Introduction

This book is about early history in central-east Tanzania. Tanzania's central coastal and hinterland regions have been home to peoples of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds for millennia. These areas, like many along what is often called the "Swahili Corridor," were among the first in Africa to engage in regular, long-distance transoceanic trade. For more than 2,000 years, since as long ago as the last century BCE, people living along the central Tanzania coast have played a part in brokering webs of intercontinental economies that connected people who lived in the interior of Tanzania with those of societies that abutted the Indian Ocean and beyond. People who lived in hinter-coastal communities in those early times, as well as in recent centuries, have long lived with an awareness that their communities form part of a large global network. 1

This book brings to center stage for the first time the long-term history of a region that has for centuries been a mediating zone in the interaction of coast and interior. The Ruvu group of societies, speakers of ten languages currently spoken across a large block of central-east Tanzania, comprise the heirs in culture and language of the societies that have occupied these territories for the past 1,500 years. The book chronicles the histories that gave rise to this complex of peoples, beginning in the period when their earliest common linguistic ancestor first emerged in the region as a spoken language in the middle centuries of the first millennium CE. We identify that early language as proto-Ruvu because its speakers, the proto-Ruvu society, likely formed their earliest communities astride the Ruvu River. Although the book's central subjects are the speakers of proto-Ruvu's descendant languages, Ruvu history is embedded within a broader historical framework. Understanding that the proto-Ruvu language and society derived from a long history of language—and thus societal—divergences in earlier periods of Bantu history is key to understanding the significance of Ruvu societies in East African history and in the wider framework of Bantu cultural history. 2

The research to recover Ruvu history had three primary goals. The first was to reconstruct a narrative account of the ways ancestral Ruvu languages diverged, giving rise eventually to the ten extant languages that comprise the Ruvu subgroup. The second aim was to recover information about the material and sociocultural features of Ruvu communities in early eras. The third objective was to build a framework of conceptual ideas and worldviews that informed the choices and strategies Ruvu people made as they built and sustained their communities. 3

Homing in on these matters has revealed important information about Ruvu history. The data demonstrate that Ruvu-speaking peoples carried facets of their inherited Bantu worldviews, ideology, and knowledge forward as they diverged from their ancestral speech communities. 4

And they also reveal the intentional ways Ruvu descendants reinterpreted their inherited understandings to meet the diverse and immediate needs of their lives. The tenacious persistence of Ruvu peoples as long-term historical actors owes a great deal to worldviews and ideologies they inherited and adapted from their Bantu ancestors, which formed the basis for the creation, organization, and management of their communities.

5 Ruvu long-term histories are multivalent, but salient and informative themes emerge consistently from the language data used to recover them. They show that Ruvu peoples proffered an integrated understanding of the complex ways in which such temporal matters as illness, lineal and social responsibility, agricultural fecundity, and female fertility were linked dialectically to the numinous spheres of ancestral and nature spirits. Ruvu people, like their Bantu forebears, lived their lives with a fundamental understanding that balancing these omnipresent relationships was essential for contending effectively with life and for guaranteeing the future of their communities. Furthermore, it was clear to Ruvu people that although aspects of their episteme were rooted in foundational knowledge inherited from earlier ancestors, they were still required to recreate ideologies and temporal sociocultural institutions continuously to satisfy the demands of spirit forces and to meet the needs arising from their temporal contexts.

6 A primary way Ruvu people demonstrated this understanding was in their expressed religious beliefs. Principal among those expressions were religio-ritual ceremonies, which represented the institutional embodiments of their religious understandings. For Ruvu people, communicating with spirit forces played a fundamental role in how well they lived. They also understood that spirits were fluid entities. Spirits made specific demands on living people and communities. Ruvu people understood that ignoring spirit requests meant that their communities might not thrive. As Ruvu people moved about creating new homes and communities on the central-east Tanzania landscape, they remained mindful of these precepts and took great care to consider the spirit world as they negotiated the reality of their day-to-day lives. Their desire to have strong and lasting communities ensured that an array of religio-ritual ceremonies that met spirit demands were commonplace. Although the expressions of these observances varied, their rationale rested on the enduring understanding that the ethereal and temporal worlds were eternally interconnected.

