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A GREEN PLACE, A GOOD PLACE

AGRARIAN CHANGE, GENDER, AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION TO THE 15TH CENTURY

David Lee Schoenbrun

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Note on Spelling

Words and place names in African languages are written using the following conventions.

The river that forms the border between Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi has been spelled Rusizi. The northernmost and southernmost lakes that straddle the border between Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo have been spelled Mwitanzige and Rweru, respectively.

Nouns and verbs in Bantu languages are composed of a prefix and a stem. With nouns, class prefixes for people are usually *mu-* (singular) and *ba-* (plural). These two prefixes have been left off names for ethnic groups. Thus, *Nyoro* stands for both *munyoro* and *banyoro*. All other Bantu noun prefixes are included in the names of language groups. Thus, for example, *Rutara*, *Luhyia*, and *Kivu*, although *ru-*, *lu-*, and *ki-* are prefixes. A few other conventions with regard to prefixes deserve explaining. Some Bantu languages add a vowel before the prefix and some do not. For example, *Abazigaaba* (noun) in Rwanda and not *Bazigaaba*; or *obucweke* (noun) and not *bucweke*; or *ugutuunda* (verb) and not *gutuunda*. I have retained these individual differences. The prefix *bu-* can mean "the *place* of the Ganda," as in *Buganda*, or "the *condition* of dying childless," as in *bucweke*. Where the prefixial status of a noun varies from language to language, I have placed a simple dash before the stem.

Sounds in African languages are transcribed in the Africa alphabet, with the following differences. Semantic tones are marked where known or reconstructed. High tone is marked with an acute accent. Low tone is marked with a grave accent. For example, **kukúnga*, "to gather or assemble," in Great Lakes Bantu, but **mukungu*, "chief," in West Nyanza Bantu. Distinctions between vowels of the first and second degrees are rendered in the following manner: /I/ as in "pea" and /i/ as in "pit." The distinctions between /e/ as in

INTRODUCTION

This book is about ancient peoples, the lands they lived in, and the ways they lived together in those lands. The lands themselves lie between some of Africa's largest lakes (Map 1.1). The peoples who sojourned there represented an enormous variety of historical traditions in ancient Africa. They hunted, gathered, and fished, they grew grains, tended the searching yam vine and pruned the sheltering banana plant. They crafted pots of clay, built houses of wood and thatch, they hammered spears, hoe blades, and axheads from the fine iron their smelters fired. Goods rare and common were traded throughout the land. They mastered and shared tongues from three of Africa's four families of languages (Map 1.2). In short, they left legacies of dynamic cultural interaction and invention for their descendants. Their stories, in so far as they are reclaimable by the techniques of historical method, fill the pages to come. But their stories are more than accumulations of social change and continuity, they offer more than an inheritance to be struggled over only by historians.

The sort of history reclaimed through comparative linguistics and comparative ethnography reveals the past in the present. The fact that cereal agriculture, patronage, mediumship, and idioms of royal power are still part of contemporary ways to survive, to succeed, to heal, and to weave together political alliances tells us that a social history of their development should offer to modern people a reservoir, a shared past, which they might draw on to face problems in the present. Thus, the challenge of historical reconstruction is also the challenge of cultural politics. The history in these pages tells of social change in the past, but it is a story which has social uses in the present.

An intellectual history of concepts of power, joined to a history of the social relations of power, offers a rich reserve of cultural capital for modern

dwellers in the lands between the Great Lakes to draw upon in their search for solutions to contemporary social problems. But a history of power is more than a history of domination and resistance, though these certainly figure prominently in the story. It is also a history of creativity and of dispersed and contradictory notions of the texture of power. The names for power, its dwellings, and its character lived through the social life of the communities that inhabited the green, good lands between the Great Lakes. The diversity and longevity of those signs and things beckon to today's children to take them up.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE PAST

Because this book offers a history of agriculture, politics, and healing, it must also consider how that history poses new challenges to contemporary farmers, leaders, and doctors. For example, during the fifteenth century, some of the religious practitioners whose abilities and standing rendered them leaders, were coopted by royal courts in the era of the kingdoms.[1] When politicians concentrated their attentions on the instrumental control of people and when healers concentrated their attentions on the creative maintenance of social and personal health, they both engineered an institutional separation of religious from political authority. The intimate local and regional contact that healers enjoyed with their clients seduced kings to try to take control of them in order to legitimize their authority with spiritual sanction and to give that authority a local face. The grounds for doing so surely included the fact that both king and doctor were concerned with fertility and fecundity. Women sought out mediums in part to ensure or to restore their fertility. And a chief's followers looked to that office, in part, to manage and protect the fecundity of the land and livestock in order to ensure abundant harvests and growing herds. Much later, during the colonial period, some healers and chiefs reasserted themselves as foci of resistance.[2] Later still, in 1960s independence movements such as the Rwenzururu Rebellion in Western Uganda, community teachers allied themselves once again to political authority.[3] Even more recently, leaders such as Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Kabaka Ronald Mutebi II of Buganda, established their authority in multiethnic states and their legitimacy in Christian idioms.[4]

In these different struggles and transitions, gender and ethnicity both play roles.[5] For example, they posed to kings and queens two of their enduring challenges: how to create a diverse following and how to centralize the creative power of women. Historians such as Steven Feierman have argued that within cults of affliction, people—especially women—could subvert gender hierarchies.[6] To the extent that persons belonging to cults stand outside "general kinship authority, they have the capacity to sustain alternative patterns of values, which challenge dominant ideology."[7] A deep social history of such

therapeutic systems may thus reveal distinctive forms of gendered identities and gendered forms of power. Contemporary women's health issues also reflect the ways gender and ethnicity unevenly distribute the social costs of health.[8] Thus, a social history of healing may also reveal a similar central challenge to contemporary Great Lakes political leaders: to balance the distribution of gendered power through ensuring that the integrity of female power be reseparated from largely male control of economic resources.

Creative power never totally subverts instrumental power, no matter how lines of gender emerge. The potential exists for friction between healers and politicians because their competitions for instrumental power will have important implications for "the distribution of social costs" of health.[9] Healers and chiefs compete for followers within social and economic systems, systems that the people who make them work understand to possess different but overlapping theories of just action.[10] Chiefs have their redistributive duties and their ritual responsibilities which, if they exploit or ignore them, can lead to losing followers to other chiefs or to rebellion. The just execution of these responsibilities can help chiefs to gain larger followings. Healers have their ritual duties and they possess practical knowledge of regional social conditions. At different times in the deep past healers and chiefs made alliances.[11] But, because members of a community do not bear the social costs of health equally and because the power to heal and the power to redistribute wealth flow in part from a vigorous, abundant agricultural economy, these powers and the inequalities on which they rest may never be concentrated in one or the other location, be it the royal court or the healer's shrine. Instrumental power and justice thus remake Great Lakes "traditions" in constantly shifting arrays of multiple centers and multiple edges.[12] This condition of tradition bears hope for a better future. It is a hope refracted through the prism of contemporary sorts of instrumental and creative powers, such as those contained in the nation-state, popular consumption, or Christian churches. The fund of Great Lakes practical and discursive knowledge reminds us that no center, however despotic or just, can hold. Things always fall apart even though, at any given time, centers are real enough. The social history told in this book will argue that, over the span of two millennia, centers were decidedly ephemeral.

Ancient histories thus have value for today's Great Lakes peoples. They have value, as John Lonsdale says of colonial Kenya, because "...the social systems through which people met change...were more resilient than modernist [or any] theorists could credit."[13] A history of how these social systems emerged, of how people in them negotiated their continuity and influenced the course of their development, offers valuable stores of cultural capital for contemporary struggles over moral order and the ways in which material circumstances should be made to reflect that moral order.

I choose to address these matters as stories because stories pose challenges to both tellers and listeners. Storytellers must negotiate two particular challenges. They must navigate the twists and turns of balancing gaps and silences in the evidence with imagination. And they must respect the possible uses such stories might have for their listeners. This section has considered some of those uses. Now, the problems of gaps, silences, continuities, and changes, the problems of evidence and of building stories must be posed.

ARGUING HISTORY FROM WORDS AND MEANINGS

This is the story of the spirit and power of names. And it is the story of the spirit and power of that which is named. Historical linguistics produces histories of words and their meanings. Because language itself is fundamentally social, historical linguistics has fundamentally a social basis. Historical linguists exploit the fact that changes in society will often be marked by changes in words and meanings. The social nature of language, thus, revolves around the twin poles of change and variation, precisely what historical linguistics is designed to recover.[14]

Between the Great Lakes, people knew that there were spirits of the forests and plains, lakes and ridges, of drums, fathers, and mothers. They knew that the spirits lived in these places and that they also lived in the names of these places. Because people remembered their names, the names of spirits and their places lived on. This section examines the possibilities for recovering what is named by exploiting two facts: people remember names and they remember those names differently.

The method of historical linguistics involves more than recovering similarities and differences. For example, because groups shared some of their understanding of things like chiefship and clanship but differed in other elements of their understanding of those institutions, the comparative method can produce a reconstruction of the ancient social knowledge that underlay both chiefship and clanship. The assumption guiding the method is simple: what is similar was inherited, what is different was innovated. But it is often not easy to distinguish between the two. There are ways to ascertain that what is similar was inherited, that it was not innovated more recently and spread rapidly thereafter. By searching carefully through the ethnographic record for evidence of material cultural items associated with such words and meanings and by teasing out a given term's semantic history, the purely comparative aspects of this methodology merge to offer striking images of the historical development of worldviews. The historian-linguist comes to recognize strands of meaning at work in different but overlapping fields of social life (Chapter 3: Conclusion). In the examples analyzed below, the technical parts of the comparative method emerge alongside such strands of meaning. Having settled to the best of our ability whether a word or a bundle

of words are retentions, innovations, or features of areal spread through later borrowing, the etymology offered then opens up to us the creative choices a community made in naming a new form of knowledge

Meanings exist in any or all of three forms.[15] People may invent new words from old ones or they may add new meanings to old words. These are internal innovations—innovations that had their origins inside the linguistic world of the community of speakers. Secondly, people may keep old words and their meanings. These are retentions—parts of the vocabulary that were passed on to the next generation of speakers. Finally, people may learn new words and their meanings from interaction with other speech communities. This sort of innovation had its origins outside the linguistic world of the community of speakers. Each of these kinds of innovations may overlap as time passes but each requires a social context for its occurrence. The inherently creative act of internal innovation results from or facilitates the beginning of something new in the social field of language. The same may be said of borrowing new words and meanings from outsiders. Retentions are valuable because they reflect parts of the socialization process, some of the choices people made about the practical and special knowledge that children would need in order to function in their parents' cognitive world. Taken together these three statuses for words and meanings reveal both social relations and historical process. Thus, a history that flows from comparative linguistics is a social history, it is a social history of inventing and remembering.

Naming things or ideas may well form the fundamental act of human memory. We tag things to recall them or to identify them, to jog our memory. Yet, it is obvious that the things and ideas spoken of in this book, even in the last few paragraphs, differ wildly in the social contexts of their creation and of their use. We must turn to the ethnographic record to learn of such contexts. Thus, for the historian, comparative linguistics and ethnography should be two facets of the same method. More detail will be given in Chapter 1 about the process of establishing the historical reality of comparative linguistic data through language classifications, the study of innovation, and the search for semantic histories. For now let us consider three examples of words whose histories reveal rather different, but interconnected, aspects of social history.

Once classifications and settlement chronologies exist (see Chapter 1) the far more exciting tasks of reconstructing vocabulary and documenting its retention and transformation await. The fruits of these labors can provide precisely what historians desire most: evidence for the all-too-often invisible parts of social and economic change. If, for example, the historical linguist can reconstruct a word for "*eleusine*" (finger millet) to the chronologically and geographically defined Great Lakes Bantu speech community, then archaeologists may search fruitfully in those areas for material evidence of these grains. If the historical linguist can reconstruct words for "chief" or

"clan" for Great Lakes Bantu, archaeologists can begin to search as well for evidence of those political and social relationships. Their search will offer to historians the possibility of confirming, denying, or revising the inferences they made from comparative linguistics and comparative ethnography.

The meanings "*eleusine*" and "chief" differ widely in the social contexts for their development and for their use in daily life. On the one hand, we may feel confident that a reconstructed word for "*eleusine*" reflects the existence of knowledge of the grain in the lives of Great Lakes Bantu speakers. Because we also find words for fields, tools and cultivating techniques, we may even feel confident that such knowledge existed not from mere familiarity with grains but from actual sowing of them. On the other hand, words for "chiefship" and units of social organization, like "clan," emerge in contexts of negotiation and contest. They refer to more than a single semantic domain because they encode ideas about other features of social and economic life. We thus rightly suspect that they do not exist as isolated grains of practical knowledge. They must, therefore, be reconstructed as pieces of interlocking sets of semantic fields, the content of which can be expected to describe precisely the dimensions of thought on such matters as chiefship and social alliance. This can only be achieved by combining ethnographic description with the rigors of lexical reconstruction and of etymology.[16]

Every time farmers plant, harvest, and serve millet or bananas the spirit of these foods is "remembered." Because these actions and their names show similarities across a wide area, they betray to us their common past. How else might one explain the distribution of such things than by arguing that that very distribution reflects the spread of human communities from an older area into the wider area the researcher discovers? As the communities spread, they brought the word and its meaning with them. If this is so, then similarity betokens common ancestry, it hints at a shared history. But how are we to tell if that history is one of simple inheritance, from ancestors to descendants, or if it is one of intervention and invention? Might not a single enterprising community have learned that finger millet could survive long dry seasons or that properly watered bananas will produce fruit for many years, even an entire human generation? And, having learned of these advantages, what would have kept this group from communicating them to neighbors near and far, thus transforming into a relatively recent event what looked like an ancient feature of shared ancestry, because of widely distributed "similarity"?

The answer to the question turns on whether or not meanings can live when some people forget. A meaning lost to some can be recovered if it has not been forgotten by everyone. Patterns of similarity between associations of words and things must not be taken as the only bearer of messages from the past. Variability, too, brings messages from the past. Perhaps, what has been forgotten by some has been remembered by others, but in slightly altered forms. Some examples of these properties of words and their meanings will show how to argue history from words.

The word for "*eleusine*," **-lo* (68),[17] in Great Lakes Bantu, is very old. The word turns up in many but not all of the languages that belong to the major branches of Great Lakes Bantu. So, we suspect that it was a retained word in each of the intermediate subgroups. The suspicion is warranted by the discontinuous distribution of the word and meaning and by the fact that *eleusine* was of such basic importance to the survival of farming communities that, from generation to generation, parents or neighbors taught young children the word *-lo*. But because its distribution stops at Great Lakes Bantu, does not go beyond the Great Lakes region, it probably was not inherited from the community of speakers of the language ancestral to Great Lakes Bantu. Where, then, did such an important word and its meaning come from? Searches throughout the vocabularies of Great Lakes Bantu languages fail to turn up any possible templates for the addition of the meaning "*eleusine*" to an already existing noun **-lo*. Nor can we find evidence that the noun *-lo* was itself invented from any preexisting verb **-la*. Thus, it seems highly unlikely that the word and meaning were innovated from within the linguistic world of the Great Lakes Bantu. The conundrum is solved by looking to vocabularies outside Great Lakes Bantu, in this case to words for grains in Central Sudanic tongues spoken today to the north of the Lakes region. There we find a perfectly good source in the word *Dö* which means "finger millet." Thus, the term for "*eleusine*" in Great Lakes Bantu was a loanword from Central Sudanic speakers. And it must have been "borrowed" during the Great Lakes Bantu era in order to explain most efficiently its modern distribution across the region as a feature of the spread of Great Lakes Bantu speech itself.

But the clear-cut historical inferences that emerge from the comparative analysis of *-lo*, "*eleusine*," become more complex when we consider words that convey meanings with political and ideological content. One such word is "clan," **rugàndá* (106). The meaning "clan" is an innovation by metaphorical extension from the domestic space of the "residence." Because the meaning "residence" shows a wider distribution than does the meaning "clan" we suspect that "residence" was the earlier meaning to which *rugàndá* referred. But the metaphorical extension of meaning from "residences" to "units of social organization" is a common one around Africa and in other parts of the world.[18] We cannot rule out the probability that it occurred in different societies at different times. What attracts attention to this particular instance is the era during which it was undertaken. Because the distribution of this word in this meaning suggests that they came into existence during the era of the Great Lakes Bantu speakers, we should consider other, related processes of social and agricultural change that occurred at the same time. The adoption of grains was one such related process, marked by the borrowing of the

new word *-lo* for "finger millet." The metaphorical extension of *rugàndá* to mean "clan" may thus have been part of a process of creating new units of social life linked to agricultural change, specifically linked to emerging needs for more labor and political support in contexts of agricultural eclecticism. New grain agricultures meant that individuals had to clear the land thoroughly and that they required access to new and dispersed sorts of environments without suffering the loss of support systems offered to them by residential groups. The dispersed "clan" may have been the new sort of group that guaranteed such support to increasingly far-flung members of the farming community. Less idyllically, the innovation of clans as groups within which one could not marry may have reflected new forms of control over marriage as a means to channel flows of people to insure, in part, the reproduction of social groups.

The innovation of *rugàndá* to mean "clan" was internal, it was generated from within the world of Great Lakes Bantu linguistic and social resources. And its form as a metaphor for a sort of residence makes explicit that the desirable center for the meaning of a clan was a notional "home." During the era in which the metaphor emerged and took root, Great Lakes Bantu speakers "understood" that clans had an imaginary origin in a particular residence or house, though they were widely dispersed in practice. To the extent that houses formed units for organizing and carrying out agricultural (and other) tasks, this innovation may be taken to have reflected, even to have harnessed, social changes linked partly to the agricultural changes revealed by the contemporaneous borrowing of the word *-lo* for "finger millet." When we move to consider the term for "chief," we begin to see how social organization, agriculture, and political leadership mutually shape each other.

**Mukungu* (210), "hereditary chief," is an innovation from a widely distributed verb "to gather or assemble" (208), and it tells us of the existence of hereditary political leaders. Its distribution as a noun for a type of "chief" is restricted to Great Lakes Bantu. The word and this meaning exist today only in nonadjacent languages from two of the five branches that constitute the Great Lakes Bantu group (see Figure 1.1). In Great Lakes Bantu and other Bantu languages, this is neither the only word for "hereditary chief" nor is "hereditary chief" the only meaning for *mukungu*. Only in a discontinuous set of Great Lakes Bantu languages did people join to *mukungu* the meaning "territorial chief." That is why we may feel confident that it was a Great Lakes Bantu innovation. Moreover, the ethnographic record elaborates on the character of this sort of chiefship, depicting these leaders as having retained their ascribed statuses as members of discursively constructed descent groups, such as the **rugàndá*, just discussed. This suggests that the separation of achieved statuses from ascribed statuses may not have been pronounced in Lakes social history.

The fact that the noun seems to have been derived from a verb meaning "to gather, to assemble" illuminates an additional facet of a political leader's discursive consciousness. Leaders expected to build alliances in order to assemble or compose wealth in people. But we cannot tell from this etymology alone if these alliances were to have been alliances among chiefs or alliances between chiefs and their followers, because both sorts of meanings turn up in the ethnographic record. The joining of this particular semantic history to etymological histories for related fields of chiefly activity—"to redistribute wealth" and "patron"—examined in Chapters 3 through 6, supports the idea that **bakungu* (plural of *mukungu*) were not only "territorial chiefs" but were also seen as composers of political alliances through patronage and redistributions of wealth.

The semantic histories of words for "*eleusine*," "chief," and "clan" bear traces of the social contexts in which their makers moved, disputed, and agreed with each other. Their polysemy—the variety of meanings that the words bear in related languages—offers clues to their semantic histories. We saw this in the historical arguments built on the comparative study of meanings given to *rugàndá* and *mukungu*. Ethnographic data are enormously important to this task for they tell us how these things and ideas were understood and used by the speakers of the languages under study. Moreover, ethnography may link language and practice by telling of unique material cultural items associated with certain word domains, like the association of special crowns with chiefs.[19] Finding such associations and variations of associations in related speech communities must be repeated. One such example may have been accidental, but many such examples seem less likely to have been accidents. If the multiple meanings of words like "chief" and "clan" differ from speech community to speech community then we may expect that variation to reflect historical change. As we saw with the word for "clan," its multiple meanings, embedded in the accumulated variety of their forms, offered us a set of hints about the steps taken by communities of speakers as they fashioned a new semantic domain for concepts of larger units of social organization from concepts of residence. The new meaning was a creative act that flowed from peoples' practical knowledge of their residential communities and the meaning they created was revealed (through comparative ethnography) as a discursive domain. Its discursiveness lay in the way the term expressed variability with a social cost and was revealed by the fact that "clans," precisely what *rugàndá* (singular) came to mean for Western Lakes and West Nyanza speakers, did not everywhere possess the same status as units of social life. In some societies special rights and responsibilities were attached to or claimed by certain clans. In other societies no such special rights were attached to clanship.

At the heart of this history lies the different senses of power described, implied, or expressed by the words themselves. The story of agricultural

change implied by the borrowing of *-lo*, "*eleusine*," is also the story of people gaining new instruments for controlling their environment. The sowing of grains meant that new fields lay open to potential exploitation in the drier zones of the region. The story of social change described by the innovation of "clan" as the new meaning for the old word *rugàndá*, "residence," is also the story of people making new units of social organization that distinguished insiders from outsiders. As farmers dispersed across the Great Lakes region, they brought with them a social philosophy of belonging that placed in the hands of insiders a certain power over outsiders and thereby sustained a sense of social identity across potentially vast areas. The story of political change expressed by the semantic history of "chiefship" attached to the word *mukungu* is also a story about negotiating the terms under which such leaders were to exercise their power. They were seen as gatherers of people and makers of alliances, as community builders. And they were seen as leaders who worked through both territorial control and achieved status. These facets of power do not exhaust the archive of social relations built by Great Lakes communities, and many more such aspects will emerge in the following pages. But those introduced here describe the contours of the social history of the region, and they reveal the extraordinary capacity of comparative linguistics, joined to comparative ethnography, to recover the achievements of ancient Africans.

THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK

An enormously varied tapestry of forms of power runs through this book. The mutual relationship between people and their surroundings—between people changing their environment and the changed environment offering people new opportunities and constraints—forms a major theme of this book. The long-term social history of power told here shows how changes in social life and environment mutually reinforced one another. The power to change the environment, to construct new forms of social life, to control other people as well as an abstract moral power residing in the practice of building social relations between people and of maintaining or repairing social relations between people and ancestors, suffuses Lakes social history.

From a great variety of linguistic and ethnographic evidence, I have derived the notions of "instrumental" and "creative" power to represent the contradictory historical character of power. Power is contradictory because it defies permanent concentration in the hands of individual leaders or in particular institutions. It is contradictory because, even when a person or an institution succeeds in concentrating power, other people may generate other sources of power. Both instrumental and creative powers behave this way in the social history of the Great Lakes region. But they represent different aspects of what Great Lakes Bantu speaking people thought power was and what it should do. As categories of historical change, they represent both the

concrete ways in which Great Lakes people controlled others and the language they used to explain how such controls could work. As philosophical and phenomenological categories, I find these concepts useful because they express the mercurial nature of power and prohibit our seeing all but the most brazen instrumental power of violence as demanding only either a resistant or a collaborative response from those subjected to it. People surely struggled against and cooperated with powerful individuals and institutions, but they also seem to have understood that the different faces of power—its mercurial nature—meant that they could shape different combinations of power to achieve their aspirations.

A few brief examples may help explain this argument. Creative power operates in the words, pauses, and gestures that healers and political orators use to make people well and to sway opinion. Creative power works in the words a healer speaks over a medicine to activate its potential to heal (Chapter 3). Instrumental power operates in the exchange of gifts to build patron-client relationships or in the power of military threat to cause social change. In practice, the two forms are not divided. Military leaders use oratory together with weapons to win battles and doctors receive gifts as well as offer healing words to make people well. So, what is the basis for suggesting the historical importance of these two forms of power?

Great Lakes Bantu speakers have made and continue to make distinctions in the meanings of these sorts of powers. They have created divides and crafted joins between them and they have expressed these divides and joins in the semantics of words for these powers (Chapters 4 through 6). If I have invented the phrases "instrumental power" and "creative power," I invented them after studying a great number of distinct verbs and nouns that Great Lakes Bantu speakers use and have used to describe things like gift exchange, military power, health, healing, and political leadership. The two concepts overlap, to be sure. But they are two facets of how people work on and in their world. In one sense, this book is an extended meditation on these two facets of *what* people can do to survive, thrive, and change and *how* they can do it in their social lives

If linguistic evidence reveals divides and joins between creative and instrumental power, then ethnographic evidence reveals how people understood the distinctive capacities or effects of the two powers to "belong," in particular combinations, to certain community intellectuals, such as healers, chiefs, or women with many grown children. No combination of linguistic and ethnographic evidence can reveal either who proposed particular combinations of instrumental and creative power or how those combinations may have been reformulated. This sort of topic always interests social historians because it focuses on the intersection of real people's desires and limitations with the geometry of hierarchy, privilege, and social control. But it lies beyond the reach of the evidence available for the Great Lakes region before

A.D. 1500. We can recover a sense of the tools people used to understand their social world and to shape it to their ends. But we cannot recover any particular act of understanding or shaping. We can recover the kinds of hopes and fears ancient Great Lakes peoples entertained, but we cannot see which were realized or suffered.

The argument of the book follows the development of these strands of power in their environmental, social, and spiritual or medical fields. Using the tools of comparative linguistics and ethnography to reconstruct these histories reclaims the steps by which new words and meanings enter a speech community (as loans or internal innovations) and then become retentions. The process strongly suggests a series of spiral creations of discursive forms from practical knowledge which then themselves sometimes become practical and unquestioned. Could these processes be signs of the transformations of hegemonic to ideological forms of knowledge—signs of the reclamation (from the untouchable domain of hegemony) of certain knowledge so that people might refashion them into better tools for ensuring prosperity and pursuing moral virtue?

The driving forces in the story are the tensions between human and physical categories and between different sections of the social world within the natural one. This story is not determinist: it recognizes the operation of creative activity to meet new challenges and it recognizes the operation of dominating, resistant, and creative powers. The key theme throughout is a set of variations on a fundamental conundrum of living: over long spans of time it is not possible to concentrate power inside a single locus. This reflects something Great Lakes Bantu peoples understood well: leaders often sought to unite the instrumental power of chiefs and the creative power of healers, but individual leaders only succeeded in doing so for brief periods.

The historical intersection of transformation and deep continuity provide the threads that bind sources and story together. Intersections of regional conjuncture and conceptual change focus the narrative on the bedrock of the *longue durée*, constituted in part by precisely what Lakes peoples needed to remember over the roughly two millennia covered in this book. These themes will be presented in chronological order and in a condensed form in Chapters 2 and 3. The remainder of the book fills the themes with detail and specificity; it gives them historical identity and shows how they were not linear historical processes. Lakes Africans preserved ancient social, physical, and economic forms and reinvested them with new meaning at different times. The study of continuities thus invites a consideration of the history of radical change. Chapter 1 explores these methodological challenges further and introduces the early history of settlement and cross-cultural contacts.

Part II describes the emergence of a Great Lakes Bantu cultural world. Food production and society, and their effects on environment, constitute the

main themes. Chapter 2 focuses on the forging of a Great Lakes Bantu agricultural synthesis that was carried across environmental boundaries and into many corners of the Lakes region by A.D. 500. At its core, the Great Lakes Bantu agricultural synthesis brought root crops, grain crops, and cattle raising together to create a mixed agriculture. Because these different sorts of food production had their roots in different historical traditions, but were combined by Great Lakes Bantu-speaking communities, the concept of a "synthesis" is appropriate. Both livestock raising and cereal farming were developed by Sudanic, Sahelian, and Cushitic speakers while Bantu speakers excelled in growing root crops, fishing, and hunting. Chapter 2 tells how this skill in mixed agriculture helped bring into existence the cultural world of the Great Lakes Bantu.

