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GENDERED HISTORIES BETWEEN THE GREAT LAKES: VARIETIES AND LIMITS*

By David L. Schoenbrun

Introduction

This essay delimits and describes varieties of gendered histories between East Africa's Great Lakes before the fifteenth century. Because gender is historical, because both social and material conditions shape its meaning over time, gender has both a hegemonic and a negotiated dimension. This essay tries to reveal only how we might make histories of the hegemonic dimensions of gender in precolonial Africa. The subtleties of contest and of differences in individual strategies do not come to us through the available sources. Thus, the negotiated dimensions of gendered histories for the ancient Great Lakes region lie outside our representational capacities. Even so, as this essay will argue, histories of hegemonies bear valuable insights into the development of gender relations and thus repay efforts to recover them. They are important to write because they render more sophisticated and complex the often notional "precolonial gender relations" from which so many students of gender in Africa begin. Moreover, by including a search for forms of symbolic capital in the search for varieties of gendered histories, the elusive dimension of negotiation can be brought out of the shadows and silences of the available sources. Thus, describing the varieties of gendered precolonial histories and their limits produces valuable historical and methodological conclusions.

We will mine a combination of linguistic and ethnographic data in order to describe the character and growth of gendered units of social organization. This description will reveal historical changes in the gendered rights and responsibilities which the men and women who gave life to social organization could visit on each other. When we analyze changes in these institutions, rights, and responsibilities within the workings of the region's two major agricultural systems—intensive banana farming (among the Ganda) and specialized cattle pastoralism (among the Hima)—we can build arguments about how agricultural change and gender mutually shaped the special character gendered identities between the Great Lakes. Contests over women's labor and reproductive power, and opportunities for

*I thank Chris Lowe, Jean Hay, and two anonymous readers for improving the clarity of this essay. All errors and omissions are mine.

women to create and wield symbolic capital together governed the elaboration of banana farming and cattle pastoralism in the centuries after A.D. 1000.¹

Two sets of ethnographic and linguistic data provide the basis for throwing into stark relief the different trajectories of these gendered histories. One set comes from the Hima and the other set comes from the Ganda. While the Ganda became expert banana farmers between the 11th and 15th centuries, the Hima had become expert pastoralists during the same period. Pastoralism and banana farming are common forms of agriculture between the Great Lakes but the Hima and Ganda stand out for their intensive specializations in herding and farming, respectively.

Ethnographic descriptions of units of social organization (as well as of the rights and responsibilities attached to members) from Hima and Ganda contexts may be historicized by linking them to lexical reconstructions of the words which name these institutions. The connection between word and ethnographic description is possible because Hima and Ganda people speak historically related languages (Runyankore and Luganda, respectively). These languages belong to the West Nyanza branch of Great Lakes Bantu. They share much vocabulary and grammar as befits tongues with a common linguistic heritage.² However, they differ from each other sufficiently to warrant placing them in separate branches within West Nyanza. Hima (Nkore) belongs to Rutara and Luganda belongs to North Nyanza (Figure 1).

In the search for gendered histories, the paper will focus on gendered divisions of labor and gendered identities in "houses." With this focus, we may revisit ethnographic descriptions of adult men and women in their statuses as mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sisters and brothers. In those descriptions we may identify a range of husbands' rights in wives' labor (both productive and reproductive) in parts of Hima and Ganda society (See Map 1 and Figure 1). The central role of gender in shaping divisions of labor and in conferring rights over children means that a history of these rights and responsibilities is also a gendered history. The essay will shoulder the burden of explaining the historical development of such rights and responsibilities by sketching the historical development of differences in the economies of the two areas, differences which had emerged before 1500. Explanations will emphasize differences between the material and ideological aspects of cattle economies and those of banana economies.

These lines of reasoning will reveal how gender shaped the emergence of specialized economies and how women, in their gendered identity of "wife" might

¹ See Andrew Reid, "Changing Social Relations and their Contribution to the Development of Pastoralism in the Interlacustrine Region of Eastern Africa," *Tanzania Zamani* 1, 3 (1993): 20–34; David L. Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds and Banana Gardens: The Historical Geography of the Western Great Lakes Region, ca. A.D. 800–1500," *African Archaeological Review* 11 (1993): 39–72.

² David L. Schoenbrun, "Great Lakes Bantu: Classification and Settlement Chronology," *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 15 (1994): 1–62.

have shaped the development of economic specializations through their creative deployment of symbolic capital. Studying symbolic capital softens the impression that material conditions shape social conditions directly. The dialectical nature of the relations between material and social life involves the mediation of the two by symbolic capital. And, if we may believe ethnographic depictions of Hima and Ganda life, women produced vital stores of symbolic capital.

In Pierre Bourdieu's formulations, symbolic capital belongs to a set of forms of capital which together constitute power.³ One scholar who has used this concept to good effect, Paul Roscoe, has described it as including: "prestige and social honor, [and] the forms in which different kinds of capital are recognized as legitimate."⁴ Symbolic capital, then, is connected to other forms of power, such as the instrumental control of others' capacity to act. Symbolic capital shapes the ways in which instrumental power may be created and concentrated. In a discussion of symbolic capital and marriage among the Kabyle of Morocco, Bourdieu claims: "It is significant that in the first phase of the very complex negotiations that lead to the marriage agreement, the two families bring in prestigious kinsmen or affines as "guarantors." The symbolic capital thus displayed serves both to strengthen their hand in the bargaining and to underwrite the agreement once it is concluded."⁵ This description easily fits any number of societies around the Great Lakes. However, marriage negotiations (and other sorts of public social processes) involve a great variety of conflicts (not all of which are gendered) and a great variety of representations of gender. In short, men and women have created and deployed different sorts of symbolic capital within the key arena of social reproduction which may readily be seen at work in the marriage process. Have men and women created and deployed symbolic capitals in radically different ways under radically different material conditions? Do these differences have a history with a shape and content that we can recover?

Studying symbolic capital as part of the search for gendered histories follows from the claim that depicting conflict and negotiation should characterize definitions of gendered power and of its deployment. This approach rejects studies focused single-mindedly on "resistance" as the key to such histories. Even though resistance takes many forms, analytic reliance on the concept presumes consciousness of the integrity of systems of inequality and a rejection of all or part of them. A study of symbolic capital must accept that consciousness of conditions

³ Pierre Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge, 1990), 112–21; Paul B. Roscoe, "Practice Theory and Political Centralization: A New Approach to Political Centralization," *Current Anthropology* 34, 3 (1993): 112–40.

⁴ Roscoe, "Practice Theory," 114.

⁵ Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," 115–16.

of apparent inequality involves incoherent, contradictory, and shifting content.⁶ It must also recognize a middle ground between the dominators and the dominated, a middle ground where discursively creative people do not accept all the terms and conditions of dominant groups, and where they engage with some of those terms and conditions, but not others. This essay will suggest that these key, contingent dimensions to gendered histories of symbolic capital, and of the material conditions whose manipulation is a partial aim when people use such capital, will be the dimensions most difficult to discover. Their elusiveness thus forms a limit to the possible gendering of ancient Great Lakes histories.

Studies of symbolic capital reveal other realms of powerful commentary on gendered identities, commentaries which may simultaneously accept the terms and conditions of domination and redefine them for the purposes of the dominated. In a recent refinement of this thesis, N. Thomas Håkansson has argued that changes in gendered economic and social relations cannot be accounted for by political economy alone; they must be explained in part by reference to ideology and to the organization of variant lineal descent and gender systems.⁷ Moreover, in the Hima and Ganda cases, within these ideologies there existed spaces for women of specific life-cycle statuses to construct dissenting choices, through their abilities to deploy and give value to symbolic capital, in order to relieve some of the more oppressive elements of their lives. These dissenting choices were varied in their content and in the institutional forms through which women hoped to put them into play. The multiplicity of institutional forms offers to us a variety of possible histories of gendered action in the distant pasts of the Great Lakes region, but only a partially definable variety, even if the variable content of dissenting choices will never be specifically known.

The essay will thus conclude with a plea that further work in ancient gendered histories from non-literate contexts describe the limits placed on gendered histories by silences in sources, silences over precisely what we most need to hear about: the content and the contexts for the deployment of symbolic capital. Silences such as these severely curtail the range and texture of the narratives we might build about gender, symbolic capital, and the actions and identities which put the two into historical relationship. Still, to be narratively curtailed by evidentiary silences is not to be silenced by the evidence! Employing an interdisciplinary approach to linguistic and ethnographic data we may do rather more than speak of the histories of certain material conditions of farming and herding. Even if at the end of the day these conditions seem to be causes, we must remember Bourdieu's point that symbolic

⁶ Jonathon Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes," *Journal of African History* 32, 3 (1991): 277–312, especially 282–88.

⁷ N. Thomas Håkansson, "The Detachability of Women: Gender and Kinship in Processes of Socioeconomic Change among the Gusii of Kenya," *American Ethnologist* 21, 3 (1994): 516–38, especially 517.

capital is a sort of sum. It "is perhaps the only possible form of accumulation when economic capital is not recognized."⁸ The invisibility in our sources of the agency of makers and deployers of symbolic capital may reflect this quality of symbolic capital itself: its capacity to deny naked self-interest and egoistic calculation.⁹ How, then, might a history of material production, forms of social organization, and gendered forms of social capital be constructed? In seeking to answer such a question, the essay offers substantive and methodological conclusions about the pursuit of gendered ancient African histories in non-literate contexts.

Method.

