet begun to menstruate. In the views of Ruvu peoples, menstruation was an important issue because it could interfere with the productive process.[91] Historian Christine Ahmed-Saidi, who has researched extensively the potting traditions of Zambians, who also speak languages of Bantu origin, has collected analogous testimonials. In her experiences, women talked commonly about the need to observe the ritual aspects of potting, but perhaps the most revealing outcome of her research was that in contrast to the widespread assumption that pottery firing was the most precarious step in the creation process (something highlighted, for example, in the traditions associated with iron making) her informants insisted that it was the clay source that was the most important aspect of the process. Such expressions carry obvious parallels with what Ruvu informants conveyed.[92]

65 From an epistemological standpoint it appears there may be more at play than ceramic making in the creative processes. While on the one hand it is rather easy to understand that people knew certain clay made the best or most revered pots, there are many ceremonial pots and other earthen-made products that are passed down by kin for religious, technological, and

medicinal reasons.[93] It thus may be that the definition of the best clay depended on the intended use of the vessels. In the Ruvu ethnographic record, for instance, Marja-Liisa Swantz found that Zaramo in the Bunju area kept *matawango*, a religiously-significant clay-pot container in which they placed earthen figurines, *pungi*, "fashioned from clay and mixed with some parts of the skin, hair and nails of the ancestral guardian of such pots."[94] The association of ancestral keepers with the pots demonstrated the importance of their being kept, at least within particular kin groups. It is significant that such guardians' physical bodies needed to be embodied within the clay figures. Swantz reported that at the time she did her research, *pungi* figurines were no longer made in Bunju, though there was an actively used *matawango* shrine in the area, which generated both fear and reverence among those who believed in its significance. "When certain rites had to be performed," she writes, "the guardian [of the pot] came from town to officiate."[95] In a distinct Ruvu language group, Beidelman reported that Kaguru used particular pots for religio-ritual medicinal purposes during boys' initiation ceremonies. Post-circumcision initiates kept small pots of water infused with strings of mostly white beads to wash away the blood from the wound. "These beads (and sometimes added roots, herbs, and other medicines) add to the water's power to cool the wound and consequently make it heal. When the initiate has fully recovered and emerges from his seclusion, this pot is presented to his mother." If an initiate did not heal, which was not common, the "dead youth's mother would receive his pot, broken, as a tacit indication of her loss."[96] Although there are clearly additional questions raised by these examples, it is obvious that the pots were not mere vessels or clay figurines but also of important religious and medicinal significance in Ruvu communities.

66 The linguistic evidence tied to pottery sheds light on both the antiquity of its associated technologies as well as the types of vessels Ruvu people wanted. Turning now to aspects of direct pottery production in early Ruvu times, we know that **ulongo* was the term proto-Ruvu speakers used to name clay. In so doing, they preserved a proto-Savanna Bantu noun.[97] But some time after the start of the second millennium, Sagala and Lugulu speakers added a distinct word for a clay type, **-widi*, to their lexis. Its etymology is suggestive of interactions among one or both groups with an Eastern Sahelian speech community who used either **wèr* or **wèd* to name a type of "mud."[98] Because of prolonged exchanges between Sagala and Lugulu speakers, it is difficult to discern how this adopted word may have first entered their communities and/or been shared among them. However, as was suggested in the previous chapter, this exchange may be representative of the exclusive possession Eastern Sahelian speech communities had of a particular type of desired clay, though other yet unexplored possibilities may account for this history.

67 As for pottery producers, proto-Ruvu speakers likely called potters **muumbaji*. This word derives from a proto-Bantu verb **-bumb-*, "lump together." Subsequently, proto-Forest-Savanna Bantu speakers innovated a new meaning from it. They used it to name the specific

process "to mold or pot," **kuumba*. Later Bantu-speaking communities retained both the knowledge of pottery and verb **-bumb-*, although the more general sense of the word "to lump together" remained widely in use.[99] **Muumbaji's* literal translation is best glossed, then, as "the one who lumps the clay together."

68 As we noted in chapter 2, pottery's prevalence in the Northeast-Coastal Culture Zone archaeological record is among the weightiest evidence marking their settlement in the hinter-coast since the early part of the first millennium CE. It is therefore significant that by using linguistics we can begin to propose possible names for the varied products that these hinter-coastal communities manufactured, used, and likely traded. Two of their vessels were named by terms that had been in use since the proto-Bantu period. They include the **-bìgá*, which was a "water (or liquid holding) pot," and the **-(j)ùngú* "cooking pot."[100] Then, in the Eastern-Savanna-Bantu period, at least two additional vessels were added to their assemblage and carried on in later Ruvu pot-making traditions. One was characterized as a general clay pot, **-nongo*, while Ruvu speakers specified the **-fuko* as a "vegetable cooking pot."[101] Later, in the early Kaskazi period of the middle of the last millennium BCE, **-kalango*, derived from a proto-Bantu verb that meant "to fry or roast" was innovated. In Ruvu descendant languages it still identifies "frying/roasting pots." Interestingly, and telling for early Ruvu history, the name for this type of pot has been identified outside of Kaskazi in the Makua language. It is suggestive, similar to word borrowings discussed in the previous chapter, of additional word transfers between Makua and proposed Southern Ruvu speakers who may have lived in areas adjacent to Rufiji-Ruvuma language communities some time after the seventh century CE.[102]

69 Adding to their potting practices, proto-Northeast-Coastal Bantu language communities likely innovated an additional vessel, the **-teleko*, after settling in central-east Tanzania. Ruvu speakers identified it as a "cooking pot." Zaramo and Gogo speakers of recent times use it specifically in beer brewing, while some Doe and Kutu speakers maintained that this type of pot is for preparing solid foods in liquids. Such explanations are consistent with the etymology of the word from a proto-Bantu verb for "to cook or boil." Among the speech communities outside of Northeast-Coastal who are familiar with these pots are the Kisi, Hehe, and Sonjo of the Njombe subgroup and Matumbi, Mwera, Yao, and Ruihi of Rufiji-Ruvuma, the two most southerly Kaskazi language branches. As in the case of **-kalango*, this term appears in the Makua language of the Kusi branch of Mashariki, where it is described as a large, open vessel used in beer and food preparation. This Makua example, however, is characterized by irregular sound correspondence, making it a likely borrowing from a possible Ruvu language source.[103]

70 The cumulative picture is indicative, again, of a Southern Ruvu language having introduced the word to them. Examining **-teleko*'s overall block distribution among Ruvu's adjacent Kaskazi descendant languages suggests that it likely resulted from exchanges among the

groups. The implications of the widespread variability in pottery make the potential for archaeological recoveries of Triangular Incised/Tana ware, among others, across Kaskazi descendant language areas—and well into the interior—very promising. Importantly, pursuing the history of pottery will further build our understanding of the technological, gender, and nutritional histories that accompanied the developments in the processes involved in making and using pots.

Ruvu Kitchens and Their Trappings

71 As the domain of women, the "kitchen" likely represented a niche of power for Ruvu women. Who, after all, can go without food? Across many societies in central-east Tanzania, control over food stores and agricultural productivity remains until today by and large the purview of women. Women are the primary caregivers and feeders of children and extended families and, sometimes, entire communities. In many places, it is the common scene of the day for there to be activity related to preparing the family's next meal. Throughout Bantu history, there is every reason to suppose that food preparation was the undertaking of women within homestead environs.

72 And, of course, where evidence of cooking pots, food containers, and storage vessels is found, it is also likely that implements used in cooking processes will appear. Particularly telling is that words related to cooking utensils provide important evidence about societal contacts between Bantu- and Eastern-Sahelian-speaking communities, and they are likewise telling indicators of the continuous use of ancient Bantu-derived implements. Proto-Ruvu communities used at least two general terms to talk about their manners of cooking, **-teleka* and **-ambika*, "to cook/boil." Both derived from ancient Bantu verbs, the first from the proto-Bantu era and the latter from the proto-Mashariki period, and thus reflect age-old ways of naming cooking processes involving firing or heating foods. Connected to cooking processes was the kind of heating surface used. Here, too, an ancient word arises, the **-figa* "hearth."[104] But as essential as the hearth was to food preparation, it also carried significant meaning in religious ideas about how to sustain abundance within communities. These are evident in religio-ritual ceremonies tied to the hearth as a site of power with direct connections to fecundity.