Chapter 3 explores the social, political, and medical dimensions of the broad themes outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. The social side of the Great Lakes Bantu tradition emerges by discussing historical changes in social organization, in forms of healing and political power, and in the institutions that directed and sanctioned them. The earliest historical dimensions of the concepts of creative and instrumental power emerge. The abundance of Lakes economies—their proximity to diverse microenvironments and social resources—underwent several periods of expansion and contraction. Lakes peoples changed their views on the nature of power, they articulated new theories about their capacity to act in their social worlds, as they sought to conserve the integrity of their communities. When social stresses and environmental strains induced farmers and herders to emphasize new specializations in bananas or in cattle, some members of these new societies developed new ideas about power and introduced them into the mainstream. These new ideas incorporated metaphors of social unity and redistribution to explain how to overcome challenges to social health posed by new forms of wealth (cattle) and by shrinking access to old forms of wealth (the best croplands for a mixed agriculture). The heirs to those who succeeded have, in turn, passed down to us their reworked forms of words for political and social life. The longevity of these forms expresses their potency in the thoughts and actions of Lakes intellectuals—those who invested them with meanings and those who contested those meanings—and in the new combinations of livelihood and theories of social justice that the Lakes peoples formed.

Part III shows how these changes took various shapes in different parts of the Great Lakes world. In Chapter 4, the themes of historical changes in food systems, forms of power, and institutions in and around the Kivu Rift Valley unfold. From within their mixed farming communities, people fashioned notions of patrilineal descent, of female reproductive power, and of a social contract through which territorial leaders were to maintain the fertility of the land and superintend the flow of its produce. West Highlands societies also developed sets of administrative offices filled by achievement rather than

ascription. These offices formed the basis for political centralization, in central Rwanda, after about A.D. 1400.

The social history of the lands by Lake Victoria is told in Chapter 5. There, after the environmental strains of the mid-first millennium A.D., farmers placed increasing faith in the productivity of the banana. Banana farming concentrated value in the control of land, its inheritance, and its health. Consequently, by about A.D. 1000, territorial forms of political power flourished as homesteads and new patrilineages sought to maintain control of this vital resource. As the territorial nature of political power changed so too did people transform the territory of healing. They invented portable sorts of spirits that could move with groups as they settled on the internal frontiers inland from Lake Victoria. The combination of highly productive banana plantations, appointed political office, and portable territorial healing complexes reached its acme in the kingdoms of Buganda and Buhaya, after the sixteenth century.

Chapter 6 narrates the history of the central savannahs. These verdant grasslands carried the largest herds of cattle known anywhere in the Great Lakes region, and they received the largest number of refugees from the strained societies of the highlands and lakeshores, after the Early Iron Age. Here arose the unique combination of cattle pastoralism and cereal agriculture that galvanized the earliest forms of political centralization to the north and south, in Kitara, Rwanda, and Buha. New institutions of resistance and accommodation to the political powers also appeared here. People invented institutions of mediumship and healing in which ideas about the creativity of power both restrained potentially despotic leaders and recognized their crucial role in maintaining social health. The new chiefs who could superintend the flow of this creative power could ensure that dangerous and impure conditions were removed. They did so at the request and with the consent of their followers. These farmers and herders knew that the bounty of nature required moderation on their part if their society was to prosper.

The peoples of these three regions followed different paths away from their ancestral tradition. But the histories of food and society in the Great Lakes region between A.D. 500 and 1500—especially the histories of bananas, cattle, healing, and territorial chiefship—drove the later growth of new forms of political and social life. The history of regional cultural identities goes back into the last millennium B.C., but major features of the distinctive societies we know today from Buganda, Rwanda, Buhaya, and Bushi took form after about A.D. 1400. The Epilog reflects on how parts of these histories have continued to shape cultural life between the Great Lakes.

The principal goal of this book is to demonstrate the value of a history that looks away from centralization and toward the blending of traditions. Food history, dispersed (and ultimately uncontrollable) forms of power and agency all offer possibilities for vitiating the potential tyranny of instrumental power. Great Lakes people have long known that the world is neither purely material nor purely transcendental, that one must not hope to make power the instrument of one's will if one is unwilling to become the object of that power. The recovery of both the practical and the discursive elements of their pasts offers new material for contemporary discussions of food, power, and agency.

The book makes four major contributions to these ends. It develops a methodology for writing social histories of gender, health, and philosophies of social justice before the fifteenth century. It narrates the dialectical historical interplay of environment, agriculture, and social practice in shaping historical experience and consciousness. It argues that gender and healing played central roles in the development and character of political complexity. And it problematizes the historical category of power by showing how African societies wrestled with two forms of power, creative and instrumental, which both could and could not be concentrated in persons and institutions.

NOTES

[1] Renee Tantala, "The Early History of Kitara in Western Uganda: Process Models of Religious and Political Change," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1989); Iris Berger, *Religion and Resistance: East African Kingdoms in the Precolonial Period* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1981); Peter R. Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology: A Structural Approach in an African Society* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1978).

[2] Jim Freedman, *Nyabingi* (Butare: Institut national de recherche scientifique, 1984); Steven Feierman, "Healing as Social Criticism in the Time of Colonial Conquest," *African Studies* 54, 1 (1995), 73-88; 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: James Currey, 1986), 311-33.

[3] Kirsten Alnaes, "Songs of the Rwenzururu Rebellion," in *Tradition and Transition in East Africa. Studies of the Tribal Element in the Modern Era,* ed. Phillip Hugh Gulliver (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1969), 248ff.

[4] See David Lan, *Guns and Rain,* (London, Berkeley & Los Angeles: James Currey, University of California Press, 1985), 221-22.

[5] Freedman, *Nyabingi*, 80-90.

[6] Steven Feierman, "Struggles for Control: The Social Roots of Health and Healing in Modern Africa," *African Studies Review* 28, 2/3 (1985), 73-147; Iris Berger, "Fertility as Power: Spirit Mediums, Priestesses, and the Pre-Colonial State in Interlacustrine Africa," in David Anderson and Douglas Johnson (eds.) *Revealing Prophets* (London: James Currey, 1994), 70, 73; Svein Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune: The Bacwezi Complex and the Other Spirit Cults of the Zinza of Northwestern Tanzania* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1981).

[7] Feierman, "Struggles for Control," 82.

[8] Feierman, "Struggles for Control," 99-105.

[9] Feierman, "Struggles for Control," 74.

[10] John Lonsdale, "The Moral Economy of Mau Mau," in Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Class, Clan, and State in Colonial Kenya* (London: James Currey, 1992), 351.

[11] See, for example, Michelle D. Wagner, "Environment, Community and History: 'Nature in the Mind' in Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Buha, Western Tanzania," in *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania,* ed. Gregory Maddox, James Giblin and Isaria Kimambo (London: James Currey, 1996), 184-85.

[12] David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 216-30.

[13] Lonsdale, "Moral Economy," 351, my bracketed material.

[14] Raimo Anttila, *An Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1989), 22; Christopher Ehret, *The Classical Age of Eastern and Southern Africa: A History, 1000* B.C. *to* A.D. *300.* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1998), Ch. 1.

[15] Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 12.

[16] Vansina, *Paths*, 9-16; David L. Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Cultural Vocabulary: Etymologies and Distributions* (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Press, 1997), Introduction.

[17] In this book, the numbers following Great Lakes Bantu words refer to the numbered roots in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction.* Refer to that source for a full accounting of the language evidence underlying the proposed reconstructions of words and meanings given here. Please see A Note on Evidence, at the end of this book, for an extended example of reconstructing semantic histories.

[18] Roy Grinker, *Houses in the Rainforest* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), passim; Vansina, *Paths*, 73-77; David L. Schoenbrun, "Gendered Histories Between the Great Lakes: Varieties and Limits," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 461-92.

[19] Richard Sigwalt, "Early Rwanda History: The Contribution of Comparative Ethnography," *History in Africa* 2 (1975), 137-46; Randall Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology: An Historical Study of Political Competition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 46-52; John H. M. Beattie, *The Nyoro State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 119-22.

1

FINDING THE WAY BACK

The Great Lakes region covers about 160,000 square miles, a little more than New Mexico and a little less than Uganda. It boasts tremendous environmental diversity, some of Africa's best evidence for ancient iron production, a rich agricultural paradise, and a host of kingdoms whose roots lie deep beneath the thick layers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historical experience. The ancient history not only undergirds the modern, but still lives, today, in the laying out of a banana garden, the pounding of barkcloth, the social therapy given to an AIDS sufferer, even in the importance of the crested crane in Uganda's coat of arms. The very ancient past has been conserved and reinterpreted for millennia, whether practically as in the garden, or discursively as in the decorations on the postcolonial ship of state. This book seeks to interlace the broadest of historical themes—environment, food, speech, and institution—on equally grand scales of space and time.

The way back to this past begins with an introduction to the themes and the sources for their historical reconstruction. This chapter studies the rigors of an interdisciplinary approach to the region's ancient history. It completes the task of laying down the methodological rules for arguing ancient histories begun in the Introduction. But first, we must visit the places that belonged to the people whose histories follow (Map 1.1).

THE FLIGHT OF THE CRANES

It is 1800 and a flock of crested cranes, symbols of commitment and plenty, take off from Mt. Masaaba (Elgon), on the Uganda-Kenya border. On the way to their destination, the southern Mitumba mountains on the Congo side of the border with Burundi, the birds cross some of the most diverse environmental tableaux anywhere in the world. From the frigid afroalpine heights,

[11] See, for example, Michelle D. Wagner, "Environment, Community and History: 'Nature in the Mind' in Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Buha, Western Tanzania," in *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania,* ed. Gregory Maddox, James Giblin and Isaria Kimambo (London: James Currey, 1996), 184-85.

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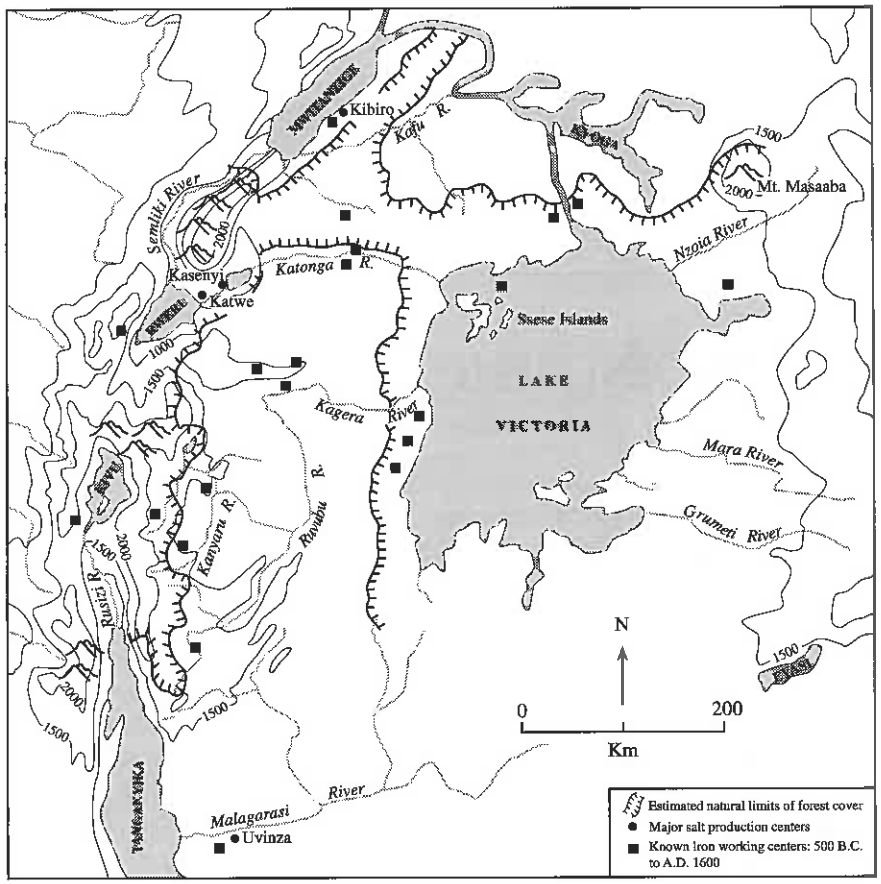


Map 1.1 Natural Resources and Physical Geography of the Great Lakes Region.

stretching over 1,000 meters below Masaaba's 4,321 meter-high caldera, where dry season herders climb in search of sweet grass, they glide over the tops of bogs surrounded by dense bamboo forests and then drop into the lush plant life that rings the great mountain between 3,200 meters and 1,500 meters like a green beaded waist-belt. In this forest the crowned cranes find towering hardwoods, excellent for lumber and charcoal, a wealth of barks, roots, leaves, and fruits; the vital pharmacy for highlands peoples and their animals in normal times, their larder in times of stress. The belt of forest riches passes below the birds, giving way to a patchwork of fields, quilted with paths connecting homesteads, marketplaces, pastures, and ports on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Collections of long canoes, carved from some of those forest hardwoods, bob in the lake's swell. They are full of bananas, fish, perhaps a few goats,

some chickens, and a set of pots from the offshore island of Buvuma destined for market in Busamya. The lake is a powerful presence, throwing up winds, waterspouts, and storms that shape life for all who live near it. To the cranes, its shoreline traces a tightly curved watery border to the bright green banana plantations of Busoga and Buganda. Crossing directly over the Ssese Islands, the cranes spot the home of one of the region's most important ancient deities: Mugasha, the Spirit of the Lake.

Soon they sight the huge lowland swamp, with its towering conifers, at the mouth of the Kagera river, a source of the Nile. Where the land is low between the ridges, or where the fingers of the Lake reach far inland west and south of Buganda, this vast swamp repeats itself in miniature. The stepped ridges stroll back from the edge of Lake Victoria, their backs and flanks covered in banana gardens that surround the homesteads in soft green crowns with radiating fields of grain, and root crops, veined with paths leading to the grasslands where herds of cattle may be found. Catching the warm thermals rising off the dry inland plain, the cranes see larger herds of cattle with distinctively long, curved horns. The Karagwe and Kagera Depressions, two dimples between Lake Victoria and the Kivu Rift Valley, link the ridges of Buhaya and Gisaka. They hold excellent lands for herders, grain growers, and hunters. In the distance rise the eastern walls of the Kivu Rift Valley, the gash that cuts through the western side of the region from Lake Tanganyika to Lake Mwitanzige. With swampy streams flowing into the Kagera River at their feet, the rounded hills seem piled one on top of the other as they run up into the haze above the hot Karagwe plain.

As the lands of Buhaangaza and Bushuubi pass below and the hills become ridges, their sides steepen, the swamps narrow to ribbons of deeper green against the vaguely contoured and, in some places, terraced fields of grain, beans, root crops, and bananas. At the crest of the ridges, every so often, a patch of ancient wild fig trees, faintly enclosing an open space, beckons to the cranes to rest where the spirits of the ridge people are propitiated with gifts and prayers. Echoing the design of the land in Buhaya, the cool green of the banana gardens in Burundi is punctuated by tall reed fences and the large round grass roofs of the homestead, perched near the top of the ridge. Such a vista occurs all the way up the Kivu Rift Valley into the Rwenzori mountains, far to the north of the wheeling cranes.

Climbing the thermals higher and higher they pass over the backbone of wrinkled highland that reaches 2,600 meters into the sky and divides the two vast water drainages of the Nile and the Congo. Ahead of the birds, anvil-topped thunderheads form as the warm moist air over the verdant Congo basin crushes against the cooler, drier highland clime. Behind them, in a similar fashion, clouds pile over Lake Victoria and Buhaya. But now, the dense forests, reminiscent of that green beaded waist-belt on Masaaba, carpet the divide before disappearing suddenly, as the land drops off, into steep ridges, rushing down to the floor of the

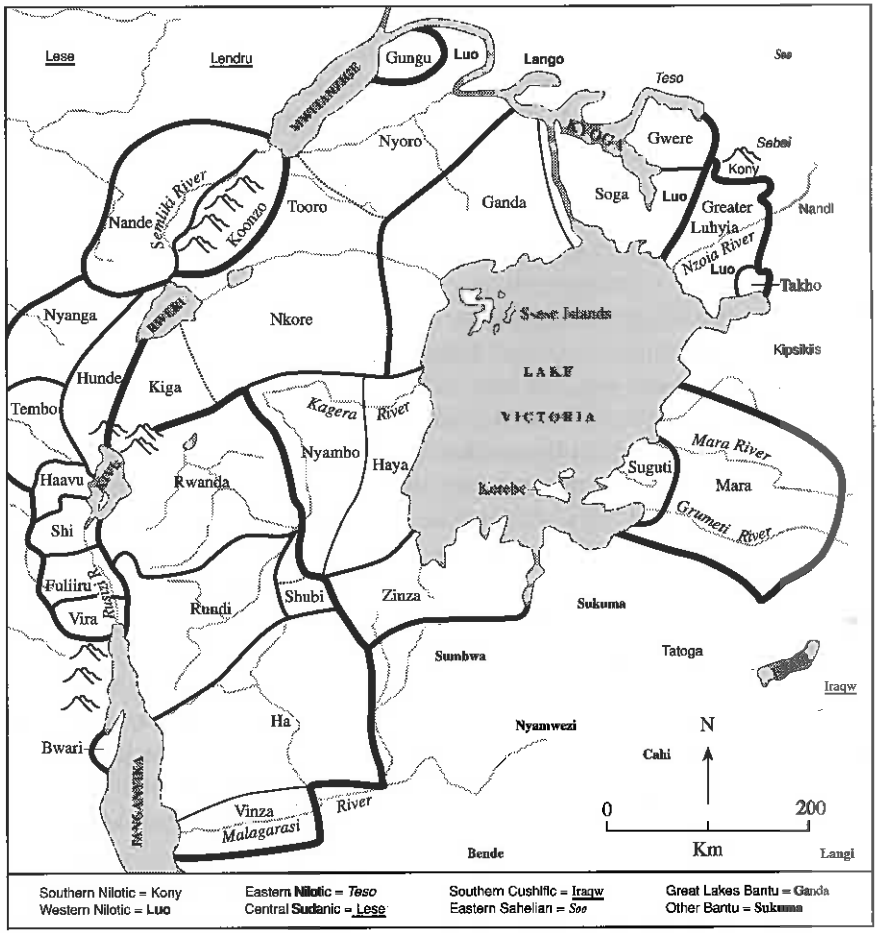
Kivu Rift Valley. To their north, the dry plain of the Rusizi river runs down from clear Lake Kivu. To their south, the folded grassy uplands of Buha send the winding green course of the Malagarasi river back to the northeast before the hills open and sweep the river's flow south and west again to meet Lake Tanganyika. Directly ahead looms the great western wall of the Rift, the Mitumba mountains, slashed by deep canyons, covered in fields and homesteads until the altitude takes over and the dark green forest shrouds the crested cranes' destination in the mountain heights.

Any traveler who follows a straight line misses much and the cranes are no exception. Their journey covers what is visually distinct in the Great Lakes region, both the natural and the constructed environments, but it misses the other imprints of people: their speech, their economy, their ideas about society. We must find the way back in order to describe some of these dimensions of life between the Great Lakes.

From Linguistic Diversity to Linguistic Unity

Although people who speak Bantu languages dominate the region today, members of all four of Africa's language families contributed to Great Lakes history. How far some of these tongues are now from the Great Lakes region conceals the important role their ancestors played in the early history of the region (Map 1.2). The Hadza and Sandawe live to the southeast around Lake Eyasi and they speak Khoisan languages. The Iraqw, Gorowa, Burunge, and Alagwa, all Southern Cushitic-speaking peoples, live on and around the Mbulu plateau south of Ngorongoro Crater. They, and their ancestors, belong to the only branch of the AfroAsiatic group that had a direct role in Great Lakes history. The numerous speakers of various branches of Nilotic languages today occupy positions on the northern and eastern frontiers of the Great Lakes region. Southern Nilotes, like the Kalenjin, live in the highlands of Western Kenya and the Tatoga live in the dry rolling grasslands west and south of Serengeti. Western Nilotic Luo homesteads dot the rolling hills inland from the northeastern shores of Lake Victoria. Many Eastern Nilotes live around and north of Mt. Masaaba. Though the Maasai, perhaps the most widely-known speakers of Eastern Nilotic languages, live in the eastern Rift valley. Like the Southern Nilotes, Central Sudanic peoples descended from the ancient NiloSaharan speech community. Modern populations speaking such Central Sudanic languages as Moru, Madi, and Balendru live on the north and northwest edges of the Great Lakes region. Still other NiloSaharan peoples, the Ik, Soo, and Nyang'i, all descendants of the old Kuliak group, inhabit areas to the immediate northeast. The predecessors of all these groups made important contributions to Lakes history.[1]

However, Bantu speakers dominate the region today. And they speak a fairly close-knit set of languages. The politics of language aside,



Map 1.2 Linguistic Geography of the Great Lakes Region Today. Line thicknesses mark different levels of linguistic relatedness. Thicker lines divide less closely related languages. Dotted lines divide dialects of a single language. See Figure 1.1 for subgroupings.

nearly twenty million people speak Rwanda, Rundi, Ha, Shuubi, Haangaza, and Vinza in the West Highlands region. These communities could draw on the mutual intelligibility of their dialects and languages to form a regional tongue to rival the prominence of Swahili elsewhere in East Africa. There are other examples. But this state of affairs has not always been the case, and one of the underlying narrative voices in this book tells the story of the rise to prominence of Bantu speech in the Lakes region.

Environmental Diversity and Linked Subregions

We have seen already, from overhead, the rainbow of environments the Lakes region boasts. Down on the ground, their constructed, domesticated nature sets them off from wild areas as proper places for people. Any attempt to build an arbitrary nomenclature for the land in the Great Lakes region runs into problems. But their inhabitants' descriptions preserve the nuance in the classification of land and its forms.

Lakes peoples often semantically link land forms and social forms. In Buganda, a proverb warns against the evils of solitude lurking in the discrete limbs of land separated from each other by long tongues of swamp: "Though Buganda is one place, you can be a stranger to the man on the opposite arm of the Lake."[2] In the Kivu Rift Valley and, especially in Rwenzori and Bunyoro, the same word often means both "village" and "hill" or "ridge." There are other features of Lakes environments, built by people, where persons from places as widely separated as Buzinza and Buhaavu would feel at home and would call some variation of *ikigabiro* (282). Inside this faint ring of *Ficus* trees, which the crested cranes passed over in Burundi, people made offerings to their royal and ancestral spirits, seeking their assistance in maintaining or restoring social health.

Important contrasts in the use of Lakes environments crosscut the commonalities. Major differences exist, of course, between rolling grasslands and upland ridges, between the well-watered lowlands and the drier inland pastures, and between those who dwell in the thick forests just west of the Kivu Rift Valley and their neighbors to the east (Map 1.1). But some differences are more subtle. For example, the valuable timber tree *omuvule* (*Chlorophora excelsa*), often towering over 150 feet tall, is a rather common sight in fields from Busoga to Buzinza, but not in the upland fields of Kigezi, central Burundi, and Rwanda. Where it is common, in fields south of Lake Victoria, people call these trees by the same general term used for "hoe," thereby linking farming to the domesticated space represented by the *omuvule* tree.

Today's islands of forest are the dispersed remnants of a formerly continuous belt of forest that reached from Rwenzori to eastern Busoga, in a faintly northward bulging arc (Map 1.1). In these once extensive tracts Great Lakes peoples found medicine, lumber, wild game, and plant and insect foods. Inside the forests and at the boundaries of their fields, healers found the majority of their medicines. Roots, leaves, and barks were the most common bases from which a healer could fashion a poultice, a food additive, or a charm to protect a house from evil. Great Lakes Bantu speakers derived their general term for "herbal medicine" from the word for "tree" or "shrub," the thing that provides so much of their pharmacy. From the forests and field boundaries near the Nile-Congo Divide, healers gathered nearly 500 species of plants to treat illness.[3]

For Great Lakes peoples these forests formed invaluable stores. Hunting and gathering in the forest bore richer rewards than doing so in the open savannah, where larger herds could not offset the poorer diversity of plant species. Hunters used spears, bows and arrows, and net and pit traps to take animals ranging from birds to the tiny dik-dik to the African elephant. Hunted animals provided valuable protein sources, skins for containers and drum covers, fat for cooking, healing, and dye-setting. A wealth of wild foods also grew in the forests and at their fringes—aerial yams, many different tubers, fruits, seeds, and edible leaves.[4]

If the size and proximity of forest larders shifted drastically under pressure from Lakes farmers, their rivers and lakes remained trustworthy building blocks for winning their livelihood. But not all of them offered equally rich bounties. The highland Lake Kivu, nestled between the imposing walls of the Kivu Rift Valley, possesses a biochemistry that depresses phytoplankton growth which, in turn, keeps fish populations at rather low levels compared to the other Great Lakes.[5] Lakes such as Mwitanzige, Kyoga, Tanganyika, and Victoria are very much richer in fish and bird life. People who settled on their shores made fish a major part of their diets and made dried fish a central item in their interregional trading systems. The larger rivers Semliki, Rusizi, Kagera, and the Nile all provided hunters and fishers with similar riches in fish, bird life, and aquatic animals like the hippopotamus. But beyond being sources of food, lakes and some rivers acted as highways for communication and as boundary points for the movement of goods like pots, worked iron, barkcloth, and salt.

This extraordinarily integrated environmental diversity shaped an equally diverse set of economic activities. Production, circulation, and consumption of food, manufactured goods, and scarce resources like salt, formed overlapping webs of interregional trading relations that bound together some subregions more closely than others. But the raw materials for important products of artisanal labor like pots, iron goods, barkcloth, and salt, were not all distributed evenly across Great Lakes landscapes.

Potting clays and kaolin were the most widespread. Some people used the chalky white kaolin (as well as ochre and charcoal) as a pigment to decorate their house walls, their bodies, and possibly their pots. Iron smelters, smiths, and potters desired certain clays with qualities that endured high temperatures without becoming too brittle.[6] Whether they were used to build furnaces or to fashion pots, Lakes potters and ironworkers preferred specific clays and potters may have controlled access to these special clay resources.[7] But these common resources could never command the high values in interregional trading networks enjoyed by the durable cloth made from the *Ficus* tree, which thrives in the wetter parts of the region.

Barkcloth was an important garment in the Lakes region but it was only produced in quantity in Buganda and southern Busoga, in Buhaya, and in

parts of the greater Kivu Rift Valley.[8] A soft and pliant cloth could be made by peeling off the bark of the *Ficus* tree, laying it against a smooth log, and repeatedly beating it with mallets of different weights, taking care to keep the cloth moist with water. The process was not unlike that used by indigo cloth dyers in Nigeria's Hausaland. Another important item, coffee berries (*Coffea robusta*), which were chewed as a stimulant and offered as a gift to guests in homesteads from Buzinza to Bunyoro,[9] grew from early times on the southwestern shores of Lake Victoria. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that farmers began to plant coffee in Bunyoro, Buganda, and Rwanda.

None of these resources, not clay, kaolin, coffee or barkcloth, rivaled the importance of iron bloom and salt in Lakes homesteads. Iron ore was important for the tools and jewelry which smiths made from smelted iron bloom. But, unlike potting clay, iron-bearing ores were not distributed evenly in the region (Map 1.1). Until kings Kyabaggu and Junju conquered the ore-rich areas of Buddu and Kyaggwe, Ganda people had to trade for bloom and finished iron goods with Wanga (on the Winam Gulf of Lake Victoria, in western Kenya), Bunyoro, and Bukooki. Regions favored with iron ore-bearing rock or sands included Bunyoro, Buhaya, Buzinza, Nduga in Rwanda, Marangara and Ngozi in Burundi, and a host of locations in Bunande. These concentrations partly shaped the choices available to early ironworking farmers as their numbers grew and as new lands needed to be brought under cultivation.

Metallurgy was also important to Lakes political and environmental history. On the one hand, by controlling ironworking, political leaders hoped to augment their authority by associating themselves with smelters and smiths during important celebrations. On the other hand, the smelters and smiths gained increased status and legitimacy by their association with leadership on those same occasions. Ironworking had a profound long-term impact on Lakes forests, with its voracious demands on stands of hardwood trees used for charcoal to fire furnaces and forges. Overall, the politics and production of iron played a critical role in shaping environmental change and settlement between the Great Lakes.