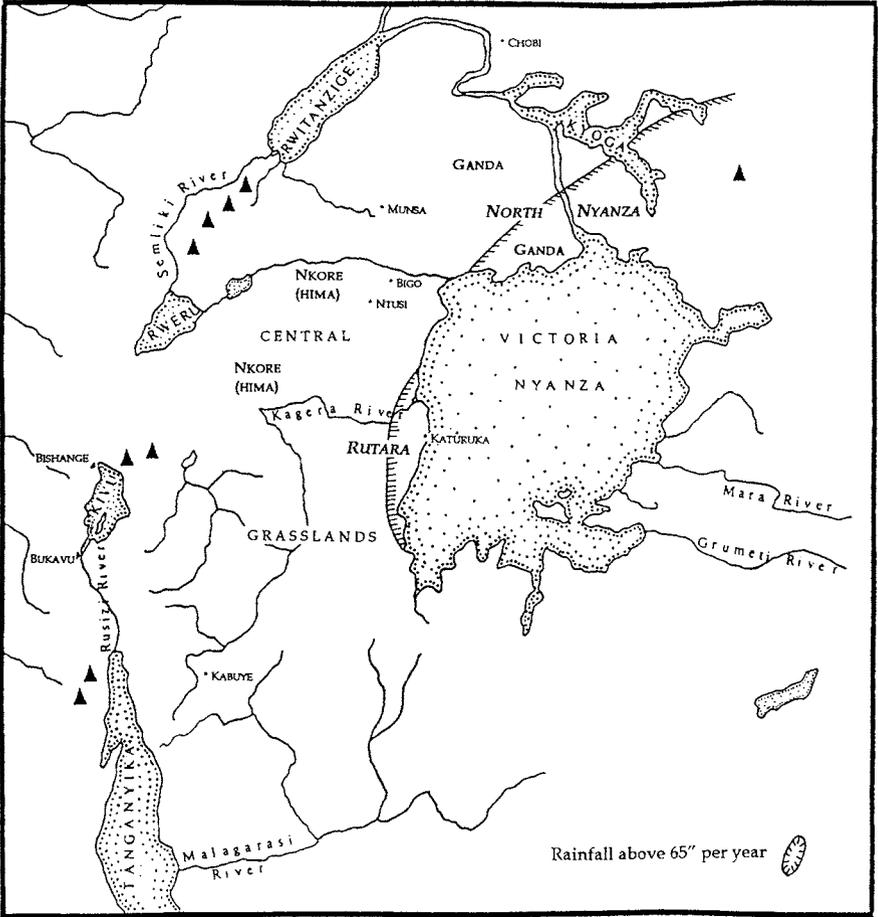
The evidence for ancient gendered histories between the Great Lakes comes from a combination of ethnography and historical linguistics. The two types of sources may be brought together around a genetic model of language history. Genetic models—language classifications with historical content—facilitate comparisons of ethnographic details of meanings for institutions and practices named by words from different but related languages. If the same words and their meanings, from different languages within subbranches of the classification, show a regular resemblance, they may be retrospectively attributed to that specific branch in the classification. The terms "Rutara" and "North Nyanza" name two such branches. They are geographical-linguistic subgroups of West Nyanza Bantu (Figure 1), which is itself a branch of Great Lakes Bantu.¹⁰ The comparative method in historical linguistics produces evidence for the historical character of Great Lakes Bantu and its descendant subgroups. Comparativists discover words and meanings in phonologically regular correspondence with distributions restricted to this branch of Bantu and for each of the subbranches which constitute Great Lakes Bantu. These innovations could only have achieved their contemporary distributions if they had been parts of the vocabularies of speech communities ancestral to the modern languages. The material in the appendix represents some of the further fruits of such labor. These words and meanings tell us something of the character of the

⁸ Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," 118.

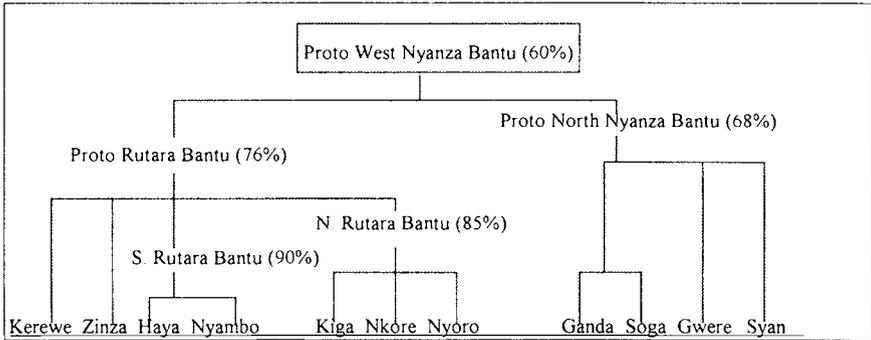
⁹ Bourdieu explains: "In an economy which is defined by the refusal to recognize the 'objective' truth of 'economic' practices, that is, the law of 'naked self-interest' and egoistic calculation, even 'economic' capital cannot act unless it succeeds in being recognized through a conversion that can render unrecognizable the true principle of efficacy." "Symbolic Capital," 118. I am not prepared to concede that Lakes peoples denied egoistic self-interest any role in calculating "amounts" in their different sorts of capital, but I am prepared to accept so in contexts like marriage. Assuming that this is correct, their symbolic capitals perform the "conversions" of self-interest which submerge individual makers and deployers of "economic" capital within a welter of honor and prestige.

¹⁰ Great Lakes Bantu is a branch of (is descended from) Mashariki Bantu. Western Bantu comprises the Bantu languages of the Greater Zaire Basin. Western Bantu and Mashariki Bantu are both branches of Bantu.

proto-speech communities which invented them and used them in their conversation.



Map 1. The Great Lakes Region: Language, Rainfall and Archaeological Sites

Figure 1. The West Nyanza Branch of Great Lakes Bantu

Parentetical percentages reflect cognation out of a 100-word list of words least likely to be borrowed. Glottochronological dates are reckoned at a shared retention rate of 86 per cent per 500 years of elapsed time.

The ethnographic record provides additional, if often woefully limited, contexts for the meanings of words gleaned from strictly linguistic sources.¹¹ In the best cases, the ethnographic record allows us to attach to a word's semantic field complexes of verbal and nonverbal elements. We can thus understand words in relation to one another and in relation to the range of contexts for their use.¹² John Janzen,¹³ Jan Vansina¹⁴ and others, have learned that the greater the complexity of specific relations between the verbal and the nonverbal elements attached to a word's semantic field, the greater the chance that the word and its core meanings were present in speech communities ancestral to today's and that they thus stand as inherited features of the cultural history of the area.¹⁵ This essay approaches such densities of correspondence by discussing spatial and other metaphors of the rights

¹¹ Christopher Ehret, "Language Change and the Material Correlates of Language and Ethnic Shift," *Antiquity* 62 (1988): 564–74; Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison, 1990); David L. Schoenbrun, "A Green Place, A Good Place: A Social History of the Great Lakes Region, earliest times to 1500," manuscript, ch. 1.

¹² This is a response to the plea made nearly twenty years ago by Kuper and Van Leynseele to develop a methodology for comparing social structures rather than traits alone. See Adam Kuper and Pierre Van Leynseele "Social Anthropology and the Bantu Expansion," *Africa* 48, 4 (1978): 335–52, especially 335–39.

¹³ John Janzen, *Ngoma: Discourses of Healing in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992).

¹⁴ Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*.

¹⁵ Ehret, "Language Change," 570–72; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 9–16.

and responsibilities which Rutaran and North Nyanzan communities attached to their units of social organization, like "clan," "lineage," and "agnates."

With all the strengths and weaknesses of both types of evidence, the essay rests on a combined foundation of comparative linguistic and comparative ethnographic data for several societies at the lakeshores and inland from Lake Victoria Nyanza. These records yield terms for units of social organization from the Ganda and Nkore languages which can be analyzed for plausible etymologies. The semantic histories will then be set against those portions of the ethnographic record which represent gendered identities and gendered divisions of labor within these speech communities. Ethnographers record different identities for men and women: sister, brother, wife, husband, mother, and father, and they tell how those identities intersected with patterns of gendered divisions of labor and property. Because gendered divisions of labor and property sit at one of the centers of gendered histories, and because the institution of marriage sanctions and legitimizes those labor and property relations, parts of the rituals of marriage will be presented, in the hopes of discerning in them a set of opportunities for the creation and deployment of gendered symbolic capital. We cannot see in these records the choices made by individual men and women in individual houses. But we can recover the objects of their choices and the institutions through which they gave meaning to these objects of the gendered work of symbolic capital.

The Genders of Households and Property: Linguistic and ethnographic considerations.¹⁶

Scholars who have written about Rutaran and North Nyanzan speech communities base their work on archaeological, linguistic, and oral historical evidence. They have most often used these sources, especially oral traditions, to write about the origins of kingdoms among speakers of Rutaran and North Nyanzan tongues. These scholars have identified agricultural specializations, itinerant spirit mediums (and their clients), the control of metallurgical skill, and interzonal trade as central

¹⁶ For recent relevant discussions of households, houses, and lineages as useful units of historical study see Henrietta Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology* (Minneapolis, 1988), ch. 3; Adam Kuper, "The 'House' and Zulu Political Structure in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History* 34, 3 (1993): 469–87, especially 473–74; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Uses of Kinship," in Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 162–99.

themes in the rise of states in Karagwe,¹⁷ Buhaya,¹⁸ Bunyoro,¹⁹ and Nkore.²⁰ Bananas and the invention of an interlocking set of patronage-based offices in Buganda seem to have characterized the emergence of royal power there.²¹ Regional studies have presented the evidence for a set of agricultural and ideological innovations which drove these processes of political aggrandizement and realignment.²²

The emphasis on states and their histories has meant a relatively smaller amount of work exists for the histories of social life, especially for histories of units of social organization. Study of units of social organization, the range of meanings given them, and the histories of the words which name them, shows the men and women who knew Rutaran and/or North Nyanzan dialects involved in both wider processes of meaning-making and in gendering each other. In particular, making meanings and social relations around cattle pastoralism and banana farming vitally shaped the history of interlacustrine gender relations.

¹⁷ Israel Katoke, *The Karagwe Kingdom: A History of the Abanyambo of North-west Tanzania* (Nairobi, 1975); Andrew Reid and Rachel MacLean, "Symbolism and the Social Contexts of Iron Production in Karagwe," *World Archaeology* 27, 1 (1995): 144–61.