7 Although Ruvu religious beliefs and expressions were critically important for community well-being, Ruvu-speaking people also knew that community sustainability depended on their maintenance of sociocultural institutions. For example, Ruvu people recognized the importance of initiation rites as a means of educating people about physical maturity and its associated social and religious responsibilities. They also valued health care practitioners and the healing treatments they offered because they helped to restore and maintain individual and community health. Ruvu-speaking people also recognized important political units that ordered their communities. They practiced uxorilocal marriage, and they managed inheritance

along the line of a woman's matrilineage. These institutions, among others, were viewed as legitimate in the eyes of community members because they were simultaneously crafted to meet the contemporary needs and expectations of their constituent members and anchored in historically shared ideological principles.

Based on these understandings, I would maintain that, just as establishing the framework for the history of language divergence is critical to understanding the historical movement and interactions that Ruvu communities engaged in over time, so also a command of local epistemologies is essential to the historian's uncovering the accompanying social historical developments that give weight and substance to that history. Ruvu peoples' epistemological understandings were broad and pliable, but they were entrenched in the core cognitive processes that people "on the ground" used to make reasonable sense of their worlds and to come to decisions about their lives. Local epistemologies guided the intellectual processes people applied in the practical day-to-day affairs that created and sustained their communities. These were dialectical processes. Viewed in this way, it should be clear that this book will not argue that Ruvu—or any—history was static or predetermined. Nor does it constitute an attempt to romanticize or create an altruistic picture of Bantu-descended epistemology or Bantu societies. Rather, it highlights that core epistemologies anchored in Bantu and sometimes even more ancient Niger-Congo eras endured *because* they were continuously and collectively reinterpreted and expressed in any given moment.[1] **8**

The Evolution of the Project

This project did not begin as an effort to understand the history of how people in central-east Tanzania interpreted, shaped, and engaged with their ever-changing world. I began the first stint of my research for the original manuscript armed with requisite graduate student curiosity, a Western-feminist-influenced research agenda, and training in historical-linguistic methods. With these I aspired to make a contribution to the scholarship on "the early history of gender in Africa." Once I arrived in Tanzania, however, I learned fairly quickly that I was carrying way too much baggage, namely, a load of assumptions. I had anticipated that people would reveal to me the what, when, where, why, and how of gendered roles, and others matters associated with them. Once I shed my expectations, my shrewd informants took me through a series of lessons whose emphases instructed me instead on how they took on and managed everyday life challenges. **9**

Over time, I learned about what mattered most to them. Though I was not immediately sure what the data were going to permit me to write, it was clear to me that they were educating me about what they thought I should care about. I submitted to their teachings. They shared stories about the ways in which they paved the way for their immediate and longer-term **10**

survival. They insisted that to be successful they had to give attention to many intersecting matters. What particularly piqued my curiosity was that again and again their descriptions and strategies seamlessly traversed what I perceived as distinct temporal and metaphysical realms. For example, during the course of our conversations many people centered their discussions on issues connected to food production and access to clean water, which were directly linked to rights of land use and reliable precipitation. Those, in turn, were tied up in beliefs about the role of spirit forces as well as the authority of influential leaders in their communities. Also of primacy in our conversations were the ongoing challenges they faced in maintaining physical and mental wellness. They especially highlighted the challenges posed by affliction brought on by social circumstances as well as bodily illnesses that seemingly emanated from within. In their views disease etiologies often involved more than environmental pathogens and the physical body. They involved ethereal forces.

11 What unfolded over many sessions with consultants was rich information, but the data I collected posed a fundamental challenge for me because they were leading me toward subjects I had not anticipated, particularly matters of the ethereal and epistemological. As the data mounted, I felt pressed to reframe my project based on these data, but felt apprehensive about doing so. Once I returned home, I realized that my unease was spawned by the fact that, at many points, I had wanted to name what people were talking about religion. Intuitively, I bit my tongue about tagging it as such because I had long grown circumspect about the way religion in Africa is handled in Western academe. My response was to stay away, to not broach the topic as religion, at least not directly. Instead, I looked to the ways anthropologists addressed spiritual and temporal matters and decided to write a history of belief and practice in Ruvu societies. Although I knew that what I was doing was distinct from anthropologists because I was recovering the transformative *histories* of those matters over a long historical period, I was not satisfied that I had circumvented the matter of religion.