Though excellent sources of iron ore turn up widely in the region, the critical element of fuel was not always distributed so fortuitously. In its earliest phases, ironmaking appears to have been restricted to areas rich in both hardwood forests and ore supplies; namely, the zones south of the Kagera river near Lake Victoria, and along the eastern flanks of the Kivu Rift Valley in the Western Highlands. Until further archaeological work clears up the picture, these two centers can be seen as sources of smelted iron in the earliest periods, and perhaps as sources for the spread of iron-smelting and smithing into other parts of the Lakes area.

Salt played an equally important role as a valued trade item. A necessary part of the human diet, and needed for cattle as well, salt has long been a part

of African economic history, driving much of the interregional trading systems that connected Saharan and Sahelian societies in West Africa. In the Great Lakes region, people produced salt using a variety of techniques, but only three areas provided high quality salt made from brine or salt lakes (Map 1.1). Salt of poor quality was produced by burning certain grasses or mixing saline soils with water, then taking the salt-bearing ash or mud, boiling it, filtering it, and leaching out the salt by drying it in the sun. This produced a brown, often gritty and bitter salt. High-quality salt, from Uvinza, the Katwe lakes of Busongora, and the "salt gardens" of Kibiro,[10] came to be in great demand between 1500 years ago (from Uvinza) and seven hundred or more years ago (at Kibiro and Katwe). Another source, Kaksingiri, east of Lake Victoria supplied Buganda in early times.[11]

But above all, the areal specialties in food and metallurgy bound the region together in trading relations that could easily have stimulated or resulted from deeper social ties such as marriage or alliance. These trade links swung on two main fulcra: between fish (mostly dried) and farm produce around lakes and rivers and between pastoral and farm produce around pasture lands. A third, rather amorphous connection undoubtedly grew up between hunters who worked the savannahs and forests and their herding or farming customers.

This economic diversity and specialization grew from deep roots. They formed parts of a continuum of social development that included intellectual life. Within and between these subregions of specialized food, craft, and metallurgical production, farmers, herders, homestead heads, healers, and spirit mediums articulated concerns and ideas about power, health, authority, art, and social relationships. These concerns reworked into new forms some very old ideas about the nature of social balance, about how to extend instrumental political power, and about how to compose growing communities. As the long-term and short-term consequences of both material and ideational change came to be recognized and considered by Lakes intellectuals, their work with the store of cultural capital took new forms.

The Tyrannical Glory of Kingdoms

This economic and cultural bounty is one of the reasons the Lakes region has repeatedly drawn the attention of historians to its large states. Kingdoms such as Rwanda, Bunyoro, and Buganda, to name just a few, undoubtedly rose up, in part, on their respective productive bases. Differences in food systems help account for the variety of political forms at work in these societies. But all share to varying degrees and in different arrays, some very ancient ideas about the practice of power, authority, spiritual creativity, health, family, and the obligations shared by ruler and ruled, senior and junior, male and female. These concepts and practices breathed life into the institutional

structures of clientship, the redistribution of wealth, military service, shrine guardians, and so on, all of which formed keystones in the many-gated edifice of kingship and kingdoms in the Lakes region. This book will present the main lines of their regional and chronological development. But the fascination with the history of kingdoms in the Lakes region has other sources. The impress of the recent past has left its mark on stories of the distant past.

The birth of the colonial state gave birth to the Great Lakes kingdoms in historical texts. Partly by requiring they be fixed within a linear chronology, in order to imbue them with the power of "specific" knowledge, literate research gave life to their authority in the new colonial world. Many scholars have observed this.[12] But, in this book, the politics of historical knowledge produce two problems. Firstly, the colonial context for assembling texts on the history of these states must be kept in mind when handling them as ethnographic sources. More will be said on this later in the Chapter. Secondly, a focus on the histories of Great Lakes kingdoms has too often resulted in binary narratives; stories that pit the political and military organs of society against their religious and domestic counterparts. Such plots yield exciting tales about the fortunes of king, court, clan, and chief, but only rarely have these characters been emphasized in a description of landscape, food, and society.

This book attempts such description by integrating the themes of environment, language, food, and society in order to produce a detailed story of Lakes pasts. What is different from area to area and era to era demands analysis as much as what is similar. This approach develops historically a conceptualization of power as creative, dispersed and negotiated rather than as solely repressive and yearning for concentration. Such a conceptualization follows some recent studies that analyze how people help construct the institutions in and through which social, political, and health matters are addressed and defined.[13] But these scholars studied pieces of the region—Kitara, the central Kivu Rift Valley, northern Rwanda, and Buganda—while this book seeks the deep past of the entire region. With the profound historical unity of Great Lakes cultural practices thus exposed, historians will have to reconceptualize the operation of power in the recent past. This new idea, a legacy of Lakes historical achievement, is a potent gift; power certainly constrains and influences, but it can harm and heal at once.

THE SOURCES

This study rests on historical reconstructions that flow from archaeology, environmental studies, historical linguistics, and comparative ethnography, and only very rarely on oral historiography. These sources constitute the building blocks of Great Lakes histories. The majority of the book follows Jan Vansina's use of the idea of "upstreaming." Beginning from an essentially twentieth-century baseline of information, one must try to swim as far back into the past as the method of the comparative study of innovation allows. One can also swim from the deep past toward the present ("downstreaming") by using archaeology, environmental studies, and the comparative study of retention to describe continuities in Great Lakes social history. The evidence that comes to us down the stream of time in the form of material cultural and environmental change will be discussed next. But, when upstreaming, "as one moves further into the past, the amounts of data to be examined are more massive, and because the traces become fainter and fainter, the quality of the evidence must be better and better."[14] The linguistic and ethnographic sources discussed below, provide these quality materials (Map 1.5).

Changes in the natural environment provide both a canvas and a context for the actions of farmers and herders on their landscape. Archaeological evidence yields both relative and absolute chronologies that may be correlated with the radiometric dates from environmental studies. Archaeology also produces evidence for technological process and material cultural traditions that reflects important social developments. Historical linguistic evidence tells about what people knew how to do and how they thought about their world. Archaeology and historical linguistics, together, bring people to the forefront of the story. Environmental change, however, underpins and reflects much in the archaeological and historical linguistic record. Though we can see the people's hand in nature through environmental studies, we must not assume that nature's hand drove all the developments in a social history like this one. People changed their environment as profoundly as their environment induced them to change their ways of life.

The Peoples' Hand in Nature

Since the 1960s, students of environmental change in the Great Lakes region have left us a rich and varied body of evidence.[15] Their principal contributions come from the study of fossil pollen (palynology), the biochemical analysis of lake sediments, and the tracing of changes in the volume of river systems (paleohydrology). Using their findings, we can reconstruct the broad contours of environmental, but especially of vegetation and climatic change from perhaps as early as 5000 years ago.[16]

The pace of botanical change is terribly slow and this benefits environmental historians. The current diversity of plants, their unique associational forms or "communities" and the way their makeup changes according to altitude, temperature, and moisture availability have remained stable for many millennia. But the distributions of plant communities have altered. Thus, ancient plant communities and changes in their distribution may be read rather safely against modern studies of similar processes. For example, because

grassland pollens are identifiable only to the family level, their important roles in any vegetation history must be inferred from their interactive behavior with other plant communities.

Ecological studies of Lakes grasslands and forests reveal that their natural patterns of development differ from those that result from human agency.[17] Forests develop distinct and easily recognizable collections of different trees, they retreat faster, and they generally suffer from reduced diversity when they are exploited by farmers than when they are left undisturbed or when they are subjected to the elephant-led grazing cycle. By identifying the differing patterns of succession that pollen diagrams reveal, a picture emerges of the human, animal, and climatic imprints on Lakes environments. However, we know far more about these imprints in highland environments than in the low, dry central grasslands because all the reliable palynological evidence so far available comes from highland studies.

Deposits of fossil pollen and lake sediments can be dated radiometrically and they often yield long time lines. One core from northern Rwanda's Kamiranzovu Swamp reaches back more than 40,000 years.[18] For some cores, carbon dates prove impossible to obtain. These may then be correlated with dated cores from neighboring areas. Even if the sequence of vegetation changes contained in the undated core matches broadly the sequence in the dated core, the two may be correlated only with great caution.[19]

Environmental history in the Great Lakes region often reflects the parameters and pace of economic change. When ironworkers and farmers constricted forests and exhausted soils, grasslands often expanded and provided incentives for herders to move into the social mainstream. Therefore, we can see in the history of forest constriction and grassland expansion both the cumulative effects of choices made by farmers and herders and the accumulated legacy of a broadly shifting climate. This inheritance included the technological, social, economic, political, and cultural achievements brought together by Great Lakes men and women in the region's famous cultural centers: banana-growing Buganda and Buhaya, cattle-rearing Nkore and Karagwe, and the enduringly fertile mixed-farming worlds of Kigezi, Bushi, the Western Highlands, and Bunyoro. These cultural worlds reveal much of their identity in their definitions of the environments that typify them. A history of their environments prepares the way for a more nuanced history of the people who fashioned those environments.

While palynology helps us trace the expansions and contractions of forests and grasslands, another source for environmental history helps us chart shifts in climate between the Great Lakes. This source, the Rodah Nilometer, measures the high points and low points in the annual Nile flood. It thus provides direct dates for changes in the volume of the flood. These measurements can supplement information on climate changes generated by pollen studies. Together they can recover the environmental framework for some of

the major social and agricultural changes engineered more recently by Lakes Bantu speakers. But the complex character of the climatic systems between the Great Lakes and in the Ethiopian highlands that produce the rains that feed the great river means that care must be taken when using evidence from the Nilometer.

In the busy city of Cairo, on the island of Rodah, sits an unassuming slab of marble, well back from the cool waters of the lower Nile, which flow to it by a narrow canal. Sometime in the seventh century, masons carved a set of calibrated niches into a recess in the stone. Each of the gashes they carved darkens as the flood waters rise and then dries to a bright white as the waters recede.[20] Between June and September the floodwaters reach their highest mark, having traversed some 3,000 miles from Ethiopia's distant highlands and more than 4,000 miles from the lake and river systems of the Lake Victoria Basin. Which of these two huge rain catchments contributed what amounts of the silty waters flowing past the darkening Nilometer determines what we can say about high or low rainfall in those source areas.

Two weather systems make the Niles work. One weather system drops rain on the highlands of Ethiopia from April to June and contributes water via the Blue Nile and the Atbara rivers. These rivers are the principal sources for the floods recorded 3,000 miles downriver at the Rodah Nilometer, between June and September. During those summer months, very little rain falls in the Ethiopian highlands but the rains can be heavy in June and September in the Lake Victoria Basin. Rains between the Great Lakes provide nearly 100 percent of the water which flows by the Nilometer during the flood's annual low, between November and April. When rains fail in the Great Lakes region between April and June the Nilometer registers a dramatic drop at the end of the summer. When the rains fall on time in the Great Lakes region, the Nilometer instead records a gradual receding of the flood. Thus, long periods of very low floods and long periods of rapidly receding floods mean long periods of low rainfall in the two source areas.

Vegetation and climate change seem on the surface to say little about human action. But the history of changes in the plant world in which Great Lakes peoples lived lies buried in layers of sediment at the bottom of lakes and bogs. Changes in forest and grassland cover, embedded in analyzed pollen cores, often resulted from human activities that changed their environments and thereby created new opportunities and constraints for further action. If used alone, however, historical interpretations of environmental evidence are frustratingly deterministic. People appear always to be acting within a shrinking range of natural resources. This may well be a shred of evolutionism that broadly holds true. But when taken with archaeology and comparative linguistics, studies of vegetation and climate change define the environmental parameters for the initiatives as well as the responses put forward over the centuries by Great Lakes farmers and herders.

The Peoples' Hand[21]

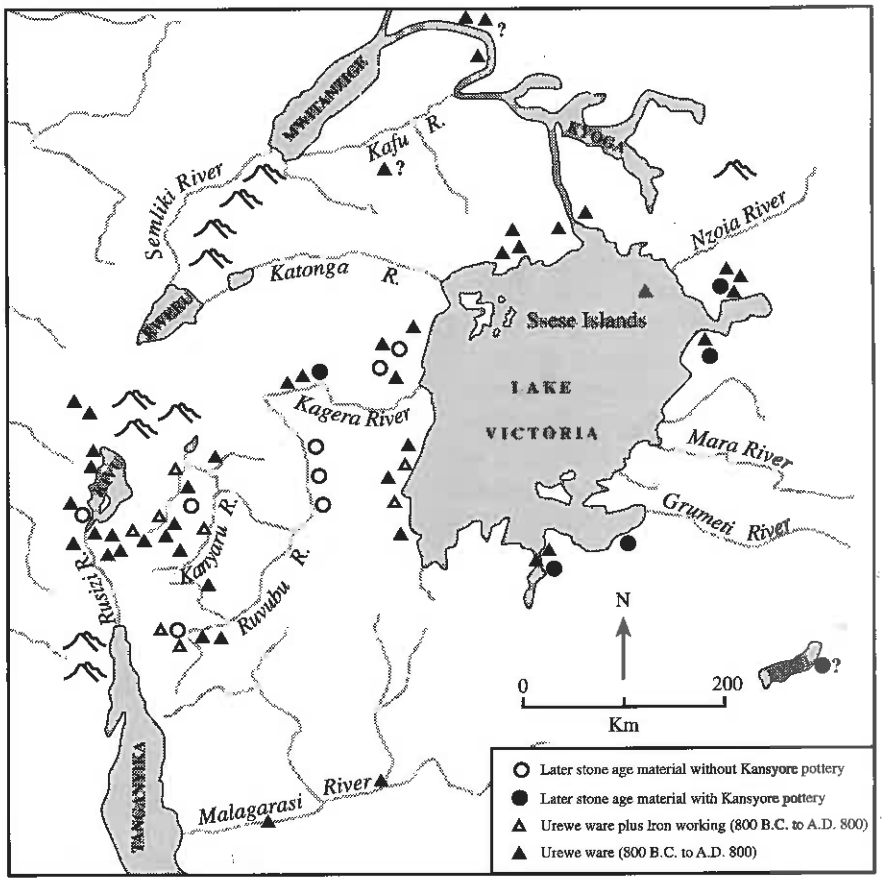
Environments felt the peoples' hand, but the physical surroundings were not the only object of people's labor. Archaeological studies provide invaluable evidence for a wide range of activity between the Great Lakes. Three important facets of archaeological studies from the region will be employed in this book: dating, information on food systems, and material culture.

Chronologies derived from environmental and historical linguistic studies can be supplemented by radiometrically dated archaeological materials from sites in and near the areas covered by the other two methods. Correlations of this kind strengthen the next chapter of the book, where separate but strikingly parallel chains of historical inference about changes in vegetation, speech community, food production, and material culture emerge. Typological analyses of pottery traditions provide another geographical and chronological complement to environmental and historical linguistic studies. Where the timing and spread of pottery traditions coincide with the timing and spread of speech communities it is quite likely that the two stories issue from the same broad community of people. Secondly, archaeological excavation recovers evidence of economy, especially of food production. Though woefully thin for the Lakes region, important evidence for livestock and grain farming have been sifted from the earth of the Western Highlands and from areas east and west of Lake Victoria.

Material culture, the third branch of archaeological evidence studied here, forms one of archaeology's largest bodies of information. Metallurgical studies have produced exciting analyses of the environmental and social impact of smelters and smiths in Rwanda and Tanzania.[22] Scholars who have studied the richest body of material cultural evidence, that of pottery, have defined several different pottery traditions between the Great Lakes. Two of them, Urewe ware and Rouletted wares, are very important. Elsewhere on the continent, archaeologists have established both technological and decorative style and the organization of space as "texts," and we await interpretative work along these lines from the Lakes area.[23] From all these sources enough information exists to compose an archaeological picture of the Early and Later Iron Ages.[24]

Iron Ages Between the Great Lakes

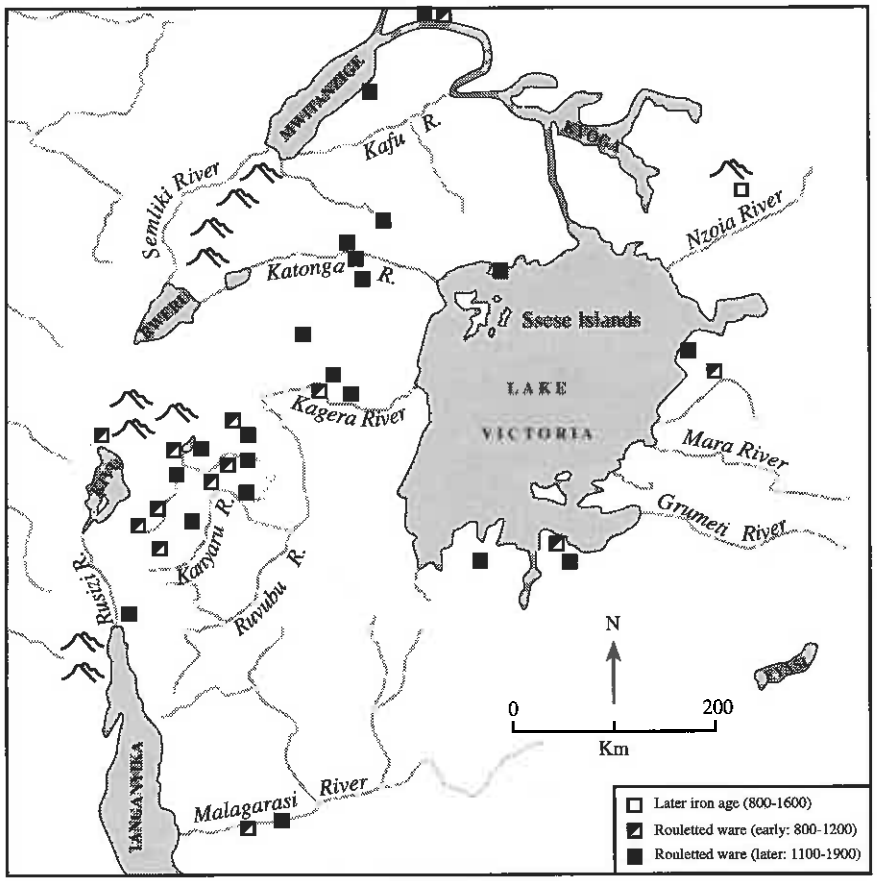
The Early Iron Age between the Great Lakes (Map 1.3.a), with its obvious importance for explaining environmental change and for tracing the emergence and spread of intensive agriculture, is a complex story. Early Iron Age communities changed the distribution of forests with their demand for fuel and their need for new fields. They lived mostly in wetter riverine and lakeshore environments composed of low, rolling countryside, veined with slow-moving watercourses where thicket fringed the mature forests near the



Map 1.3.a Archaeological Traditions in the Great Lakes Region, ca. 1000 B.C. to ca. A.D. 800.

water. Early Iron Age sites stretched from the Kivu Rift Valley eastwards to the Kenya side of Lake Victoria. The earliest were in the west, in Rwanda and Burundi, followed closely by those in Buhaya. After 2000 years ago, Early Iron Age sites turned up along the Victoria Nile, at Chobi, and in the Urewe valley, the site that bore the distinctive Early Iron Age ceramic tradition "Urewe ware," first described archaeologically by Mary Leakey. Undated sites exist at the southern shores of Lake Victoria, and Urewe ware has been found as far south as Uvinza (Map 1.3.a).

The lands between the Great Lakes were not only home to Early Iron Age peoples. Other evidence, so far containing no indication of ironworking, turns up in neighboring areas. This other archaeological information includes a ceramic tradition, Kansyore,[25] which has been found on the Kagera River, at



Map 1.3.b Archaeological Traditions in the Great Lakes Region, ca. A.D. 800 to A.D. 1600.

sites near Mwanza, and east of Lake Victoria (Map 1.3.a). These sites bordered or lay within zones bearing Early Iron Age materials, but Kansyore materials are much older. Although very few radiocarbon dates place Urewe and Kansyore wares in the same time period, it is conceivable that the earliest iron-using communities lived for some centuries, in the early and middle parts of the last millennium B.C., amongst the fishing and hunting societies who made Kansyore wares. Because they relied mostly on fishing and hunting, Kansyore ware makers would have coexisted with rather than competed against their fishing and farming neighbors.

Recent surveys and earlier studies in the drier parts of the central grasslands have so far unearthed no evidence of Urewe ware or metallurgical activity on poor agricultural soils.[26] But stone tools and Kansyore ceramics turn

up in riverside and lakeshore sites widely around Lake Victoria (Map 1.3.a).[27] Throughout the region, other ill-defined stone materials occur without any pottery.[28] These distributions of archaeological evidence have led one scholar to propose the following picture of communities settled west of Lake Victoria during the last thousand years B.C.[29] Foragers used the greatest amount of territory, including rock-shelters and exposed hilltops. They probably made the poorly defined stone materials that archaeologists find in the region. Fishing (and possibly farming) communities lived by Lake Victoria and near the larger, permanent rivers. They used Kansyore pottery. Farmers, some of whom used metal and all of whom used pottery, settled only on lands with good soils and reliable rainfall. Near Lake Victoria, they sometimes settled amidst the fishing people who used Kansyore pottery.[30] And around the Kivu Rift Valley, they sometimes settled near, but not inside, moist forests.[31] Wherever they settled in these two zones, it seems to have always been in the areas best suited to agricultural activity. These farmers were the ones who used the Urewe ware pots that date to between 700 B.C. and A.D. 800 (Map 1.3.a).

How did the farming communities that used iron expand? Why did they take the course suggested by the distribution and dating of Early Iron Age sites? The combination of fuel requirements and a tentative, shifting agriculture probably drove this very slow expansion from the Kivu Rift Valley to the western shores of Lake Victoria, branching then to the north and south. The inshore waters of Lake Victoria bore the canoes of farmers and metallurgists to all corners of the Lake. Even at Gogo Falls in western Kenya, far from the Kivu Rift Valley, the signal Urewe ware turns up.[32]

These expansions had their own paces and rhythms. Local communities strained against the productive capacity of their lands and the limits of their eclectic farming knowledge. Exploiting forests for fuel and new fields meant reduced ground cover and a corresponding increase in the erosive damage done to topsoils by wind, rain, and nutrient leaching. The presumed increase in farming productivity, allowed by using iron tools to work heavy bottomland soils, placed undue strain on local environments. This uncompromising equation fostered later innovations in iron production techniques[33] and in farming techniques. But, initially at least, together with the requirements of a long-fallow farming system, the pressures of forest clearance may have combined with each new family's requirement for their own farmlands to ensure the gradual progress of Early Iron Age societies across the Lakes landscape.

Though we still know distressingly little about the archaeological character of Early Iron Age communities, we can hazard some guesses at the timing of their expansions. A series of increasingly strained relations between iron-using farmers and their resource bases seems to have driven the relatively rapid spread of Early Iron Age communities around the region. What

had been thus far a matter of gradual expansion in familiar wetter environments, between 700 B.C. and 300 B.C., and a rather more dramatic expansion into drier environments south of Lake Victoria, between 300 B.C. and A.D. 300, became a growing torrent of settlement in entirely new areas five centuries later. This shift began as early as A.D. 800 in the highlands of the Kivu Rift Valley and stretched fully into the fourteenth century, as is amply attested to by archaeological data that describe a Later Iron Age "revolution" between the Great Lakes.[34] Two important new features turn up in the record to justify recognizing 800-1400 as a new era in Lakes history. First, the distribution of settlements expands into regions that had been either uninhabited or had not been settled by iron-using farmers. Second, an entirely new pottery tradition entered the daily life of Lakes farmers and displaced completely the older Urewe and Kansyore pots (Map 1.3.b).

Not only do sites now turn up far from large rivers and lakes, often on or just below ridgetops,[35] but most of them contain rich stores of cattle bones, grindstones, and the occasional sorghum seed. The sparse evidence for cattle and cereals, from Early Iron Age sites in Rwanda,[36] stands in stark contrast to this explosion of a dryland livelihood. Evidence for ironworking also grows in frequency. It seems that the last phases of settling permanently in the woody grassland voids—which had probably been used exclusively for hunting or perhaps for a rather ephemeral pastoralism—involved some Lakes peoples committing their futures to a combination of herding and cereal raising.

We shall soon discuss the agricultural and environmental (Chapter 2) and the social and economic (Chapters 4 through 6) factors that shaped this expansion into the center of the region. Our purpose here is merely to coax from the archaeological evidence for the spread of Rouletted pottery a sense of the regional settlement history and its chronology. These new rouletted pots, decorated with repetitive designs that potters applied by rolling a knotted or twisted cord of woven grass across the still-soft clay, appear rougher when placed next to the carefully grooved Urewe styles. But, aesthetics aside, the far wider distribution of rouletted styles (compare Maps 1.3.a and 1.3.b) suggests that, after the ninth century A.D., more people used more pottery than had been the case during the preceding thousand years.

The archaeological evidence for the contours of settlement between the Great Lakes reveals a series of local adaptations that carried people to the limits of their environments, and just beyond. In the first stages, fishers, hunters and gatherers built widespread but probably small settlements as they exploited rivers, lakes, forests, and local patches of woody grassland for food. With the dawn of agriculture and iron, early in the last millennium B.C., these societies moved around the lakeshores and along the river courses. Nearly two thousand years later, by A.D. 800, a new phase of settlement expansion took place, where communities raising cereals and keeping stock, more or less exclusively, settled permanently in the central grasslands. Though older

zones of settlement were not abandoned, the vegetation looked quite different in A.D. 1000 than it did 500 years before.[37]

All these riches really only scratch the surface of what archaeologists can tell historians. For example, more detailed excavations underway in Uganda will shed light on settlement patterns, the organization of space in the homestead, human and pastoral paleodemography, and other aspects of life between the Great Lakes.[38] Ongoing work in the region should bring added depth and breadth to the scattered results so far achieved.

The combination of environmental and archaeological evidence changes our view of the Lakes past. Archaeology produces evidence that people made symbols (represented by iron goods in wealthy graves; decorative motifs on pots; the organization of living space), they composed and defended social boundaries (represented by different but contemporaneous sets of pottery designs; differences between the organization of space in herding and farming homesteads); and they managed or mismanaged their environments in new ways (represented by shifts from hardwoods to swamp grasses as fuel sources for ironworkers).[39] These impressions in the archaeological record reveal a profound continuity from the deep past to life today between the Great Lakes. Issues of soil use, forest management, agricultural sustainability, and ethnic identities occupy modern Lakes communities as they did their ancestors. Though these factors must interconnect differently today than they did five hundred or twenty-five hundred years ago, the greatest textures of continuity are to be found in the tradition carried forward, from generation to generation, by the living languages of the Great Lakes region.

Spoken Things: History from Linguistics Between the Lakes

Language "is an arbitrary, symbolic, and largely unconscious holistic system of communication with a high degree of internal inertia," so argues Jan Vansina in promoting the value of comparative linguistics for historical studies.[40] Much of this study follows from that premise in seeking the historical continuities and changes embedded in patterns of meaning and difference. But, at the same time, the split between performance and mere competence implicit in the arbitrary and unconscious dimensions of language is uncomfortably dogmatic. Speakers and their speech surely possess virtuosity, originality, and context? Isn't there more to language than practical competence, that rich store of historical experience? Of course, there is more. For one thing, when a new word comes into existence from an older meaning the creative process speaks directly to us.