¹⁸ Peter R. Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology: A Structural Approach in an African Society* (Westport, Ct., 1978); Fred Kaijage, "Kyamutwara," *Journal of World History* 13, 3 (1971): 542–74; Robert G. Carlson, "Hierarchy and the Haya Divine Kingship: A Structural and Symbolic Reformulation of Frazer's Thesis," *American Ethnologist* 20, 2 (1993): 312–35.

¹⁹ John H. M. Beattie, *The Nyoro State* (Oxford, 1971); Graham Connah, "The Salt of Bunyoro," *Antiquity* 65 (1991): 479–94; John Nyakatura, *Anatomy of an African Kingdom* (New York, 1973); Renee Louise Tantala, "The Early History of Kitara in Western Uganda: Process Models of Religious and Political Change" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1989); Peter Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey, Ceramic Analysis, and State Formation in Western Uganda," *African Archaeological Review* 12 (1994): 105–31.

²⁰ Samwiri Karugire, *A History of the Kingdom of Nkore in Western Uganda to 1896* (Oxford, 1971); Edward I. Steinhart, "Herders and Farmers: The Tributary Mode of Production in Western Uganda," in *Modes of Production in Africa*, ed. Donald Crummey and C. C. Stewart (Beverly Hills, 1981), 115–56; Andrew Reid, "The Role of Cattle in the Later Iron Age Communities of Southern Uganda" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1991).

²¹ Benjamin Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship in Buganda*, (Oxford, 1991); M. S. M. Semakula Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda from the Foundations of the Kingdom to 1900* (London, 1971); Sir Apolo Kagwa, *The Kings of Buganda* (Kampala, 1901); Nakanyike B. Musisi, "Women, 'Elite Polygyny,' and Buganda State Formation," *Signs* 16, 4 (1991): 757–86; Lawrence D. Schiller, "The Royal Women of Buganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23 (1990): 455–73.

²² David L. Schoenbrun and Renee L. Tantala, "Visiting the Land of the Dead and Living to Tell About It" (Paper presented to the 38th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Orlando, Florida, 3–6 November, 1995); Peter R. Schmidt, "Oral Traditions, Archaeology, and History: A Short Reflective History," in *A History of African Archaeology*, ed. Peter Robertshaw (Portsmouth, N.H. and London, 1990), 252–70; Iris Berger, *Religion and Resistance* (Tervuren, 1981); John E. G. Sutton, "The Antecedents to the Interlacustrine Kingdoms," *Journal of African History* 34, 1 (1993): 33–64.

Rutara and North Nyanza speakers (Map 2) organized their units of social life out of both material relations and metaphorical expressions. Names for larger social groupings, like lineages or clans, often emerged from metaphors, and their etymologies reveal parts of the meanings given by people to those larger units of social organization. In addition, a few cases will be discussed below which throw some light on the gender attributions of the household and its property.

Among the many interconnected semantic fields bearing traces of the history of gendered identity and gendered space in Rutara and North Nyanza four will be discussed here: fields translated as "clan," "lineage," "agnates," and "courtyard" (see Appendix for proposed roots). The etymology for one of these terms, **-ka* (Appendix: Root 13) reveals its earlier (Proto West Nyanza) meaning to have been limited to that of "homestead" or "head of cattle." It took on the meaning of "clan" in North Nyanza dialects. Another term, **-gándá*, has an important residential dimension to its meanings elsewhere in Bantu (Appendix: Roots 8–12), but in Rutaran dialects it came to refer to dispersed exogamous, totemic and, rarely, corporate clans. A third term, *ssiga*, refers to a maximal patrilineage in Ganda (Appendix: Roots 1, 2).²³ The term derives from the Proto Bantu root for hearthstone. Another term, **-lá*, in the meaning "family" (Ganda) or "lineage" (Haya, Soga, Nande), seems ultimately to have been derived from the Proto Bantu root for "womb, interior" (Appendix: Roots 3–5). A last term, **-buga*, means "courtyard" (in class 7/8), throughout Great Lakes Bantu, and "Queen Sister" (in class 11) in Ganda.²⁴

But how do these terms express gendered concepts of identity and space? And how do the histories of the development of new meanings for each of them reflect the historical development of gendered identity and space? Answers may be posed to such questions from within the textured meanings given in ethnographic descriptions of the things to which people attached these words.

Considerable ethnographic evidence exists for deeply rooted cultural definitions of the hearth and the house as female domains across interlacustrine societies.²⁵ Thus, the extension of meanings for these terms, in Rutara and North Nyanza, to include patrilineage and patriclan can be expected to reflect the outcome of a struggle over the gendered control of material and cultural resources referred to by the new meanings added to the old words: children, productive lands, livestock,

²³ Kuria has *irigiha*; *amagiha* in same meaning. This is metathesis, a systematic reversal of the order of two consonants.

²⁴ For full distributional evidence and etymological arguments, see David L. Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Cultural Vocabulary: Etymologies and Distributions* (Köln, forthcoming).

²⁵ I build here on an idea posed first by Christopher Ehret, "Eastern Africa in the Earliest Iron Age: Explorations in History, 1000 B.C. to A.D. 300," manuscript, 124. But see Christine Ahmed, "Before Eve was Eve: 2200 Years of Gendered History in Central Africa" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1996).

and jural process.²⁶ In order to reconstruct retrospectively likely social dimensions of such struggles in North Nyanzan and Rutaran societies before 1500, within material contexts to be discussed below, we must now look carefully for the ways in which gendered identities, property, and labor intersected in each of two more recent ethnographic contexts, one each from Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies. Generalizations about gender, property, and labor emerge from these examples. Their "just-so" character should not cause alarm. The point here is to set up the ways in which Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies differed in their conceptualizations of gendered identity, property, and labor and then to pursue an historical explanation for these differences.

Ethnographic writing on Hima (Rutara) and Ganda (North Nyanza) societies depicts some of the distinctive features of their gendered identities, property, and labor in the first half of the twentieth century. Hima societies were decidedly pastoralist, archly patriarchal, and they occupied lands that lay between several hubs of long distance trading activity.²⁷ Ganda societies, by contrast, were decidedly sedentary, rooted in a banana-based economy. Ganda possessed a pronounced system of social stratification which invited a considerable amount of social mobility, and they occupied one of the hubs of the trade in ivory and slaves.²⁸ Though the two sets of societies stand in contrast to each other, they have shared historical roots. A review of their differing forms of social space and social relations will bring into focus the varieties of gendered histories that have grown from those roots between the Great Lakes.

Hima houses and camps.

Ethnographers place cattle at the center of Hima relations of production, and the historical semantics of metaphors, including those pertaining to the nature of gendered work and gendered identity flow very much from the nature of cattle keeping. Cattle belong to husbands/fathers, only passing to sons legally at the father's death.²⁹ Wives must perform no labor related to the keeping of mature cattle. They do care for calves and churn butter, two vital parts of a homestead's (s.

²⁶ As has been shown for Western Kenyan societies by N. Thomas Håkansson, "Family Structure, Bridewealth, and Environment in Eastern Africa: A Comparative Study of House-Property Systems," *Ethnology* 28, 2 (1989): 117-35; *idem*, "Descent, Bridewealth, and Terms of Alliance in East African Societies," *Research in Economic Anthropology* 12 (1990): 149-73, and Regina Oboler, "The House-Property Complex and African Social Organization," *Africa* 64, 3 (1994): 342-58.

²⁷ Yitzhak Elam, *The Social and Sexual Roles of Hima Women* (Manchester, 1973); Karugire, *Kingdom of Nkore*.

²⁸ Kiwanuka, *History of Buganda*; Karen B. Sacks, *Sisters and Wives: The Past and Future of Sexual Equality* (Urbana, Ill., 1982); Musisi, "Women, 'Elite Polygyny,' and State-formation."

²⁹ Elam, *Social and Sexual*; Kalervo Oberg, "Analysis of the Bahima Marriage Ceremony," *Africa* 19 (1949): 107-120.

eka; pl. amaka) existence.³⁰ Wives also smoke the milk pots, maintain the husband's house, and may even share the same room with other wives of the same man. Women and men, acting as wives or mothers and as husbands or fathers, have fundamentally different relations to cattle, the central object understood by Hima persons to compose wealth. This difference, however, does not merely reflect a diverging instrumental control over livestock, where men have it and women do not. The uses to which cattle may be put are even more complex than are the sophisticated, male-directed systems of pasturing, loaning, and raiding. A glimpse at how cattle are managed during marriage arrangements will reveal this other level of complexity.

One student of Hima society tells how, at marriage, the wife-to-be receives from her natal homestead (*eka*; *amaka*) barkcloths, milk pots, charms, a smoke pot for cleaning milking pots, a small pot for personal grooming, herbs, and wire jewelry.³¹ The bride's kinswomen, her classificatory sisters, give her a charm (s. *orugisha*; pl. *engisha*) to protect her health against the jealousy of co-wives.³² When the bride's father comes to choose the cattle to be included in the marriage payment (*enzhugano*), the groom's father drives off several animals. One of those animals, not to be part of the marriage payment, is called *enshugyi*, or "cow of the groom's mother's *emandwa*" (a protective and helpful family spirit).³³ The sequestration of *enshugyi* cattle highlights both the importance of the fertility of women and the tension in relations between the health of cattle herds and the reproductivity of wives. The concern is explicit in two ways. First, the sacred cow "belongs" to the groom's mother's *emandwa*, a spirit which can be propitiated to redress barrenness.³⁴ Secondly, this cow's name, *enshugyi*, is derived from the verb *okushuga* "to prosper, be prosperous" and the cow thus cannot be sent to affines, those difficult outsiders who are so critical to reproduction as wife-givers, without risking a diminished capacity to prosper.

Wives and mothers thus occupy social positions which exclude them completely from direct access to the central instruments of production, except for

³⁰ Elam, *Social and Sexual*, 19–20; John Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu. An Account of Some Central African Tribes of the Uganda Protectorate* (Cambridge, 1915), 103, 107–108.

³¹ Oberg, "Analysis," 112.