12 After doing further research across a range of academic disciplines, it struck me that we—Western trained scholars—have not done enough to challenge ill-constructed approaches to African epistemology and religious history, particularly when they involve matters rooted in transcendental or spiritual domains. It became apparent that approaches to religious expressions and their underlying episteme are commonly swept under the rug. Through our collective silence, however, we have participated in perpetuating the predominant assumption that things we would identify as religion remained unchanged in Africa until encounters and upheavals associated with Euro/Western presence and eventual occupation came to pass. Tied to this misperception, and particularly problematic, is that in popular media, and even in our classrooms, religion and philosophy in Africa are rarely discussed in ways that suggest there *could be* a history or histories to tell at all. Instead, audiences are commonly presented simplistic, misleading messages and images about religion in Africa. For instance, Christianity and Islam are sometimes used merely as a way to explain the background of conflicts on the

continent. The causes of such conflict are attributed to the introduction of "world religions" to Africa. The inferences audiences commonly make is that Africans did not know how to handle "civilized" religions. Alternatively, when discussions of indigenous religions do arise, audiences typically learn about a pre-colonial Africa that was engaged in "primitive" or "pagan" practices prior to Christian contact. Beyond these there often is a clear silence about Africa's deep religious history, or the possibility thereof.

13 These constructs of Africa's past, whether generated by misguided information or uninformed silences, must be confronted directly. Since they are contrary to what I believe the great majority of Africanist historians accept as accurate, we should all be committed to challenging them. We can begin by acknowledging that the gaps in our knowledge did not happen by accident, nor do they persist as such. They are inextricably linked to hegemonic epistemologies that are revealed in a number of guises. For instance, they are anchored in the racist paradigms in which things thought indigenous to Africa are assumed to be primordial. This paradigm is present when people do not care to know more or when they do not bother themselves with searching for deeper and surely more complex historically supported answers. It is present when Africa is presumed to have no ancient history of religion or philosophy worthy of inquiry, let alone one that measures up to the standard of "world religions." The collateral effect of these acts of disregard for the history of Africa's religious and epistemological past is that they by default contribute to perpetuating the fundamentally racist presumptions that abound about Africa and Africans more generally. If it is not racism on bio-evolutionary grounds that people accept the premise of African inferiority, then it is on their so-called lack of spiritual/intellectual evolution that they are judged substandard. This is to say that if Africans are not assessed as biologically primordial—a notion we still fight vigorously— then their spiritual or intellectual evolution is alternatively labeled "unevolved."

14 These hegemonic epistemological paradigms are a direct reflection of knowledge as eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century Eurocentric people with varying interests in Africa proffered it. As it suited them, they construed images that depicted an Africa that lacked developed technologies, economies, political institutions, and even religious sensibilities in order to prove Africa's lack of "civilization."[2] Because these represent persistent and usually silent historical discourses, the challenges facing scholars who seek to write early African history are often insidious. In other words, it seems epistemologically "natural" for us to be uncritical of damaging biases as well as their consequences, regardless of our well-meaning intentions. The naturalness of what transpires—which is that it is tolerable to leave African religious and epistemological history out of the historical equation—is the unfortunate result. The effects of this are that the histories of religious expressions and their

underlying episteme in African societies are assumed to be invalid, irrelevant, or homogenous before they are known. This leads, however obliquely, to perpetuating misleading preconceptions that are left unaddressed in our work.

None of us lives outside of the framework of our inherited episteme.[3] We can, however, train ourselves to be mindful of the ways they influence our analyses. That acknowledged, I am under no illusion that my attempt to address such matters in early African history will be unflawed. However, remembering that it is not a historian's job to decide or judge what constitutes "Truth" encourages me. I thus strive only to carefully and conscientiously represent these histories as I have come to understand them. The goal is to contribute a sense of the historical depth and dimension of religious and intellectual archetypes in early African history that at best are presumed dynamic but unknowable, but are more regularly dismissed altogether. **15**

Toward the goal of recovery, I employed methodological and critical approaches proffered by scholars working on issues of epistemology, indigenous knowledge, religion, gender, philosophy, and linguistics to write these histories. **16**

Book Chapters

This book is foremost about the Ruvu societies that emerged within the last two millennia. As their histories of knowledge and material culture are presented, an effort is made, where possible, to point out which aspects were inherited from their Bantu-speaking ancestors. This approach is particularly effective in showing how local knowledge was anchored simultaneously in lived experience and inherited understandings. These elements of past and present, I would maintain, weighed in on the cognitive processes that Ruvu used to establish priorities and make choices in their day-to-day lives. Those decisions and their practical effects are what comprise their histories. **17**

Chapter 1 introduces the principal methodological approaches and data that were mined in writing this book. It outlines the usefulness of linguistic methods for reconstructing histories of societies for which written historical documentation is lacking. It argues that language is a powerful testament of ideas and culture and for these reasons it is among the most democratic sources we can use to reconstruct history. Language is a reflection of the cumulative memory of its speakers. Quite literally, it embodies what they chose to remember. Equally important, language often preserves, hidden in the earlier derivations of its words, concepts and ways of looking at the world that are no longer current. It can, for example, capture people's **18**

innovations and their abstract concepts, and it brings into relief moments when their relationships with speakers of other languages led them to adopt words—and thus the ideas and things those words express—that were previously foreign to them.