While a speaker's virtuosity must be appreciated, we should seek first to describe the common ground, the continuity of experience that makes communication possible. In Chapter 2 the history of practical consciousness—what Great Lakes Bantu speakers knew how to do—comes forward. The rest

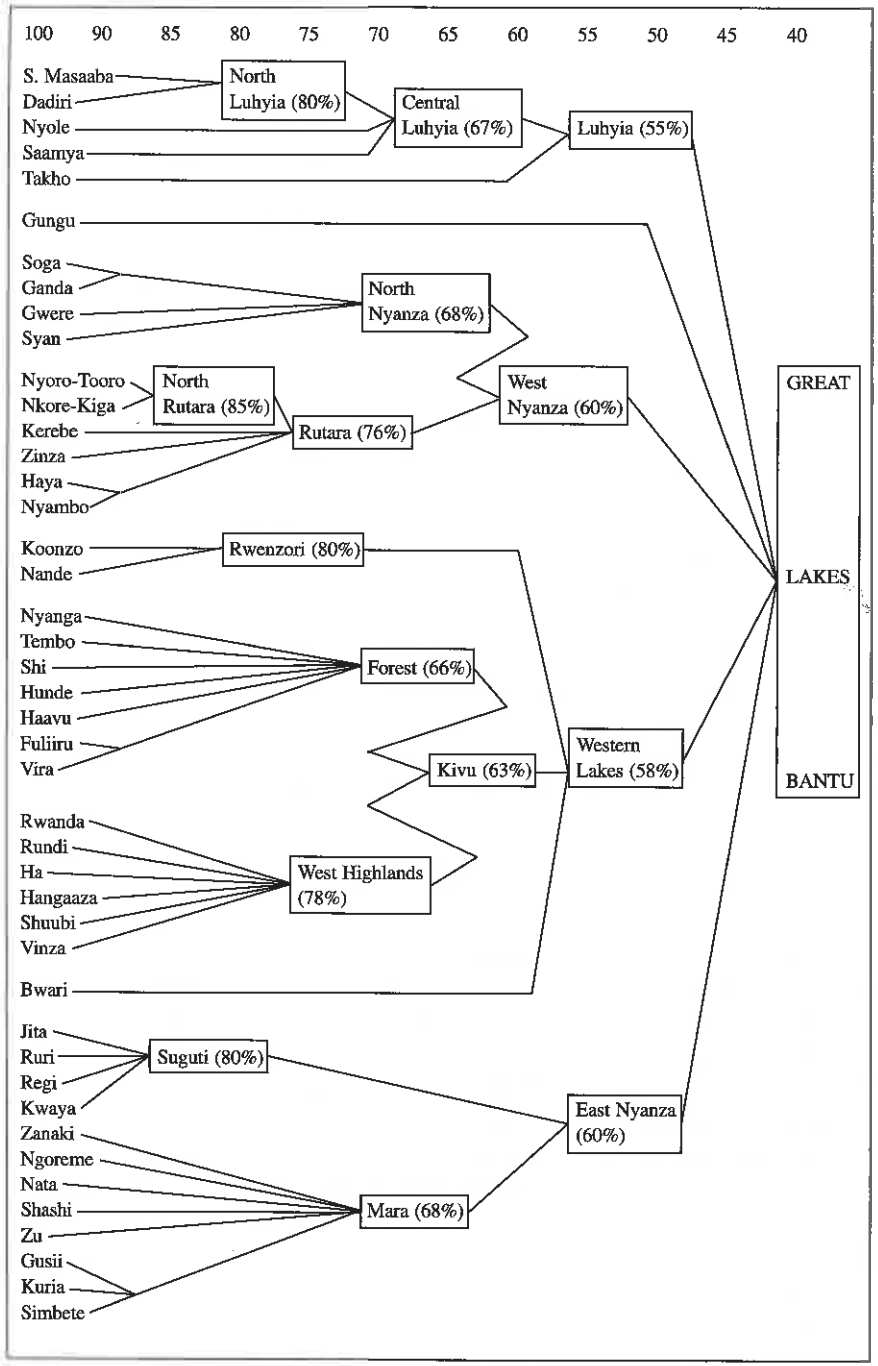


Figure 1.1 Great Lakes Bantu Linguistic Classification. Glottochronology reckoned at a shared retention rate of 73-74% per thousand years.

of the book studies the closely related domain of discursive consciousness, what Great Lakes Bantu speaking peoples knew how to talk about and who decided what those subjects would be and who would have the authority to speak and be heard.[41] The focus on practical consciousness makes the search for retentions and innovations not only plausible but an exciting feature of the historical linguistic project.

This project contains two phases. The first phase includes classifying a group of related, contemporary languages in order to learn about the dialects and languages spoken by the ancestral communities from which the contemporary languages descend. The second phase includes detecting changes in the words and meanings used by people who spoke those ancestral languages. Though the two phases are related, scholars normally begin with classification.

Classification

Vocabularies from Lakes languages contain traces of their historical relationships, their geographical spread, and the long-term coexistence of very different speech communities in the region. These historical processes of settlement and contact place people at the center of environmental change. And we can see the sequential unfolding of settlement and contact clearly through the prism of language classification.

Reconstructed historical relationships between Great Lakes Bantu languages emerge from comparisons between core vocabulary lists[42] that allow provisional establishment of regular sound correspondences and the recognition of cognates. For example, in Ha (a set of closely related West Highlands dialects spoken in northwest Tanzania) the verb *gukùùra* (60) means "to uproot a tuber" and in Koonzo (a Rwenzori language spoken on Uganda's side of the Rwenzori mountains) *kukùùrha* means "to uproot beans and groundnuts." Since both verbs have the same meaning with corresponding sounds they are cognates—inherited items in Ha and Koonzo. By counting rates of cognation in core vocabulary, for each pairing of the related languages under study, a preliminary subgrouping of Great Lakes Bantu can be deduced (see Figure 1.1). Higher rates of cognation show more recent divergence while lower numbers show earlier divergence. Ha and Koonzo have a 59 percent cognation rate; they share 59 out of the 100 core vocabulary items. But Ha and Rwanda have an 83 percent cognation rate. All three tongues are related, but Koonzo began to diverge from its ancestral speech community, Proto Rwenzori, long before Ha and Rwanda began to diverge from theirs, Proto West Highlands.

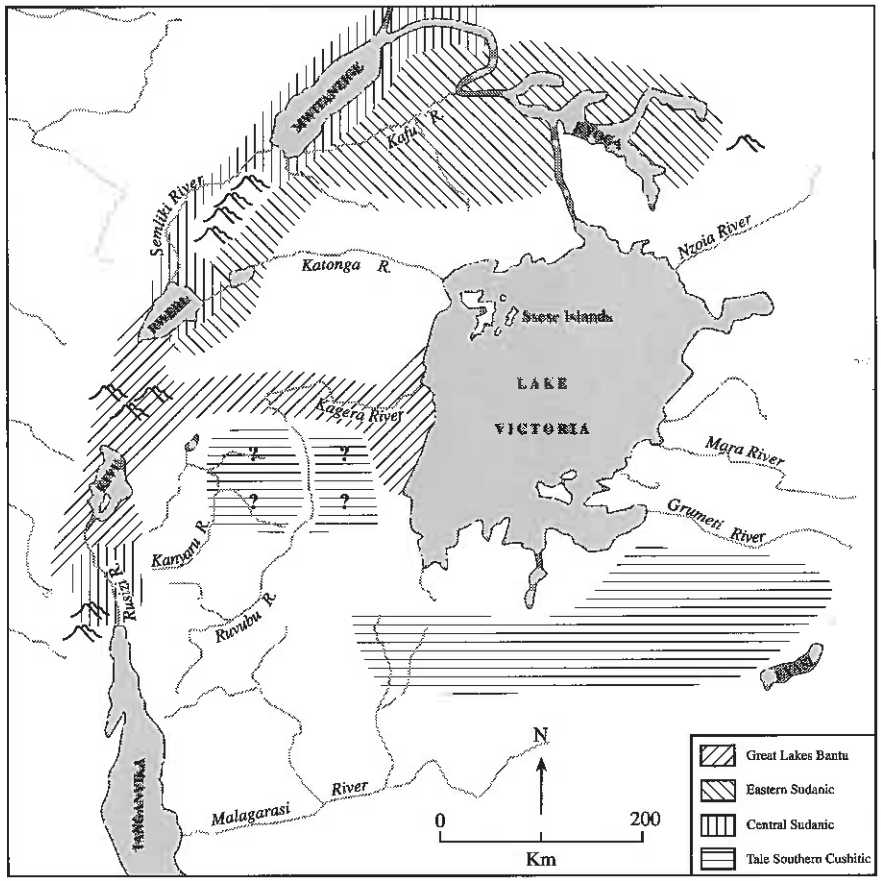
These ancestral languages, or protolanguages, existed during the time when dialects were still mutually intelligible. This period can last for centuries or only for several generations. For example, the Proto West Highlands and Proto Rwenzori periods are only now drawing to a close; many speakers of Koonzo

and Nande (Rwenzori languages) understand each other clearly and many speakers of Ha, Rundi, Rwanda and Vinza (West Highlands languages) understand each other clearly as well. However, a Koonzo speaker and a Ha speaker would understand each other only very poorly. Their 59 percent cognate score betokens a long departed ancestral speech community which linguists have named Proto Western Lakes.

Just how long ago was the Proto Western Lakes community? Chronological dimensions of Lakes language history can come from the evidence of lexicostatistics, in this case counting cognates. Glottochronology, a subset of lexicostatistics, employs the empirical finding that random change in basic vocabulary tends to accumulate at a regular pace over periods of centuries, and thus extremely rough calendar dates may be reckoned from differences in cognate percentages.[43] About 16 out of 100 items will be replaced each 500 years, either by meaning shift, by morphological analogy, or by borrowing from another language.[44] According to this rate, Ha and Rwanda ceased to be easily mutually intelligible about 500 years ago. Koonzo's ancestral speech community, Rwenzori, and Kivu (from which both Ha and Rwanda were to grow) lost easy mutual intelligibility over 1500 years ago. Figure 1.1 represents the sequence of development of the intermediate subgroups of Great Lakes Bantu and gives a rough chronology for their development.

The principle of least moves[45] suggests the directions that Great Lakes Bantu communities took as they diversified and spread across the region (Maps 1.4.a, b, and c). One begins with modern languages and maps their geographical extent. Next, one attributes equal strength first to modern tongues, and then to their ancestral speech communities, as they must have moved across the geographical plane to produce the current distribution. Thus, in Map 1.4.c, because the bundle of modern languages forming the North Nyanza branch of West Nyanza Bantu centers on the northwest corner of Lake Victoria and because the corresponding group of languages constituting Rutara centers on the area south of the mouth of the Kagera river, all these must have developed out of a zone midway between these two areas. The West Nyanza territories lay then around Lake Victoria shore and inland along the Kagera river (Map 1.4.b).

Languages spread for both historical and sociological reasons.[46] The principle of least moves merely approximates the historical regions where different Lakes protolinguistic identities emerged, and it may do even this in a dangerously instrumental fashion. The concept of a dialect chain better represents the social, environmental, and economic factors that shaped the spread of Lakes Bantu speech.[47] Dialect chaining explains differences between related languages as the result of their increasing isolation from one another at distant ends of a larger community of mutually intelligible dialects. For example, after the initial spread of the Great Lakes Bantu speech community into the well-watered lands east of the Kivu Rift Valley, those groups living in the Kivu Rift Valley lost regular contact with the groups who lived at the

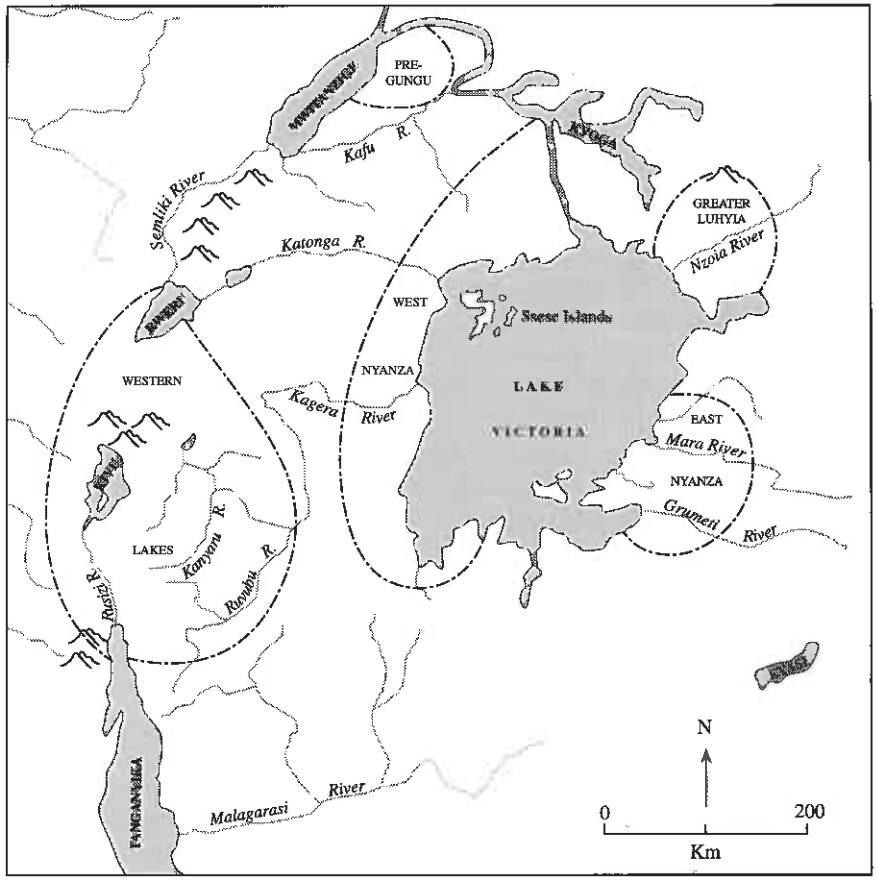


Map 1.4.a The Historical Geography of Great Lakes Bantu, ca. 1000 B.C. to 500 B.C.

eastern frontier of settlement, near Lake Victoria.[48] The two speech communities gradually grew apart and could no longer easily understand each other even though they maintained a relative ease of communication—the ease that characterizes "dialects"—with their immediate neighbors. The effects of dialect chaining may be seen in the tendency for neighboring languages to share higher rates of cognation than they will with any other of the members of their subgroup.[49]

Great Lakes Bantu and the Bantu Expansions

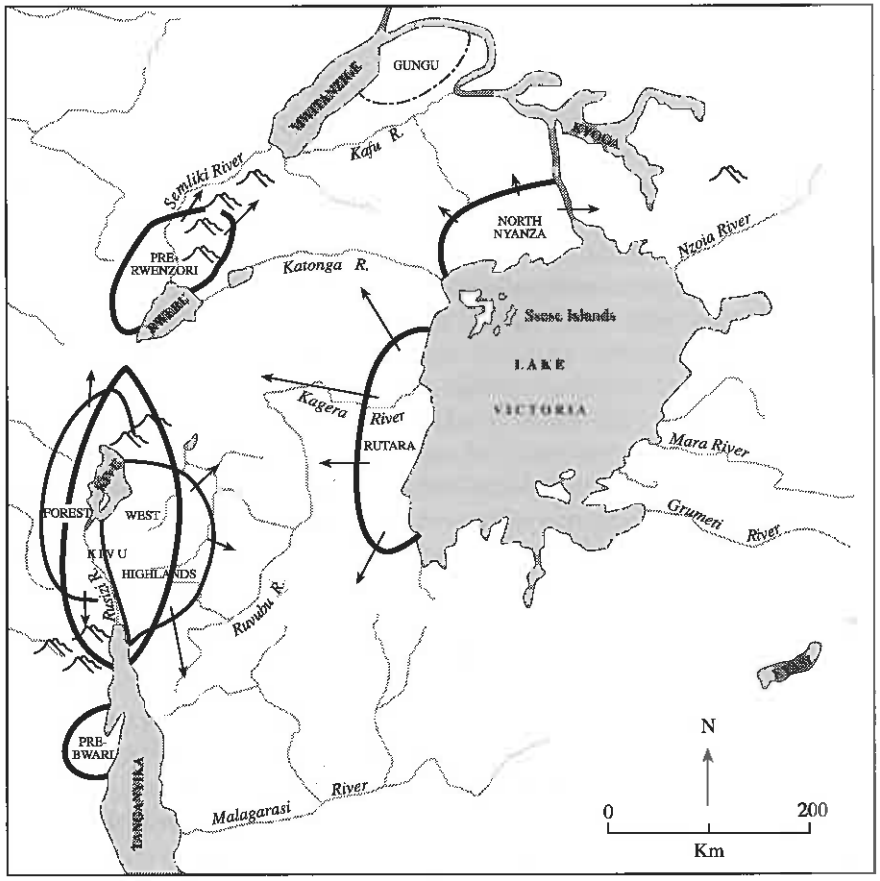
The technical elements of this story are less compelling than the narrative of settlement expansion expressed by a genetic classification of Great Lakes Bantu. A genetic classification insists on relations of descent between mod-



Map 1.4.b The Historical Geography of Great Lakes Bantu, ca. 500 B.C. to A.D. 500.

ern and ancestral communities of speakers who use related languages. The "relatedness," the systematic correspondence between sound and meaning for shared vocabulary items, implies the descent relation.[50]

Great Lakes Bantu had its own ancestors—a Mashariki parent and a Savannah grandparent. (Proto Bantu probably was a great-great grandparent.) It is now quite certain that the earliest Bantu speakers must have lived in and around the Benue Valley of Nigeria.[51] It is there that the greatest linguistic diversity exists within still recognizably related languages. The ancient community split into northern and southern groups by 3000 B.C., dated glottochronologically.[52] Mashariki Bantu formed out of Savannah Bantu, which formed out of the eastern part of this northern branch. Mashariki began to spread still further eastwards, with some communities reaching the



Map 1.4.c The Historical Geography of Great Lakes Bantu, ca. A.D. 500 to A.D. 1600.

Kivu Rift Valley by 1000 B.C.[53] Over the next thousand or more years, several different protolanguages, descended from Mashariki Bantu, came to be spoken along the full eastern length of the continent, from northeastern Kenya to South Africa. Of these, Great Lakes Bantu developed between the Kivu Rift Valley and the mouth of the Kagera River.

When historians speak of "the Bantu expansion" they are describing these broad processes of linguistic divergence. But they actually speak of a complex set of Bantu expansions, not all of which were interrelated. It is important to grasp that even though these expansions involved the spread of Bantu speech they did not always involve the movement of Bantu speakers. To understand this it might be best to imagine the Bantu expansions in the following manner.[54] Think of many communities of people forming dialect chains

along corridors and in zones of environmentally familiar lands. The communities at either end of the chain or at distant edges of the zones, having lost regular contact with each other, begin to accumulate changes and innovations in their dialects that are not shared with the others. Over a period of very many generations these differences render the two tongues less than mutually intelligible. This process might have involved a modicum of people slowly and consistently "expanding" away from an older center of settlement or it may have involved an initially rapid expansion over a large area, with linguistic divergence developing after that expansion had slowed or ceased. It seems quite likely that the history of Bantu language diversification was characterized by pulses of expansion, interspersed with long periods of slow growth, which could lead to repeated resettlements of areas already populated by other Bantu speakers.

The transitions between the pulses and the periods of slower growth may be the important matters for study. For, it seems that when various of the ancestral Bantu speaking groups first reached Central, Southern, and Eastern Africa they found communities of people already living there who spoke languages entirely different from Bantu. Many of these communities also lived in environmental zones that differed from those in which Bantu speakers would have felt comfortable at the time that they met. Among the first of these were probably the forest- and marsh-dwelling foragers of the Inner Congo basin.[55] They may well have taught early Bantu speakers how to exploit forest and marsh resources. Others whom members of different branches of the Bantu group met included the Adamawa-Ubangian (now represented by communities in eastern Cameroon, southern Chad, and western Central African Republic), Khoisan speakers (especially in southern Africa), and Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, Nilotic, and Southern Cushitic groups, mostly in eastern Africa.[56] Whether they lived in the same or, more often, in different environments, when Bantu speakers met these different communities they acquired some of their knowledge about finding and producing food in their special zones. Most of these periods of cultural interaction and learning are marked by sets of non-Bantu loanwords in Bantu speech and they may well have preceded pulses of expansion.

For a great variety of reasons, some of which are argued in Chapter 2, Bantu speech has come to predominate in Africa south of the equator. These languages have acted like sponges and soaked up or retained the knowledge of preceding and neighboring communities. But it is very difficult to know when one of these periods of cultural contact resulted in the pushing aside of earlier residents by newcomer Bantu speakers or when it resulted in the earlier residents gradually adopting Bantu speech. Either way, the legacy of cultural contact is visible in the words transferred from one language community to another.

The Bantu expansions, then, are more than problems for the historical linguist to tackle. They included population movements, cultural contact, and

agricultural, technological, and social innovation, and they involved a tremendous diversity of communities teaching and learning from one another. That these processes always unfolded in a peaceful manner seems unlikely, but we know next to nothing about African military history south of the equator before A.D. 1000.[57] All these different aspects of the Bantu expansions insure that scholars other than linguists, such as historians and archaeologists, will continue to study them. But the shared history of cultural and technical achievement, generated by the Bantu expansions themselves and carried in the vocabularies of contemporary Bantu languages, means that understanding these complex histories offers unique rewards to the people who live in the huge Bantu-speaking part of Africa. The zones between the Great Lakes of eastern Africa form only one small part of that world but the story of Great Lakes Bantu expansions exemplifies much of the larger story of Bantu expansions only hinted at here.

Great Lakes Bantu speakers came gradually to occupy all of the Lakes region covered in this book. The major branchings of the Great Lakes Bantu classification reflect the timing and geographical extent of these spreads. The combined labors of many scholars have provided a firm classification of Great Lakes Bantu and its expansion, here laid out in Figure 1.1 and Maps 1.4.a, b, and c.

The ancestral community broke up into five groups of differing complexity. Four of them seem to have moved off from the old territories of the Great Lakes Bantu. One, Western Lakes, remained in the Kivu Rift Valley. Some branches differentiated into sets of languages more numerous than in other branches. Thus, Proto Western Lakes eventually gave birth to more than sixteen modern tongues (Figure 1.1) while Gungu stands as the sole heir to the notional Pre-Gungu ancestral language (the ancient form of contemporary Gungu). The expansion of Great Lakes Bantu beyond Mashariki territories certainly involved much local differentiation, with easy mutual intelligibility disappearing as communities at one end of the territory lost regular contact with those at the other end (Map 1.4.a). The initial impulse probably involved Mashariki Bantu speakers moving into the Kivu Rift Valley, settling there and gradually differentiating themselves from those who went farther east and south. Great Lakes Bantu communities formed *in situ*, from their Mashariki Bantu ancestors, through a process whose results lay quite beyond the abilities of an individual to perceive in their own lifetime. There was no moment when Mashariki Bantu speakers "became" Great Lakes Bantu speakers. If we recall that the dynamics of the expansion were gradual, tied to the needs of food collecting, farming and, later, of iron-using communities, this description is fitting.

Beginning in the swath of riverine environments in the central Kivu Rift Valley, Great Lakes Bantu speakers expanded to the mouth of the Kagera River. With the five-way branching of Great Lakes Bantu, into Western Lakes, West Nyanza, East Nyanza, Greater Luhyia, and Pre-Gungu, most of the re-

gion was settled by Bantu speakers (Map 1.4.b). The major gaps in this expansion lay directly in the center of the region, from Bunyoro to the central Malagarasi River. Smaller voids existed in the deep forest remnants within the Kivu Rift Valley and across the midsection of the region, and in the wet, swampy lands near Lake Victoria. Four of the five branches formed hubs of linguistic unity: East Nyanzan in the lands between the Suguti and Mara Rivers, Greater Luhyia between the forests of Mount Masaaba and the northeastern shores of Lake Victoria, West Nyanza along and just inland of the western and northwestern shores of Lake Victoria, and Western Lakes in and on the hillsides of the Kivu Rift Valley. The Pre-Gungu developed along the northeastern shore of Lake Mwitanzige, thus describing the northernmost extension of Great Lakes Bantu settlement.

Glottochronological computations provide the following dates for these developments. Great Lakes Bantu began to diverge from Mashariki Bantu at 500 B.C.; the five-way split-up of Great Lakes took place 2000 years ago. Divisions within the four larger groups began very soon thereafter: Greater Luhyia split into Pre-Itakho and Central Luhyia at A.D. 200; East Nyanza grew into Suguti and Mara at A.D. 300; West Nyanza became Rutara and North Nyanza at A.D. 500; Kivu, Pre-Bwari, and Rwenzori communities emerged from Western Lakes around A.D. 400, and Kivu itself split into the Forest and the West Highlands groups at A.D. 600. Great Lakes Bantu expansion came to a close in the east when Mara broke up around A.D. 900 and Central Luhyia communities broke up at A.D. 1000 (Map 1.4.c). In the west, this broad expansion culminated with the splintering of Rutara into northern and southern branches at A.D. 1200; the breakup of North Nyanza by A.D. 1000; the divergence of Forest languages by A.D. 1000; and the breakup of West Highlands languages by A.D. 1400 (Map 1.4.c). The entire process seems to have followed three main stages of unfolding. The earliest phase took place between the Kivu Rift Valley and the western shores of Lake Victoria. The middle phase took Bantu speech around the shores of Lake Victoria and up the many hillsides of the Kivu Rift Valley. And the last phase sent Bantu speaking communities into the central parts of the region as well as into the dry savannahs southeast of Lake Victoria.

Time scales derived from Early Iron Age and Later Iron Age sites across the region for the expansion of societies using iron and Urewe ware and later of societies using iron and Rouletted ware correlate extremely well with the glottochronological time scale. The two scales agree both in the timing and in the location for these communities. The earliest dates for the Early Iron Age come from Rwanda, Burundi, and Buhaya and span the period from 600 B.C. to A.D. 200. These match the spread of Great Lakes Bantu. Later dates for the Early Iron Age sites stretch from A.D. 200 to A.D. 800: Chobi (ca. A.D. 300), Urewe (ca. A.D. 300), sites in the Mwanza area (ca. A.D. 200), and many of the sites in Buhaya, Rwanda,

and Burundi, which give dates that run into the ninth century A.D.[58] These dates fit with the middle phase of Bantu expansion, when Western Lakes, West Nyanza, Greater Luhyia, and East Nyanza communities spread to all four corners of the region.

Later Iron Age sites and their dates appear to match the last phase of Bantu expansion in the region. The earliest of these dates, from sites bearing Rouletted pots and/or evidence of ironworking, comes from northeastern Rwanda in the Gisaka region.[59] They span the four centuries between A.D. 800 and A.D. 1200,[60] roughly the same centuries given to us by glottochronology for the breakup of Kivu societies and for the heyday of the Rutaran community. Another set of dates from Later Iron Age sites bearing demonstrably different Rouletted pots begins in the eleventh century and reaches into virtually modern times. These sites, including the salt works at Kibiro (thirteenth century) and the famous western Ugandan sites of Ntusi, Munsa (eleventh century), Mubende Hill, and Bigo (fourteenth century), are all in regions with virtually no archaeological evidence from the Early Iron Age (Map 1.3.b). Their dating and location correspond well with the last phase of Bantu expansion which involved the breakup of Rutara, North Nyanza, and West Highlands societies. This last phase gave us some of the speech communities we know today: Haya, Nyambo, Nyoro, Toro, Nkore, Kiga, Ganda, Soga, and Gwere, as well as Rundi, Rwanda, and Ha.

After this breathless recounting, a blunt admission is in order about the vagueness of both radiocarbon and glottochronological dating. Because these methods of dating can have substantial margins of error or large standard deviations it is possible that chronologies built on each will not actually correlate. In other words, it is possible that a piece of charcoal found in an iron-smelting furnace in Buhaya, Tanzania, is actually on the old side of its calibrated radiocarbon date of 1800 (plus or minus 180) years before the present.[61] It may actually be 1980 years old and not 1800 years old or 1620 years old. Were it the younger age (1620 years old), it could have been made by people who spoke Proto West Nyanza languages. Were it the older age (1980 years old), it could have been made by people who spoke Proto Great Lakes Bantu! Obviously, these issues in dating resolution mean that firm correlations with direct dating sources like the Rodah Nilometer must be taken with care. These uncertainties notwithstanding, I am convinced that the redundant matches, in time and place, of chronologies for vegetation change, archaeologically defined pottery traditions, and the stages in the expansion of Great Lakes Bantu languages means that the apparent fit is far more than fortuitous. Surely, there will be adjustments and even fairly substantial revisions of these chronologies for some of the subregions in the Great Lakes zone as new dating evidence comes to light. These are to be expected and welcomed. But the overall relative chronological framework, the succession of splits in Great Lakes Bantu and the order of vegetation changes and of different pottery traditions

proposed here is likely to withstand those refinements because of the redundancy of the correlations between the different sorts of dating evidence.