73 For example, before the onset of seasonal rains, while Kagulu cleaned and cultivated lands, representatives of local settlements regularly convened at gravesites in the outlying areas to propitiate matrilineal spirit forces important in their area. To do this, they erected a small shelter, extinguished their hearth fires, and remained sexually inactive. At the conclusion of associated ceremonies, *watani* (clans whose borders adjoin) ignited a new fire from which household hearths were relit. The time between extinguishing household fires and the

moment they were rekindled encompassed a liminal period in which the year was ripe for renewal. If there were drought conditions, the religio-ritual ceremonies connected to the hearth were often elaborated. Similarly, they might be complicated in an effort to rejuvenate land weakened by cultivation or malevolent ethereal forces.[105]

74 In addition to engaging in religio-ritual practices aimed at insuring provisions, technical and skilled steps involved in food processing took place in a homestead's *-*bùgà*. Grain preparation was likely among the most arduous. Once harvested, grains had to be threshed and winnowed.[106] Beyond hulling, they were then pounded and ground. To do this, Ruvu speakers, like their Mashariki ancestors, used flattened stone mortars, **luwala*, to produce flours of varied textures.[107] Northeast-Coastal Bantu and wider Mashariki language communities used an additional mortar, the **ituli*. In contrast to the former mortar, it represents an early word transfer into proto-Mashariki from an exchange with Eastern Sahelian speakers in the early part of the last millennium BCE.[108]

75 The mortar's companion was the pestle. Over time, Ruvu-descendant speakers have come to identify pestles in various ways. A term introduced after the proto-NECB period, **mtoho* represents a proto-Wami innovation from the era between 300–500 CE. An interesting point here is that this term has an original Eastern Sahelian etymology.[109] What must have happened is that proto-Wami speakers innovated the noun from a formerly borrowed Eastern Sahelian verb that was transferred into proto-Mashariki Bantu early in the last millennium CE, within the same period that **ituli*, "mortar," was acquired from Eastern Sahelian speakers. While one might think that it is convincing to argue for a direct borrowing from an Eastern Sahelian language into proto-Wami, the fact that there is no other corroborating evidence of Eastern Sahelian loanwords into proto-Wami makes the former etymology more compelling. A second word for pestle, **musi*, of proto-Savanna Bantu origins, curiously only occurs in one Ruvu language, Lugulu. Most probably this is a second-millennium-era loanword into Lugulu from another Kaskazi subgroup, perhaps Rufiji-Ruvuma.[110]

76 A third term for pestle, **mutwango*, attests in both West Ruvu and Kagulu languages and derives from an early Forest-Savanna Bantu verb root, *-*túaŋg*-, "to pound, hit."[111] Its presence in two of the three branches of Ruvu might initially hint that the West Ruvu and Kagulu speakers retained another proto-Ruvu term that East Ruvu sister languages did not. But a closer look at the word's distribution suggests that it is another example of the influence Njombe speech communities had on proto-West Ruvu after the seventh century CE. From the verb *-*túaŋg*- Njombe derived the noun **mutwango* to name their pestles. The Forest-Savanna-Bantu verb itself continued to be used by Kaskazi descendants, including Northeast-Coastal Bantu descendants, in the sense "to pound grain in a mortar."[112] The presence of the term in Kagulu in this case likely resulted from additional areal sharing among neighboring groups, as was the case with other cultural elements. As we have noted, there is considerable

linguistic and oral-historical evidence suggestive of major movements of Njombe peoples into West-Ruvu-speaking lands over the past thousand years, so this conclusion aligns well with other evidence. A tangential yet interesting turn in the underlying verb's history, however, occurred among proto-Central-East Ruvu speakers between approximately 1100–1400 CE. They coined from it a gendered noun, **mtwanzi*, for "woman." Its literal translation is suggested here as "the woman who pounds in a mortar," which would seem to have given emphasis to women's responsibilities in food preparation. The interesting question, and a difficult one to answer yet, is why it may have been compelling at that period to highlight women's role as food preparers. As a source of historical power in the face of developing Swahili culture and entrenchment in this hinter-coastal zone, might it be that women were laying claim to their power as food producers? Or might its usage have something to do with the incorporation of Njombe-speaking women into these Ruvu communities?[113]

77 Additional Ruvu cooking utensils included paddle spoons and other stirring devices. West Ruvu, Kagulu, and Lugulu speakers referred to long paddled spoons as **mtela*. Within the Njombe group the term refers widely to a paddle spoon, but its more limited occurrence outside of Njombe, in identified Ruvu languages plus Pogolo of the Kilombero group, makes this word an additional case of a transfer among their societies, adding further evidence of the Njombe influence on Ruvu and other Kaskazi neighbors in the second millennium. **Mtela*'s etymology, however, is anchored in the Southern-Kaskazi period of the last few centuries BCE. To that period dates the root word for **-tela*, "wood or stick." As Southern Kaskazi communities dispersed, the ways in which they used **-tela* took on new, although related, meanings. For example, Pogolo, Rufiji and Yao speakers used it as the word for "tree." In Matengo and Mpoto of the Mbinga branch of languages it named a "stick." Additionally, it identified "medicine" across the Kilombero and Rufiji-Ruvuma languages. The application of words for tree or products derived therefrom to medicine is a common semantic linkage in Bantu languages because medicinal remedies often were made from wood, roots, and other herbaceous materials. Similarly, wooden spoons and other instruments were commonly referred to by terms that reflected their material composition.

78 But in addition to word transfers from Njombe to Ruvu descendant speakers, a proto-Northeast-Coastal-Bantu term for a paddle spoon, the **mwiko*, was also used in proto-Ruvu speech communities. Widely attested across Mashariki-Bantu languages and other distinct branches of Savanna Bantu, it dates at least to the proto-Savanna-Bantu language.[114] Supplemental to the **mwiko* were two spoons that East Ruvu speech communities identified. Kami speakers named one such spoon *babate* while Doe and Kwere speakers term another *balagwa*. Based on their limited distribution and phonological structures, they likely represent adoptions that occurred in the last five centuries, though their etymologies remain obscure.[115]

79

In addition to paddle spoons, Bantu-speaking people used stirrers. These implements may have become increasingly important in the Kaskazi period because one of their staple food items came to include *_ugali_, thick porridges that provided a significant carbohydrate source.[116] Kaskazi period cooks likely made it by mixing flour and water. But the simplicity of such a statement fundamentally understates the culinary and social significance attached to the final product. In central-east Tanzania the quality of one's *_ugali_ was, and remained until recent times, a source of tremendous pride among its makers. It must be of the right texture, which is discerned by sight, touch, and flavor. Making nice, smooth porridge relied on stirrers and rhythmic agitation, among other things. In structure, early stirrers probably resembled those that Ruvu people use today. They are long, thin, and stick-like with curved sickle shaped carved wood pieces on one end. In making porridges, one holds them between the palms and spins them rapidly by moving the hands back and forth. Doe speakers call this instrument *-_tinko_. This word derives from an exchange with an Eastern Sahelian language source that transpired well before the proto-Ruvu period, probably during the Kaskazi or Mashariki eras. Outside of Doe, however, this term generally names a spoon.[117] The best explanation is that its designation as a specific stirrer in Doe represents a recent innovation. Another word, *-_paga_, identifies such *_ugali_ mixers in West Ruvu and Kagulu languages, though its sound correspondence is suggestive of a word transfer from a yet-unidentified source.[118] The fact that a proto-Ruvu-era word for such distinct mixers cannot be reconstructed may reflect refinement in food preparation specific to porridges and the ways they are made that developed in recent historical periods. Having introduced some of the cooking vessels, storage and transport containers, and food processing implements Ruvu people used in their societies, we turn now to the ways in which they conceptualized land, the place of food production at ground level.

Conceptualizing Land

80

Land is not a neutral entity; it is implicated in historical developments. Because of this it is important, if not essential, to understand the way Ruvu speakers conceptualized and used it. Based on what is known thus far about early Bantu worldviews, it seems clear that land was important to Bantu-descended people on at least two fronts, material and spiritual. If words and meanings associated with land can be taken as indicators of how Ruvu speakers viewed land, then land was as much a site of potential spiritual and physical contestation as it was entrée to prosperity and good living. The way land was defined, parsed, used, and preserved was interwoven with their religious beliefs. The intersection of physical land and religion implored people to take into account technical concerns associated with, for instance, soil fertility, land availability, and climate. But they also had to pay attention to the power of spirit forces to impede or help those matters.