19 After explaining how the linguistic method was applied to the Ruvu languages, the chapter presents a narrative account of the way the proto-Ruvu language and its descendants diverged over an approximate 1,200-year period. I then explain how Ruvu history is part of the longer eras of Bantu and Niger-Congo history. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the foremost challenges to writing Ruvu peoples' early history.

20 Chapter 2 shows how the Ruvu languages are one subgroup among many that diverged from proto-Mashariki Bantu, a language that was spoken in the early part of the last millennium BCE in the African Great Lakes region. In little more than a millennium, Mashariki-descendant language speakers established communities that stretched to the eastern and southeastern areas of the African continent. Because these communities were producers of many implements, archaeologists have been able to locate evidence of their material culture. Homing in on the archaeological work that has been done in central-east Tanzania, I present a synthesis of the archaeological and linguistic-derived findings and show that their conclusions correlate in detailed and mutually confirmative ways.

21 Working from lexical reconstructions, chapter 3 introduces aspects of the worldview that guided proto-Ruvu speakers as they established their communities. It shows that many of the ideological principles they embraced were derived from ancient knowledge and precepts that their early Bantu ancestors also held to. I then present details of the material makeup of their societies. This discussion covers, for example, the types of implements used in food storage and cooking, and the types of furnishings they kept. It also includes the likely layout of their homesteads and the ways they named and organized their communities. Beyond that, the chapter draws attention to the types of pottery they created, used, and named. It makes the case that their potteries are what archaeologists should expect to find all over central-east Tanzania. Finally, the ways they conceptualized and used land is discussed.

22 As is common in many societies the world over, Ruvu believed that people who attain certain levels of physical maturation should bear particular knowledge and responsibilities. Chapter 4 turns to the ways that Ruvu communities educated and socialized members of their communities. Emphasizing the histories of religio-ritual ceremonies and their underlying rationales, I examine the way Ruvu peoples took conscientious care in guiding people into life positions, from pregnancy to adulthood, that they valued in their societies. Ruvu people believed that each stage of life carried particular vulnerabilities, and because of that they took

special care to guarantee successful passage into each one. Their religio-ritual ceremonies were sanctioned methods of creating social fabrics that built on normative social patterns and statuses anchored in local reasoning and needs.

Chapter 5 moves away from the body as a site of reproduction and responsibility, toward an examination of the way Ruvu people explained and treated illness. It begins with an introduction to the ways Ruvu assessed disease etiology. I argue that disease etiology was categorized in three ways. In Ruvu peoples' views, affliction came about as a result of environmental pathogens, witchcraft, and/or the work of spirit forces. When disease or suffering struck individuals and communities, Ruvu people sometimes turned to diviner-doctors, whose powers included the ability to tap into the spirit world to discern etiology. Diviner-doctors also prepared and disseminated remedies in their communities. Additional health practitioners important in Ruvu history have included birth attendants and circumcisers. This chapter also argues that *-*tambiko*, religio-ritual ceremonies, were an essential element in all attempts to heal and prevent affliction. Their primary purpose was to foster communication between temporal being and ethereal forces toward a goal of securing and maintaining health and prosperity. Finally, a number of physical medicines Ruvu people used are discussed. **23**

Chapter 6, the book's final chapter, departs from the thematic approach used in preceding chapters. It provides an overview that uses the full breadth of the evidence presented in the book to create a narrative that breaks the nearly 2,000-year history into four chief epochs. The first of these establishes the ethno-linguistic composition of local populations and the establishment of the transoceanic economic enterprises along central-east Tanzania's hinter-coastland up to about 500 CE. Following that, a second period, marked by the emergence of proto-Ruvu society and its course of divergence into three language descendants, took place over the second half of the first millennium CE. In this epoch some of the salient features of later Ruvu communities took shape. This chapter also reviews initial periods of contact between Ruvu peoples and other societies, both Bantu-speaking and non-Bantu, that formed the basis of persistent interactions. The subsequent periods, roughly 900 to 1400 and 1400 to 1800, examine regionally distinct ethnolinguistic cultures that emerged in central-east Tanzania. I argue that even though the Ruvu societies formed a distinct sociocultural cluster zone, they were still part of an interregional system that arose as a result of their geographical location and proximity to the world trade systems that took shape along the East-African coast. **24**