³² In Kyamutwara, to the south of Nkore, the protective charms (*engisha*) are associated with Mugasha, an ancient deity linked to Victoria-Nyanza, fertility, and fishing. See David William Cohen, "The Cwezi Cult," *Journal of African History* 9, 4 (1968): 51–7; Tantala, "Early History;" and Edmond Cesard, "Le Muhaya," *Anthropos* 31 (1936): 111. Here, Hima women of the bride's natal homestead (*eka*; *amaka*) give charms (*engisha*) to the bride to ensure that she will be protected from the negative impact which jealousy can have on either her ability to bear children or on her ability to promote and to defend the interests of the children she does manage to rear against the interests of the children of her co-wives.

³³ Oberg, "Analysis," 108.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

the care of children and calves. They may not enter into client relations with patrons, and thus they can have no recourse to the social relations of cattle-as-property beyond the ones defined by kinship and marriage.³⁵ In this ideological construction, wives have only the status of reproducers. However, a woman may become a wife without marrying out of her natal lineage, her *ekyika* (singular), if she has no brothers or patrilineal male cousins. In this case, her father may invite a poor Hima male to act as a proxy-son, in order to have male heirs who will inherit the father's herd. It is thus possible for a woman to become a wife *inside* her natal lineage.

Like the household in Buganda, no homestead (*eka*; *amaka*) in Nkore can survive alone because no single homestead has access to the labor necessary to sustain the herd. Thus, homesteads (*amaka*) form into camps in order to pool male and unmarried female labor. Camps are divided into courtyards (s. *ekibuga*; pl. *ebibuga*), inside each one of which the "owner of the household" (s. *nyineka*), was expected to keep those animals of his which were resident in the camp at any given time. Because husbands and fathers control cattle-as-property and because the courtyard (*ekibuga*) is the province of these cattle, we may consider the courtyard as a male space, a male province. This differs considerably from the gender of the referents for the term *-buga* in Buganda (see below). Also, the male homestead head (*nyineka*) plans the nourishment of his wives and of his daughters-in-law. He also controls the volume of food available to a wife's children.³⁶ Husbands and fathers-in-law seek to exclude Hima wives from pastoral activities and they try to superintend their sexual activities as well. These practices reinforce the image of wives as tools of social relations, as means only to reproduce the homestead by bearing children. They appear, from this male vantage point, as utterly subordinate to men. After presenting comparable images of wives in Buganda, we shall consider the other side of this picture.

Ganda houses and neighborhoods.

Karen Sacks has examined the ethnographic literature for evidence of the sexual division of labor in nineteenth-century Buganda. She understands that by the time this century had opened, gender relations and kinship relations had changed dramatically.³⁷ During the eighteenth century the instruments of production, such as banana gardens and herds of stock, which *had been* controlled by clans and clan heads (s. *mutaka*; pl. *bataka*) began to come more directly under the control of the king (s. *Kabaka*). In the nineteenth century, royalist consolidation intensified as kings used the wealth they gained from successful military and trading campaigns to reward both loyal male militia and royal Queen Mothers and Sisters with estates

³⁵ Elam, *Social and Sexual*, 53–60.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25, 27, 49.

³⁷ Sacks, *Sisters and Wives*, 203–205.

and tax bases. In the earlier stages of this process, even before the eighteenth century,³⁸ the bestowal on an individual of an appointed office (*s. mukungu*; pl. *bakungu*) by the Kabaka easily became hereditary within a given clan. But during the nineteenth century, as raiding, slaving and ivory hunting picked up in value and volume, the Kabaka's personal power over patronage networks, banana gardens, and large herds of livestock peaked.

Because all the ethnography from Buganda was created after 1850, it depicts the conditions of gendered property and labor divisions *after* the rise to power of an absolutist Kabaka and *after* the rise to power of certain powerful clans (*s. ekika*; pl. *ebika*), clans which had had deep lineages (*s. ssiga*; pl. *amahiga*) whose members, over the years, enjoyed the fruits of their proximity to the halls of royal power. In such a world commoner women could not legally inherit banana gardens, even though as wives they worked them for their cognatic family (*s. olulá*; pl. *endá*). Nor were commoner women said to have been able to enter into clientage relations. As Sacks has pointed out,³⁹ this would have meant that peasant women could not accumulate wealth in either land or followers. Yet a wife who had been given livestock and other material objects (ivory bracelets, for example) was free from clanspersons' claims on her husband's property.⁴⁰ Even if commoner wives were represented as standing outside the streams of banana garden inheritance, they did have, as individual wives, their 'own' gardens for bananas and root crops.⁴¹ They obtained cuttings for their new gardens from "friends,"⁴² presumably from other wives in the settlement (*s. ekyaaló*; pl. *ebyaaló*) or from their married sisters. These cuttings do not appear to have been given out during the marriage ceremonies, though some evidence exists for a representation of such a practice in royal installation rituals.⁴³

Wives produced, processed, cooked, and served the staple vegetable foods which their families consumed. They also wove food trays and superintended the preparation, tending, and harvesting of all the fields, not just the banana gardens. If the wife had a herdsman for a husband (usually a Hima), she churned milk.⁴⁴ Husbands, normally in groups, shared the labor of hunting, fishing, banana beer making, home building and repairing, barkcloth making, smithing, potting, and canoe making.⁴⁵ Wives of wealthier husbands might enter local markets with food

³⁸ Kiwanuka, *History of Buganda*, 99–102.

³⁹ Sacks, *Sisters and Wives*, 208–210.

⁴⁰ Lucy Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1934), 221.

⁴¹ Mair, *An African People*, 122; John Roscoe, *The Baganda* (Cambridge, 1911), 426.

⁴² Roscoe, *Baganda*, 429.

⁴³ Holly Hanson, personal communication.

⁴⁴ Roscoe, *Baganda*, 426ff, 410, 420.

⁴⁵ M. B. Nsimbi, "Village Life and Customs in Buganda," *Uganda Journal* 20, 1 (1956): 27–8; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 394ff, 404ff.

surpluses and beer in order to purchase fat (for their soapmaking) and other rareties, such as hoes and salt from Bunyoro.⁴⁶

The labor of wives and children made property in land (*obutaka*) valuable. This property was attached to the offices of clan or lineage heads (s. *omutaka*; pl. *abataka*), or to first among equals of sets of the lineages which comprised a clan (*ekika*; *ebika*). The concept of *obusika*, a property or office heritable through descent, expresses the joining of patrilineality to the heritable control of productive lands and their offices: wives' and children's labor made property valuable under the control of a husband's patrilineage. Besides legally conflating office, property, and patrilineality, the term *obutaka* also refers to male ancestral burial grounds.⁴⁷ Thus, by usurping the rights to clean and tend the graves, an ambitious elder (s. *omukulu*; pl. *abakulu*) may have hoped thereby to convert his status as the head of a shallow lineage (s. *omutuba*; pl. *emituba*)⁴⁸, which had three or four generations buried in its settlement area (s. *omutala*; pl. *emitala*), into a new status as the head of a deep lineage (*ssiga*; *amahiga*). In doing so, he would have simultaneously converted those buried in the (new) *obutaka* from descendants who were subordinate to another lineage head (*omutaka*), into the ancestors of the new deep lineage (*ssiga*) and he would have converted himself from an elder (*omukulu*) to a lineage head (*omutaka*). Non-royal wives appear to have had no opportunities to achieve conversions of their status similar to those available to male elders. Though wives generated children, they could not accumulate for themselves the group of followers in a settlement area necessary for it to survive intact for three or four generations.

Succession lineages (a feature of North Nyanza society) may have controlled access to property and offices in such a way that male power was distributed horizontally, throughout the deep lineages (s. *ssiga*; pl. *amahiga*) or throughout the clans (s. *ekika*; pl. *ebika*).⁴⁹ This differs considerably from the Hima emphasis on property remaining under the control of males from a more narrowly defined descent grouping, the *oruganda*. The difference reflects two sets of conflicting needs. In the case of the Hima, male cattle managers needed to disperse their stock in order to protect the herd from raiding or catastrophic outbreaks of disease and to ensure access to optimal grazing. These requirements conflicted with the desire to conserve and to concentrate, within the homestead, control over heritable wealth in cattle. In the case of the Ganda, the need to disperse

⁴⁶ Roscoe, *Baganda*, 452ff, especially photograph on p. 454; Mair, *An African People*, 96.

⁴⁷ Lloyd A. Fallers with F. Kamoga and F. Musoke, "Social Stratification in Traditional Buganda," in *The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*, ed. Lloyd A. Fallers (New York, 1964), 90.

⁴⁸ This word, in the same noun class, refers also to the barkcloth tree, *Ficus* sp.

⁴⁹ Mair, *An African People*, 212; Lloyd A. Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy* (Chicago, 1956 [reprinted 1965]), 86-95.

property throughout a clan (*ekika*) conflicted with the desire by men to concentrate Ganda women in their household while any children, as potential makers of relationships with superiors, should be dispersed throughout the clan.⁵⁰

Forms of symbolic capital.

The foregoing sketches reveal two strongly patriarchal and patrilineal societies in which males controlled the productive resources of cattle and land by using their power as leaders of patrilineages to direct the inheritance or transfers of these resources. In Hima society, wives' material labor has been confined primarily to biological reproduction and to the socialization of young children. In Ganda society, their labor provided the critical margin for men to pursue wealth and power outside the homestead. What sorts of gaps or places in these systems existed within which wives or sisters might have created and dispersed power unique to them? Answers to this question may be approached through the fact that, though the continued existence of patriarchies and patrilineages depended on men exploiting the labor of wives and sisters, those women directed important matters and wielded symbolic capital at critical ritual and legal junctures and they did so as knowledgeable and respected actors.