81 In the middle of the first millennium CE, proto-Ruvu farmers distinguished at least two broad categories of familiar land. The distinction lay in whether they were regularly and physically occupied or not. Regularly occupied lands included those on which Ruvu built their homes, *-*kaya,*[119] and did their farming, **ulimo*.[120] On the other hand, unoccupied but familiar land included land on which people hunted, propitiated spirit forces, or traversed en route to their cultivated plots or other destinations. In some cases, it may have been land their ancestors once cultivated then left fallow. Such lands were generally characterized as "untamed or wild." That conceptualization was perhaps tied both to an idea about their being undomesticated and to their being neglected. Indeed, unoccupied lands could often be overgrown with grasses, forested, or bush-laden. But when Ruvu people needed to enter them they could be temporarily "reclaimed" so as to diminish the likelihood of danger caused by spirit forces who dwelled there. One path toward such security was to perform propitiatory ceremonies. Even with the distinction between occupied and unoccupied, familiar lands shared a fundamental commonality in that each required religio-ritual supplication of ethereal forces. Because land was integral to their religious beliefs and outlooks, for Ruvu people it was implicated in their overall understandings of the way to achieve and sustain wellness.

82 For both types of familiar land there are examples of Ruvu religio-ritual practices that demonstrate their understanding of the importance of ethereal forces with relationship to land. Earlier in the chapter, two examples of spirit association with land were already introduced. The first involved a Lugulu prayer to ancestral spirit forces in which they asked their ancestors whether settlement of a particular land tract was advisable or not. The second was represented by the regular Kagulu termination and relighting of hearth fires just before expected seasonal rain in order to propitiate ancestors and so insure bountiful harvests. Additional ceremonial offerings were done for homestead prosperity. Among Gogo speakers, regular ancestor propitiations involving beer and prayer were held for those buried in the cattle byres kept in homestead courtyards. And if Gogo were planning to depart homelands on which ancestors were buried, custom required them to erect burial markers so that they could locate the site when they returned to hold religio-ritual offerings in their honor.[121] Leaving a homestead was the first step toward land becoming unoccupied bush, **mbago,* but still familiar.[122]

83 As noted in the Gogo example, it was sometimes necessary for Ruvu people to hold propitiatory ceremonies in honor of their ancestors in formerly occupied areas. Similarly, Kwere speakers held propitiation ceremonies at local gravesites or, if they were no longer marked, at the base of trees within their neighborhoods. Zaramo were expected to make a yearly pilgrimage to venerate ancestors when it was possible. This was referred to as "sweeping of the graves." But if a pilgrimage was not possible, they were permitted to create

shrines in the ancestor's honor. When extreme calamity beset them, however, they were expected to make arduous trips to their ancestor's gravesite.[123] In the same way, Kagulu speakers believed that,

> The most sacred, social act of communion with [ancestral spirits] occurs in wild space, which for a passing time is demarcated and reclaimed by and for ordered society. Yet the dead's association with the bush has a dangerous side similar to witchcraft. The disgruntled dead not only cause misfortune but also may trespass quite literally into the nonbush.[124]

As we will explore further in the next chapter, maturing young Ruvu men were brought to particular **mbago* zones that were designated for religio-ritual initiation and circumcision ceremonies. Because early Ruvu people likely conceptualized "wild space" similarly, it is likely that they approached these sites with copious respect. However, because Ruvu culture's underlying religious episteme assured them that when appropriate measures were taken they stood a fair chance of curtailing the negative effects of spirit forces, they sensibly took preventative measures. In the Kagulu example, they did this by creating order in the region and by supplication through veneration. Those strategies, they believed, contained potentially malevolent ancestral spirits to the boundaries of the bush and could ward off their movements into settled and cultivated areas where they might wreak havoc on their communities.

84

At the same time, Ruvu did not conceptualize land only by its ethereal dimension. It was also named and described by its topographical features. It is in naming of certain places that that we often discern with whom Ruvu people may have interacted. In the linguistic data those interactions are suggested by some of the borrowed words that proto-Ruvu speakers incorporated into their lexis during the middle of the first millennium CE. For example, two early word transfers likely resulted from exchanges with Southern Cushitic Ma'a speakers. One involved the word *roró*, for plain. Across the descendant languages of proto-Ruvu, including proto-West, Kagulu, and Lugulu speakers, **-lolo* identified "valleys."[125] Secondly, proto-Ruvu speakers incorporated a Ma'a word for "slope" to name their "riverbanks," **-gemo*.[126] In contrast to these borrowed words, East Ruvu descendent language speakers preserved **-kolongo*, a proto-Wami period innovation for "valley." East Ruvu's more easterly locales, areas not appealing to pastoralist Ma'a speakers, likely accounted for the relative lack of Ma'a impact on them and thus may explain the East Ruvu preservation of their inherited proto-Wami term vis-à-vis those who experienced protracted contacts.[127]

85

Terminology associated with grasslands offers additional insight into the use and eventual narrowing of inherited Bantu lexis concerning land among Ruvu speakers. Among West-Ruvu Lugulu speakers, grasslands were termed **nyika*, reflecting a proto-Mashariki-period word previously used to describe savanna.[128] Recent Lugulu speakers used it to name areas covered with grass without necessarily connoting savanna grass varieties. In contrast, East

Ruvu and Kagulu speech communities derived grasslands from *-*bàlà*, a term rooted in the Savanna-Bantu period to name "open spaces."[129] The conceptual connection here was likely with unobstructed tracts of land. Sagala speakers used a distinct term, *-*tàmbadad-*, a word that carried an underlying meaning, "to sprawl." For Sagala speakers, grasslands were literally "sprawling" areas. The diversity in words Ruvu speakers used to name such land is suggestive of earliest Northeast-Coastal Bantu communities having used a range of designations for the varied types of grasslands and spaces with which they were familiar. Over time, perhaps recognizing no functional purpose in preserving such distinctions, Ruvu descendant language communities may have found it useful to narrow such terms as they settled into their homelands.

86 For early Ruvu peoples, cultivating land required nearly continuous, year-round commitment. Judging from general patterns among more recent Ruvu communities, we can hypothesize that when they were not actively sowing land for the next season's harvest, they were busy preparing for it. Ruvu farmlands have been conceptualized into at least five categories/stages: recently cleared land, fallow fields, large uncultivated plots, primary cultivated fields, and home gardens. Recently cleared lands were those formerly uninhabited or those that had been abandoned and left without care for an extended period. Proto-Ruvu speakers called these types of cleared fields **isenge*, a word that derived from proto-Bantu *-*cèŋg-*, meaning "to cut."[130]

87 In Bantu farming communities, used land that was no longer agriculturally viable was fallowed to replenish its fertility. Ruvu speakers used two words to describe such fields, *-*lale* and *-*sokola*. The more ancient of these roots, *-*lal-*, dates to the Eastern-Savanna period in the second millennium BCE, when it designated "fallow land."[131] For example, Ila and Lenje speakers of the Botatwe branch of Savanna Bantu apply *chilala,* as do the Lamba of the Sabi branch, to a "fallow field." Among the Mashariki languages, Sukuma and Nyamwezi, the same root forms the basis of the names for "fallow" and "new fields." A second proto-Ruvu word, *-*sokola*, for "cleared, fallow land" is likely an early innovation.[132]

88 In central-east Tanzania people also identified land prepared for planting. In proto-Ruvu speaking communities **iselu* were fields that may have been tilled and ready for use but were not yet sown. The term derives from a proto-Bantu verb *-*céd-* that meant "to clean."[133] Its presence in Zigua of the Seuta branch, as well as in Sabaki, suggests it was a proto-NECB innovation. An exception to its widespread use turns up among Kaguru speakers, who used an alternative word, *sale,* which in early Bantu applied to cultivated fields in general. Its etymology predates the proto-Savanna-Bantu period of the second millennium BCE, and is thus a proto-Ruvu retention.[134] It identified a functional plot of farmland in such forest languages as Bobangi and Mongo, as well as in the Western-Savanna Ndongo language. In the proto-Eastern-Savanna Bantu the meaning was shifted to denote an unused or a deserted

field. This continues to be its meaning in such languages as Lamba, Yao, and Tumbuka. The Kagulu likely modified this older meaning slightly to refer to land that was not sown at that particular moment but soon would be.