Approaches

25 If there is one frustration that historians of early history likely share when reading ethnographic accounts, it is the occasional tendency writers have to telescope the contents of their accounts into the deep past as if they were an omnipresent fixture of society. As tempting as it is to hypothesize about the likely roots of a cultural practice or idea based on its prevalence across distinct societies in the ethnographic present—and even though in fact such features commonly *do* represent continuities in ideas and such from times past—doing so without historical evidence amounts to conjecture. What reconstructed language evidence does is add weight to such inferences by showing that there were spoken words in early eras that named such practices and abstract concepts. And that is what this book is able to do, reconstructing word histories on the basis of the proposed language relationships and chronologies and combining them with published ethnographic accounts as well as ethnographic data collected by the author during fieldwork interviews.

26 Ethnographic accounts are helpful for a number of reasons. In many cases ethnographers, whatever their larger motive for gathering information about particular societies, often include in their works the words that name the things—societal practices, agricultural goods, medicine, religious ideas, and more—that interest them. What this allows the historian who pays attention to language evidence to do is to probe the histories of those words. One can extract words from the ethnographic record that can then be discussed with informants during fieldwork. In so doing, it usually opens up the opportunity to create a list of words associated with that word or sets of words. This allows one to collect the sets of words belonging to broader semantic fields, that is, words that are related in practice or as an aspect of the concepts or cultural practices whose history one seeks to study. Working from such lists the historian can then reconstruct the histories of suites of ideas or customs and begin to fill in the historical tableaux.

27 Another way that ethnography is useful, particularly when it is representative of the societies of speakers whose languages are being reconstructed, is that after vocabulary data sets and fieldwork interviews are completed, the ethnographic details of particular events that occurred in recent times can be assessed as expressions of a societal feature whose occurrence has been shown to belong to a proto-language society. It is important to note that using comparative ethnography for historical reconstruction does not necessarily require that things be now precisely as they were in times past, but rather that they serve as evidence that how people did or said certain things or what they believed long ago represent continuities from the past, and, although they may have undergone reinterpretation, at times significant and in other cases subtle, the foundational features lasted into the ethnographic present.

28 Although a great deal of ethnographic work has been carried out in central-east Tanzania, the ethnography of Ruvu societies is not among the most abundant. Nevertheless, the ethnographies that do exist provide a valuable resource for the comparative aspects of this work. The literature is particularly useful for offering examples of the way proto-language features from within the Ruvu group—and sometimes for eras that predate proto-Ruvu—persisted as important features of recent Ruvu societies. But just as importantly, the reconstructed histories of words related to items central in the ethnography permit one to offer historical critiques of mistaken inferences ethnographers have made. It is thus in these ways that they are assessed and contribute to recasting early-Ruvu history.

29 To approach the subject matters dealt with in this book I probed into many theoretical niches. The way I interpreted the works of a number of scholars across the disciplines has been central to framing the arguments presented here. Their scholarship often did more than add to my corpus of knowledge; they challenged the way I thought about knowledge. They frequently, and with a sense of urgency, questioned common approaches and assumptions evident in the historiography. Perhaps the most intellectually provocative was the work of philosopher T. Carlos Jacques. In "From Savages and Barbarians to Primitives: Africa, Social Typologies, and History in Eighteenth-Century French Philosophy," he makes a compelling argument for the need to consciously challenge the historical biases in approaches to African history that were finely etched into the current hegemonic episteme by late eighteenth-century French philosophers. His insights into the processes involved in constructing a static notion of Africa's past provided the springboard for critiquing, from a historiographic perspective, the insufficiencies and tropes of Western scholarship since that time.[4]

30 Adding another dimension to his critique was work anthropologist Rosalind Shaw has done on religion in Africa. She centers her argument on an assessment of the phrase "African traditional religion." She maintains that this phrase does not merely leave unchallenged assumptions about African religions being primordial, and she shows that the qualifier "traditional" ultimately, even if inadvertently, reinforces the idea of African religion as a static paradigm because of the connotations it provokes in the epistemologically Western-centered reader's mind.[5] After considering how these scholars' arguments intersected and informed one another, I began to interrogate the notion of episteme in history, particularly its use in constructing and sustaining biases about religion in Africa.