Another blunt admission is in order. Even though the distribution and the chronology for the "spread" of Urewe ware and Rouletted wares closely match the progress across the region of Great Lakes Bantu and its immediate descendent communities, we do not necessarily know the linguistic identity of the makers of Urewe ware. This apparent contradiction flows from the fact that contemporary studies of potters, their technological and decorative styles of making pots, and patterns of trade in pots reveal no such direct correlation between language, ethnicity, and potting style.[62] Contrary to the views of some scholars,[63] language, ethnicity, and potting style do not always coincide in a society. Some groups in a given society might use pots made elsewhere by another group.[64] Or they might have specialist potters who married in but retained the technological and decorative styles of their natal society.[65] We know distressingly little about such possibilities in the early history of the Lakes region, though the example of specialized, *Batúá* potters in Rwanda may echo early roles for specialist potters whose social position, in many ways, came to be defined by farmers and herders as standing apart from the mainstream.[66] These warnings and uncertainties notwithstanding, the extraordinary fit of Urewe ware and Rouletted ware distributions with Lakes Bantu speaking settlement, between about 500 B.C. and about A.D. 1200 suggests at least that people used both language and material culture to mark differences in their identity.

Innovation

Lexicostatistics, glottochronology, and correlations with other dated sources of evidence, like archaeologically defined pottery traditions, must be supplemented by abundant language evidence for the cross-cultural contacts and innovations that those other sources and analytical techniques reveal. Presented briefly in the Introduction, the second phase of the historical linguistic project provides this supplementary evidence by discovering innovations. Whether the innovations were transfers of knowledge ("loanwords") between speech communities or meanings developed within a given community of speakers ("internal innovations"), discovering innovations opens the way to writing a history in which Lakes people play a leading role. One way it does so is by recovering the great cultural diversity of the early Great Lakes Bantu speaking world through the study of loanwords.

Loanwords in Lakes Bantu languages from Central Sudanic, Sog Eastern Sahelian, and Tale Southern Cushitic signal the contributions of non-Bantu speakers to the region's agricultural and cultural history.[67] For example, the Great Lakes Bantu noun for "lion," **ntale*, is a loan from a branch of Southern Cushitic. No plausible Bantu derivation exists. But there is an obvious Southern Cushitic source: **taale-*, "lion" that does not carry the characteristic Bantu noun class prefix, *-n-* which, in this case, marks the noun as class 9/10. The word itself also suggests that Southern Cushites provided environmental knowledge to Great Lakes Bantu communities that were still largely unfamiliar with dryland savannahs and their unique animal life that included lions.

Language contact and the transfer of knowledge implicit in loanwords also took place among Bantu speakers. The same arrays of phonological changes that help to form linguistic subgroups in the first stages of classification also help to identify loans within Bantu speech communities. For example, Kuria *ugufuunda* (92), "to churn milk" should be *ugutuunda*. Though Kuria possesses the */f/* sound, speakers regularly pronounce */t/* before */u/*. The */f/* in this word therefore places it immediately under suspicion as a loan. Kwaya, a neighboring language whose speakers regularly pronounce */f/* before */u/*, is the likely source.

Identifying loans in Great Lakes Bantu languages depends upon a thorough understanding of the phonological history of the probable source languages and of Great Lakes Bantu languages (the latter usually attained during the search for cognates). The value of loans lies in their indicating who was involved in the contact and what was transferred. They form a major historical source just as important as discovering internal innovations of new words or of new meanings for old words.

For example, the historical development of food production vocabulary can reveal processes of increasing agricultural complexity. By tracing the growth of sets of words in Great Lakes Bantu that name crops and domestic animals, both as loanwords and as internal innovations, historians can deduce when Great Lakes Bantu speakers began to incorporate livestock into their food systems. Some words for crops and domestic animals were common to Great Lakes Bantu while other words were coined later, by West Nyanza and Western Lakes speakers. This fact reveals both that livestock keeping practices changed in the period between Great Lakes Bantu and its descendants West Nyanza and Western Lakes and that they did so differently in the two descendant groups. Thus, the systematic study of cultural vocabulary and loanwords connected with food production reveals the elaboration of different food ways and the extraordinarily diverse cultural contexts in which Lakes farmers and herders lived.

Not all innovations were the creations of protolanguage groups. Another form of innovation—areal innovation—reveals spheres and periods of contact between speakers of different intermediate subgroups of Great Lakes Bantu. Areal terms exhibit distributions that overflow the boundaries between subgroups in the classification as a result of interaction between people who spoke those ancestral languages. For example, the root **-gaabU* meaning "red-brown cattle," was invented in the period after Great Lakes Bantu had

broken into its daughter speech communities. But it was invented in only three of the five branches; neither Greater Luhyia nor Gungu attest it. We know that the ancient Great Lakes Bantu speech community did not innovate this word because modern attestations of the root occur only in languages belonging to adjacent branches of the parent group, not to geographically separate branches. The development of this noun can be dated by placing it between the demise of Proto Great Lakes Bantu and the glottochronological dates for the most and the least diversified of the three daughter branches in which the term existed. That would be between about 2000 and 1500 years ago. The recent end of the range is derived from the dates for either East Nyanza or West Nyanza (both at 60 percent, or after A.D. 500) and Western Lakes (at 58 percent, or just before A.D. 500) (see Figure 1.1).

Another common form of areal spread occurs when a protolanguage community creates a word that later spreads beyond its original linguistic frontiers, in a block distribution (a distribution with no gaps). The Rutaran word **-luku* names a head of cattle colored dark and light, but it also occurs in Rwanda, a West Highlands language. Since no other West Highlands language has the word, Rwanda speakers either borrowed it separately from Tale Southern Cushitic speakers (its source) or they learned it from a Rutaran language, at a later period.

Some areal innovations spread widely from a center or centers of development. These often show perfect block distributions and little or no important sound change. The root **-hogo*, "reddish cattle," exemplifies this. Occasionally an item turns up with these qualities but with skewed reflexes that imply separate borrowing. An example of this, **-gòndó*, "spotted," forms a solid block of reflexes on either side of the Kagera River.[68]

The variety of forces that stimulates innovations produces a variety of possible historical explanations for their contemporary distributions. New words replace old words in a language as a result of atrophy, transfer, and analogy. Older words should show the effects of sound change and often they show the effects of having been subjected to atrophy, transfer, and analogy by turning up in very spotty distributions. Historical linguists feel that core or basic vocabulary words resist these processes precisely because they refer to basic or core parts of human existence. But, as we saw with cattle terms, innovations in other parts of the vocabulary can show great variation in their distributions. Innovations in banana farming, clientship, and spirit mediumship commonly occurred in centers of development and spread outward from there into neighboring areas. This phenomenon suggests the prior existence in the neighboring areas of banana farming, clientage, and spirit mediumship into which the innovated terms and their referents could be easily incorporated. Areal language evidence of this sort divulges the history and direction of cooperation and contact between different Great Lakes Bantu

speaking communities. It also expresses the social reality that Lakes people belonged to and participated in more than a single, neatly bounded speech community.

Proposing etymologies for new words and meanings is, in some ways, the most rewarding part of discovering innovations. Etymologies recover something of the creative act of inventing new words and meanings because discovering etymologies reveals the pool of meanings people dipped into to create the names for new things and ideas (see A Note on Evidence). The derivation of *mukungu,* "wealthy person, hereditary chief," from the verb **kukúnga* (208) "to gather, assemble," reveals that people drew on the concept of *gathering* or *assembling* people and wealth, expressed by the verb, to name the new category of person who achieved these things, the *mukungu*. Historical linguists feel certain that people invented the noun from the verb (and not the other way around) for several reasons. First, the verb is spread widely but discontinuously across the Savannah Bantu speaking area and its reflexes in these various languages show regular sound correspondences. It was therefore probably a part of Proto Savannah Bantu vocabulary. On the other hand, in the meaning "hereditary chief," *mukungu* occurs in West Nyanza languages, a far narrower set of languages within Great Lakes Bantu. *Mukungu* ("hereditary chief") therefore came into existence after the verb *kukúnga* had already been in use because the narrower distribution of *mukungu* reveals its younger age.

Etymologies and the histories of changes in meaning that they carry form important evidence in this book. They permit us to look in on the process of social invention. They reveal some of the philosophical underpinnings of political and medical practice. And they take us far beyond the more familiar themes of settlement, expansion, and cultural contact into the heart of social history.

It is worth noting, however, that historical linguistic methods have produced two distinct genres of historical narrative: the theme of "expansion," implicit in the assumptions underlying genetic classifications and their models, and the theme of "innovation," implicit in the necessity to establish the veracity of subgroups in genetic classifications. These two themes often suggest a process of continuous growth and progress. It is important to consider very briefly the strengths and weaknesses of these genres.

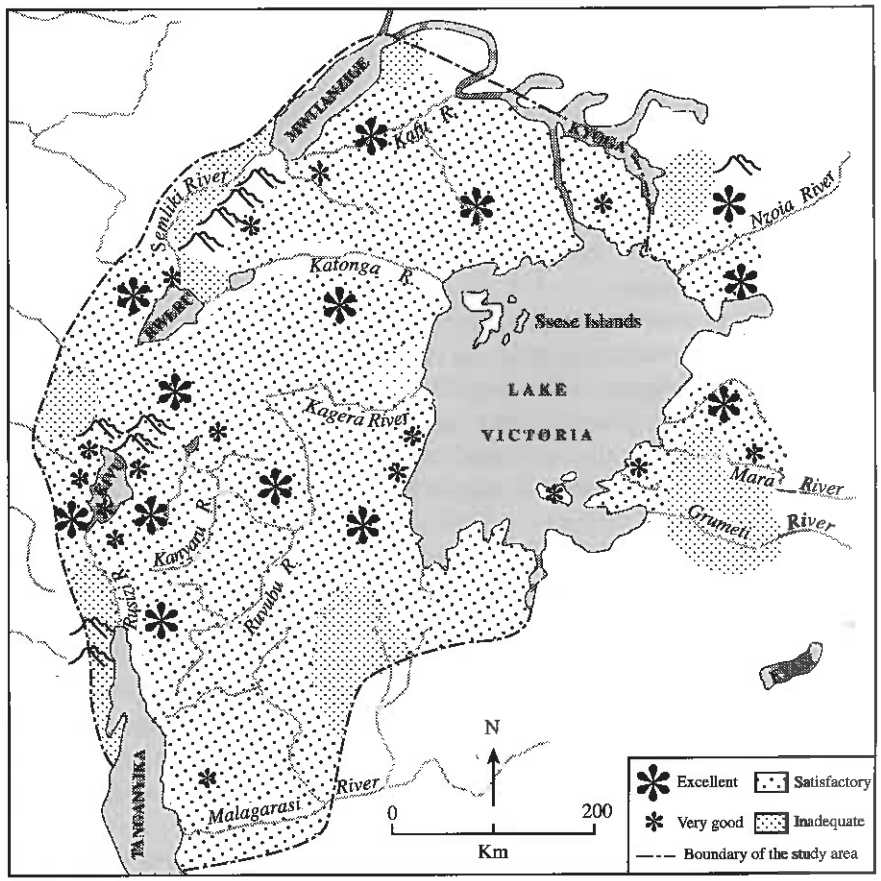
One important strength in the notion of expansion is that it provides a rough, linear historical framework for periodization. By defining stages in the expansion of a group of languages, the historian invites the reader to organize the story of this expansion into chapters. However, the theme of expansion can mask the development of linguistic diversity that occurred with little or no expansion or movement of people. The expansion theme gives the impression of continuous migrations of people, an image the reader should balance with other images of long-term settlement in a region. Study-

ing the innovation of new words and meanings (including loanwords) in order to confirm the integrity of subgroups within a genetic classification has the great benefit to historians of emphasizing creative cultural history and contacts between communities. It can, however, divert our attentions from the importance of retained knowledge, the knowledge passed on from generation to generation which changes very, very slowly. Retained knowledges are stores of practical and discursive consciousness. After all, as we have seen with the invention of the word *mukungu* ("hereditary chief"), what people innovated was built from what they already knew. With the strengths and weaknesses of these two genres of historical linguistic narrative in mind, the results of such scholarly effort can be used to great effect.

In the end, then, historical linguistics produces information about the innovation, etymology, and distribution of terms for religious practice, political forms, tools, food crops, field types, and domestic animals and their breeding and colors. The range of meanings, gleaned from fieldwork and the comparative ethnographic record, gives clues about the semantic shifts that operated in earlier times.[69] These meanings have been preserved, reworked, and preserved again, from generation to generation. Their users remembered these things precisely because of their enduring practical utility. And they crafted semantic extensions, the additions of new meanings to the old, to remold discursive consciousness precisely to fit changed practical conditions. Or, conversely, the new meanings helped to appropriate practical knowledges for new discursive ends. This last major element of Lakes social history emerges in the second half of the book. However, for all its power, the comparative method cannot recover lexical innovations or evidence of cultural contact that is lost in modern speech or older lexicons. Comparative ethnography, though, can recover parts of the past missing from the historical linguistic record.

Ethnography and Orality

In order for this book to include discursive elements in Great Lakes social history, to discuss not only what Lakes peoples knew how to do but also the various forms and styles of discourse deemed appropriate for different members of society, we must assess the reliability of the available documentary evidence for discursive practice; both individual pieces and entire corpuses. Scholars have advised that we consider a battery of questions in order to establish the reliability of the textual ethnographic and oral evidence.[70] For the different parts of the Great Lakes region, I have assessed the information available for the pool of meanings for Lakes vocabulary. I have considered all of the factors in Jan Vansina's checklist: the "quantity of materials, number of authors, their eventual relationships..., the diversity of their backgrounds, their professional competence, their gender, their linguistic competence, their insider or outsider status, the length of their stay, the variety of genres, and the dates of observation."[71] The results of this assessment appear in Map 1.5.



Map 1.5 Quality of Ethnographic and Language Evidence from the Great Lakes Region.

The cartographic expression of "reliability" camouflages the extraordinary variety of contexts for the production of ethnographic and oral sources. A few examples can illustrate this diversity. The Soga historians and the informants employed by the colonial state in the 1930s to help write histories of Busoga, were born in the 1890s. The 1890s were a time of intense competition and conflict between various Soga kingdoms, an expansionist Buganda kingdom, African Christians, and a militaristic Imperial British East Africa Company. In the 1930s, literate Soga stood to gain both monetary rewards and new forms of legitimacy by acting as cultural interpreters to colonial and

mission stations.[72] For example, between 1921 and 1938 the multilingual politician, Y. K. Lubogo, wrote *A History of Busoga* in Luganda, the language of the neighboring and powerful Ganda kingdom![73] Not only does this make the source difficult to use for linguistic data, but its assembly over some 17 years spans widely differing political contexts in both Buganda and Busoga. For example, because cash crop production increased in importance during these years, Lubogo's statements about farming practices (especially crop rotations), cannot be taken at face value; we must know more about who his audiences were.[74]

Similar opportunities for shaping the colonial construction of aspects of Lakes pasts existed elsewhere in the region. For example, Hans Cory, (the government sociologist in Tanganyika from the 1940s to independence in 1961), assembled large conclaves of male elders around the southern half of Lake Victoria in order to codify land tenure practices and "customary law." Elders used patently historical arguments, based on precedent, to cement contemporary power relationships into the colonial "native" legal system.[75] This happened especially with marriage, where union by bride payment or service came to be seen as the only form of legal or "legitimate" marriage, even though other forms existed. Female comments on these matters are missing in these sources. The colonial state's goal to create a fundamental cultural and legal divide between "natives" and "colonials" shaped the historical content of documents concerning matters like marriage practices and property inheritance systems.[76] The familiar consistency of many of these documents was more apparent than real. A welter of disagreement and sheer fantasy lay behind some of these histories.[77]

When historians began to focus on kingship and its special authority, they created a set of interlocking questions about chronology, power, and economy which have shaped much historical study in the region from late colonial times to the present. In Uganda, Benjamin Ray has described the importance of the ethnographer-missionary John Roscoe's relationship both to Sir Apolo Kaggwa (the Prime Minister of Buganda kingdom) and to Sir James Frazer (the Cambridge academic), beginning in the 1890s. Frazer desired evidence for his theories on regicide and divine kingship, evidence he hoped to find in other people's field notes. Roscoe's wish to fulfill Frazer's needs shaped his own goals in the field.[78] Roscoe deeply respected Frazer and wanted to help him. He therefore focused on evidence for regicide and royal divinity out of proportion to other cultural practices such as healing and adjudication of disputes. To collect this evidence Roscoe relied on his friend and colleague Sir Apolo Kaggwa, the Prime Minister of the kingdom of Buganda. Kaggwa himself was involved in his own intellectual pursuit of a Ganda political past and its cultural history. Among other things, Kaggwa published the earliest historical text from the interior of eastern Africa written in a local language: Ganda. *Basekabaka be Buganda* or "The Ancient Kings of Buganda," appeared in Kampala, Uganda in 1901. The research for that volume proceeded apace with Kaggwa's role as an informant in Roscoe's own ethnographic project, to appear as *The Baganda,* in 1911. A complex process of cross-fertilization developed between the goals of Frazer's *Golden Bough,* Roscoe's desire to participate in Frazer's project while maintaining his missioner's aim "to understand the Baganda and to help them in their many difficult problems,"[79] and Kaggwa's attempt to produce a standardized history of Buganda's kings.

If pursued by itself, the comparative study of contemporary cultural practices harbors anachronism. To avoid this pitfall, comparative ethnography must be woven into a third dimension of comparative linguistics. The Great Lakes region is an especially promising place for this interdisciplinary endeavor because ethnographic and language evidence abound and sometimes astound us with the rigor of their analysis and presentation. If words are "tags attached to things,"[80] then ethnographic data form the required pool of information on the meanings of the things referred to by words. Comparing both records enables us to recognize historical change. By studying the meanings given by Great Lakes peoples themselves to institutions and objects, we may build hypotheses about earlier forms—the reconstructed vocabulary—and we may attempt to trace the paths traversed by changes in meaning—semantic histories.

To put the methodological problem bluntly, one cannot project uncritically into the past the variety of social organization, healing, and political practices represented in late-nineteenth-century ethnography, without posing a disingenuous equality between the material conditions of earlier practical consciousness and the material conditions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century practical consciousness. We must resist the temptation to accept that the same explanations for recent changes in discursive consciousness may explain ancient changes in discursive consciousness. In fact, no such evidentiary relation may be demonstrated. The seemingly discrete bits of knowledge recovered by comparative linguistics stand in contrast to the more textured descriptions gleaned from comparative ethnography; this rich ethnography must be concentrated and reduced as it is made to rest on the particularities of individual reconstructed words.

CONCLUSION

In order to take control of the disparate sources relating to social organization, personal and social health, and power and politics in ancient Great Lakes discursive consciousness, two things must be accomplished. First, the concepts covered by terms for these processes must be reconstructed following the dictates of the comparative method. From this beginning we may learn the distributional characteristics and the range of meanings describing a semantic field. Next, each of the individual "explanations" of

historical semantics, implicit in a given item of reconstructed Great Lakes Bantu vocabulary, must be located within wider bundles of interrelated semantic domains. This can be likened to the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's classic approach to family resemblances,[81] in which the contexts of repeated associations, both within and between domains of meaning, reveal arrays of socially constituted meaning. In the analysis carried out here, elements of meaning do not necessarily form opposed or binary units. Rather, they form complexes or configurations with definite interrelations. They are polythetic.[82]

For example, certain offices like chiefship imply certain responsibilities, employ certain regalia, and require specific ritual locations to establish their legitimacy. Certain healing statuses reveal other configurations of material culture, social relation, and discursive power. If the comparative method can reveal ancient complexes of items and ideas that form the different material and discursive domains of chiefship or healing then their historical existence may be revealed as well. All the pieces must fit and their individual distributions must be tracked down. Only then can stories be offered to explain how they changed later from their earlier core forms.[83]

The second requirement of method reconnects the discursive to the practical by setting changes in social hierarchies and in the operations and politics of power into the broader contours of changes in food systems and the environment. If discursive elements of social change must be reconstructed as bundles, these also have connections to production that must be brought to light. By doing so, patterns of social life will emerge that were, in the past, both negotiated, provisional attempts to mediate relations between people and also accumulations of knowledge about managing relations between people and their environment. Chapters 3 through 6 tackle the historical development of the social relations of community building, politics, and health. Chapter 2 tells how people created the foundation of agricultural abundance which supported much of the rest of their social history.

NOTES

[1] See Ehret, *Classical Age*, Ch. 2 and 5, for a masterful treatment.

[2] Ferdinand Walser, *Luganda Proverbs* (London: Mill Hill Missionaries, 1982), 469.

[3] Martine Baerts and Jean Lehmann, *Guérisseurs et plantes médicinales de la région des Crètes Zaire-Nil au Burundi* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1989), 41.

[4] See J.-B. Cuypers, *L'alimentation chez les Shi*, (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1970), 50-55 and S. Desouter, *Abrégé agro-pastoral Rwanda*, (Paris: Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, 1982), 27-60, especially 58-60.

[5] R. E. Hecky and E. T. Degens, *Late Pleistocene-Holocene Chemical Stratigraphy and Paleolimnology of the Rift Valley Lakes of Central Africa* (Woods Hole, MA: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, 1973), passim.

[6] S. Terry Childs, "Clay Resource Specialization in Ancient Tanzania: Implications for Cultural Process," in *Ceramic Ecology Revisited, 1987: The Technology and Socioeconomics of Pottery*, ed. Charles C. Kolb (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1988), 10; see also Dean E. Arnold, *Ceramic Theory and Cultural Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 20-32.

[7] Childs, "Clay Resource Specialization," 23-26, and "Refractory Ceramics and Iron Smelting in East Africa," *Journal of Metals* 42 (1990), 37-38.

[8] John Tosh, "The Northern Interlacustrine Region," in *Precolonial African Trade. Essays on Trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900,* ed. Richard Gray and David Birmingham (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 106; E. G. Kimwani, "A Pictorial Description of the Manufacture of Barkcloth in the Bukoba District," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 30 (1951), 85-98; L. Dubois, "Notes sur les principales plantes et fibres indigènes utilisées au Congo belge et au Ruanda-Urundi," *Bulletin agricole du Congo belge* 4 (1951), 870-90.

[9] Tosh, "Northern Interlacustrine Region," 107.

[10] John E. G. Sutton and Andrew D. Roberts, "Uvinza and Its Salt Industry," *Azania* 3 (1968), 45-86; Ephrahim Kamuhangire, "The Pre-colonial Economic and Social History of East Africa with special reference to South-Western Uganda Salt Lakes Region," *Hadith* 5 (1976), 67-91; Graham Connah, *Kibiro: The Salt of Bunyoro, Past and Present* (London: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 1996).

[11] Michael G. Kenny, "Salt Trading in Eastern Lake Victoria," *Azania* 9 (1975), 225-28.

[12] Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "African Historical Studies: Academic Knowledge as 'Usable Past' and Radical Scholarship," *African Studies Review* 32, 3 (1989), 1-76; Gillian Feeley-Harnik, "Issues in Divine Kingship," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 14 (1985), 276.

[13] Tantala, "Early History," *passim*; David S. Newbury, *Kings and Clans: Ijwi Island and the Lake Kivu Rift, 1780-1840* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Benjamin Ray, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship in Buganda* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1991); Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also, Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

[14] Vansina, *Paths*, 33.

[15] For method see David L. Schoenbrun, "Treating an Interdisciplinary Allergy: Methodological Approaches to Pollen Studies for the Historian of Early Africa," *History in Africa* 18 (1991), 323-48; for data see 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.

[16] David Taylor and Rob Marchant, "Human Impact in the Interlacustrine Region: Long-Term Pollen Records from the Rukiga Highlands," *Azania* 29/30 (1994/1995), 283-95.

[17] See James D. Paterson, "The Ecology and History of Uganda's Budongo Forest," *Forest and Conservation History* 35 (1991), 179-87; Alan C. Hamilton, "The Vegetation of South-West Kigezi," *Uganda Journal* 33 (1969), 175-99.

[18] Alan C. Hamilton, *Environmental History of East Africa* (London: Academic Press, 1982), 182-83.

[19] Schoenbrun, "Treating an Interdisciplinary Allergy," 328; Taylor and Marchant, "Human Impact," passim.

[20] See Ralph Herring, "Hydrology and Chronology: The Rodah Nilometer as an Aid in Dating Interlacustrine History," in *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa,* ed. J. Bertin Webster (New York: Africana Publishers, 1979), 40-42; David Henige, "Review of J. Bertin Webster (ed.) *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa*," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14, 2 (1981), 359-63.

[21] For more detailed coverage of archaeological materials from the Great Lakes region, consult the following journals: *Nyame Akuma, Nsi, Azania, The African Archaeological Review, Journal of African History*, and occasionally *Uganda Journal, Tanganyika Notes and Records, and Tanzania Zamani.*

[22] Marie-Claude van Grunderbeek, Hugues Doutrelepont and Emile Roche, *Le premier âge du fer au Rwanda et au Burundi. Archéologie et environnement* (Brussels: I.F.A.Q., 1983); Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology*, passim.

[23] S. Terry Childs, "Style, Technology, and Iron Smelting Furnaces in Bantu-speaking Africa," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 10 (1991), 332-59; Kearsley A. Stewart, "Iron Age Ceramic Studies of Great Lakes Eastern Africa: A Critical and Historiographical Review," *African Archaeological Review* 11 (1993), 21-37; Nicholas David, Kodzo Gavua, and Judith Sterner, "Why Pots Are Decorated," *Current Anthropology* 29 (1988), 365-79; Linda Donley-Reid, "Life in the Swahili Town House Reveals the Symbolic Meaning of Spaces and Artefact Assemblages," *African Archaeological Review* 5 (1987), 181-92.

[24] I use the terms as chronological markers for the following rough periods: 800 B.C. to A.D. 800 (Early Iron Age), A.D. 800 to nineteenth century (Later Iron Age). I do not intend them to represent technological-economic complexes.

[25] Peter T. Robertshaw, "Gogo Falls: Excavations at a Complex Archaeological Site East of Lake Victoria," *Azania* 26 (1991), 114-19, 156-63.

[26] M. Rachel MacLean, "Late Stone Age and Early Iron Age Settlement in the Interlacustrine Region: A District Case Study," *Azania* 29/30 (1994/1995), 297; D.A.M. Reid and K. Njau, "Archaeological Research in Karagwe District," *Nyame Akuma* 41 (1994), 68-73; D.A.M. Reid, "Social Organisation and Settlement in the Interlacustrine Region," *Azania* 29/30 (1994/1995), 307.

[27] MacLean, "Late Stone Age," 299; Susannah Chapman, "Kantsyore Island," *Azania* 2 (1967), 165-91, especially 173-77; Susannah Pearce and Merrick Posnansky, "The Re-Excavation of Nsongezi Rock-Shelter," *Uganda Journal* 27 (1963), 85-94, especially 87-89; Robertshaw, "Gogo Falls," 114-19, 156-63; Peter T. Robertshaw, David Collett, Diane Gifford, Nubi B. Mbae, "Shell Middens on the Shores of Lake Victoria," *Azania* 18 (1983), 1-43, especially 34-35; Robert Soper and Bruce Golden, "An Archaeological Survey of Mwanza Region, Tanzania," *Azania* 4 (1969), 15-79, especially 40-41.

[28] MacLean, "Late Stone Age," 297; see also Reid "Social Organisation," 307-9.

[29] MacLean, "Late Stone Age," 299.

[30] Reid, "Social Organisation," 307; Merrick Posnansky, "The Iron Age in East and Central Africa," *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 16 (1961), 134-36.

[31] Reid, "Social Organisation," 307-8; Van Grunderbeek et al., *Le premier age*, passim.

[32] Robertshaw, "Gogo Falls," 168-70.

[33] Peter R. Schmidt, "Historical Ecology and Landscape Transformation in Eastern Equatorial Africa," in *Historical Ecology,* ed. Carole Crumley (Albuquerque: School of American Research Press, 1994), 106-8.