89 When it came to agriculture, there were at least two types of cultivated plots of land kept by proto-Ruvu peoples. Their large primary fields were **migunda*, which were usually some distance from their homesteads in regions where plentiful water sources were available for irrigation purposes.[135] But, as we covered earlier in the chapter, they likely kept a smaller garden near their homes. As has been the case more recently, such smaller gardens likely supplemented their diets during scarce times to meet day-to-day needs. For example, gardens provided maize, beans, peppers, bananas, and small leafy vegetables. But large cultivated fields, **migunda*, were the primary source of sustenance for the Ruvu peoples. In the case of polygynous households, each wife likely had her own **migunda*. Peter Rigby reported that for Gogo, "each married woman, that is, the owner of each *nyumba* [house] has her own *migunda* for the production of the basic crop of sorghum and millet, and her small garden patches (*vigunda*) for vegetable crops and small cash-crops such as castor and groundnuts for sale."[136] But occasionally women, men, and older children maintained their own plots of land in addition to one shared by all, which they worked to contribute entirely to the household.[137]

90 Successful farming, of course, depended on understanding seasonal cycles. To name seasons proto-Northeast-Coastal Bantu speakers maintained some terms inherited from their Bantu ancestors, but they and their descendants also adopted words. For example, in the coast and immediate hinterlands there was a period of shorter rains centering around October and November, not present in the Mashariki homelands in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Some PNECB applied **-limo*, the old Mashariki term for that period of the year, to the new kind of rain regime, but other speech communities opted early in the middle of the first millennium CE to adopt a Ma'a-language word, *bure,* in the shape **-bUli*, to name the lesser-rainy season.[138] For the heavy-rain season, which centered around the months of March to May, the proto-PNECB as well as their proto-Wami and proto-Ruvu descendants retained the older Mashariki root, **masika*.[139]

91 Later, in the last centuries of the first millennium CE, proto-West Ruvu speakers adopted a different word, **-fuku*, which they later passed on to Kami and Lugulu after the start of the second millennium CE.[140] But **-fuku* was not a proto-West-Ruvu innovation; it is yet another term acquired originally from an Njombe language. In part we know this because it carries a uniquely Njombe feature noted by a word-final **u* instead of the expected regular proto-West Ruvu **o* (that is, it is **-fuku* instead of the expected **-fuko*). That they borrowed this term

likely is suggestive of what happens when communities move into new climate regimes, which is just what proto-West Ruvu speakers did when they moved westward to the two-rain-season environment in the interior.

Land and Labor

92

The physical aspects of field preparation—tilling, sowing, and harvesting—were distinct from spiritual prerequisites and physical land descriptions. They depended on the use of tangible tools and on organizing labor forces. Many early Ruvu agricultural implements were inherited from their Mashariki ancestors and sometimes from even earlier Bantu eras. Primary among the cultivating tools proto-Ruvu people used were *-*témò*, axes; *-*gèmbè*, hoes; *-*wiwi*, rakes; and digging sticks, which in proto-Ruvu were termed *-*hananga* and, later, in proto-East Ruvu *-*hakwa*. Iron axes and hoes were items that spread throughout the Kati languages some time after the Kaskazi period of the first few centuries CE. The Ruvu terms for digging sticks, however, are not as yet known outside of the Ruvu, and thus do not appear to be inherited Bantu terms. In contrast, the long history of the use of rakes is yet to be investigated, but the word is likely an old innovation. In the Ruvu case, the noun designating a rake was formed from a Mashariki noun for a "[weed] heap," though the source of the underlying root is not yet known.[141]

93

Reaping harvests and home building were likely among the most onerous household tasks in Ruvu communities. And in the case of agriculture, its timing was delicate. The linguistic evidence suggests that to deal with both needs proto-Ruvu people organized collective work parties. In proto-Ruvu communities and among their descendants such work parties were termed *-*wili*, although some time after the proto-Ruvu period eventual Gogo speakers termed them *chisanji*.[142] When Ruvu speakers described such efforts, they explained that people would put out a call for help with big projects like home building or harvesting and the community was obliged to help. According to Rigby, a considerable amount of care was given and structure adhered to during a *chisanji* cultivating party.[143] Among Gogo Rigby noted, "people are invited to attend work parties, usually the night before, by young boys or men of the homestead who go around and inform them of the field at which it is to be held."[144] Additionally, "there is no offense if one does not attend for a good reason, but a man or woman who consistently refuses to will soon lose reciprocal services, even if they provide large quantities of good beer."[145] A further Gogo example carries added gender nuances:

> After a fair or good harvest in the previous season, women normally have enough grain left over in their granaries (*madong'a*) to prepare beer for communal work parties in the next cultivation season. If they do not have the resources, they may invite kin and neighbors to a work party on the promise of a beer party when the

> crop is harvested . . . beer for agricultural work parties is brewed by a married woman, using only the grain belonging to her house, for the cultivation of her own fields.[146]

Among Kwere speakers, Vuorela says, *kiwili* cooperative harvesting work groups arrived and began working early in the morning, only stopping when food was served.[147] Vuorela's informant offered an example: "This year we organized a *kiwili* for harvesting our maize. We asked some people to come and help and six adult men, three children and one of my uncle's grandchildren came. Their task was to carry the maize from the field to our courtyard. We then had to put it in the stores ourselves."[148] After eating they would go away to wash themselves and then return for beer.

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There was at least one further organized work force also used by some of the Ruvu. The Kagulu indicated that cooperative working societies were employed in building houses. For these parties they used the term *lusigi*. Beidelman provides a mid-twentieth century Kagulu example of a *lusigi*: "The final task of plastering with earth is a neighborhood affair, usually done in one day at a building party (*lusigi*). The builder's wife and kinswomen prepare many gallons of beer and invite neighboring women and men to work."[149] Whether or not these were loosely organized efforts or highly structured events is still unclear. And although we cannot determine the regularity of such collective efforts, they were used often enough that an understood protocol seems to have surfaced, and they likely represent deep-seated Bantu customs. We know, for instance, that Sukuma people who speak a language of the Takama branch of the Kati group also carried out these sorts of community-building strategies for both agriculture and in the construction of houses.[150] Clearly, further research on the topic should help us to discover things about the particular ways in which these customs were carried out in earlier eras.

Conclusions

95

Examining the spiritual, ceremonial, and physical dimensions of societies in Ruvu history provides a way to approach holistically the way people attempted to foster productivity and community stability. Anchored in worldviews held by early Bantu ancestors, Ruvu descendants believed that bringing together manual dexterity and knowledge with the support of ancestor spirits converted latent power into materialized power. A core notion linked to land was tied to their understanding that even if physical bodies did not dwell on a particular site, the land was still implicated as spaces where ancestral forces associated with people physically departed from the temporal spheres held influence, as did nature/territorial spirits. It appears that Bantu people never assumed that they were the first people on the land. Theirs was not a world of discovery, but a world in which newcomers were always imposing

themselves on what had come before.[151] Added to that, they understood that supernatural forces were present in inhabited and unoccupied areas. In either state, supernatural entities had the potential to wreak havoc upon their endeavors or to contribute to their successes. In their worldviews, the promise of such influence correlated with the way they lived with, conferred with, and paid homage to the spirit forces by way of ceremonial veneration. Such ceremonies were one avenue for tapping into reserves of spiritual powers and were in all likelihood a priority among the majority of communities, as will be evident in subsequent chapters.

96 Included among the matters examined were ways the earliest Ruvu people named and conceptualized physical space. Fundamentally connected to the way they viewed their place within the physical landscape are the approaches they employed to manage land through institutions and practices that distinguished among types of land as well as for defining their functionality. Images of land parceling, and management inextricably linked to forms of political organizing and leadership, rights to land usage, and the garnering of sufficient agriculture provisions emerge from the data. While these social-institutional entities and spaces were essential to social order and belonging, it was understood that those sites shared space with vital supernatural phenomena of immediate consequence and concern, which were important to the goal of general societal well-being. We glimpse through relationships between physical land and people as well as understandings of land-based knowledge, a complex system of normalized institutions founded on culturally anchored precepts that were always mindful of ethereal forces that could influence those relationships.

97 The centrality of spirit forces in Ruvu societies was not a new phenomenon in Bantu history. Rather, it was a core element of an early worldview that envisaged kinship-linked ancestors and other spirit forces in ongoing conversation with the corporeal world, and that worldview can be reconstructed to the very early Niger-Congo period, perhaps to its proto-language period. What can be illuminated here is not so much how the worldview was transformed in Ruvu spheres of the Northeast-Coastal Bantu cultural zone—because it in fact appears mostly intact—but rather how its framework was treated discursively at a local level while being deeply rooted in an ancient episteme.

Notes

Note 1: Usagala refers to the regions in which Sagala speakers, linguistic descendants of the Ruvu subgroup of Northeast Coastal Bantu, reside. They were descendants of the proto-West Ruvu community that diverged into a distinct language in the last centuries of the first millennium CE, along with Gogo and Vidunda. See chapter 1 for the history of their proposed language divergence.