31 Of the many historians, philosophers, theologians, and anthropologists who added their threads to the web of my deliberations, I took to heart recommendations made by Okot p'Bitek, Newell S. Booth, Terence Ranger, and Harold W. Turner. In unique ways they each advocate for a holistic approach to the study of African religions. They encourage scholars not to ignore the apparent omnipresence of religion in Africa. Instead, they urge scholars to view it as an opportunity to take a broad approach to religion in African societies and history. What

they recognized was that embedded in epistemology is a fundamental metaphysical component whose ultimate function is to provide a framework and strategies for creating well-being in society. Examined in this way, Newell suggests, religion is core to episteme, and episteme is core to social functioning.[6]

Finally, this work rests on the shoulders of a core group of Africanist scholars dedicated to **32**
reconstructing early Bantu history. Because of their diligence, the epistemological nuances embodied in abstract ideas and the material expressions of these are brought to light. The theoretical arguments and historical conclusions put forth by historians Christine Ahmed-Saidi, Christopher Ehret, Kairn Klieman, David L. Schoenbrun, and Jan Vansina have been instrumental in writing this book.

Notes for Readers

It is important to make it clear that the word "Ruvu" or the phrases "Ruvu people," "Ruvu **33**
communities," "Ruvu-speaking people," and the like, which appear throughout the work, are the means of identifying groups of early settlers and their descendants—whose own self-names are lost—who made their homes in the hinter-coastal regions of Tanzania and who spoke what are now identified as Ruvu languages. These phrases are practical ways of conveying an understanding that those people spoke languages derived from a common linguistic ancestor, the proto-Ruvu language.[7] The use of such phraseology reflects a deliberate effort to acknowledge the possibility that their common language genealogy resulted in their having inherited particular shared cultural understandings and features that were embedded within the vocabularies of the descendant languages they spoke. However, this does not presuppose that they were necessarily the physical, genetic descendants of earlier Ruvu language speakers. An assumption such as that would be wholly limiting and likely erroneous in light of the varied and fluid lives proto-Ruvu speakers and their descendants have lived since their initial settlement in the region, as well as the more obvious point that speakers of a language do not have an essential biogenetic link to prior speakers of a language. Some portion of the genetic ancestry of modern-day Ruvu peoples surely does go back directly to the proto-Ruvu, but the fluidity of ethnic boundaries and the repeated historical spreads of Ruvu speech into areas where other peoples lived means many other lines of ancestry have been blended into Ruvu societies over the centuries. Furthermore, the names given to the early Ruvu societies are not a representation of the way that early Ruvu-speaking people referred to themselves. For that we have no evidence.

On the matter of spelling conventions used throughout the text, there are a few points to **34**
underscore. Reconstructed linguistic forms have a star placed before the word beginning, for example, **Mulungu* "God." In cases where words attest in distinct languages but are not

reconstructed to a proto-language period, no star precedes the word, for example, *mwana nya nhiti* "fertility medicine." Nouns and verbs in Bantu languages are composed of a prefix and a stem. Instances where prefixes are omitted are indicated by a dash placed before the stem, for example, *-*lungu* "God." Finally, the letters /l/ and /r/ are used interchangeably.

Notes

Note 1: I believe that this approach would serve us well in transoceanic diasporic studies, as they too commonly are steeped in homogenous ideas about African religious and intellectual histories.

Note 2: T. Carlos Jacques, "From Savages and Barbarians to Primitives: Africa, Social Typologies, and History in Eighteenth-Century French Philosophy," *History and Theory* 36, no. 2 (1997): 199–200.

Note 3: Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in Africa* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), xiv.

Note 4: Jacques, "From Savages and Barbarians to Primitives: Africa, Social Typologies, and History in Eighteenth-Century French Philosophy," 190–215.

Note 5: Rosalind Shaw, "The Invention of 'African Traditional Religion,'" *Religion* 20 (1990): 339–53.

Note 6: Newell S. Booth, *African Religions: A Symposium* (New York: NOK, Inc., 1977); Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Literature Bureau, 1970); T. O. Ranger and I. Kimambo, eds., *The Historical Study of African Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Harold W. Turner, "The Way Forward in the Religious Study of African Primal Religions," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 12, no. 1 (1981): 1–15.

Note 7: The Ruvu label has been used in the past. Its use here is in part an effort to sustain uniformity in naming. See, for instance, Derek Nurse and Thomas J. Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993); G. Philippson and D. Nurse, "The Northeastern Bantu Languages of Tanzania and Kenya," *Kiswahili* 45, no. 2 (1975): 1–28.