To this end, two contexts for the deployment of symbolic capital might be profitably explored: the gendered space of the homestead itself, and the organization of action and cast of characters in important ritual processes. Adam Kuper's work on the Zulu homestead⁵¹ forms a rewarding template for describing the adaptive function of the homestead⁵² in West Nyanza societies. Future scholarship might build on this by pursuing the role of the homestead as a metaphor, that is, as a means to argue over various social rules and conceptions of cosmology;⁵³ our earlier discussions of etymologies for parts of the taxonomies of social and domestic space and of their semantic histories indicate one line of approach. Students of ritual have generated a wealth of information on symbolic capital.⁵⁴ Their findings combine the webs of meanings in which ritual actions occur with the character of the unique locations for the ritual acts themselves. In the Great Lakes region, studies of ritual and ritual process have yielded important insights into the

⁵⁰ Mair, *An African People*, 59–64.

⁵¹ Adam Kuper, "Symbolic Dimensions of the Southern Bantu Homestead," *Africa* 50, 1 (1980): 8–23; Kuper, "The 'House' and Zulu Political Structure," 469–87.

⁵² C. Daryll Forde, *Habitat, Economy and Society*, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1934).

⁵³ Carlson, "Hierarchy and the Haya," 318–21; and, more generally, Daniel L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low, "The Built Environment and Spatial Form," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990): 471–74.

⁵⁴ E.g. Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembo Ritual* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1967); Janzen, *Ngoma*; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa* (Chicago, 1986).

creation and renegotiation of social hierarchy,⁵⁵ the participatory nature of kingship⁵⁶ and the creation of critical social commentary.⁵⁷ All of these scholars paid careful attention to the dramaturgical elements in the ritual processes of transformation and negotiation which they studied.

In the next section, we will peruse the ethnography of Hima and Ganda marriage ceremonies, where, among other things, women are transformed into wives. The key problem will be the forms of power and locations for its exercise which wives and sisters created within these two strongly patriarchal societies, understanding such female power in relation to male power and privilege. Wives or sisters with important roles in the marriage have the potential to reshape or redefine of some of the specific, new social relations which the rituals themselves were expected to produce. A special focus will be on the powers of the bride's father's sister (FZ) because she appears repeatedly in the ethnography as just such a shaper of specific social relationships.

Images from Hima marriages and houses.

According to ethnographic representations of late pre-colonial Hima ideals the bride's father's (s. *sengawe*) sister leads the socialization of a new bride; she researches the character of the groom and the groom's relatives; and females may use their father's sisters to promote a case against would-be grooms. After a father receives a formal request for one of his daughters to marry (*okuhuta*), he assembles his brothers and sisters and together they discuss the groom's and his lineage's character. The father's sister initiates these proceedings and she can influence considerably the response to the initial request. If the would-be bride is unwilling, she deploys her father's sister to press her case to postpone the marriage.⁵⁸ It is unclear from the ethnography what precise considerations might have been important to a father's sister, or just what rhetorical devices she might employ to make the case.

⁵⁵ Randall Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology* (Bloomington, 1981); Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*.

⁵⁶ David S. Newbury, *Kings and Clans: Ijwi Island and the Kivu Rift, 1780-1840* (Madison, 1991).

⁵⁷ Tantala, "Early History"; Alison des Forges, "'The Drum is Greater than the Shout': The 1912 Rebellion in Northern Rwanda," in *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa*, ed. Donald Crummey (London, 1986), 311-33; Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 29-35; *idem*, "Fertility as Power: Spirit Mediums, Priestesses and the Precolonial State," in David Anderson and Douglas Johnson, eds., *Revealing Prophets: Prophecy in East African History*, (London, 1995), 66-67, 70-72.

⁵⁸ Oberg "Analysis," 107-108.

The daily tensions and ritual reciprocity which characterize relationships between mother's brothers and their sister's sons in Buganda⁵⁹ do not exist for Hima males. This is so largely because Hima mother's brothers or sister's sons do not possess any wealth, that is they possess no cattle, until their fathers die. A cattleless mother's brother can hardly be expected to help a sister's son start his own herd! Thus, in Hima society, relationships between male affines appear unencumbered by the sort of tensions generated by unreciprocated gift giving which can arise in social systems where mother's brothers might possess productive wealth. However, for a married father's sister's affinal relations, considerable conflict could arise if she has been asked to represent the interests of one of her patrilineal sisters in a marriage negotiation with the lineage of her affines. As a mentor to the young brides in her natal lineage, it is unclear how a father's sister might manage or exploit any potential conflicts between her birth lineage and her in-law's lineage. One would like very much to see in the ethnography just how she balanced her own condition with the interests of each of her different constituencies: her own lineage, her husband's lineage, and her "daughter's" affines-to-be.⁶⁰

Images from Ganda marriages and houses.

We have seen the normative views of gendered divisions of labor in Ganda homesteads. But inside the 'rules' that these normative statements express, it seems that wives organized a part of an entitlement system which privileged children over men in the distribution of cooked foods. Nsimbi⁶¹ reports a story where, during a famine, a man's children received food before him. Given the importance to postmenopausal women of the survival and growth to maturity of their children (for it is they to whom an old woman may turn for help in times of stress), this story reveals an important degree of wifely consciousness of her position and of her control over food.

Though ideologies of patriarchy and patrilineality suffuse Ganda society, the institution of *ndobolo*, whereby the mother's brother may claim his sister's children,⁶² indicates that a wife's natal lineage may make legally recognized claims on the children of their in-laws. To the extent that a child so claimed carried out meaningful labor, this practice contradicts the portion of Ganda patrilineal ideology

⁵⁹ And elsewhere, see David L. Schoenbrun, "A Narrative History of People and Forests Between the Great Lakes" (Boston University Working Papers in African Studies, No. 194, 1995), 6-8.

⁶⁰ However, rules about caring for pregnant wives reveal the explicit responsibility of her natal homestead (*eka*; *amala*) to ensure their daughter's health. Before and just after each of her childbirths, her natal homestead must provide milk to sustain her, as a wife for their affines, and to sustain her children, exactly what the affines get through the wife.

⁶¹ Nsimbi, "Village Life," 28.

⁶² Roscoe, *Baganda*, 463; Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, 70-72, 216n5; Mair, *An African People*, 62-63.

which claims that all children belong only to the father's clan (s. *ekika*; pl. *amaka*). Perhaps we might depict the meaning of *ndobolo* more profitably if we understand it to represent and to reveal tensions in the arrangements of patrilineality. The temporary loss of the patriline's claim on its female's children is what *ndobolo* signifies. Its very presence in Ganda society is remarkable, as it seems to have disappeared from Nkore, where the verb *okulóboramu* means "to take a share; take commission,"⁶³ and does not appear to apply to children. Lucy Mair⁶⁴ worked in parts of Buganda where children were often raised by a relative of the father, most commonly, the father's sister (s. *sengawe*).⁶⁵ Baganda recognized her power over her nephew's children by agreeing that she, alone of all relatives, could bring an effective curse on the child while she still lived. Baganda and Basoga also understood father's sisters to possess considerable authority in both marriage arrangements⁶⁶ and in decisions taken on succession to offices like the *omutaka* or the *obusika*.⁶⁷ This was appropriate given that an unmarried father's sister (s. *sengawe*) stood to lose a helper at home, in the name of perpetuating another lineage or family. What is more, a married father's sister was to guide another of her lineal sisters into the contradictory status as child-giver for her affines. As in Hima society, the ethnography does not tell us whose interests the father's sister represented.⁶⁸

But women, as wives, did represent lineally constituted interests in Buganda. The *olubuga* (Appendix: Root 6), also called the "Queen Sister" in the case of royalty, was an identity and a role for a woman which became active at funerals and in the meetings which were held following a death to arrange for succession to office. In those discussions about succession, the *olubuga* was a

⁶³ Or in Nyoro where *endoborwa* means "share." See Margaret B. Davis, *A Lunyoro-Lunyankole-English and English-Lunyoro-Lunyankole Dictionary* (Kampala, 1938 [reprinted 1952]) p. 298. In Haya *kulóbora* means "to choose, select, pick." See August Meyer, *Kleines Ruhaya-Deutsches Wörterbuch*, (Trier, nd), 81. And in Kereße *kulobora* means "to open the eyes." See Eugène Hurel, "La langue kikerewe," *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprache* 12 (1909): 96. In Hera society, in southern Africa, this word is *rovoro* and it means "bridewealth paid in cattle." See J. F. Holleman, "The Pattern of Hera Kinship," *The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers* 17 (1949): 45.

⁶⁴ Mair, *An African People*, 59–64.

⁶⁵ See also Roscoe, *Baganda*, 61.

⁶⁶ Mair, *An African People*, 60, 79–80, 85.

⁶⁷ Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 90.

⁶⁸ In the case of succession to office, a father's sister's memory of genealogies can be critical to supporting or derailing an individual's claim to a vacated office (see Mair, *An African People*, 210ff; and for the Soga, see Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 90) or to a position with duties and responsibilities. Mair refers obliquely to an institutional condition of motherhood that warranted formal installation when she observes "This [ceremonial shaving and washing of the mourners at a funeral] should be done by the mother of the dead person; of course his actual mother is very likely to be dead, but the duty devolves upon the woman who has succeeded her." See Mair, *An African People*, 211 (emphasis mine).

necessary complement to the identity and role of the agreed upon male heir. Mair quotes anonymous sources as proclaiming: "A man cannot inherit alone, he cannot stand alone on the barkcloth,"⁶⁹ he had to be joined there by a woman acting as the *olubuga*. An *olubuga* also had to accompany any woman who was to succeed to a position of responsibility. Here, in rituals of succession to offices, spears symbolized male heirs and knives symbolized both the female heir and her *olubuga*. The ritual expressed the value of perpetuating explicitly female positions through succession.⁷⁰ Even if wives found it difficult to direct the inheritance of important forms of wealth like banana gardens, they did control the heritable disposition of certain positions of responsibility. Relations of production and the material symbols which signified them were very much within the territory of a woman's public identity.⁷¹

Agricultural changes up to 1500: Rutara and North Nyanza.