Note 2: Wood, "Itinerating in Usagara, 1888," 24.

Note 3: Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 98–9.

Note 4: For examples of this principle in Ruvu, see G. Bombwe, "Some Traditional Prayers of the Luguru," *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* 9 (1970): 253.

Note 5: CS 711; Proto-Bantu *-*dung*- "to become fitting, straight, right"; Southern Kaskazi *-*lungu* "God"; e.g., Nyanja *mlungu*, "god" pl. *achimlungu* "gods" *umlungo* "divinity"; Kikuyu n. *mũrungu*; Shambala *mulungu* "god"; Ngulu *mulungu* "god"; Zigula *mulungu* "god"; Kamba *mulungu* "god"; Itumba *mulungu*; god"; Kondoa/Solwe *mulungu* "god"; Yao *mulungu* "god"; Gindo *mulungu* "god"; Ganji *mulungu* "god"; Hehe *mulungu* "god"; Ziráha *mulungu* "god"; Nkwifiya *mulungu* "god"; Ndunda *mulungu* "god"; Kwenye *mulungu* "god"; Bena *mulungu* "god"; Sango/Lori *mulungu* "god"; Bunga *mulungu* "god"; Sukuma *mulungu* "god"; Turu *mulungu* "god." Ehret, *An African Classical Age*, 166–7; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 620.

Note 6: Both Akan and proto-Bantu derive from the Benue-Kwa period. Benue-Kwa is one Niger-Congo subgroup. Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa*, 104–5; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 298.

Note 7: Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 159; Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 50.

Note 8: Similar to the Southern Kaskazi period, **Mulungu* has taken on added nuance. Since the introduction of missionary Christian work, it is now used to name the conceptualized Christian God. To do this, NECB speakers added an additional conceptual nuance, that of divinity, which was not among the meanings **Mulungu* intimated prior to that.

Note 9: Wood, "Itinerating," 25, 28.

Note 10: James L. Brain, "The Kwere of the Eastern Province," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 58/59 (1962): 238.

Note 11: Lloyd Swantz, "The Zaramo of Tanzania: An Ethnographic Study" (Ph.D. thesis, Syracuse University, 1965), 59. Swantz's use of *dawa* represents a Swahili word in Zaramo. The proto-Ruvu word for medicine was **miti*, which derived from the noun for tree.

Note 12: T. O. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 146. Such translations of a Christian idea of God were not unique to Tanzania. It was done widely in Africa.

Note 13: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 159.

Note 14: Ibid., 50.

Note 15: CS 617, 619; Proto-Bantu *-*dĺmu* "ancestor, spirit"; *-*zímu* "ancestor spirit"; e.g., in Nyanja *chizimu* adv. *-achizimu* "spiritual"; *mzimu* "spirit, the spirit of a man which haunts his old neighborhood for some time after death"; *zima, ku-* v.t. "quench, extinguish (fire)." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 159; Fadhili Safieli Mshana, "Art and Identity among the Zaramo of Tanzania" (Ph.D. thesis, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1999), 148; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 623; David L. Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*: *Etymologies and Distributions* (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1997), 182–3; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 297.

Note 16: Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 297.

Note 17: Ibid., 95, 297.

Note 18: T. O. Beidelman, "Three Tales of the Living and the Dead: The Ideology of Kaguru Ancestral Propitiation," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 94, no. 2 (1964): 109.

Note 19: Joseph Mawinza, "The Human Soul: Life and Soul Concept in an East African Mentality Based on Lugulu" (Dissertation, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1963), 140–1.

Note 20: For examples of the centrality and power of ancestors in early Bantu history, see Klieman, *"The Pygmies Were Our Compass,"* 74; Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place*, 197–9; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 95. Schoenbrun suspects that the idea that ancestors could or would inflict harm on their own descendants may be a more recent or, at least, recently intensified experience. This is certainly tenable, particularly when we consider that intervening historical factors have pulled attention away from Bantu ancestors over time.

Note 21: Wood, "Itinerating in Usagara, 1888," 24.

Note 22: Ehret, *African Classical Age,* 159; Klieman, *"The Pygmies Were Our Compass,"* 146–7; Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place*, 136, 198; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 95; Marja-Liisa Swantz, *Ritual and Symbol in Transitional Zaramo Society* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1970), 184; Mshana, "Art and Identity among the Zaramo of Tanzania," 149.

Note 23: CS 844, 1134, 1401. Such religio-ritual processes are often referred to by the ancient Bantu word *ngoma*. This word's primary meaning is "drum." However, in these contexts they refer to a collection of customs that include song, spoken words, and dance. There are many types, uses, and messages associated with religio-ritual *ngoma* throughout the Bantu-speaking world. A great majority of them are linked to accessing spirit power for transformative purposes. For more on *ngoma* see chapter 5. See also Peter Pels, "Kizungu Rhythms: Luguru Christianity as Ngoma," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26 (1996); Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 324; John M. Janzen, "'Doing Ngoma': A Dominant Trope in African Religion and Healing," *Journal of Religion in Africa 21*, Fasc. 4 (1991); Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 640; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 123–4.

Note 24: Medicine is inclusive of all elements of healing or paths toward wellness.

Note 25: Bombwe, "Some Traditional Prayers," 253.

Note 26: For shrine references in Ruvu, see Lloyd Swantz, *The Medicine Man among the Zaramo of Dar es Salaam* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam Press, 1990), 120; L. Swantz, "Zaramo of Tanzania," 67.

Note 27: The use of spoken words/prayer involving ancestors represents a widespread religious tradition in the Bantu-speaking world. See, for instance, Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place*, 92, 111, 258–9; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 96.

Note 28: Bombwe, "Some Traditional Prayers," 254.

Note 29: Ibid., 256. Bombwe noted that separate prayers were made to God. And he gave the impression that it is a God that Lugulu people expect will respond. That understanding of God likely represented newer understandings associated with Christianity. However, he was clear that the usual way prayer was directed was to the ancestors, as it was believed that they are closer to God.

Note 30: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 50. Also see, Klieman, *"The Pygmies Were Our Compass,"* 74, 82; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 95.

Note 31: Tanzanian colonial officials inadvertently captured the essence of *mulungu* as both spirits and afflictions that called for *mganga* treatments in Vidunda communities. See "Kilosa Station, Vidunda Tribe," in *Native Affairs Ethnography* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania National Archive, no date). See M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbol*, 154; John Beattie, "Spirit Mediumship in Bunyoro," in *Spirit*

Mediumship and Society in Africa, ed. John Beattie and John Middleton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 161; Hans Cory and M. M. Hartnoll, *Customary Law of the Haya Tribe: Tanganyika Territory* (London: Percy Lund Humphries and Co., 1945), 113. According to Kesby, Langi (sometimes spelled Rangi) speakers of the Kati subgroup remembered that in the 1930s, when they were still young, *Mulungu* "God" was associated with the sun. He further noted that they said *Mulungu* caused calamity and for that reason they had to hold *ntambiko* (ceremonies of offering) in an effort to "beseech" him. Kesby concluded that they were speaking of God as a punishing God. But in fact he conflated the *mulungu* "nature spirit" that *could* bring on calamity with *Mulungu* "God," which would not. The association of sun with God in Langi came about because of a Southern Cushitic influence. John D. Kesby, "Progress and the Past among the Rangi of Tanzania," (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1982), 398, 149–50, 288. For a discussion of the history of **Mulungu* "God" and the acquisition of its Southern Cushitic nuance, see Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 167–8. See, for other examples, T. O. Beidelman, *The Cool Knife: Imagery of Gender, Sexuality, and Moral Education in Kaguru Initiation Ritual* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 90; T. O. Beidelman, *The Kaguru: A Matrilineal People of East Africa* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 35. Mawinza recognized the fact that ethnographers, colonial officials, and others generally mistook the distinction between **mulungu* "spirit" and **Mulungu* "Creator." See Mawinza, "Human Soul," 33.

Note 32: CS 712; Proto-Kaskazi **-lungu* "potentially evil spirit-type" associated with abandoned "hot" areas; e.g., Nyanja *kutena malungu* "have fever (be hot as to body)," *Nafa lelo malungu* "I have no 'go' today," *ku-gwa malungu* "be dazed, undone," *ku-kululuka malungu, ku-gooka malungu* "lose all power of mind and body from surprise, fear or illness"; Tshiluba "poison" vt. *-lunga* n. *mulungu*; Rundi *iki-runga (ibi-)* volcano (place of heat); Lima *mulungu* "devil"; Bondei *mulungu* "devil." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 620; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 60.