[34] John E. G. Sutton, "The Antecedents of the Interlacustrine Kingdoms," *Journal of African History* 34, 1 (1993), 60-63. For details, see D.A.M. Reid, "The Role of Cattle in the Later Iron Age Communities of Southern Uganda," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1991); Peter T. Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey, Ceramic Analysis, and State Formation in Western Uganda," *African Archaeological Review* 12 (1994), 125ff.; and Francis Van Noten et al., *Le histoire archéologique du Rwanda* (Butare: Institut national de recherche scientifique, 1983), passim.

[35] Reid, "The Role," 157; Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 115-16.

[36] David L. Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds and Banana Gardens: The Historical Geography of the Western Great Lakes Region, *ca.* A.D. 800 to A.D. 1500," *African Archaeological Review* 11 (1993), 43-45.

[37] A more detailed history of shifting settlement in Buhaya has been proposed by Peter Schmidt, *Iron Technology in East Africa: Symbolism, Science, and Archaeology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 268-73.

[38] Reid, "Role of Cattle," passim; Peter T. Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping Power in Bunyoro-Kitara, Uganda," in *Pathways to Complexity: An African Perspective,* ed. Susan Keech McIntosh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), in press; M. Rachel MacLean, "The Social Impact of the Beginnings of Iron Technology in the Western Lake Victoria Basin: A District Case Study" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1996).

[39] Schmidt, "Historical Ecology," 99-125.

[40] Vansina, *Paths*, 10.

[41] Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 30-31.

[42] For sources see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, 19-29, 265-313.

[43] For generally favorable views on this vexing question see Morris Swadesh, "Towards Greater Accuracy in Lexicostatistical Dating," *International Journal of American Linguistics* 21 (1955), 121-37; Anttila, *Historical and Comparative Linguistics*, 396-98; and Christopher Ehret, "Language change and the material correlates of language and ethnic shift," *Antiquity*, 62 (1988), 566-69. For unfavorable views see Theodora Bynon, *Historical Linguistics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 266-72; and Henrik Birnbaum, *Linguistic Reconstruction, Its Potential and Limitations in New Perspective* (Washington, 1978), 17. I use Christopher Ehret's calibration rate of 73-74 percent per thousand years.

[44] All such "replacements" are innovations and represent natural processes of language change that occur in both literate and nonliterate contexts. See Ehret, "Language Change," 564-66; Vansina, *Paths*, 9-16.

[45] Edward Sapir, "Time perspective in aboriginal American culture: a study in method," in *Edward Sapir: Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality,* ed. David G. Mandelbaum (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 410-25.

[46] See Robert L. Cooper (ed.), *Language Spread: Studies in Diffusion and Social Change* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), especially 5-62.

[47] Derek Nurse and Thomas. J. Hinnebusch, *Swahili and Sabaki: A linguistic history.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 37-38.

[48] Movement around the lake was facilitated by canoes. See Christopher Ehret, "Linguistic Inferences about Early Bantu History," in *The Archaeological and Linguistic Reconstruction of African History,* ed. Christopher Ehret and Merrick Posnansky (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 59-61; Vansina, *Paths*, 55-56.

[49] See discussion in David L. Schoenbrun, "Great Lakes Bantu: Classification and Settlement Chronology," *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 14 (1994), 103-17.

[50] Technical discussions may be found in Anttila, *Historical and Comparative Linguistics*, passim.

[51] Jan Vansina, "New Linguistic Evidence and 'The Bantu Expansion,'" *Journal of African History* 36, 2 (1995), 173-95. For the historiography of Bantu linguistics see Jan Vansina, "Bantu in the Crystal Ball," *History in Africa* 6 (1979), 287-333; 7 (1980), 293-325.

[52] Vansina, *Paths*, 49.

[53] Ehret, *Classical Age*, 31-34.

[54] This scenario rests on the following sources: Ehret, "Linguistic Inferences," 57-73; Ehret, *Classical Age*, 31-37; Vansina, "New Linguistic Evidence," passim; Jan Vansina, "A Slow Revolution: Farming in Subequatorial Africa," *Azania* 29/30 (1994/1995), 15-

26; David Collett, "Models of the Spread of the Early Iron Age," in *The Archaeological and Linguistic Reconstruction of African History*, ed. Christopher Ehret and Merrick Posnansky (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 182-98; see also Kairn A. Klieman, "Hunters and Farmers of the Western Equatorial Rainforest: Economy and Society, 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1880," (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1996), Ch. 2 and 3.

[55] Vansina, *Paths*, 47-49; Klieman, "Hunters and Farmers," Ch. 4; Ehret, *Classical Age*, Ch. 2.

[56] For a summary, see Ehret, *Classical Age*, 42-96.

[57] But see Ehret, *Classical Age*, 106-12; Vansina, *Paths*, 106-7.

[58] Very few dates from sites bearing Urewe ware and/or metallurgy are later than A.D. 800. See Bernard Clist, "A Critical Reappraisal of the Chronological Framework of the Early Urewe Iron Age Industry," *Muntu* 6 (1987), 35-62, especially 55.

[59] Christiane Desmedt, "Poteries anciennes décorées à la roulette dans la région des Grands Lacs," *African Archaeological Review* 9 (1991), 161-96.

[60] With a notable gap between ca. A.D. 900 and A.D. 1100; see Desmedt, "Poteries anciennes," 170, 171, 176-78.

[61] Radiocarbon dates for the period between 800 B.C. and A.D. 200 must be recalibrated to correct for fluctuations in the amount of atmospheric carbon 13. See M. Stuiver and G. W. Pearson, "High-precision calibration of the radiocarbon time scale, A.D. 1950-500 B.C.," *Radiocarbon* 28, 2B (1986), 805-38.

[62] Mary A. McMaster, "Patterns of Interaction: A comparative ethnolinguistic perspective on the Uele region of Zaire ca. 500 B.C. to 1900 A.D.," (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1988), passim; Ingrid Herbich, "Learning Patterns, Potter Interaction and Ceramic Style among the Luo of Kenya," *African Archaeological Review* 5 (1987), 195ff; Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 31; Wanahoza fisherwomen (from the Malagarasi swamplands southeast of Buha) make house pots for farming families who live some 10 to 15 miles away. See C. Macquarie, "Water Gipsies of the Malagarasi," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 9 (1940), 66.

[63] Most notably those of Thomas N. Huffman, *Iron Age Migrations and the Ceramic Sequence in Southern Zambia: Excavations at Gundu and Ndonde*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1989), 5-9.

[64] Vansina, "New Linguistic Evidence," 194 n. 32; Herbich, "Learning Patterns," 195-96.

[65] McMaster, "Patterns of Interaction," 87-89.

[66] In a fashion similar to the Okiek in Kenya (for which see Corinne A. Kratz, *Affecting Performance* [Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1994]), *batwá* played important roles as "outsiders" in the ritual and oral historiographic life of Western Lakes societies. See J-B. Cuypers, "Les relations sociales et les attitudes entre Shi (Bantu) et Rhwa (Pygmées) à l'Ouest du lac Kivu," *Proceedings of the East African Institute of Social Research Conference, January 1964* (Kampala: Makerere College, 1964), 4ff.; P. Colle, "L'organisation politique des Bashi," *Congo* 2, 2 (1921), 672ff.; P. Pagès, *Au Ruanda sur les Bords du Lac Kivu (Congo Belge): Un Royaume Hamite au Centre de l'Afrique* (Brussels: Institut royal colonial belge, 1933), 29-30; Marcel d'Hertefelt and André Coupez, *La Royauté Sacrée de l'Ancien Rwanda* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1964), 224-79, especially 238-39, 270-71; Daniel Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief: Epic Literature from the Banyanga, Zaire Republic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 6-7, 10-11, 285, 300; P. F. Géraud, "Historical Notes of the Bakiga from Uganda (Ndorwa-Rubanda-Rukiga), Pre-Colonial Period," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Etnologico già Lateranensi* 34/36 (1970-1972), 335-36.

[67] See David L. Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat: Ancient Agriculture Between the Great Lakes," *Journal of African History* 34, 1 (1993), 29-31. I did not pursue possible loanwords from any Khoisan languages that may have been spoken between the Great Lakes.

[68] See Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds and Banana Gardens," 45-50, 63-67.

[69] Vansina, *Paths*, 15-20.

[70] Vansina, *Paths*, 17-31.

[71] Vansina, *Paths*, 28-29.

[72] David William Cohen. *Toward a Reconstructed Past: Historical Texts from Busoga, Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 6ff.

[73] Y. K. Lubogo. *A History of Busoga* (Jinja: Cyclostyled, 1960).

[74] See Cohen, *Toward*, 1-20 and David L. Schoenbrun, "A Past Whose Time Has Come: Historical Context and History in Eastern Africa's Great Lakes Region," *History and Theory* 32, 4 (1993), 38.

[75] Hans Cory and Mary M. Hartnoll, *Customary Law of the Haya Tribe* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1958); Hans Cory, "A Few Notes About the General Introduction of Brideprice in BuKwaya," (Bukoba, 1945, typescript); B. A. Rwezaura, "Indigenous Responses to the Imposition of Colonial Law: The Case of the Kuria People of Tanzania," *The African Review* 15 (1988), 77-88.

[76] See Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legay of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 49-52, 109-68.

[77] David S. Newbury, "Bushi and the Historians: Historiographical Themes in Eastern Kivu," *History in Africa* 5 (1978), 131-51, especially 140, 149 n. 26, and *Kings and Clans*, 227-35.

[78] Ray, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, 30ff.

[79] John Roscoe, *The Baganda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), xii.

[80] Vansina, *Paths*, 11.

[81] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 129ff.

[82] Sandra T. Barnes, "The Many Faces of Ogun," in *Africa's Ogun*, ed. Sandra T. Barnes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 12-16.

[83] See Jan Vansina, "The Use of Process-models in African History," in *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, ed. Jan Vansina, Raymond Mauny, and L.V. Thomas (London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1964), 375-89.

PART II

THE ANCIENT CULTURAL WORLD BETWEEN THE GREAT LAKES

2

THE ROOTS OF AGRICULTURAL ABUNDANCE: 1000 B.C. TO A.D. 1500

The wealth of natural resources between the Great Lakes supported an enormous array of food systems. This chapter will discuss the available evidence for the history of the productive side of the Great Lakes Bantu ancestral tradition. These stories help to explain the dynamics of the expansion of Bantu speech outlined in Chapter 1. They bring together the mutually interacting forces of environmental change, peoples' food systems, and their technology.

As the agents of a Bantu-speaking agricultural synthesis of the specialties of different agricultural communities in the Later Stone Age and Early Iron Ages, farmers and herders defined the contours of practical consciousness in early Lakes history. Around their homesteads they combined in new ways the fruits of several millennia of experimentation and innovation with root crops, cereals, livestock, and metallurgy which, together with their considerable (and ancient) expertise in fishing, hunting, and food collecting, meant that earlier agronomic boundaries could be breached after about 500 B.C. A period of consolidation accompanied these agricultural developments: an era of thicker local settlement witnessed the first sustained ônslaught on Lakes forest and savannah environments. By late in the first millennium A.D. some Lakes societies had set out on new paths of agricultural specialization. Some farmed bananas intensively while others kept cattle in large herds. Throughout the course of these agricultural histories Lakes people added to their stores of practical knowledge about how to win a livelihood; they transformed environmental and social conflict into opportunities to expand the territories in which Great Lakes Bantu languages were spoken.

THE FORAGING BEDROCK

Great Lakes forests once had a direct link with the ancient rainforests in

places for people: first for fishing, foraging and hunting, with little discernible effect on the overall health and extent of Great Lakes forests until early in the last millennium B.C. Then, with the advent of food production and ironworking—though not at the same time—people altered the boundaries between wild and domesticated environments. These boundaries buffered successful farming and herding communities from the threats posed by wild animals and disease to their croplands and domestic stock. The differences between wild, untamed environments and domesticated ones became fundamental divides between safety and danger;[1] they offered rich creative ground for innovating new powers and responsibilities for political and religious leaders. These innovations will be introduced in Chapter 3 and drawn out further in Chapters 4 through 6. It is vital, now, to understand how Lakes peoples constructed their domesticated environments out of the wilderness.

The oldest sources of food between the Great Lakes surely lay in its streams, rivers, forests, and savannahs. Fishing, hunting, and gathering combined to sustain the earliest communities in the region. Though food production displaced these practices as centers of social life, the older ways continued to furnish vital nutrition to Lakes families and offered relief in times of agricultural shortage. Thus, the history of fishing, hunting, and foraging shades through virtually the entire story told here. It is a dynamic history, involving ecological, technical, and social dimensions.

The forest and savannah ecologies of these different food sources shaped the distribution of settlement between the Lakes. The relationship between rainfall, soils, plants, and animals determined the availability of larger animals to hunters and trappers and determined the relative nutritional value of edible plants and fruits. These relationships patterned the history of hunting and gathering between the Great Lakes. Their history was not just a shapeless mass of peoples' comings and goings, helpless before the vagaries of the environment.[2]

The richest hunting grounds for the larger game animals—the areas where they would have been most numerous—were not the same territories where gatherers could have expected to find the greatest diversity of edible plants.[3] In areas where rains fall regularly throughout the year, poorer soils support richer edible plant life and richer soils support a healthier population of grazing animals. Grasslands grow especially well on nutrient-rich volcanic soils and woody vegetation grows especially well on nutrient-poor, acidic soils.[4] Because grazing animals can convert the biomass of grasslands most easily, large herds seek out and intensively graze natural grasslands. This intensive grazing means that grassland ecosystems never have the opportunity to develop a woodland component; most of a grassland ecosystem's biomass exists in the bodies of the animals who graze it. Hunters of these animals will naturally seek out their prey in these grassland areas.

Gatherers will find their richest stores of concentrated plant foods in regions with low rainfall and low soil fertility because plants in those regions

need to store water and nutrients in order to survive the dry season.[5] Where conditions are favorable, where rainfall is regular and soil fertility is high, edible plant foods will be rarer. An inverse relationship between available edible plant foods and animal resources thus appears to exist in areas that enjoy fairly regular rainfall throughout the year, like much of the Lakes region.

In the forests, the ecological equation produced different results. The moist forests provided a truly vast store of potential products. If one were to think of an ecosystem as a puzzle and of each form of life as a piece, then rainforests contain the largest number of pieces that fit together in the most intricate manner. A smaller number of pieces comprises other ecosystems (such as savannah woodland) and because the pieces are fewer in number, they are each larger and better able to withstand exploitation than the numerous tiny parts of a rainforest.

Forests were larders where communities could trap animals, collect medicines, produce lumber, and find fiber for clothing from sources like the barkcloth-bearing *Ficus* trees. Abundant leaves rich in vitamins, fruits and berries rich in fats and vitamins, and insects rich in protein provided gatherer-hunter societies a very healthy diet indeed. But the fragile balance between pieces of the rainforest puzzle meant that these resources had to be managed with care to avoid upsetting too violently the dynamic equilibrium—the precise fit between many tiny pieces—that is a mature moist forest environment. It follows from this that forest-based communities would have been correspondingly smaller in size than those who dwelt at the ecotones between savannah, forest and river, where the edible animal and plant parts of the puzzle were hardier.[6]

Fishing was restricted to those homesteads established near streams and rivers, so these fisherfolk would have formed a veined pattern of settlement. Together with the distributions of forests and grasslands rich in animals (with their carefully balanced food sources), the foraging bedrock of the Lakes past ran deep (Map 1.3.a).

Techniques for fishing and hunting and words for collected plants tell a complicated story of the development of regional specializations by Lakes Bantu groups in the early eras of their settlement between the Lakes. Differences in the tools used to hunt and catch fish and differences in the types of gathered plant foods reflect regional settlement preferences for different Lakes Bantu speaking communities. Even after food production emerged around 1000 B.C., these preferences exerted a strong influence on the cultural identity of Lakes communities. The great importance of food collection and fishing shaped Lakes Bantu communities' relation to their physical world and partly shaped their views of themselves as, say, eaters of fish in contrast with Tale Southern Cushitic groups who may well have practiced their famous fish avoidance.[7]

In forests, hunters hung nets and dug pits to trap animals as they followed established trails. These techniques predated Great Lakes Bantu, having arisen during the earliest periods of Bantu history.[8] Sudanic and Sahelian societies, and autochthonous groups now called *batúá* (149) by Lakes Bantu societies, probably also hunted in this way. As occupational specialists in forest hunting and, later, in potting, groups of *batúá* may well have first introduced to Sudanic and Mashariki Bantu societies the specific challenges of hunting in the forests of the greater Kivu Rift Valley.[9]

People fished with nets, fences, and lines.[10] Large nets could bring in the sometimes huge fish to be had in Lakes Tanganyika, Mwitanzige, and Victoria. The fish fences easily trapped smaller and medium sized fish as schools moved along the shoreline or as waves washed them behind the reed barriers. Angling with hook and line or with basket traps trailed behind canoes in wide rivers or on lakes were ancient parts of Bantu fishing practice. It seems probable that some of the hook and line tackle was quite heavy and could bring in rather large fish.[11] Along smaller streams and in the shallows of lakes, fish could be taken by harpoon and by building dams. Throughout the region, a special poison from the *iruku* tree (*Tephrosia vogeli*), could be applied to the water to stun the fish and force them to the surface, where people could easily collect them in baskets.

These regional and technical specializations provided stimuli for trade between communities with access to one or the other source of food. Fishing communities would have been able to trade dried fish to hunting specialists for their hides, sinew, and meat. Collected and processed rareities, like salt or barkcloth could bring valuable returns in animal or fish products. Such intercourse between specialists and the regions they lived in almost certainly led to a diversification of fishing and foraging expertise as the fruits of cooperation and competition spread. The loanwords from Tale Southern Cushitic found in Lakes Bantu for the animals of the savannah bear witness to a part of this process.[12] The fact that virtually all of the terms for hunting and fishing technology used by Lakes Bantu societies were internally generated confirms that these were ancient sorts of practical knowledge, a knowledge put into action by the capable hands of ancient Lakes men and women who exploited the rich fish, plant, and animal resources in a world that must have seemed new to them as they learned about it.

THE COMING OF AGRICULTURE[13]

For all who lived in it, this world changed dramatically with the development and spread of agricultural techniques. These ways of winning a livelihood altered the natural environment as communities no longer just managed their environments for a collected subsistence. Although their management practices—including the use of fire in hunting—induced important

environmental changes, these communities increasingly sought to bring forth from the land a greater and greater return on a greater and greater investment of labor. The story of the coming of agriculture is important because, even though initially it seems to have continued the long period of environmentally specific regional specializations and settlement patterns, it eventually led to their disappearance.

The development of diverse food systems preceded the emergence of the Early Iron Age but it flowered during the roughly thousand years after its inception around 500 B.C. The cultural context matched the diversity of this florescence. People speaking several different languages herded cattle, sowed grains, planted root crops, fished and hunted all across the area (see Chapter 1). But the first food producers settled in the western parts of the region well before 3000 years ago. Differences in the ideal rainfall and types of soils best suited to their food systems produced a patchwork pattern of settlement. Mixed-farming Sog Eastern Sahelian peoples and the largely pastoral Tale Southern Cushites settled side by side between the Lake Victoria littoral and the Kivu Rift highlands (Map 1.4.a). The mainly root-cropping and fishing Mashariki Bantu and the cereal and stock raising Central Sudanic peoples settled amidst each other. The Bantu speakers apparently lived in areas where they could expect to receive the luxurious amounts of moisture and the warm temperatures that their crop complex required. These farmers may have been partly responsible for the earliest constrictions of forests in the western Lakes region. Their tools may have been made of stone and wood, but iron before 500 B.C. cannot be ruled out.[14]

The environmental specificity of this settlement pattern led to long-standing contacts between the various agricultural traditions. Agricultural practices also shaped and responded to environmental changes such as receding forest cover and shrinking rainfall amounts. The Mashariki Bantu took up cereal farming and one of their descendant groups, the Great Lakes Bantu, later developed cattleraising in order to expand their settlement options and to increase the productivity of their food systems. They probably learned about the new food ways through intermarriage, cooperative hunting parties, and trading in the products unique to each environmental region and historical tradition. For example, Mashariki Bantu peoples may have exchanged dried fish and yam flour for sheep or cattle from the Sudanic communities.[15] Or, later, Tale Southern Cushites may have given bulls to Great Lakes Bantu peoples in return for iron implements.

The Great Lakes Bantu Synthesis

By 500 B.C., people who were probably multilingual, but who increasingly spoke Great Lakes Bantu as a first language, rose to prominence in the context of diverse food production practices. The boundaries enclosing language, food system, and settlement location had begun to break down. The cumulative agricultural expertise, a result of centuries of cultural interaction

(and contained in modern Lakes Bantu vocabularies) was a prerequisite for the ascendancy of Bantu speech. Some Great Lakes Bantu societies exploited the cattle keeping and grain producing parts of their food systems in order to expand into the drier zones of the region. The exploitation of secondary cattle products—various forms of milk and blood—indicates how far cattle had been integrated into Great Lakes food systems after 500 B.C. In response to environmental changes they themselves had induced—partly through their metallurgical and agricultural abilities—this expansion ultimately assimilated Cushitic, Sahelian, and Sudanic society, though that process did not draw to a close until after A.D. 1000.

The five to seven hundred years after 500 B.C. marked the height of the Early Iron Age, during which Great Lakes Bantu communities developed their economic power and left a lasting impression on the landscape. Farmers and herders made demands on land, labor, and technical expertise as they undertook the agricultural developments charted here. Though food, environment, and technology were closely linked, changes in land, labor, and technical expertise more appropriately characterize a period in the African past too often described only by technology. The Early Iron Age in the Lakes region was as much an age of cultural contact and economic development as it was a period of metallurgical advance.

In the twilight of the Early Iron Age, between A.D. 300 and A.D. 800, Western Lakes and West Nyanza Bantu farmers and herders elaborated on the achievements of their Great Lakes Bantu predecessors. Long-standing farming practices and the accumulated environmental impact of iron production increased erosion, reduced soil fertility, and thus may have made quality lands relatively scarce during the end of the Early Iron Age. In response to this, Western Lakes and West Nyanza farmers may have shortened their fallows on existing, healthy fields to provide more regional trade items or to offset pressures from the probably robust demographic expansion that accompanied the break down of the old agroecological boundaries. Some West Nyanza and Western Lakes farmers experimented with bananas and some West Nyanza peoples refined their pastoral social values.[16] Indeed, in this period (A.D. 300-800) some of the basic attributes of modern Lakes regional identities began to form: densely sedentary lakeshore and riverine root-cropping and fishing societies interlinked with more mobile and more pastoral societies. These identities, and the highly productive, broad-based food systems constituted two vital arenas for the historical struggles in the era of political and social change after A.D. 800.

Iron and Agriculture: Western Lakes and West Nyanza Societies

The storied debate about whether metallurgical skills—especially skill in the smelting of iron—came to Africans from beyond the continent's boundaries or were their indigenous technical innovations, too often leaves

unexamined a rather more interesting set of questions. Namely, what did African communities with smelters and smiths do with metals? A famous consideration of the impact of iron in African history holds that the possession of iron tools and weapons gave to the most ancient Bantu-speaking communities an insurmountable edge over neighbors who had no iron, specifically in the activities of making war, farming, and clearing land.[17] In this view, the possession of iron by Bantu speakers fairly impelled their diaspora across the southern half of Africa.[18] More recent work has unpacked what had become the "Early Iron Age Package."[19] Not only did comparative Bantu linguistics fail to produce a Proto Bantu vocabulary for ironworking, but it now seems likely on linguistic grounds that early Bantu speakers learned about ironworking from NiloSaharan speakers.[20] Moreover, unequivocal, carefully dated archaeological evidence for iron before 500 B.C. from the general region where Proto Bantu is believed to have been spoken continues to elude the best efforts of excavators in western Cameroon and eastern Nigeria.[21] The earliest sites are west and far to the east of there. Ironworking, as an agent of environmental change, population movement and social stratification has been returned to the role of participant (rather than unambiguous leader) in the wider world of early African social and agricultural history.[22]

Though iron no longer may be offered as a prime mover of ancient social and environmental change, its importance to local ecologies, and to social and ritual life deserves careful study.[23] Iron creates meaning when smiths beat a hoe blade into shape. Iron expresses power when a leader is buried with knife and axeheads by his side. Iron tells the story of the life cycle and assigns gender to social relations and divisions of labor when a smelter likens the smelting process to that of birth, as he makes the furnace into a fertile woman, and (in many instances) as he seeks to keep women capable of bearing children away from the site where he transforms iron ores into his "offspring," iron bloom. But not all smelters followed exactly the same technological processes; a great diversity of ironworking techniques in Africa awaits detailed comparative study.[24]

Archaeologists working in Buhaya, Rwanda, and Burundi, have unearthed evidence for early iron production dated to the same centuries as the dissolution of the Proto Great Lakes Bantu speech community, around 500 B.C.[25] This evidence implies the production of agricultural surplus to support both the seasonal work of smelters and the more regular, year-round work of the smiths. Work in Buhaya[26] has revealed that a farming sector sufficiently robust to create the demand for iron used in hoe blades very likely existed during the turn of the era.

The growth of eclectic food systems throughout the Lakes region may have promoted, if not induced, the development of the advanced iron technology of the time by Bantu speakers. The demand for iron tools in new fields stimulated smelters and smiths to keep their furnaces burning. Clear-

ance and maintenance were practiced on a widening variety of fields,[27] a diversity that may have been created by farmers who used the iron implements which were developed in the Great Lakes Bantu era, during the last centuries B.C. Western Lakes communities inherited three ancient nouns for iron tools, "iron hoe" (76), "worn-out iron hoe blade" (77), and "small iron blade for digging."[28]

In the rainy seasons, the heavier soils in the new fields planted with sorghum were prone to waterlogging. They could have been turned and planted much more easily with iron implements than with wooden digging sticks. After harvesting, these fields might have become available to livestock for stubble grazing, a development perhaps indirectly reflected in the pollen record from Kigezi.[29] Planting in different soils, the environmental degradation associated with industrial iron production (for example, in Buhaya[30]), and the growing requirements in Western Lakes and West Nyanza villages for more and varied foods, drove these communities to settle new and environmentally different parts of the Lakes world.

In Western Lakes homesteads food crops were more important than livestock. As farmers, they found the rich soils and regular rains of the Kivu Rift Valley a felicitous combination: they seem not to have added significantly to the cattle keeping knowledge they had learned from their Central Sudanic and Tale Southern Cushitic neighbors. Still, Western Lakes societies developed new uses for their familiar domestic animals focused largely on small stock and milk production.[31] Thus, even though a set of diverse livestock-raising opportunities existed for farmers during the period between the end of the last millennium B.C. and A.D. 500, Western Lakes homesteads prospered on a predominantly arable base until early in the second millennium A.D. A second advance in the scale and importance of livestock began toward the end of the first millennium A.D., on the hills around the homesteads of farmers speaking Kivu languages. This development echoed one undertaken earlier and to the east of the Rift edge, in the pastures of West Nyanza farmers.

West Nyanza Agriculture: Farming and Herding

In the districts just to the west of Lake Victoria (Map 1.4.b), during the several centuries around A.D. 500, contact with neighboring farmers and innovations in their own fields marked the West Nyanza development of a highly diversified farming base. New nouns for "legume" and "unripe legume" and for "stiff millet porridge" point to ongoing innovations in the fields. West Nyanza farmers may have begun to intercrop beans with cereals and root crops to exploit the nitrogen fixing qualities that legumes possess, which make them so valuable for maintaining soil fertility. Beyond their value to healthy soils, legumes, such as cowpeas (*Vigna* sp.), gave West Nyanzan families a valuable protein source to supplement their already rich cuisine. West Nyanza farmers also continued to learn about raising and processing cereals from their Eastern Sahelian neighbors. Perhaps the new noun for "annually cultivated field" or "garden" embodied new practices such as planting cereals and tubers on a small scale, or a type of intercropping or crop rotation unfamiliar to West Nyanza farmers. This loanword notwithstanding, people derived the bulk of their innovations in West Nyanza farming vocabulary from Bantu roots.[32]

The extremely flexible range of soils in which cowpeas and Sorghum could thrive furnished West Nyanza farmers with great choice in laying out fields, whether intercropped or monocropped. Sorghum, which does well in heavier soils, may have been planted in purer stands in the bottomlands where iron hoes were used to break and turn the soil, while wooden digging sticks, certainly less expensive than iron hoes and produced at the homestead, would have been quite sufficient for preparing and maintaining intercropped fields of beans, tubers, and (in certain rotations) some *eleusine*. The Great Lakes Bantu innovations for iron tools divulge the value of iron implements to farmers and suggest that they recycled their tools. And a new noun for "wooden digging stick" (84), in West Nyanza, attests to its continued importance. The language evidence may well be our only source of information on the use of wooden implements and the raising of root and runner crops. However, we must remember that fishing, gathering, and hunting remained integral parts of food systems in the West Nyanza area and more widely throughout the Great Lakes region.