The evidence given above for a set of synchronic gendered identities and hierarchies drawn from late pre-colonial representations and memories must now be understood by reference to the historically changing material conditions of agricultural systems, the very conditions in which gendered work and identity changed. The identities and hierarchies and the material conditions must be put into historical motion to allow us to examine whether changes in gendered units of social organization required changes in the status of women. And we must historicize gendered identities and hierarchies to learn if the changes in work and identity just mentioned were responses to changed material conditions. To pose questions of gendered historical change in this materialist manner might seem to foreclose the possibility of pursuing histories of symbolic capital and of gendered agency. But neither symbolic capital nor social action are separate from the contours of material conditions such as agricultural practice because material agency requires symbolic mediation. We merely now look behind the techniques for negotiating social life with which people wielded and generated symbolic capital, in order to glimpse the contingency of the value conferred on the stakes which Rutarans and North Nyanzans recognized unconditionally as valid or self-evident.⁷² The stakes at issue were cattle and banana gardens. The techniques for negotiating access to them were, in part, gendered units of social organization.

⁶⁹ Mair, *An African People*, 213.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 212, 218.

⁷¹ It should also be noted that this term is the class 11 form of the root *-buga*, which refers in class 7/8 to that female space of the courtyard in a Ganda homestead.

⁷² Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," 120.

During the centuries before 1500, families changed their structure by emphasizing lineality over undifferentiated descent.⁷³ The linguistic evidence for this consists in the fact that individual terms for undifferentiated or bilateral forms of descent are more widely and discontinuously distributed in Bantu than are individual terms for lineality. These latter terms are more numerous and have narrower and more densely packed distributions. Together, the distributional evidence and semantic histories suggest that explicitly gendered lineality, whether matrifocal or patrifocal, is the more recent social innovation.⁷⁴

In the older, less exclusively lineal ideologies, groups most easily grew through clientelism (though we cannot yet tell if clientship was open to both sexes). Complex levels of patrilineality, which held explicit claims to landuse rights, apparently emerged during the period when Rutara, West Highlands, and North Nyanza groups formed. With these developments, fertility came to be controlled jurally by males and ritually by both men and women.⁷⁵ The jural control wielded by men perhaps assisted them in concentrating people and their descendants on productive property, in the contexts of growing economic specialization and competition. The ancient mixed-farming communities thrived on an eclectic combination of crops, livestock, fishing, and hunting,⁷⁶

These developments formed part of a response to an environmental crisis near Lake Victoria and in the highlands east of the Kivu Rift⁷⁷ and to social conflict in those same areas. Long-term uncertainty in rainfall regimes induced a struggle over control of the best croplands which in turn drove some communities to create an internal frontier in the savannahs between the Kivu Rift and Lake Victoria. Emerging agricultural specialization also formed part of a response to the new challenges to homesteads which lay in the open savannahs⁷⁸ and in the dense banana gardens.⁷⁹ The development of patrilineality was an important part of what drove people into this internal frontier. The emphasis on lineality grew to include the control and distribution of new forms of surplus, like cattle (in North Rutara society, controlled by the homestead head, the *nyineka*) and perennial croplands rich with the invested labor of wives (in North Nyanza society, controlled by the

⁷³ David L. Schoenbrun, "Social Aspects of Agricultural Change Between the Great Lakes: 500–1000," *Azania* 29/30 (1995-6): 275-80.

⁷⁴ See also Ahmed, "Before Eve;" Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*; Ehret, "Eastern Africa in the Earliest Iron Age."

⁷⁵ Tantal, "Early History;" Berger, *Religion and Resistance*; Berger, "Fertility as Power."

⁷⁶ Jan Vansina, "A Slow Revolution: Farming in Subequatorial Africa," *Azania* 29/30 (1995-6): 15-26.

⁷⁷ David L. Schoenbrun, "The Contours of Vegetation Change and Human Agency in Eastern Africa's Great Lakes Region: ca. 2000 B.C. to ca. A.D. 1000," *History in Africa* 21 (1994): 269–302.

⁷⁸ Reid, "The Role of Cattle"; "Changing Social Relations"; Sutton, "The Antecedents."

⁷⁹ Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds and Banana Gardens;" Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology*.

family head, the *mukulu*, or by the lineage head, the *mutaka*).⁸⁰ Above all this was a dialectical process of historical change which included environmental parameters, innovations in the character of units of social organization, and profound changes in gendered social relations. It was not determined by any one of these factors, as the differing paths charted below reveal.

In North Nyanza, the word *ekika* replaced the word *orugandá* in the meaning "dispersed patriclan." It did so at the same time as North Nyanza societies innovated a host of new words reflecting agricultural experiments with intensive banana farming. This was a historical period during which the concentrations of population around the best banana bearing lands made local collections of homesteads the new foci of the social relations of clanship. This differed from the widely dispersed character of clans (s. *-*rugandá*) elsewhere in West Nyanza societies like Rutara. Banana land was indeed plentiful in Buganda, but the best plots were then, as they are now, not often contiguous. They were separated by swamps and tongues of barren, rocky hilltops, leading to clustered settlements in between. What looks like an environmentally determinist argument must not obscure the dialectical relations between the physical locations of the better banana bearing lands, which were discontinuous, and the instrumentality of local collections of homesteads in providing the labor required to convert these 'better' lands into banana gardens. Localities did not serve up labor automatically. They did so through mechanisms of marriage and through gendered divisions of labor. Women, as wives, were the key springs in the marriage mechanism. Why all this should have taken place may become clearer if we consider the role of the cognatic family group (s. *olulá*; pl. *endá*) in this scenario.

The fundamental center of *olulá*'s semantic domain is "inside" the body, and quite often that specific part of the inside of the body where children form. The North Nyanza referents specify that cognatic family groups (pl. *endá*) rarely attain the status of lineages, that is, lineages capable of establishing legal claims to the land based on first-comer status (and, later, as granted by the Kabaka⁸¹) or lineages capable of establishing ritual claims to productive land through burial of three or four generations of its members on the same land.⁸² In Ganda society, the uneven contrast of the cognatic family group (s. *olulá*) to the maximal patrilineage (s. *ssiga*) reveals the central challenge to reproducing groups through time: because one womb cannot achieve this alone, others must be brought *inside* as wives or husbands and their children must be given legal status as insiders, as "us" not "them," as agnates not affines. Why North Nyanzan-speakers came to draw this

⁸⁰ These might have been the conditions which existed in Tantalá's Kitara heartland (Bwera, Kisengwe, Bugangaizi): when her Tembuzi-to-Cwezi transition developed. See Tantalá, "Early History," 438-39.

⁸¹ Mair, *An African People*, 164.

⁸² Roscoe, *Baganda*, 134.

line around those sharing real or putative patrilineal descent and not around those sharing matrilineal descent cannot now be known.

To the west and south of North Nyanzan societies Rutaran societies manipulated these combinations of environmental realities and social change very differently. In the Rutaran lands, the development of pastoralism had radically changed the conditions under which Hima women could deploy symbolic capital to improve their positions as wives. In the central grasslands (Map 1), specialized pastoralism began as early as A. D. 1200.⁸³ The exclusion of women from herding was possibly one of the outcomes of struggles for control over pastoralist knowledge. This exclusion may have been the result of men having succeeded in developing control over cattle, in the first place, through an ideology of patrilineal descent and inheritance which would have put livestock in male hands at the sort of mixed farming sites, such as Ntusi, where experiments in specialized pastoralism began.⁸⁴

On the internal frontiers formed by the specialists in herding or in banana farming who had settled just beyond or within nodes of ancient mixed-farming communities, clan heterogeneity had an enduring nature. With respect to perennially cropped banana gardens, small families (pl. *endá*) would not have been able to conserve their holdings as consistently, from generation to generation, as larger ones might have been able to do. With fewer members, the holdings of an heirless departed member of a small family (s. *olulá*) would have more often reverted to the "homestead or patrilineage head" (s. *mukúlú* in Rutara and West Highlands)⁸⁵ or to the "person holding lands in the name of the clan" (s. *mutaka* in North Nyanza), for reassignment to strangers. Where larger cognatic families (pl. *endá*) lived, heirless plots would have been rarer because it would have been correspondingly more likely that when a brother died another member of the succession lineage (an adelphic group in North Nyanza society) would have been approaching adulthood.⁸⁶ On the frontiers, where land was plentiful but labor scarce, a headman of a small family (s. *olulá*) or clan (s. *ekika*) would thus have been in a position more often than headmen of larger families or clans to remake the content of their group by allocating land to outsiders. This condition would have had the effect of emphasizing unequal amounts of instrumental power over land and people because the Rutaran lineage head (s. *mukúlú*) or the North Nyanza clan lands holder (s. *mutaka*) both held potential reallocation rights to much of the land. Wherever the most desirable lands were in short supply, as around North Nyanza and Southern Rutara banana gardens, the only way a cognatic family (s. *olulá*) could grow was

⁸³ Reid, "The Role of Cattle;" Reid "Changing Social Relations."

⁸⁴ Reid, "The Role of Cattle"; "Changing Social Relations"; Sutton, "The Antecedents"; Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey."

⁸⁵ The word also means "elder" more widely in Bantu.

⁸⁶ Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 84ff.

through having more children, hence the value of marriage and wives. And it is precisely in these contexts that the house and belly metaphors emerged together to represent small and large patrilineages. Where lands or pastures were abundant (as, perhaps, at Ntusi) an enterprising homestead head (*s. nyineka* or *s. mukúlú*) could add potential landholding strangers to its group, as recipients of reallocated rights to cleared land or new rights to clear new fields. These would have become the loci, the homestead (*s. eka*), for wives whose fertility was the ultimate insurance against a clan's or a cognatic family's disappearance.

Conclusion.

In a thoughtful meditation on practice theory and state formation, Paul Roscoe argues that the potential for political centralization—the concentration of power over others—exists “wherever humans have wants that can best or only be satisfied through the agency of others, since these conditions promote struggles for dominion to satisfy these wants.”⁸⁷ The functional logic of the North Nyanzan cognatic family (*s. olulá*) and of the Rutaran homestead (*s. eka*), in their historically variable forms, constitute such conditions. But the struggle for dominion follows more than one path because the resources—the forms of power—also differ. Differences between, for example, the sizes and character of clans, lineages, and offices, reflect outcomes of “the creativity of interested humans operating both within and on these and other, nonmaterial circumstances to augment their power and satisfy their wants.”⁸⁸ Material conditions are contingent, not strictly causal factors in the human capacity for manipulating redistributions of wealth, engineering shortages of key goods (including wives or husbands), and deploying surplus as forms of political entrepreneurship.