Note 33: Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 60.

Note 34: Beidelman, *Cool Knife*, 90; James L. Brain, "Kingalu: A Myth of Origin from Eastern Tanzania," *Anthropos* 66 (1971); L. Swantz, *Medicine Man*, 66–7. Swantz's ethnographic research highlighted the complex history of the **-lungu* spirit. Among the Zaramo it is often associated with a spirit that enters one's body and makes one ill. After having welcomed it the person is then "possessed" by it. They then become known in their communities as *lungu* spirit diviners. Additionally, among the Zaramo, *lungu* spirit are often associated with the Kolelo shrine located in the Ulugulu Mountains. This association among mediums, possession, and shrine sites is also found in Lugulu cosmology. See Mawinza, "Human Soul," 33. For further discussion see chapter 5.

Note 35: Wood, "Itinerating in Usagara, 1888," 24.

Note 36: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 50–1.

Note 37: Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 220.

Note 38: CS 646, 647; Proto-Bantu **-dog-* "to bewitch"; PR **kuloga* "to bewitch"; e.g., Rundi *ku-roga* "bewitch, poison"; Bemba *-lowa (lowele)* v.t. "to bewitch, cast a spell over"; *lowe fyela* "to make incantation so that the iron ore smelts successfully"; *-lowana* "to bewitch one another"; Runyankore/Rukiga *abarogi* n. "witchdoctors"; *oburogo* "witchcraft"; Nkoya *ulothi* "witchcraft"; Kikuyu *rogora* v.t. "unbewitch"; Zigua *loga, ku-* "to bewitch"; Lenje v.t. *lowa* "to bewitch, put a spell upon, hurt or destroy by magic (spell, poison, etc.)." Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 299.

Note 39: Igor Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 5–10.

Note 40: Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 13, 26.

Note 41: Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest,* 95.

Note 42: Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 21.

Note 43: Ibid., 38–9.

Note 44: Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, 5–10.

Note 45: Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 21. For other examples, see Ivan Karp, "Beer Drinking and Social Experience in an African Society: An Essay in Formal Sociology," in *Explorations in African Systems of Thought*, ed. Ivan Karp and Charles S. Bird (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 97; Mnyampala, *The Gogo: History, Customs, and Traditions*, 110; Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship among the Gogo*, 97–104; T. O. Beidelman, *Case Studies in Anthropology* (San Francisco: Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 82. For examples outside of East Africa but still part of Bantu history and leadership roles, see Klieman, *"The Pygmies Were Our Compass,"* 154, 156–7, 173, 202–3; Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place,* 104–7; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 73–4.

Note 46: Nancy J. Farley, "Ideology and State Formation: The Ekie of Southern Zaire," in *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 92; Young and Fosbrooke, *Smoke in the Hills*, 41–4.

Note 47: Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 23; Young and Fosbrooke, *Smoke in the Hills*, 52–3.

Note 48: Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 167.

Note 49: For an example of this in Lugulu, see Mawinza, "Human Soul," 56.

Note 50: Murdock, *Africa: Its People and Their Culture History*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959).

Note 51: See chapter 5 in Ehret, *African Classical Age*.

Note 52: Ehret's view is that this kinship metaphor supplanted an older one that in deep-seated Bantu history connected matriclan unity with the symbolism of the house. This would have been inspired by interactions among Central Sudanians and Kaskazi communities. Ehret, *African Classical Age,* 149–55, 165. For a NECB example, see Brain, "Symbolic Rebirth" 177; Brain, "The Kwere of the Eastern Province," 231, 233–4. Kwere speakers also note *tombo* to name the matrilineage of the *-*kolo* matriclan. Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 627, 645.

Note 53: Ehret, *African Classical Age,* 155; Klieman, *"The Pygmies Were Our Compass,"* 70–2; Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place*, 100–1; Vansina, *How Societies,* 88–98; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest,* 153–8.

Note 54: Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 149–51.

Note 55: Beidelman, *Case Studies in Anthropology*, 49.

Note 56: Thomas O. Beidelman, "Kaguru Descent Groups (East-Central Tanzania)," *Anthropos* 66 (1971): 378.

Note 57: Ibid., 389.

Note 58: CS 1226, CS 1227; Proto-Bantu *-*kung-* "to tie up, to gather up"; e.g., Chaga *-*kungu* "bunch of fruit"; Bemba *cikungo (fi-) ca nkonde* "a bunch of bananas," *cikungo ce sabi* "a bunch of fish strung together," *cikungo ca nyanje* "ears of maize tied up in a bunch." In the sense of a grouping of matriclans, this root occurs outside of West Ruvu and Kagulu in Ngulu *kungugo* "matriclan" and Lugulu **ikungugo*. These two languages are spoken adjacent to, respectively, Kagulu and Sagala of West Ruvu, and both show borrowing influence from these neighbor languages, making it highly probable that the occurrence of the root in Ngulu and Lugulu is also a borrowing reflective

of the adoption of this institution from their neighbors in recent centuries. Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 594. See Rigby's discussion of the term in Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 85. See also, Beidelman, *Case Studies in Anthropology*, 51; Beidelman, "Kaguru Descent Groups," 374.

Note 59: "Kilosa Station, Vidunda Tribe."

Note 60: Beidelman, "Myth, Legend, and Oral History: A Kaguru Traditional Text," 84; J. T. Last, "A Visit to the Wa-itumba Iron Workers and the Mangaheri, near Mamboia, in East Central Africa," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5, no. 10 (1883): 592.

Note 61: "Kilosa Station, Vidunda Tribe."

Note 62: Brain, "The Kwere of the Eastern Province," 231.

Note 63: These exchanges are also found in oral traditions. See Mnyampala, *The Gogo: History, Customs, and Traditions*; Peter Rigby, *Cattle, Capitalism, and Class: Iparakuyo Maasai Transformations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

Note 64: PS 424; Swahili *mitala,* "polygamous marriage" (borrowed because of retained /l/; Nyanja *mitala* "polygamy"; Shambaa *mtaa* "polygamy"; Nkoya *kitâla-matâla* "house." The diversity of meanings suggests there was a Mashariki root for a matrilineal settlement that developed multivalent meanings in later eras. The derivation of this word may have an etymology in **-tada*, variously village, homestead, ward of village, or house in various Eastern-Savanna Bantu languages and, for example, proto-Sabaki **mutala* "quarter of a village." Such a range of meanings might best be explained by an original intermediate sense, "large household, and portion of a village." If so, a shift to the meaning "polygynous household" with multiple houses would make sense as the way in which the further meaning "polygynous marriage" arose. Brain, "Symbolic Rebirth," 177; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 621; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 103–4. For Gogo *mitala* as polygamous marriage. See Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 180.

Note 65: Examples of this emphasis are found in the ethnography. On this point, see Beidelman, *The Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Tanzania,* 18, 35; Brain, "Symbolic Rebirth," 177; L. Swantz, "Zaramo of Tanzania," 28–9; Marja-Liisa Swantz, *Blood, Milk, and Death: Body Symbols and the Power of Regeneration Among the Zaramo of Tanzania* (Westport, Conn.: Bergin and Garvey, 1995), 127.

Note 66: L. Swantz, "Zaramo of Tanzania," 28.

Note 67: "From Provincial Commissioner, Eastern Province 6th Sept. 1944," in 32511 (Ref 1/C/494: Tanzania National Archives, 1944).

Note 68: M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbol,* 89.

Note 69: CS 1020; Proto-Mashariki **-kááyà* "home village"; PR **-kaya* "home"; e.g., Tsonga *kaya*, *ma-* "home," *kaya*, adv. "home"; Zigua "a village, abode." Beidelman, *Moral Imagination in Kaguru Modes of Thought*, 53; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki,* 626; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 91.

Note 70: Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 248.

Note 71: In Gogo it is the interior court of a gated homestead, the "cattle byre." Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 171; Mara Mabilia, *Breast Feeding and Sexuality: Behavior, Beliefs, and Taboos among Gogo Mothers in Tanzania,* trans. Mary S. Ash (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 29.

Note 72: CS 190–193; Proto-Bantu **-bùgà* "open place"; Proto-Wami **-bùgà* "open space"; e.g., Zigua *mbuga* "resting place." The preservation of /*b*/ instead of the expected /*w*/ or /*Ø*/ is likely due to the widespread noun **mbuga* "plains" in Bantu languages. Wami languages usually preserve a /*b*/ in nasal cluster environments, Ruvu preserved /*b*/ when the semantic shift occurred and new prefix

substituted for **m-*. Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 314; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 647; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 71; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 270–1. Mnyampala, *The Gogo: History, Customs, and Traditions*, 128.