West Nyanzans developed their knowledge of cattle breeding largely on their own. Only a single loan in their language, a generic term for "cattle," suggests that they continued to see Sog Eastern Sahelian societies as sources of pastoralist expertise.[33] Though this item reveals an open attitude toward cattle in West Nyanza society, the rest of their pastoral practice recoverable by comparative linguistics diagnoses its internal elaboration.

In the West Nyanza speaking societies that lived by Lake Victoria, the cow played a socially important role. West Nyanzans innovated a new meaning for **-gànà* (45), "large herd of cattle." This implies that they needed to discriminate among different size herds around their homesteads and it suggests that cattle began to form important reservoirs of wealth. At least some homesteads could assemble large herds. Alternatively, some West Nyanza herders might have noticed the large herds of the adjacent Tale Southern Cushites or Sog Eastern Sahelians and distinguished them from their own small numbers of animals. Since they already had a perfectly good word for indicating a large number, they assigned to *-gànà* the meaning "large herd" in addition to "one hundred." The West Nyanzans also made the noun **musumba*, "young man" mean "young herder" indicating that in some of their pastures young men managed the herds. The fact that the term's wider

semantic field in Mashariki Bantu includes a (junior) male designation of some sort lends strong support to the view that cattle began to emerge as markers of stratification within and between West Nyanza homesteads, by A.D. 500.

These few words suggest that West Nyanzans understood age- and gender-specific divisions of labor in the care of domestic animals. Taken together with innovations in West Nyanza farming already discussed and added to the large body of knowledge inherited from Great Lakes times, the full West Nyanza complement of vocabulary for crops, tools, field types, domestic animals, their breeding and their secondary products strongly suggests a division of labor tied to the intensification of arable and pastoral food production.

Even though Western Lakes peoples focused clearly on farming rather than on herding, both they and West Nyanza communities grazed and bred cattle more than two thousand years ago. They milked them as well. The new terms for "fresh milk," innovated in both communities, support this conclusion. It seems that after the initial contact between Great Lakes farmers and their more pastoral Sudanic-, Sahelian-, and Cushitic-speaking neighbors, livestock rose to importance earlier in West Nyanza pastures than they did around Western Lakes homesteads. In the case of West Nyanza, pastoralism was largely internally developed and we can see in the linguistic evidence the beginnings of new divisions of labor that hint at correspondingly different categories of social identity as cattle came to signify family wealth.

Emerging Regional Identities

Root crops, grain crops, and a familiarity with cattle breeding practices provided Western Lakes and West Nyanza speakers with the economic tools to confront a series of vegetation changes initiated by their ancestors before the turn of the last millennium B.C. This same agricultural adaptation, elaborated and firmly implanted along the western littoral of Lake Victoria and in the Kivu Rift Valley, rather quickly differentiated into lowland herders and farmers (West Nyanza speakers) and Western Lakes-speaking highland farmers and herders. Bananas and specialized herding practices changed all this between 900 and 1100.

Cattle[34]

The casual visitor to almost any part of the Lakes region cannot help but notice the tremendous variety of cattle breeds grazing where sweet pasture can be found. Though some of these breeds arrived within the last century, Lakes communities have had a long and varied relationship with cattle. One of the most striking sorts of cattle is the long-horned and often very large "Sanga" breed.[35] One specialist believes the Sanga is a cross between the

ancient, humpless *Bos taurus* and the humped *Bos indicus*.[36] But others have called this view into question. Though archaeologists agree that these old breeds originated in North Africa and the Indian subcontinent, respectively, it now seems likely that the Sanga breed, sometimes called *Bos africanus*, is of very ancient African origin. Another scholar, Caroline Grigson, who studies the fossil bones of domestic animals like cattle, thinks that the Sanga used to be the main type of cattle across the entire continent, with regional variations resulting from "local isolation, local selection and hybridization with imported cattle."[37]

Whatever the final word may be on the origins of African cattle, their integration into Lakes food systems invited a host of new challenges and new opportunities. The challenges lay in the control of cattle pests and the threat they posed to the health of cattle. The opportunities lay in successful, healthy herds as magnets for followers and as means to distribute some of the risk of famine from crop failure onto livestock. Predators like leopard, lion, and hyena, were significant dangers to stock, but the insect and wild animal vectors for the parasites that cause trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and theileriosis (East coast fever) posed the greatest challenge to herders who spoke Great Lakes Bantu. The tsetse fly (*Glossina* spp.) and the brown ear tick (*Rhipicephalus appendiculatus*) carried these dangerous diseases between their wild animal hosts and their livestock (and human) victims.

There were ways to control these threats. Herders learned that their livestock could generate a limited tolerance to East coast fever and trypanosomiasis if some of their animals had regular but limited contact with the insects that carried the dangerous parasites.[38] Wherever possible, the moist woodland that tsetse flies preferred and the tall grasses that brown ear ticks preferred were eradicated completely, reducing the risk of infection to virtually nil. The earliest Great Lakes Bantu speakers may have undertaken this. Because they relied on moisture-loving root crops and fishing, they probably cleared and settled in the lowest, wettest, riverine environments that were not prone to regular flooding. These environments were also the home of tsetse flies and the wild animals they fed on (especially Cape buffalo), which therefore carried the dangerous trypanosomiasis parasites in their blood. The record of changes in vegetation seems to confirm that this process began in the river bottoms, sites of the earliest forest clearance reflected in the pollen record.[39] Lakes people used fire to control, but not destroy, the habitat of the tsetse flies and their wild animal hosts, and this practice may have left its mark in the broad swath of parkland derived by fire, known as *Miombo* woodland, which today defines the southern boundary of the Great Lakes region.[40] Smelters and smiths searching for charcoal only hastened the removal of the worst tsetse fly habitat.

Besides controlling habitat adjacent to homesteads, Lakes peoples maintained islands of wilderness harboring tsetse fly next to or within larger zones

of permanent settlement. This probably was the rule along the shores of Lake Victoria, Lake Rweru, and at the northern reaches of Lake Tanganyika. Large zones of wilderness, where the combination of poor soils and a lack of permanent water precluded permanent settlement, or settlement of any kind, stretched from the hills of southern Bunyoro in the north, to the elbow of the Kagera, and upstream to the dry expanse of the Nikonga and Wembere rivers (Map 1.1). Great Lakes Bantu speakers called this sort of uninhabited buffer zone *-*saka* or *-*rungu* (70) and John Ford called it *Grenzwildnisse*, an important frontier where resistance to trypanosomiasis could be tested and strengthened through occasional contact between stock and tsetse flies.[41]

A similar symbiosis between stock raising, farming, and pest control developed for east coast fever, a disease transmitted by ticks. Stock grazed in pastures just beyond settlements kept the grasses short and the tick populations low there. Where moisture permitted, the short grass swards also prevented the regrowth of woody vegetation, beloved of the tsetse fly.[42]

The human ecology of cattle pests shaped new settlement patterns and offered to successful groups the opportunity to specialize further in stockraising. Farmers practicing mixed agriculture controlled the environments that carried risks of stock disease only in the areas capable of sustaining permanent settlement, areas that enjoyed regular and abundant rainfall and healthy soils. The presence of such settlements, which seem to have dotted the lands east and west of the great Kagera *Grenzwildnisse*, may have acted as magnets, drawing neighboring herders like the Tale Southern Cushites northward into what had formerly been dangerous lands. Beginning in the middle of the last millennium B.C., stock raisers in Eastern Sahelian and Central Sudanic communities might have responded to these growing opportunities by placing their animals nearer to these moist, and now, safe lands opened up by Great Lakes Bantu speakers. These networks of relations around stock, farmlands, and wilderness lay the groundwork for the development of pastoralist specializations very late in the first millennium A.D.

An already highly developed pastoral way of life accompanied the settlement (and in some places the resettlement) of the grasslands early in the second millennium A.D.[43] In southern Uganda, and in the Kagera basin, local groups developed general cattle terminologies that show a strong influence from Cushitic-, Eastern Sahelian-, and Sudanic-speaking groups. But Bantu speakers developed breeding and color taxonomies from words in their own languages. All of this took place at the same time that root crop and grain crop vocabularies were expanding. We simply cannot distinguish whether these developments were generalized or occurred in separate groups within Rutaran, West Highlands, and North Nyanzan societies. It seems likely that the knowledge was generalized but that at any given point in time there were some families who placed greater stress on cattle than on bananas, depending in part on local environmental parameters and access to labor and land.

The growth of banana farming and specialized pastoralism marked an important break in the region's history. Because cattle need access to salt and to a variety of pastures across the agricultural calendar, pastoralist groups were drawn into new relations with their surroundings and they created opportunities for wealth to flow between groups in ways quite different from the flow of wealth in more sedentary, mixed farming societies and in intensive banana-farming societies. Homesteads investing labor in land—in highly productive perennially cropped banana plantations—were tied to that land while herders who invested labor in their animals could direct flows of wealth through the transfer of stock to others. The history of these specializations is at once the story of emerging technical expertise and the story of how social relations changed between groups or families or individuals who had unequal access to the new forms of wealth that herds and banana gardens became. The remainder of this chapter tells these stories by focusing on evidence for the mastery of cattle herds that is conveyed by the emergence of cattle color and horn shape terminologies. The gradual development of taxonomies of names for bananas also reveals something of the social history of that crop.

Handling linguistic evidence for cattle colors is fraught with difficulty. Color terminologies are dense in some Great Lakes Bantu languages like Nkore or Rwanda, and they partly conform to what may be called fads. It is therefore difficult to produce lexical reconstructions for anything more than the most routine parts of the terminologies—solid colors, spotting, and various forms of two-color combinations. These terms reveal enduring parts of a dynamic world of cultural capital. Cattle—and the herds they formed—were clearly very powerful economic engines and symbols of social relationships. Owners and would-be owners used color terminologies to identify individual animals in their herds and to give them "names." Color terminologies had both functional and symbolic uses.[44]

At 800, in the lands south of the Kagera's mouth, a Rutaran farmer's homestead would have been filled with a tremendous variety of crops and animals. The presumably thinnêr forest cover in the central part of the region, especially in the drier, hitherto unsettled areas of present-day Nkore and Karagwe, and the expertise in controlling cattle pests meant that some Rutaran farmers could begin to move away from the presumably increasingly densely populated areas near Lake Victoria. Cattle and grain would have been instrumental in carrying this out. Archaeological evidence, or rather the lack of it, implies a movement sometime after 800 into the grasslands of Nkore and probably into those of northern Karagwe as well.[45] The development of specialized herding practices is one of the hinges on which this argument swings. And linguistic evidence gives a clue as to how this may have taken place.

Rutarans innovated some nine color terms and a noun meaning "large cow with long horns" (the Ankole cattle, a long horned, humped "Sanga" breed).

Another ten new terms were developed as a result of contacts between Rutarans and their immediate neighbors, the North Nyanzans and the West Highlanders. Thus, between 1000 and 1450, herders invented not fewer than nineteen words for the colorful patterns of their animals' hides. These innovators lived in an area that covered what is today eastern Rwanda, eastern Burundi, northwestern Tanzania, and southwestern Uganda. This is a large area to be sure, but these new words reflect an astonishing explosion of pastoralist pursuit, an explosion in both the practical requirements of managing larger herds and the aesthetic values attached to animals that had become major stores of wealth.

As color taxonomies grew in complexity, herd composition also changed. The innovation of a word that referred quite unambiguously to Ankole cattle signals the presence of that striking animal in the Rutaran area between 1000 and 1200. With its varied horn shapes and sometimes massive humps, the Ankole cow was the dominant stock animal when European travelers first reached the Great Lakes region in the 1850s. After 1200, and stretching into the fifteenth century, Rutaran speakers innovated another batch of new color terms some of which they shared with their North Nyanzan neighbors and others of which they shared with their West Highlands neighbors. In the Karagwe region, people invented four new color names, while herders living in the lands of contact between North Nyanza and Rutara speakers invented three new words for stock colors, probably between 1200 and about 1450.

In the Kivu Rift Valley, the ancient Western Lakes-speaking farmers had not been interested in making cattle a centerpiece of their food systems, but two groups of their descendants integrated cattle into their lives in new ways between 800 and 1300. One group spoke Forest languages and developed the earliest known innovations that referred to horn shape in the region. They shared these terms with their West Highlands neighbors. These words, meaning "widely separated horns" and "short-horned," imply that herders there wanted to distinguish between animals bearing substantially different horn sizes. Perhaps they refer to the long-horned Ankole cow in contrast with the shorter horned *Bos taurus* or *Bos indicus*.

These innovations may herald the arrival in the area of the long-horned, humped cattle that West Highlands peoples began to call *nyambo*.[46] In the uplands east of the Kivu Rift, herders attached their numerous names for horn shapes to this species of cattle. But the name for the new animal itself was created at roughly the same time and with the same meaning, as **-gaabU*, the large and long-horned cattle of Rutaran cattle herds. Perhaps long-horned cattle entered societies that already had distinct and strong pastoral identities, whose herders innovated unique terms for the new animal and did not borrow from one another.

Color and horn classifications may be taken to reflect a relationship to pastoral practice beyond the merely functional roles that such names played

in identifying and keeping track of individual animals in large herds.[47] Such naming reflects an aesthetics of cattle that Melville Herskovits outlined in his classic study of the "Cattle Complex in East Africa."[48] The evidence presented here should not be seen as promoting a simple historicist approach to that view, which held that east African pastoralists personified their animals, but rather it should be considered as a first step toward unpacking the baggage of pastoral ideology entrenched in written and oral traditions from areas like Rwanda, Karagwe, Nkore, Buhaya, and Kitara. Instead of having a single exotic origin, pastoralism had many different centers of innovation, which built on a more general fund of pastoral knowledge innovated by the earliest groups of Bantu speakers to settle in the area, groups that had enjoyed long-term contacts with non-Bantu herders. There were correlates to the development of cattle-as-wealth in the banana gardens of Buganda and Buhaya. Pastoralist social values were not the only thing growing in Great Lakes homesteads from 500 to 1300.

Bananas

If cattle followed farming into drier parts of the Lakes region and there transformed the environment as well as social life, bananas (*Musa* spp.) had no less important an impact on the social history of the Great Lakes region. A healthy banana garden will yield ten times the produce of a yam garden.[49] Farmers need not clear all the trees on a new plot for bananas to thrive. Besides the relatively light labor requirement (compared to planting annual pulse and cereal crops), banana gardens do not collect standing water like ridged or mounded yam fields, and they thus harbor fewer malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Once cleared and planted, gardens are easy to maintain and they produce fruit for a generation, without the worries about storage so common in homesteads that depend on grains. A family that could make bananas a central part of its food system did not have to fear the loss of harvested grain to pests or the risk of hunger at the end of the long dry season.

Bananas came to Africa from southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent. They belong to three families, two of which—AAA and AAB—occur in Africa. Of the numerous cultivars in each family, the Lakes region boasts both AAB and AAA varieties. Unlike west and central Africa, where the AAB "plantains" predominate, AAA "bananas" are commonest between the Great Lakes.[50]

The genetic history of *Musa* spp. suggests two separate introductions of plantains (AAB) into the Congo basin where one, AAB Horn, lives side by side with the other, AAB French.[51] In the Congo basin, the numerous cultivars of these two types require that they have been in the practiced hands of farmers there for a very long time.[52] Even though varieties of Great Lakes bananas (AAA) are numerous, as will be seen below, they seem to have en-

tered Lakes agriculture rather later than plantains entered the food systems of Congo basin farmers.

A simple explanation for this exists. Banana farming offered to farmers in the Congo basin a revolutionary tool to pry open the wet, dense rainforests to settlement. While yams, their earliest and most important staple, would likely rot in the ground without a dry season of at least two months,[53] bananas thrived in precisely those large tracts of the Congo basin that enjoyed no dry season to speak of. Between the Great Lakes, far more eclectic farming systems had developed which spread into nearly every part of the region. Only the drier patches of *Grenzwildnisse* in the Kagera basin and the highest reaches of the western and eastern walls of the Kivu Rift Valley seem to have been beyond the reach of these early agriculturalists. Bananas offered advantages to Lakes farmers because they required less labor for clearing forests and for food processing and because the trees had long productive lives. But these advantages do not appear to have motivated Lakes families to adopt either bananas or plantains until comparatively recently, within the last millennium.

Even if bananas came later to Lakes gardens than plantains did to those in the Congo Basin, the history of bananas in the Lakes region reveals some of the key challenges facing farmers who remained in and around the ancient zones of settlement pioneered in the Early Iron Age. Bananas came to be absolutely central for shore dwellers around Lake Victoria and for homesteads in the Kivu Rift Valley. This centrality emerged dramatically as the Early Iron Age drew to a close in Western Lakes and West Nyanza communities.

The language evidence from the old Western Lakes territories shows that they were a distinct area of experimentation and innovation in banana farming. There, and in the Greater Luhyia region, expertise developed in growing and processing bananas and plantains. The wetter, solid ground by Lake Victoria was the third area where bananas played an important role in economic and social history.

The major period for the development of banana farming in the lands around what is today Buganda lay in later centuries. Ganda speakers can name some sixty banana varieties, and they can identify another thirty or forty distinct parts of the plant as well as stages in the preparation of banana beers and foods. Because of the lack of adequate comparative material from other branches of North Nyanza, (especially Gwere because it is a more remote member of the group), dating the development of intensive banana farming in the area remains elusive. It may have occurred in the tenth century, when North Nyanza became a speech community distinct from Rutara, or it may have occurred in the sixteenth century, when Ganda, Soga, and Gwere became distinct languages.

The situation is different with their neighbors to the south, the Rutarans. Around 1200 some of these farmers and herders innovated five new nouns

for bananas and two for banana gardens. One of the new varietal terms seems to have developed from the older root for the wild fruitless banana, **ntembe* (90).[54] During Rutaran times the word came to mean a species of beer banana and brought to five the number of beer banana varieties in use by Rutaran brewers, including those inherited from West Nyanza and Interlake eras.[55] But the most important development in this period lay in the nomenclature of field names. A new word for banana garden took the meaning of "chief's banana garden" in Nyoro. And the ancient Bantu root **-bánjá* (156) took another of its many semantic twists and turns (as **kibánjá*) when it came to mean a "banana plantation" or "property in land," in Rutara.[56] These two nouns are strong evidence for a highly developed banana economy where different varieties were planted in special plots of land reserved for them.

To the west, in the uplands of Rwanda, Burundi, and Buha, the West Highlands group innovated a mixed group of nouns related to the banana. They developed a term for a billhook used in pruning banana trees that seems to be derived from an underlying verb that generated the corresponding term in Proto Forest. They also coined separate new words for beer made from bananas, a long type of cooking banana, a stunted banana tree and its fruit, and (what may be a late loan from Tale Southern Cushitic), **-ribu*, meaning "wild banana." The new words for the tool and banana beer imply that West Highlands peoples exploited the banana not later than 1300. But these words alone hardly signal a lively internal development of this food source. When we consider the evidence for areal contacts it is clear that West Highlands speakers' expertise in banana farming grew out of contacts with Forest-speaking farmers and, more importantly, with Rutarans.

Beginning in the thirteenth century, farmers invented new words for generic types of bananas according to their use. During the preceding six or seven centuries a broad fund of words for different varieties of banana came into common use, but the invention of words that named whole classes of bananas heralded a new era in the history of the banana in the Great Lakes region. The development of taxonomies distinguishing generics reflected the increased importance of bananas as items of both nutritional and social value. Generic terms for "beer bananas" suggest that beer may have been an early reason for Forest, West Highlands, Rutaran, and North Nyanzan farmers to begin propagating bananas. Giving pots of banana beer created obligations between people or showed generosity and may have continued in a new way a very ancient practice of exchanging gifts of food and drink.[57] Stories about the origins of important crops are difficult to analyze historically because all these crops are often lumped together.[58] However, in Busoga, between two likely areas of early banana development, some stories about the origins of the banana mention eating bananas before they were used for beer.[59]

The large number of completely unique terms for varieties of bananas (by far the most numerous) and plantains in modern Lakes Bantu languages[60]

indicates that the period of intensive development of banana farming was recent, beginning with the breakup of West Highlands communities in the fifteenth century. Indeed, as Christopher Wrigley has argued, the development of intensive banana farming may have occurred in the eighteenth century. However, it seems clear that an eighteenth-century royal decree about the need for Ganda women to care for banana groves presupposes the knowledge and need for such production.[61] Thus, a date of no earlier than 1400 and no later than 1700 seems reasonable for the development of the land-intensive systems familiar today in Tarime, the lower flanks of Mt. Masaaba, Buganda, Buhaya, and parts of Kivu.

By Lake Victoria, however, bananas were important in the era immediately preceding this period. The most tantalizing language evidence for this part of the growth of intensive banana farming is a set of nouns denoting perennially cropped land.[62] They were developed in the North Nyanza-Rutara period, perhaps as early as 1200, and no later than 1500.

The new words may have arisen, in part, from earlier distinctions between lands that could support intensive farming, *matongo,* and all other types of land. Though bananas will grow almost anywhere that has enough rainfall and no frost, they yield significantly higher amounts of fruit when planted on rich, alluvial soils high in nutrients. The *itongo* (singular of *matongo*) root was part of Great Lakes Bantu speech, in the meaning "abandoned homestead," just the kind of place where nutrient stores would have been enriched by household wastes or composts. West Highlands and Rutara farmers expanded its semantic field to include the additional meaning of "lands planted in perennial crops." In areas rich in volcanic soils, farmers probably planted some fields perennially (including with perennial crops like bananas) and planted annuals in rotation. Terms in Kerebe for crop rotations on single pieces of land support this. But, those North Nyanzan, Rutaran, and West Highlands farmers who emphasized banana farming created fields that were effectively never fallowed but were planted with perennial crops such as coffee and bananas. Based on glottochronology, this would put the latest date for the practice of intensive banana farming at about 1200 to 1500.

Summary

The incorporation of the banana into the eclectic Great Lakes Bantu food systems was a long process. There was no dramatic advantage in yield offered by banana farming to farmers and herders who possessed an already extraordinary range of options in planting their fields or filling their cattle enclosures, hunting bags, and fishing canoes. The initial stages of familiarity with varieties of beer and cooking bananas may be more than 2500 years old, but sporadic cultivation surely took place between A.D. 500 and 900. The development of a specialized use for billhooks in

pruning banana trees accompanied the continued elaboration of knowledge about banana varietals. These advances were undertaken by Rutaran, West Highlands, and Forest communities in the centuries between 800 and 1300. Only a few societies speaking West Highlands, Rutaran and North Nyanzan languages took the final step in the development of banana farming. They developed concurrently the concepts of the banana plantation and of generic names for bananas according to their uses. This ushered in the intensive use of the banana in Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies, between 1300 and 1500. But, the greatest amount of diversification in varietals came after this period and continues today.

Banana gardens in Buganda and Buhaya represent the investment of labor and the generation of surplus value stored in the form of perennially fruiting trees. Those family heads or chiefs who controlled these islands of fertility and wealth used them to attract followers who desired access to such lands. And the banana gardens often formed the most significant repository of lineage wealth transmitted by and controlled through inheritance ideologies.

The major phase of banana development came after the last intermediate language groups begin to break up. The language evidence reveals remarkable parallels in the timing of the development of both specialized pastoralism and intensive banana farming. Cattle had been part of the legacy of Great Lakes food systems from the earliest times, and the span of time between the development of a breeding taxonomy and a color taxonomy is fully two millennia. Once bananas appeared, they seem to have been taken up at a somewhat faster pace, with no more than six hundred years between the innovation of words for the first varietals and the development of names for generics and for types of plantations. These different rates of change harmonized later, with the explosion in terms for cattle colors and the development of generic terms for bananas after 1000 to 1200.

FRONTIERS AND CONNECTIONS IN A MULTILINGUAL WORLD

Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Tale Southern Cushitic groups continued to live within the emergent Great Lakes Bantu-speaking world. They were linked by exchange, intermarriage, and cooperative gathering and hunting parties.[63] These links formed across natural internal frontiers, given meaning by the practical consciousness of people whose systems of food production depended on different elements of their natural surroundings.

Successful Lakes Bantu leaders may well have exchanged daughters or sons in marriage alliances with Sudanic-, Sahelian-, or Cushitic-speaking families, with the intention of gaining valuable agricultural, pastoral, and

metallurgical knowledge. These may have been mere extensions of the regular marriage strategies that were probably employed by the earliest Mashariki Bantu communities to secure access to fields and pastures or to reserves of forest resources, potting clays, and kaolin. Alliances between local lineages formed the cores of residential communities (even though they were dispersed considerably in space) that were increasingly Great Lakes Bantu-speaking and were centers of multiethnic expertise.

Lakes peoples exploited their environmental resources to create and then to breach internal frontiers. The major divide lay between highlands and lowlands. Altitude and topography determined rainfall and temperature, those elements vital in shaping the functioning of any ecosystem. Three such internal frontiers between highlands and lowlands can be found at the edges of the Rusizi Valley in the southern Kivu Rift Valley; along either side of the Rwenzori mountains; and to the east and west of the folded hills of Kigezi, between the Virunga volcanoes and the southern foot of Rwenzori. Other important internal frontiers east of Lake Victoria included the lands at the base of Mt. Masaaba and those on either side of the Tarime highlands.

Stream and river valleys, running down from the highlands into the lowlands, joined the two worlds. Above the upper Semliki valley, in both the Mitumba and Rwenzori mountains, these streams drain into the Semliki river. They have cut down through the mountains to form steep ridges between the catchments. The alternating valleys and ridges bring a little of the lowlands up into the highland valleys, like the folded fingers of two hands clasped at rest. Both highland and lowland societies were in intimate contact with each other which, over the centuries, led to their learning much from each other. Today, those who live near these internal frontiers distinguish between the two worlds, with some choosing one or the other as "home," but continuing to use and to visit the other area.[64]

These small scale thoroughfares joined larger scale connections. Highways like the inshore waters of Lakes Victoria and Mwitanzige, sections of the Kagera, Rusizi, Katonga, and upper Semliki Rivers were places for cultural interaction and for the innovation of new forms of practical consciousness. While lakes and parts of larger rivers acted as highways for canoe-using peoples, many of these connections were paths of least resistance through which gradually growing farming communities could move. Each generation required productive lands beyond those already brought under crops or animals. These were gained by clearing new lands within the altitudinal and topographic zone that favored root crops, cereal raising, or herding. Indeed, it may be that herders followed farmers onto land already cleared for grains and by ironworkers. As old fields lay fallow, the woody savannah that took over after several years would have been favorable for cattle herding, provided that its woody component was not allowed to grow sufficiently thick to harbor tsetse flies.

CONCLUSION

The replacement of Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Tale Southern Cushitic speech by Great Lakes Bantu reflects an increase in the proportion of Lakes peoples who chose to employ Bantu as their means of linguistic communication. Individuals initially made this choice based on a variety of needs. They needed to learn about each other's agricultural and natural worlds, they needed to express solidarity with their neighbors or they needed to express their differences with their neighbors. But the fact that a choice was made between speech of radically different forms (as different as Mandarin is from English or Arabic is from French) means that the forces compelling Lakes peoples to chose Bantu speech grew so strong (in numbers? in status?) that they erased any real choice between these different linguistic worlds today. At the geographical fringes of the modern Great Lakes Bantu-speaking world this process continues. That these boundaries used to be far closer to the center of the Lakes world reveals precisely what is interesting about this choice: Great Lakes Bantu *speakers* (whether originally monolingual or multilingual) came to dominate the communicative, social world of the region.