Between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1500, the conditions of specialization constrained some and facilitated others' ability to “remove themselves entirely from the oppressive power of others . . . through relocation.”⁸⁹ To some degree, the communities which relocated to the central savannahs were forced to do so by circumscribed access to the mixed farming lands in the old core nodes of ancient settlement (Map 1). Those who remained in the core areas converted to intensive banana farming. Those who fled the core areas took the old mixed farming system with them to sites like Ntusi. Once settled there, some people could concentrate on pastoralist specialization secure in the knowledge that annual crops like grains and tubers were available.

⁸⁷ Roscoe, “Practice Theory,” 114–15.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

This scenario, for the period before 1500, is supported by comparative linguistic evidence,⁹⁰ paleoenvironmental data,⁹¹ and archaeological data.⁹² What will be far harder to learn is what were the forms of power—economic, social, cultural, and symbolic—which people deployed, manipulated, and engineered to effect these expansions. But this, too, can be wrung from historical linguistic reconstructions of terms for clientship, spirit possession, and chiefship and from ethnographic depictions of the gendered and "aged" dimensions of each of these.⁹³ What cannot be recovered are the specific negotiations by which living, individual, creative agents worked various of these parts into strategies for political centralization, as has been done for later periods by Newbury.⁹⁴ What is more, such negotiations are precisely where historical actors between the Great Lakes will have changed the specific content of gender relations by changing their performance of them.

The limits to gendered histories between the Great Lakes now appear. Using ethnography and comparative linguistics alone, we cannot recover any specific contexts of contests over access to cattle or land. However, comparative linguistic and comparative ethnographic histories of those bundles of meanings attached to houses and fields might be unpacked by the still embryonic settlement archaeology of the Later Iron Age.⁹⁵ Excavations of such sites could confirm or deny the spatial architecture of pastoralist, mixed farming, and perennially cropped homesteads. Because the architecture of such sites may encode hegemonic formulations of gendered (among other) identities⁹⁶ the archaeology of such architecture might confirm or deny the sequences for their development diagnosed by comparative linguistic and comparative ethnographic analysis.

At this point we can say that exploitation by senior men of junior male and female labor (for the hard work of cattle keeping) *and* the apparent isomorphism between the status of wife and the roles of social and biological reproduction of the house are keys to the emergence of specialized pastoralism some 500 years ago.

⁹⁰ Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds and Banana Gardens."

⁹¹ Schoenbrun, "The Contours."

⁹² Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 1994; Reid, "The Role of Cattle;" "Changing Social Relations;" Sutton, "Antecedents."

⁹³ Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place*, chs 5-7.

⁹⁴ Newbury, *Kings and Clans*.

⁹⁵ Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 1994; Reid, "The Role of Cattle;" "Changing Social Relations;" Rachel MacLean, "Late Stone Age and Early Iron Age Settlement Patterns in the Interlacustrine Region: A District Case Study," *Azania* 29/30 (1995): 296-302.

⁹⁶ Linda Donley, "Life in the Swahili Town House Reveals the Symbolic Meaning of Spaces and Artefact Assemblages," *African Archaeological Review* 5 (1987): 181-92; Adam Kuper, "Symbolic Dimensions of the Southern Bantu Homestead;" Heidi Nast, "The Impact of British Imperialism on the Landscape of Female Slavery in the Kano Palace, Northern Nigeria," *Africa* 64, 1 (1994): 34-73.

The marginalization of women from direct control of emerging forms of wealth was thus not only a colonial experience. Why it was that men appear to have won this particular battle cannot be answered definitively with the available materials for ancient Great Lakes histories.⁹⁷

But what women retained control over or seized control of—various forms of symbolic capital and of the wealth that could accrue to other forms of specialized knowledge (such as spirit possession mediums⁹⁸)—can be reconstructed through the comparative study of the semantics of metaphorical visions of gendered work and identities. In this essay, this has proceeded by the application of a generative approach⁹⁹ to social change. A generative approach holds that, given a specific range of agricultural profiles and a specific range of gendered work and gendered identities, the possible combinations of the three, over time, constitute the possible varieties of gendered histories between the Great Lakes.

The limits placed on such histories by the nature of the sources are as follows: comparative linguistics and comparative ethnography may recover the rules for gendering work and identity and not the practices of individuals and individual houses. The comparative method may recover, therefore, only the hegemonic framework (and, where variation occurs, we might suggest that what was hegemonic had become ideological) and not the processes of negotiation and struggle. And, yet, negotiation and struggle surely helped to convert the hegemonic formulations of gendered work, a set of arrangements crafted inside the patrilineal ideology of a West Nyanza house, into the near-total exclusion of Hima women from control of the instruments of production. For some, this will be tantamount to admitting that gendered histories are impossible to write for the parts of ancient Africa for which we have only linguistic and ethnographic sources. For others, what has come forward here will be a welcome advance on the undifferentiated world of precolonial African gender relations and identities.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ I have not discussed the rather more famous identities of the spirit wife, the spirit medium, and the midwife, in all of which women are seen to have an existence independent of men, an existence "in which she can assert rights as an individual against other individuals." See Anne Whitehead, "Men and Women, Kinship and Property: Some General Issues," in *Women and Property, Women as Property*, ed. Rene Hirschon (London, 1984), 189–90. For an emphasis on sexuality, see Pierre Bonté, "To Increase Cows, God Created the King': The Function of Cattle in Interlacustrine Societies," in *Herders, Warriors and Traders*, ed. John Galaty and Pierre Bonté (Boulder, Colo., 1991), 62–86.

⁹⁸ Cf. Berger, "Fertility as Power."

⁹⁹ Steven Feierman, personal communication.

¹⁰⁰ A study of comparative forms of gendered concepts of life may go farther toward revealing the development of contexts for and constraints on the deployment of symbolic creativity by men and women and how these contexts and constraints changed by differing uses or practices as well as how they express contradictory elements of a gendered hegemony. For example, the gendered divisions of labor discussed here as but possible solutions to crises (perceived or actual) in agro-environmental realms, may actually be more fully understood by studying the genders of life

Appendix: Kinship and Culture Vocabulary.

This essay has offered neither a systematic discussion of what are conventionally referred to as "kinship systems" nor a treatment of their historical development as might be recovered from a comparative study of kinship terminologies. But this is only an apparent omission. Throughout the ethnographic descriptions of Lakes Bantu social groups, words naming social relations which have seeming origins in family relationships betray themselves as actually resident in far wider nets of social life than "the family." This is to point out the obvious: kinship terminologies can possess semantic fields which include lineages, clans, and residential groups (whose membership is by no means restricted to blood relatives). In reemphasizing this, we follow the able lead of Rodney Needham¹⁰¹ and the specific comments of John Beattie¹⁰² and Martin Southwold,¹⁰³ all of whom conclude that terminologies and systems of social relations have neither their origins nor their ultimate destinations in elementary family units. Though such terminologies often refer to blood relatives, they do not classify those persons by referring always, in the first and last instances, to elementary family relations. However "obvious" elementary family relations are for the conduct of social life, alone they fail to order or negotiate the many passages undertaken by an individual. People neither make nor represent passages such as initiation, marriage, childbirth, old age, and death solely through the semantic net of terms for social relations labeling elementary family bonds. It follows from this that historians should focus on the character and development of those units of social identity which run through and shape the greatest number of social fields. These forms of social identity include the interconnected units of

and health rather than by searching only for the genders of property and descent. Of course, there will be semantic overlap between descent meanings and philosophies of life and health as is hinted at in the semantic histories of some of the terms in the Appendix. Such a study might proceed along the lines set out by David Lan in *Guns and Rain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), 91–98, or by Tantala, "Early History," Vol. 1, or by Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals* (Madison, 1990), 7 or by Luise White, "Blood Brotherhood Revisited: Kinship, Relationship, and the Body in East and Central Africa," *Africa* 64, 3 (1994): 359–72. Lan claims that the color symbolism of black–white and red mark two sorts of life, two sorts of creative power; see also Adam Kuper, *Wives for Cattle* (London, 1982), 18–21; Marja–Liisa Swantz, *Blood, Milk and Death* (Westport, Ct., 1995), 49–50, 71. Black–white marks ancestral life and rain, achieved through death and controlled by men, and linked to notions of descent. Red is biological life, blood, and is female, it is brought by affines. Learning the ritual and semantic ranges of meanings for such philosophies will reveal both conflicts over gendered hierarchy—is one of these forms of life believed (by whom? with what rejoinders? expressed by what symbols?) to be "better" than the other? But how we might retrieve such complexities from the deep past, how we might combine semantic histories with histories of practice, still eludes us.

¹⁰¹ Rodney Needham, *Structure and Sentiment* (Chicago, 1962); *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage* (London, 1971), passim.

¹⁰² John H. M. Beattie, "Nyoro Kinship," *Africa* 27, 4 (1957): 317–39.

¹⁰³ Martin Southwold, "The 'Mother's Brother' and Other Problems of Meaning in Buganda," *Nkanga* 7 (1973): 52ff.

family, lineage, clan, and the various forms of gendered and public friendships such as "blood brother." But, these relations and units form and change shape around social processes. Thus, historians who will explain changes in these social fields must search for any and all of the rights and responsibilities attached to these fields and the persons in them. For it is these rights and responsibilities which partly shape the choices and constraints operating on their members.