Note 73: Beidelman, *Moral Imagination*, 56–7, 59.

Note 74: CS 897; Proto-Bantu **-gunda* "garden"; e.g., Zigua *mgunda* (*mi-*) "a field, plantation"; Yao *mgunda* "garden"; Lenje *munda, miunda* n. "plantation, garden." Additional Ruvu words used to name small cultivated areas of land are **kihati* and *mululu* in Gogo and Kagulu. Their etymologies need further research. Beidelman, *Kaguru: A Matrilineal*, 16; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 619; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 51.

Note 75: Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 173.

Note 76: Proto-Ruvu **-kano* "indoor raised storehouse." Contemporary Lugulu speakers define it as an outdoor storage area while other Ruvu-language speakers reported that it was a storage space found indoors.

Note 77: This is an Eastern Sahelian loanword in Langi "granary hut." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 316; See, for example, Beidelman, *Moral Imagination,* 56; Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 173. Oral histories support this interpretation. See, for instance, Beidelman, "Myth, Legend, and Oral History: A Kaguru Traditional Text"; Mnyampala, *The Gogo: History, Customs, and Traditions.*

Note 78: CS 1666; Proto-Kaskazi **-tándà* "sleeping mat." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 311; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 608.

Note 79: PS 290x and 290; Proto-Bantu **-kékà* "mat." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 310; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki,* 618.

Note 80: CS 1524; Proto-Bantu **-pìnd-* "to plait"; Proto-Kaskazi **-pìndà* "woven bast sack"; CS 1524; Proto-Kaskazi **-ambI* "large palm mat." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 311.

Note 81: Author interviews, Tanzania, 1998–1999. Swantz notes that an exception to female mat-making was the undecorated *jamvi* Zaramo men plaited. L. Swantz, "Zaramo of Tanzania," 84.

Note 82: Ibid., 83.

Note 83: Swantz identifies the *mkindu* wild-date palm as the source of the preferred and finest leaves for plaiting. See L. Swantz, "Zaramo of Tanzania," 83. Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 619

Note 84: Proto-Kaskazi **-kapo* "small basket"; Proto-Kaskazi **-sege* "basket likely made of palm fiber." Lenje *katundu* "basket." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 310–1; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 633, 641.

Note 85: CS 795; Forest-Savanna Bantu **-gèd-* "to measure"; Proto-Kaskazi **-gelo* "measuring basket"; e.g., Lakes Rutara branch, Kerebe *omugelo*; Tsonga *mugero*, *mi-* "furrow, water-furrow, ditch." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki,* 588; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 260.

Note 86: PS 85; **-céd-* "clean," possible root source. Mashariki **-sel-* "to winnow"; PESB **-sele* "basket"; e.g., Lenje *chisele* "basket." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 645. CS 1601; Mashariki **-pùng-* "fan, winnow"; PNECB **-ungo* "winnowing basket"; e.g., Zigua *kihungu* "flat, round basket for sifting flour; Giryama *lungo* "winnowing basket"; Unguja *ungo* "winnowing basket." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 314; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki,* 605, 621, 671.

Note 87: It is worth noting that although identified mats and baskets have been centered here, there are likely a number of additional woven items related to fishing and hunting whose names could be reconstructed that were not researched for this project.

Note 88: Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power*, 206–210. Saidi, *Nacimbusa*, Chapter 4.

Note 89: Opinions on this matter varied. Author interviews, Tanzania, 1998–1999. For example, in some Zaramo communities there were views that only certain clans could produce pottery or iron. See M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbol*, 147–8.

Note 90: Ibid., 67.

Note 91: Author interviews, Tanzania, 1998–99. Eugenia Herbert highlights the importance of insuring "bloodless" potting endeavors as evidence of the intersection of beliefs and technology in sub-Saharan Africa. Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power*, 215. It is important to note that my informants all provided this information on the basis of memory. While none of them were potters themselves, they often produced many of the tools that their ancestors used in pottery making as a means of assuring me that they were privy to the processes when they were young girls.

Note 92: Saidi, *Nacimbusa*, Chapter 4.

Note 93: Ibid.; Author interviews, Tanzania, 1998–1999.

Note 94: M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbol*, 185, fn. 11. Similarly, she reported that Kwere speakers and inland-lying Zaramo also reported having *mhungi, pungi* "cults."

Note 95: Beidelman, *Matrilineal Peoples*, 19; M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbol*, 185.

Note 96: Beidelman, *Cool Knife*, 150.

Note 97: CS 667; Proto-Savanna Bantu **-dongo* "soil, clay"; PNECB **-longo* "soil, clay"; e.g., Lenje *ŵulongo* n. "earth, clay, mud plaster." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 648.

Note 98: Ehret, *A Historical-Comparative Reconstruction of Nilo-Saharan*, 623.

Note 99: CS 199, 200; Proto-Bantu **-bumb-* "to lump together"; e.g., Lenje *muŵunshi* "potter," *chiŵumba* "anything made of clay, moulded, by a potter," *ŵumba*, v. "make of clay, mould, fashion, create." Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 292; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 668.

Note 100: CS 119; Proto-Wami **-bìgà* "pot"; e.g., Zigua *biga* (*ma-*) "a water-jar"; Yao *wiga*, *chi-* "a pot or vessel of any kind"; Lenje *luŵia*/*chiŵia* "earthen pot." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 630, 635. CS 2173; Proto-Bantu **-(j)ùngú* "cooking pot" Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 311; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 626, 636, 644; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 292.

Note 101: CS 669; PESB **-nongo* "clay pot"; e.g., Lamba *inongo* "bathing pot"; Lenje *nongo*, n. "earthen vessel for water, cooking." CS 1620; Proto-Mashariki **-pÚkò* "bag"; e.g., Zigua *fuko ma-* "a beer-jar"; Chopi *fuko/tifuko* "pot." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 619; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 292. **-Fuko* also carried a widespread meaning as "bag" and may represent a later application of the bag-type container to a pot container.

Note 102: CS 982; Proto-Bantu **-kàdaŋg-* "fry, roast"; Kaskazi **-kalango* "small (meat?) cooking pot"; e.g., Makua (*ikhalango*); Shambala *kikaango* "frying pot"; and Chaga-Dabida, Njombe, Langi, Rufiji-Ruvuma, Takama, Kilombero, Lakes, and Rungwe. Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 591.

Note 103: CS 1695 and 1696a; Proto-Bantu **-tédik-* "cook or boil"; Proto-Savanna Bantu "put (pot) on the fire"; Kaskazi areal distribution **-teleko* "cooking pot"; e.g., Makua *ntereko*/*ma-* "pot."

Note 104: CS 1548; Proto-Northeast-Coastal Bantu **-pIgà* "cooking stone"; e.g., Zigua *figa*, *ma-* "cooking-stove." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 624.

Note 105: M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbo*l, 123, 153–54.

Note 106: CS 1496; Mashariki *-*pét*- "winnow." Sagala use a different verb *-*halul*-. This term likely entered their vocabulary through their relations with a Njombe language community. The Njombe appear to form the center of an areal distribution of this word that also extends south into the Ngoni language of the Rufiji-Ruvuma branch of Kaskazi.

Note 107: CS 1891; Proto-Mashariki *-*bàlà/*-yàdá* "flat rock."

Note 108: Eastern Sahelian **túr* "to pound (with tool)." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 302.

Note 109: CS 1807; Proto-Wami *-*toho* "mortar"; e.g., Zigua *mtoho*, *mi*- "mortar"; Its source root is *T_1ò:p'* "to strike (thing)." See Ehret, *Historical-Comparative Reconstruction of Nilo-Saharan*, 443.

Note 110: CS 2076; Proto-Savanna Bantu **musi* "pestle"; e.g., Lamba n. *umunsi* (*imi*-) "pestle"; Tsonga pl. *musi* "pestle, stamper"; Lenje *muinshi*, *mwinshi* n. (*minshi*) "pestle, pole for pounding grain." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 621.

Note 111: Njombe Loanword in Sagala and Kagulu.

Note 112: Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 611.

Note 113: Proto-Central-East Ruvu **mtwanzi* "woman." See, for example, Mawinza, "Human Soul," 14; Beidelman, *Cool Knife*, 128.

Note 114: CS 2005 and CS 2055; Proto-Savanna Bantu *-*iko* "type of spoon/ladle"; e.g., Lenje *mwiko*/*miko*, n. "large spoon, ladle"; Zigua *lwiko ny*-, *mwiko mi*- "ladle." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 623.

Note 115: Swahili *-babata*, *ku* "to tap, strike lightly, as a worker in metal beating metal to make it thin."

Note 116: CS 765; Proposed Eastern Sahelian loanword in Proto-Kaskazi *-*gàdì* "mush"; PNECB *-*ugàlì* "mush"; e.g., Zigua *ugali* "staple food made of flour." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 305, 315; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 647.

Note 117: Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 119.

Note 118: An additional term for a porridge stirrer, *-*paga*, is found in Kagulu, Sagala, and Gogo. Based on its retention of the word-initial /p/, it is probably borrowed, but the source is not yet known.

Note 119: CS 1020; Proto-Mashariki *-*kááyà* "home village"; PR *-*kaya* "home"; Tsonga *kaya*, *ma*- "home," *kaya*, adv. "home"; Zigua "a village, abode." Nurse and Hinnebusch, 626; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 89, 91.

Note 120: CS 568; Proto-Bantu *-*dim*- "cultivate (especially with a hoe)." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 597, 633; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 49.

Note 121: Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 164–9.

Note 122: Proto-Wami *-*bago* "forest or bush covered land"; e.g., in Zigua *mbago ma*- "a wood or forest."

Note 123: M. Swantz, *Ritual and Symbo*l, 184.

Note 124: Beidelman, *Cool Knife*, 89.

Note 125: Southern Cushitic Ma'a *roró* "plain"; proto-Ruvu *-*lolo* "valley." Ehret, *The Historical Reconstruction of Southern Cushitic Phonology and Vocabulary*, 219; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 272.

Note 126: Southern Cushitic Ma'a *igemo* "slope"; Proto-Ruvu *-*gema* "riverbank." The final vowel difference is likely attributed to the source for the word evident in a now-extinct Usambara sister dialect of Ma'a, Iraqw *geena?i* "slope."

Note 127: Proto-Wami *-*kolongo* "valley"; e.g., Zigua *kolongo, ma-* "a pit, ravine"; Swahili *-korongo* (*ma-*) "valley." Because Swahili shows /r/ it represents a word transfer after the proto-Swahili period.

Note 128: CS 1658; Proto-Mashariki *-*támbadad-* "sprawl." CS 2002; Proto-Mashariki *-*yìkà* or -*nyìkà* "savanna."

Note 129: CS 14; Proto-Savanna Bantu *-*bàlà* "open space, country"; proto-Ruvu *-*bàlà* "grassland."

Note 130: CS 321; Proto-Ruvu *-*seng-* "to cut" and "cut, cleared space."

Note 131: CS 455 and 456; Proto-Ruvu *-*lale* derives from *-*laala* by addition of *-*i*, a locative suffix: *-*laala* + *-*i* > *-*laale*, then *-*lale* by regular Ruvu loss of vowel length; e.g., Lenje *chilala*, n. "cultivated ground disused, fallow"; Sukuma *lilala*/*ma-* "fallow land"; Lamba *icilala* (*ifi-*) "fallow ground." Ehret reconstructed *-*lala*-"grassland" or "sparsely wooded steppe" in the Kusi branch of Mashariki Bantu. This may be a secondary meaning derived from the idea of grassland as land that is left fallow for a period, which would be grass-laden land. Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 299; Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, 57.

Note 132: CS 371a; Proto-Bantu *-*cokul-* "to pull out"; PNECB *-*cokol-* "to pull out, to clear"; PR *-*sokola* "fallow land"; e.g., Zigua *sokola, ku-* "to clear out, to free from dirt"; Shambaa *sokola*; Yao *sokola, ku-* "to scoop"; Lenje *-sokola* v. "draw out, extract"; Bemba *misokolo* n. "a village in construction; *pa masokolo* "at the new village where they are constructing"; *-coka (cokile)* v.i. "to leave a place" appl. *-cokela*. Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 582.

Note 133: PS 85; Proto-Bantu *-*céd-* "clean"; PNECB "land readied for planting"; PR "prepared but unsown land"; e.g., Zigua *uselu* "a field under cultivation"; Tsonga *sela ku-* "to cover plants with soil." Nurse and Hinnebusch, 647.

Note 134: PS 60; Proto-Savanna Bantu *-*cádà* "functional plot of farmland"; e.g., Forest-Bantu languages, Bobangi and Mongo, and in Western-Savanna Ndonga. Proto-Eastern Savanna Bantu, e.g., Lamba, Yao, and Tumbuka "unused or deserted fields." Note that as in *-*lale*, Ruvu languages add *-*i* locative, which is why Kagulu converts *-*sala* to *-*sale*.

Note 135: The Kagulu termed a *migunda* that was positioned adjacent to rivers *malolo*, while those fields not near a river were called *migunda*. Beidelman, *Kaguru: A Matrilineal*, 16.

Note 136: CS 897; Proto-Bantu *-*gunda* "garden"; e.g., Zigua *mgunda* (*mi-*) "a field, plantation"; Yao *mgunda* "garden"; Lenje *munda, miunda* n. "plantation, garden." *Vigunda* shows the plural diminutive prefix /*vi-*/ to connote the small size of gardens kept close to homes. Beidelman, *Kaguru: A Matrilineal*, 16–7; Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 173.

Note 137: Author interviews, Tanzania, 1998–1999.

Note 138: Ehret, *The Historical Reconstruction of Southern Cushitic Phonology and Vocabulary*, 139. PSC *boohare* Southern Cushitic Ma'a *bure* "short rains"; Proto-PNECB *-*bUli* "short rains, lesser rains"; e.g., Zigua *vuli ma-* "lesser rainy season." Proto-Mashariki *-*limo* "spring?"; PNECB *-*limo* "short rains." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 183, 331. Proto-Ruvu's descendant Lugulu speakers, some time after the eleventh century, innovated or borrowed the word *minga* for this season of lesser rains. The term's etymology is not reconstructed.

Note 139: CS 1748; Proto-Mashariki *-*tíkà* "seasonal heavy rains"; PNECB *masika* "rainy season"; Proto-Wami *masika* "great rains"; e.g., Zigua *masika* "great rains." Ehret, *African Classical Age*, 190; Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 629.

Note 140: Njombe *-*fuku* "rainy season." In Ruvu languages it attests a final *u instead of the expected regular proto-West Ruvu *o (*-*fuku* instead of the expected *-*fuko*), so it is likely a transfer from Southern Kaskazi *-*fuku* that ultimately is of proto-Kaskazi *-*tUko*. See CS 499. Many speakers of descendant Ruvu languages use *kiangazi* to name their "hot, dry season." Its etymology is connected to the verb stem *-*dàŋg*, "to shine brightly." In Ruvu languages its shape shows the Swahili loss of **l* (**d*). Had Ruvu speakers inherited the word from their proto-Ruvu ancestors, the expected Ruvu shape would be *-*langanzi*, with the **l* preserved. It is thus a Swahili loanword in Ruvu languages.

Note 141: CS 101; Proto-Kaskazi *-*bibi* "rubbish heap"; Proto-Ruvu **wiwi* "rake"; e.g., *wiwi* "heap of trash"; e.g., Lenje *chiûviûvi* "fallen trees, piles of sticks, branches, etc"; Lenje *liûviûvi, ma-* n. "litter of felled trees, broken branches, etc. in making a clearing"; *-ûviûvi* adj. "bad, ugly"; Zigua n. *wiwi ma-* "heap (of rubbish in fields)." Nurse and Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki*, 631.

Note 142: CS 105; Proto-Wami *-*wili* "collective work"; e.g., Zigua *uwili* "work (of laborers)"; CS 285, 286; Proto-Bantu *-*càŋg-* "to mix up"; Proto-Savanna Bantu *-*càŋg-* "to assemble"; Gogo "collective work party(?)." Brain, "The Kwere of the Eastern Province," 232; Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 173. Rigby reports that *wasanji* are co-wives that help each other in agriculture.

Note 143: Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 40. Rigby suggests that sociocultural practices exhibited during *chisanji* are fundamental to Gogo cosmologies. He also discusses many aspects of the *chisanji*, specifically many of the gendered components it involves. For another example, see Beidelman, *Matrilineal Peoples*, 23.

Note 144: Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 39.

Note 145: Ibid.

Note 146: Ibid., 38.

Note 147: Vuorela, *The Women's Question and the Modes of Human Reproduction*, 139.

Note 148: Ibid., 139.

Note 149: Beidelman, *Moral Imagination*, 52.

Note 150: Hans Cory, *Sukuma Law and Customs* (Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1953), 120.

Note 151: Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, 54.