If rights and responsibilities give life to kinship systems, may we then conceive of them as statements about ideology, as ways of masking the struggles over instrumental power which mark so much of social life? In trying to answer this question, consider the fact that families and larger units of social organization bear profound contradictions. They are the vehicles for growth, sustenance, and social visibility, but they are also arenas of conflict between generations, genders, and the rich and poor. Over time, these fundamental conflicts shaped the forms social organization took, as Lakes people confronted new challenges to their survival and as they enjoyed the successes which their innovations brought to their homesteads, their lineages, and to their clans. Conflicts also surfaced around issues of maintaining social health. A history of the constellation of forces which Lakes peoples mediated and regulated, however imperfectly, through changes in social units of organization constitutes together a historical narrative of Lakes social space. Such a conceptual stance reintegrates "elemental family relations" with the wider fields of social life.

Rendering historical changes in the meanings given to kin terms by retracing polysemous pathways of semantic extension still fails to address the purposes of kin terms. At best we may conclude a sort of reciprocity to have existed, and to exist now, whereby relationship by birth formed one part in a system where "the relation between the recognition of kinship and an appropriate mode of action is reciprocal."¹⁰⁴ The appropriate mode of action which Sahlins speaks of in this quote invites historical study. After all, merely typecasting a system as patrilineal, matrilineal, unilineal, bilateral or dual, should not be held to have told us anything about how members behaved toward each other. Though it is precisely behavior and motivation which excite social historians, we have already learned that we must pay attention to groups of people formed by ties beyond relationship by birth. The problem of explaining historical changes in modes of behavior between groups of individuals thus may be pursued fruitfully by infusing the sometimes sterile debates on kinship with historical sensibility to the contexts of personhood, gender, politics, and health, as shapers of group behavior and as locations for individual or group change in that behavior. Kinship or descent groups, then, provide categories which both constrain and enable action. Historical reconstruction of certain

¹⁰⁴ Marshall Sahlins, *The Use and Abuse of Biology* (Ann Arbor, 1976), 26, quoted in H. Scheffler, "Sexism and Naturalism in the Study of Kinship," in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), 370.

elements within these larger categories—affinity and lineality, for example—should reveal some of the ways people relieved social tensions and seized opportunities for realizing their aspirations within larger complexes of political institution and medical practice.

For these reasons, then, Rutaran and North Nyanzan kinship terminologies and rules of descent have not been reconstructed *in toto*. They have been touched on only insofar as they might throw light on politics and health. Politics and health, it may fairly be said, run through and shape fields like kinship and rules of descent. The added advantage of following this line, namely that of finding gendered identities and hierarchies to have been a feature of agency, which in its specificity only imperfectly reflects the ideologies of gender expressed in kin term taxonomies, is that it directs our attention away from the dichotomy of private (kinship/descent) versus public (politics) spheres of historical activity. By studying histories of politics and health, as against a narrowly defined 'kinship' realm, we turn our analytic attention to the constraints and opportunities which people in Lakes societies engaged by gendering identity and by making gendered hierarchies.

The shift in analytic vision still holds issues of labor, reproduction of labor, and various modes of power to form overlapping centers of historical study. No essential gendered identity for men and women existed around purely familial concerns, however far from the homestead these family concerns might have traveled. Lakes social systems instead appear historically to have been both functional means to solve problems and fluctuating representational nets for crafting identities.

Culture Vocabulary: A Sample.¹⁰⁵

- *-*piga* "Firestone." 5/6. In East Nyanza, Greater Luhyia, Western Lakes, and West Nyanza, thus Great Lakes Bantu. In Proto Sabaki: **ifiga*. Also in Luban, Shona, Sanga, Thagicuu, Matengo, Kwanyama, Venda, thus Proto Savannah. Perhaps a deverbative of the nonprepositional form of Proto Savannah *-*pígik*- "to fix into," but tone is wrong.
- *-*higa* "Maximal lineage, with eponymous founder." 5/6. In Kuria and Ganda. An innovation from (1) above.
- *-*dâ*. "Stomach, Interior, Pregnancy, Intestine." 3/4, 5/6, 11/6, 14/6, 11/8, 9/10, 9/18. Proto Bantu. In Great Lakes: Western Lakes, West Nyanza, Greater Luhyia, East Nyanza.

¹⁰⁵ David L. Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary*, provides a more complete statement on reconstructing Great Lakes cultural vocabulary.

*-*dá*. "Village, Natal Village." 14/6. Proto Western Bantu.¹⁰⁶

*-*dá*. "Family, Lineage." 11/10. Nande, Ganda, Soga. Nande and Soga have the lineage meaning, Ganda has family/cognatic group meaning. If these are separately innovated metaphors to lineage and family from village, then Great Lakes or, perhaps, Mashariki or Savannah become the likely levels for such innovations. Should be considered together with *-*buga* "courtyard," *-*gii* "village," and, in Great Lakes, with *-*jaalo* "group of huts, homestead with lands and pastures" as parts of the Village/Homestead taxonomy. The tone reversal still needs explanation. But the redundancy of tone reversal in other house-lineage metaphors, like with *-*líango* "doorway" and *-*líango* "patrilineage," in West Highlands, should be noted.

*-*búgà* "Free or clear land near home, Area, Village." 7/8, 9/10, 11/10. In Western Bantu and Great Lakes Bantu, suggesting possible Proto Bantu innovation. Perhaps replacing Proto Bantu *-*bánjá* which came to mean "open space for meetings." In class 11, comes to mean "Queen Sister" in Ganda. In class 7, means "courtyard in front of a house," in Nkore and Ganda. While not clearly gendered in either case, the space in Ganda is more clearly female if only because children play there and food is processed there.¹⁰⁷ However, in class 3 the meaning is "place in front of residence; chief's residence."¹⁰⁸ Thus both genders enter the meaning. Etymology unclear; may be deverbative of *-*búg-* "to plaster, dig foundations," in relict distribution which includes Luban, Bobangi, Bulu, Duala, and Ganda [*èbbugwé* "strong pallsade, external wall of royal residence."].

*-*lòngò* "Line, Row, Ten, Kinship." Proto Bantu (Vansina 1990:268). In Tiv as "tribe." Vansina derives the meaning "large social group" from CS 657-59 "heap, arrange, pack carefully," but the distribution of these items narrower than for CS 664 "line of objects." Ehret¹⁰⁹ suggests this etymology for the meaning "lineage." The West Nyanza innovation "twin" and "put in order (adj.)" are all that remain of the semantic field of "line, row." In West Nyanza (and elsewhere in Great Lakes Bantu) kinship meanings attached to *-*gàndá* and to later innovations on "lineage" (-*ryaango*, -*ka*, etc.). Not in Nkore or Kiga.

¹⁰⁶ Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 271.

¹⁰⁷ Mair, *An African People*, 15-16.

¹⁰⁸ Henri Le Vaux, *Premier Essai de vocabulaire Luganda-Français d'après L'ordre étymologique* (Algeria, 1917), 78.

¹⁰⁹ Ehret, *Eastern Africa in the Earliest Iron Age*, 124-28.

- *-*gàndá* "House, Clan, Village, Chief's enclosure, Collateral relative of same sex." 5/6, 9/6. Vansina argues for the meaning "house," or "settlement inhabited by a house."¹¹⁰ Ehret argues that the term meant "matriclan" in Proto Savannah Bantu¹¹¹ and formed part of a taxonomy of kinterms which diagnosed ambilineal descent metaphors, based on "house" and "belly," for two levels of social organization: the matriclan (*-*gàndá*), the matrilineage (*-*jú/*-jó*) and the patrilineage (*-*lòngò*). The nub of his argument is that because clan/lineage concepts refer to historical content—to relationships in the present which are understood in the present by reference to real or putative membership in a "House" of the past—the two ideas developed in tandem. Because Ehret feels that the presence in a set of related languages of linguistic evidence for the operation of "house" and "belly" metaphors (in Great Lakes Bantu, for example) reveals that Proto language community to have understood matrilineality, we must interpret the facts that in Lakes Bantu languages today, the semantic fields for *-*gàndá* include "collateral lines, siblings of the same sex, patrilineage, patriclan" as all diagnosing different parts of the suppression of matrilineality and the ascendance of patrilineality. However, on the face of this evidence, there does not seem to be any reason for imagining that "houses" generated "clans." While the two can be argued to have developed together, this possibility does not explain why they should have done so. See the next three items for some more derived meanings, the last one offering insights onto a *possible* semantic history for the entire bundle.
- *-*gànda* "Bundle." 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10. Looks to be Proto Mashariki, with reflexes in Southeastern Bantu, Great Lakes, Sabaki, and Tetela. The meaning in Ziba (Rutara) makes the link between "bundle" and "clan": "Family, Pedigree; Thickening of milk," class 11.
- *-*gánda* "Coagulate." Looks to be Proto Savannah: Kongo ("thickened piece of food."), Bolia/Ntomba, Ila, Mbundu, Bobangi; Shona; Proto Sabaki, Gikuyu, Taita. Tone suggests this different root from *-*gàndá* "residence, bundle."
- *-*gàndá/*-gaanda* "Foundation pole of building." 3/4. In Western Lakes and Rutara with slightly narrower distribution than *-*gàndá* "patrilineage." Both "foundation pole" and "patrilineage" narrower distributions than "large social group" which is itself more narrowly distributed than "residence," suggesting the last meaning is the oldest meaning, and the one that developed together with "large social group."

¹¹⁰ Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest*, 268–69.

¹¹¹ Ehret, *Eastern Africa in the Earliest Iron Age*, 129–32.

- *-*gàndá* "Servant, follower." 1a/2. Proto Western Lakes. May point to importance of subordinates/unmarried person to health of the clan. Possibly derived from *-*ganda* "to spread, increase," in Ngombe, Yao, Masaaba, and West Highlands.

- *-*ka* "Household, Clan." 5/6, 7/8. Proto Great Lakes Bantu as "homestead" and "head of cattle" In Proto West Nyanza meaning narrowed to "household" as "head of cattle" replaced by *-*te*.¹¹² Innovation of "clan" meaning in North Nyanza, Nkore; and to "shallow patrilineage" in Kuria and Kiga. Derived from Proto Nilo-Saharan *-*ka* "cattle camp" by way of Sog Eastern Sudanic.

¹¹² Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 30–31.