Loanwords reveal something of the social identities and values that shaped people's decisions about which language to use. In this book, loanword studies reflect only one side of the process because they show only the elements of Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Tale Southern Cushitic speech which Great Lakes Bantu speakers chose to incorporate into their own languages. "Foreign" words for new or newly important things were integrated in the Great Lakes Bantu language world. We cannot know what choices were made by Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Tale Southern Cushitic speakers—native speakers—because those speech communities have long since disappeared, even if some of their biological heritage and practical knowledge lives on in modern Great Lakes societies. Indeed some of the individuals who spoke the now-departed Tale Southern Cushitic or Sog Eastern Sahelian tongues very likely decided to adopt the Bantu speech of their mixed-farming and iron-using neighbors. In either case, whether Sudanians, Sahelian, and Cushites moved away from expanding Great Lakes Bantu societies or joined them, their historical existence lives on in the continued use of some of their vocabulary by Great Lakes Bantu speakers.

We can thus hear the legacy of this long period of cultural contact, transformation, and displacement when a Munyankore person calls her millet grain "*obúro,*" his cattle "*énte*" (89), and the savannah-dwelling lion "*entáre.*" We can see this legacy in the fields, where *obúro* is sown, in the pastures full of *énte*, and in the tools used in the fields and in the cattle enclosures. This is the marvelous gift of historical linguistics. It bequeaths to us a legacy of creative social history. What were once choices, for ancient Great Lakes Bantu

speakers, of whether or not to learn to use "foreign" crops, tools, and animals, and what, in the choosing, were discursive statements of social distance, solidarity and otherness, have become less clearly discursive. These crops, animals, and tools are part of rural life for Lakes Bantu peoples, they are all now part of the "we," not of the "them."

The history of this social context of choice between socioeconomic worlds is dimmer than we would like it to be. What we have are the words traded between the worlds, and then only those traded into the Great Lakes Bantu speakers' lives from their neighbors', whether as relatives or as trading partners. Perhaps because the knowledge these words expressed was practical—in use every day by all family units—it now seems bereft of the novelty of the earlier discursive context. But what could have been more courageous than for the son or daughter of a root cropping and fishing community to spend more time with their sorghum seeds, to dig storage pits for their harvest of Finger millet, or to alter the layout of their house to accommodate calves and lambs? Neither cereals nor domestic animals were entirely foreign to Mashariki Bantu or Great Lakes Bantu families, but the lands and labor they required and the bounty they bequeathed drew those families who grew grains or herded cattle away from some of the everyday concerns of their relatives, who grew yams, raised cowpeas, and herded goats. The cumulative results of what were initially, perhaps, both practical and discursive choices about foods and agricultures grew in their implications. Families who knew how to sow cereals and breed livestock could settle in lands different from those used by root croppers and fishers. They came to enjoy porridges and beers that tasted different from roasted yams. These differences, once the province of completely different peoples—Central Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Tale Southern Cushitic speakers—now gradually came to express difference within what had been a common world of speech, a Bantu-speaking world.

The social dimensions of these choices and the discursive elements of their use are the next stories to tell. These stories involved a variety of building blocks: units of social identity, politics, and health and healing. The outlines of their histories will provide points of departure for more textured discussions of regional structures of historical change in Part III. Indeed, it is only through studying the combination of environmental change, practical consciousness of food, technology, and resource specializations—and discursive struggles over control of them and of human resources—that we can recognize regional commonalities in the historical development of economy and society between the Lakes.

NOTES

[1] Steven Feierman, *The Shambaa Kingdom* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 48; Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology*, 26-32.

[2] Jan Vansina, "Do Pygmies Have a History?" *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 7,1 (1986), 431-45.

[3] The following discussion relies on Stanley Ambrose, "Hunter-Gatherer Adaptations to Non-Marginal Environments: An Ecological and Archaeological Assessment of the Dorobo Model," *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 7, 2 (1986), 11-42.

[4] Ambrose, "Hunter-Gatherer Adaptations," 18-20.

[5] Ambrose, "Hunter-Gatherer Adaptations," 22.

[6] In the folded foothills of the Kivu highlands, in the Karagwe Depression, and east of Lake Victoria, even small hills could form such ecotones "in the round." See D.A.M. Reid, "Report on Archaeological Research in Karagwe" (University of Dar es Salaam, 1994); Robertshaw, "Gogo Falls," 63-68; Jacques Nenquin, *Contributions to the Study of the Prehistoric Cultures of Rwanda and Burundi* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1967), 220-56; MacLean, "Late Stone Age," 297-300.

[7] John E. G. Sutton, "The African Aqualithic," *Antiquity* 51 (1977), 32.

[8] Vansina, *Paths*, 88-92, and 287, for linguistic evidence; Patrick R. Bennett, "On the Reconstruction of Bantu Technology and Its Vocabulary," *Muntu* 3 (1983), 121-35.

[9] See Vansina, *Paths*, 279. This relationship is embedded in royal ritual in many Kivu Rift Valley societies where honey (originally a forest product) and *batúá* women play special roles in harvest celebrations and chiefly accession. See Packard, *Chiefship*, 36-37; A. Gille, "L'umuganuro ou fête du sorgho en Urundi," *Bulletin des juridictions indigenes et du droit coutumier congolais* 14, 11 (Sept/Oct 1946), 368-71; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 20-26.

[10] See Vansina, *Paths*, 288, for linguistic evidence; see also Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 18 fn 53; E. Barton Worthington and Stella Worthington, *Inland Waters of Africa* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1933), 142-51; and Bennett, "Reconstruction of Bantu Technology," 121-35.

[11] Yuji Ankei, "Folk Knowledge of Fish Among the Songola and the Bwari: Comparative Ethnoichthyology of the Lualaba River and Lake Tanganyika Fishermen," *African Studies Monographs, Supplementary Issue* 8 (1989), 1-88, especially 12, 13, 48ff.

[12] See David L. Schoenbrun, "Early History in Eastern Africa's Great Lakes Region: Linguistic, Ecological, and Archaeological Approaches ca. 500 B.C. to A.D. 1000" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1990), 558-60.

[13] The following argument draws on Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 27-29.

[14] Marie-Claude Van Grunderbeek, "Chronologie de l'Age du Fer Ancien au Burundi, au Rwanda et dans la région des Grands Lacs," *Azania* 27 (1992), 55-68.

[15] For specialized fishing, see Macquarie, "Water Gipsies," 62-64; H.F.I. Elliott, "An Island in Lake Victoria," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 10 (1940), 31-33.

[16] D.A.M. Reid, "Changing Social Relations and their Contribution to the Development of Pastoralism in the Interlacustrine Region of Eastern Africa," *Tanzania Zamani* 1, 3 (1993), 28-32; Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds," 45-50.

[17] Merrick Posnansky, "Bantu Genesis—Archaeological Reflexions," *Journal of African History* 9, 1 (1968), 1-11; David W. Phillipson, *African Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 148-49, 171.

[18] Roland Oliver, "The Problem of the Bantu Expansion," *Journal of African History* 6 (1966), 361-76.

[19] Martin Hall, *Farmers, Kings, and Traders, The People of Southern Africa, 200-1860*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 17-31; S. Terry Childs and David Killick, "Indigenous African Metallurgy: Nature and Culture," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22 (1993), 319-22.

[20] Pierre de Maret and Francis Nsukka, "History of Bantu Metallurgy: Some Linguistic Aspects," *History in Africa* 4 (1977), 43-65; Pierre de Maret and Genvieve Thiry, "How Old Is the Iron Age in Central Africa?" in *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production,* ed. Peter R. Schmidt (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 29-39; Christopher Ehret, "The Establishment of Iron-Working in Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa: Linguistic Inferences on Technological History," *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 16/17 (1995/1996), 1-47.

[21] Vansina, *Paths*, 58-61; Childs and Killick, "Indigenous African Metallurgy," 320-22.

[22] Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 27-29.

[23] D.A. M. Reid and M. Rachel MacLean, "Symbolism and the Social Contexts of Iron Production in Karagwe," *World Archaeology* 27, 1 (1995),144-61; Eugenia Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 55-96; Childs and Killick, "Indigenous African Metallurgy," 325-33.

[24] But see Childs, "Style, Technology," 353-54.

[25] Marie-Claude Van Grunderbeek, Hugues Doutrelepont and Emile Roche, "L'âge du fer ancien au Rwanda et au Burundi: Archéologie et Environnement," *Journal des Africanistes* 52, 1/2 (1982), 5-58; Peter R. Schmidt and S. Terry Childs, "Innovation and Industry During the Early Iron Age in East Africa: The KM2 and KM3 sites of Northwest Tanzania," *African Archaeological Review* 3 (1985) 53-94.

[26] Peter R. Schmidt, "Early Iron Age Settlements and Industrial Locales in West Lake," *Tanzania Notes and Records* 84/85(1980), 77-94.

[27] Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 26ff.

[28] Schoenbrun, "Early History," 510-11.

[29] See especially Michael E. S. Morrison and Alan C. Hamilton, "Vegetation and Climate in the Uplands of South-Western Uganda During the Later Pleistocene Period, II: Forest Clearance and Other Vegetational Changes in the Rukiga Highlands During the Last 8000 Years," *Journal of Ecology*, 62 (1974), 26; but see Taylor and Marchant, "Human Impact," 288-92.

[30] Schmidt, "Historical Ecology," 101-12.

[31] Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 24.

[32] Schoenbrun, "Early History," 526-27.

[33] The root is *ente*, see Schoenbrun, "We Are What We Eat," 31.

[34] This section draws on David L. Schoenbrun, "Social Aspects of Agricultural Change between the Great Lakes, A.D. 500 to 1000," *Azania* 29/30 (1994-95), 272-75.

[35] I. L. Mason and J. P. Maule, *The Indigenous Livestock of Eastern and Southern Africa* (Farnham Royal, Bucks: Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, 1960), 21-22, 25-29; N. R. Joshi, E. A. McLaughlin and Ralph W. Phillips, *Types and Breeds of African Cattle* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization, 1957), 146-61, 193-98. See also H. Epstein, "The Sanga Cattle of East Africa," *East African Agricultural Journal* 22 (1957), 149-64.

[36] Caroline Grigson, "An African Origin for African Cattle?—Some Archaeological Evidence," *African Archaeological Review* 9 (1991), 119-44.

[37] Namely with *Bos taurus* in North Africa and with *Bos indicus* along the east African coast, see Grigson, "An African Origin," 139.

[38] John Ford, *The Role of the Trypanosomiases in African Ecology: A Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 123, 234; Martin Birley, "Resource Management in Sukumaland, Tanzania," *Africa* 51 (1981), 1-29; James Giblin, "Sleeping Sickness in Africa: An Evaded Issue?" *Journal of African History* 31, 1 (1990), 59-80.

[39] Schoenbrun, "The Contours," 270ff.

[40] James Giblin, *The Politics of Environmental Control in Northeastern Tanzania, 1840-1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 32.

[41] Ford, *Role of the Trypanosomiases*, 123ff.; Abel G. M. Ishumi, "The Kingdom of Kiziba," *Journal of World History* 13, 1 (1971), 719.

[42] James Giblin, "East Coast Fever in Sociohistorical Context: A Case Study from Tanzania," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23 (1990), 410-21.

[43] Reid, "Role of Cattle," 180-82, 255-70.

[44] An entirely different world of honorific titles, phrase-names and praise-names stands outside the scope of this study, but see discussion of cattle clientship in Chapter 6.

[45] Reid, "Role of Cattle," 266-70.

[46] We still do not know if long-horned Sanga breeds developed in the Great Lakes region or if they were introduced from Sudan or the Kenya Rift Valley; see Peter T. Robertshaw, "The Last 200,000 Years (or Thereabouts) in Eastern Africa: Recent Archaeological Research," *Journal of Archeaological Research* 3, 1 (1995), 61-64. D.A.M. Reid, letter to author, 24 February 1997, points out that horncore evidence from Ntusi indicates that long-horned cattle were present there.

[47] Careful studies by D.A.M. Reid of cattle bones from Ntusi reveal specialized herd management practices in the eleventh century A.D., see Reid, "Role of Cattle," 228-54.

[48] Melville J. Herskovits, "The Cattle Complex in East Africa," *American Anthropologist* 28 (1926), 230-72; 361-88; 494-528; 633-64.

[49] See Vansina, *Paths*, 61-65; Christopher C. Wrigley, *Crops and Wealth in Uganda: A Short Agrarian History* (Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research, 1959), 7-8; Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds," 40-42; Gerda Rossel, "The Linguistic-Taxonomic Study of Plantains in Africa" (Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 1997).

[50] Edmond de Langhe, "Bananas," in *Outlines of Perennial Crop Breeding in the Tropics,* ed. F. P. Ferwerda and F. Wit (Wageningen: H. Veenman and Zonen, 1969), 53-78. See also Edmond de Langhe, Ronnie Swenne, and D. Vuylsteke, "Plantain in the Early Bantu World," *Azania* 29/30 (1994/1995), 147-60; Gerda Rossel, "The Diffusion of Plantain (*Musa* sp. AAB) and Banana (*Musa* sp. AAA) in Africa: A Case for Linguists, Taxonomists, and Historians, Focused on Nigerian Crop Names," in *Origins and Development of Agriculture in East Africa: The Ethnosystems Approach to the Study of Early Food Production in Kenya,* ed. Richard E. Leakey and L. Jan Slikkerveer (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Research Foundation, 1991), 129-60, especially 140-49.

[51] Vansina, *Paths*, 61-65, following Edmond de Langhe, "La taxonomie du bananier plantain en Afrique equatoriale," *Journal d'agriculture tropicale et botanique appliquée* 9, 10/11 (1961), 417-49. For arguments about how subspecies and hybrids could have arisen, see de Langhe, "Bananas," 71-72.

[52] Edmond de Langhe et al., "Plantain," 148-53. Pierre de Maret, in a personal communication (15 November 1997), points out that he and other scholars from the Musée royale de l'Afrique central have developed a technique for recognizing *Musa* spp archaeologically. This will allow firmer dating of the chronological sequence proposed here.

[53] Vansina, *Paths*, 61-65.

[54] Seeds from this plant, *Ensete ventricosum*, turn up in royal ritual and healing regalia throughout the Great Lakes region; see John Nyakatura, *Aspects of Bunyoro Customs and Traditions,* trans. and annotated by Zebiya Kwamya Rigby (Kampala: East African Publishing House, 1970), 57-58. *Ntembe* seeds were used by Mugasha's priests, in Buhaya, to fashion their *ngisha* (286) amulets (Holger Benettsson, personal communication, April

1994). See also Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 16, 19; Marcel Pauwels, *Imana et le culte des mânes au rwanda* (Brussels: Académie royal des sciences coloniales, 1958), 117, plate 5, figs. 13 and 19; Julien Gorju, *Entre le Victoria, l'Albert et l'Edouard. Ethnographie de la partie anglaise du vicariat de l'Uganda* (Rennes: Imprimeries Oberthür, 1920), 206. Even though no evidence exists that Lakes peoples used Ensete as a food source, wild or "domesticated," its ritual importance, its use as a source of fiber, and references to it in regional oral traditions mean that we should not rule out the chance of a southerly extension of the famous Ensete complex developed by Omotic speakers in Ethiopia, see Christopher Ehret, "On the Antiquity of Agriculture in Ethiopia," *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), 161-77; Steven A. Brandt, "New Perspectives on the Origins of Food Production in Ethiopia," in *From Hunters to Farmers: The Causes and Consequences of Food Production in Africa*, ed. J. Desmond Clark and Steven A. Brandt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 173-90, especially 185-90. Gerda Rossel, "Enset: één van de oudste nuttig planten in Afrika," *De Baobab* 12, 1 (1996), 18-21, argues that some names for bananas and plantains were made from names for Ensete; see also Gerda Rossel, "Musa and Ensete in Africa: Taxonomy, Nomenclature, and Uses," *Azania* 29/30 (1994/1995), 130-46. For the root, see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 90 and 373.

[55] "Interlake" represents an era of areal contact between the Western Lakes, West Nyanza, and East Nyanza branches of Great Lakes Bantu; it is not a genetic subgroup of Great Lakes Bantu. See Schoenbrun, "Great Lakes Bantu," Map 2, p. 97.

[56] Only in class 7/8. In other classes the root means "legal process, decision" or "obligation." See Chapter 5.

[57] For a discussion of "inflicting debt," see Timothy Earle, "The Evolution of Chiefdoms," in *Chiefdoms: Power and Ideology*, ed. Timothy Earle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 5-6; see also Chapter 3.

[58] But see David William Cohen, *The Historical Tradition of Busoga: Mukama and Kintu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 55-56, where he recognizes connections between stories about crop origins and the actions of eponymous clan members.

[59] Lubogo, *History of Busoga*, 153-56.

[60] Some 200 terms for plantain and banana varieties exist in Great Lakes Bantu languages. See Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds," 59, n. 2, for the numbers in individual languages; Rossel, "Linguistic-Taxonomic Study," passim.

[61] A reference to the edict of Kabaka Semakookiro, see Christopher C. Wrigley, "Bananas in Buganda," *Azania* 23 (1989), 69.

[62] Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds," 67-72.

[63] Loans in Great Lakes Bantu from Tale Southern Cushitic for savannah animals, and from Central Sudanic for a species of wild yam suggest this.

[64] See Packard, *Chiefship*, 55-82 for a detailed analysis of such a human ecology in Bunande (Zaire); see also Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 36-39; Michelle D. Wagner, "'Whose History Is History?' A History of the Baragane People of Buragane, Southern Burundi, 1850-1932" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1990), Ch. 2.

3

The Challenges of Prosperity: Social Identity, Politics, and Health to A.D. 500

This chapter tells the stories of three interlocking domains of continuity and change: units of social organization, leadership, and healing. Through these fields of social life people met the challenges to peace and prosperity entailed by their productive agricultural systems. Each of these domains was both an abstract idiom for social action and a place to make wealth and reproduce society. Each one was also constituted by material cultural forms that expressed social meanings such as group identity. Pottery styles, house styles, regalia and healing dress and paraphernalia all counted in this regard. Each of these fields shaped the others.

The history of the social side of the Great Lakes Bantu agricultural synthesis involved three major developments in these fields. In the last millennium B.C., people could choose from either their mother's people or their father's people when deciding how to pass on property and standing or through whom to join a community. But they changed this open system to emphasize lineality—either the father's or the mother's line—by the middle of the first millennium A.D. Lakes peoples initiated this change at the same time that they invented territorial and hereditary elements for the institution of chiefship. They drew on the vocabularies of redistributing wealth and integrating followers to bring about these changes in chiefship. Chiefs, lineality, redistribution, and composing large communities all developed hand in hand between 300 and 700. Thirdly, Great Lakes Bantu speaking societies living between the Kivu Rift Valley and Lake Victoria developed healing institutions that drew on culturally meaningful divides between the physical and spiritual worlds—between instrumental and creative power—to generate specializations in health care. Rainmakers, midwives, bonesetters, and diviners all

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The history of the social side of the Great Lakes Bantu agricultural synthesis involved three major developments in these fields. In the last millennium B.C., people could choose from either their mother's people or their father's people when deciding how to pass on property and standing or through whom to join a community. But they changed this open system to emphasize lineality—either the father's or the mother's line—by the middle of the first millennium A.D. Lakes peoples initiated this change at the same time that they invented territorial and hereditary elements for the institution of chiefship. They drew on the vocabularies of redistributing wealth and integrating followers to bring about these changes in chiefship. Chiefs, lineality, redistribution, and composing large communities all developed hand in hand between 300 and 700. Thirdly, Great Lakes Bantu speaking societies living between the Kivu Rift Valley and Lake Victoria developed healing institutions that drew on culturally meaningful divides between the physical and spiritual worlds—between instrumental and creative power—to generate specializations in health care. Rainmakers, midwives, bonesetters, and diviners all

helped to assemble the moral terms of a social order that was probably mainly concerned with fertility. They gave life to this concern and to its moral terms through their practical knowledge of human physiology and pharmacopoeia, and through the power of their speech, which could activate or deactivate medicines. Healers and chiefs both proved to be formidable sources of authority and they may not have always coexisted easily with each other.

These developments occurred over the more than 1000 years of the Early Iron Age. They occurred in the contexts of the increasing preeminence of Bantu speech, increased expertise in mixed farming, and environmental crisis. They are all closely related because healers were concerned with maintaining the physical and social health of the members of their communities, because chiefs wanted to build their communities by attracting new followers, and because units of social organization were "strategies" for composing those communities.

FIELDS OF SOCIAL LIFE

Space organizes daily life and reflects philosophies generated to explain social experience and identity.[1] Thus, social life is rooted in space—it is attached to a place—and social life is also dispersed through space, it is attached to a variety of places. Socially constructed spaces took two important forms for early Lakes people. First, people organized social fields shaped by economic activity within specific environmental parameters. These social fields had distinctive personalities along a continuum from herding to sedentary perennial crop farming systems. They included land-extensive, dispersed settlements as well as land-intensive, concentrated settlements.[2] Secondly, social life itself generated different units of identity and activity, often metaphorically modeled on the female body or on the physical layout of houses and homesteads but not restricted to single locations. These units included the sizes, distributions, and internal architecture of settlements and the social relations that bound people together in groups. Some socially constructed spaces, like the economic-ecological spaces described in Chapters 1 and 2, were identified with a certain sort of place: homesteads, neighborhoods, and the country. The other kind of socially constructed space was dispersed, it spread across places in the guise of groups with a common idiom of kinship. Material conditions tied people to homesteads and neighborhoods or patterned their movements between homesteads and neighborhoods, but the negotiated and contradictory obligations of social life called people away from local life into wider worlds inhabited by clans or lineages.

Homestead, Neighborhood, and Country

Great Lakes Bantu speakers created wholly new architectural forms for their houses and for the enclosures that surrounded them. The distinctive square house built by Bantu speakers in the Congo Basin, with its paneled

and gabled roof, gave way in the east to a round style of house,[3] with a thatched roof (21, 121, and 155). As their settlements expanded into the more open woodland of the plains in the Kivu Rift Valley and to the east, they began to use the new building materials in these areas: elephant grass, reeds, and thatch grass. The most distinctive attributes of these new homes were the fences surrounding them (**ngó*, 113). These tall fences, with their main gateways (**mareembo*, 100), separated domestic space from the rest of the landscape of fields, pasture, and wilderness. They protected people and domestic animals from predators and they provided privacy for individual families. By encoding gendered and aged spaces within the homesteads, their internal layout choreographed interactions between family members and guided contacts with outsiders.

When compared to neighboring communities in the Inner Congo Basin, more than homesteads looked different in Great Lakes Bantu society. Collections of homesteads composed neighborhoods (**eka*, 123; **-kyaalo*, 153; *mugongo*; **mutala*, 148) which were dispersed across the landscape far more widely than the dense agglomerations of homes in a forest village. But these neighborhoods were not strewn across the landscape in a haphazard fashion. In the highlands bordering the Kivu Rift Valley they often clung to the sides of ridges, stretched just beneath and on either side of the ridge crest. Christopher Ehret has observed that the crest of each ridge functioned like the old main street of a forest village.[4] Just inland from Lake Victoria, the hills were lower and gentler, and streets connected neighborhoods to other neighborhoods nearby.[5] Here, neighborhoods (sometimes called **mitala*, plural of *mutala*, 148) formed on individual fingers of dry, arable land above the swampy bottomlands subject to regular or permanent inundation.

No single term for such a neighborhood may be reconstructed for Great Lakes Bantu, but both the Western Lakes and West Nyanza terms often describe such neighborhoods as draped over ridges or hills. This suggests that the Great Lakes Bantu still cut their settlements out of forest edges and that West Nyanza and Western Lakes communities developed the expertise of laying out new neighborhoods away from forests. As the first centuries of the first millennium A.D. drew to a close, a traveler crossing through the region might have had to try several different words when looking for a specific neighborhood, but each neighborhood would have looked broadly similar in structure and layout.

Ridge-dwelling members of Great Lakes society lived in homesteads very near to each other, if one walked along the length of the ridge at the same broad band of altitude. If one walked up, over, and down a set of ridges, homesteads would appear very far apart indeed (see Illustration 4.1). In the flatter mosaic of seasonally flooded hillock country, around Buhaya and Buganda, the equivalent band of settlement would have appeared both altitudinally and topographically narrower. Because the hills rarely exceed

100 meters in height there (while such hills often reach 300 meters from swamp to crest in Rwanda, Rwenzori, and Buha) homesteads were no more than 500 meters apart, across a soggy tongue of swampland. Still, unless the finger of swamp was large enough to attract a ferry keeper or bridge builders, neighbors had to trek several kilometers to gossip and discuss events.

In the western part of the Great Lakes region, neighborhoods did not exist as unconnected islands, they were bound together into a vaguely recognized territory, the **kihúgo* (118). This unit of land included a collection of neighborhoods which shared a sense of relatedness. Together they formed a country, though certainly not in the nationalistic sense. The **kihúgo* might well have been defined by the limits of easy travel, by the nearest sacred hill or patch of forest, by the number of homesteads that supported a given chief, or by a nearby lake or large river.

The earliest Bantu-speaking societies of the Lakes region also saw themselves as distinct from some neighboring groups. They expressed this with the term **ihanga* (116) which today connotes a distant, foreign country but which may be taken to have originally meant a distant, foreign group of people. The processes of cultural interaction between the region's different speech communities, so clearly reflected in the bodies of Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Cushitic loan words in Great Lakes Bantu, seems to have yielded a self-consciousness that verged on what we might today call ethnicity. The kinds of social ranking implied by *batúá*, "bush-dweller" (149, the name is not self-referential), and **baírù*, "farmer" (196), do not come through in naming another group as distant and foreign; it seems that a foreign group was not necessarily deemed an inferior one. Still, we know that Lakes peoples learned fundamental elements of their food systems from Sudanian, Sahelian, and Cushite speakers and it seems likely that some Cushite, Sahelian, and Sudanian communities "became" Bantu speaking as part of that process. Therefore, **mahanga* (plural of *ihanga*) might have named at least those communities of individuals who continued to live distinctly Sudanian, Sahelian, and Cushitic lifestyles. Thus, an *ihanga* was a place where people were different from Bantu speakers, a place where people lived in drier environments, kept more livestock, grew and ate more grain and did not eat fish so much or consider forests to be central parts of their resource base.

Ideologies of Belonging

These three units of social place—homestead, neighborhood, and country—almost certainly differed in size and shape throughout the Great Lakes Bantu world. But in some important ways they mirrored the second sort of social places, where people were bound together in groups. Farming and herding required easy access to fields and pasture and these requirements surely defined fundamental forms for homesteads and neighborhoods. But

these very same realities also drew people away from their specific homestead or neighborhood and even drew them out of their country. The families, lineages, and clans that people used to maintain their identities when they were outside their homes formed overlapping continua of social life that could be spread over large areas.

Up to the middle of the first millennium A.D., these forms of social organization overlapped because mixed agriculture required a great deal of flexibility in recruiting labor and in opening up the enormous variety of fields that people used. Great Lakes Bantu people had to interact with Sudanic, Sahelian, and Cushitic neighbors and with various groups of hunters and gatherers to gain access to the resources and knowledge each of them possessed. Lakes peoples emphasized flexibility in constructing units of social organization so they could incorporate new people more easily, like these neighbors.

Historians and anthropologists seeking to recover the character of ancient units of social organization often begin with the comparative study of kinship terminologies and systems. This approach can yield important conclusions about how people in the past conceived of their choices in assembling groups of supporters at various stages in their lives. But kinship terms often define not only membership in a social group but also membership in a neighborhood. By naming both of these sorts of belonging, kinship terms can make everyone in a neighborhood seem related to each other. This masks the process of becoming a member of a group or a neighborhood by means other than birth or marriage. Jan Vansina remarks on the numbers of "friends, acquaintances, and followers" who joined houses in the Inner Congo Basin.[6] Homesteads and neighborhoods—kinship groups—could be enormously diverse in their actual makeup, even if the kinship terms themselves seem to specify precise relations of biological descent.

People created lineal identities and residential alliances to build units of social organization during the era of the Great Lakes Bantu agricultural synthesis, between 500 B.C. and A.D. 500. By invoking lineality they emphasized exclusivity and by focusing attention on residence they emphasized alliance and common purpose. Words that name these techniques can be reconstructed to Proto Great Lakes Bantu and they will be discussed shortly. But they must be understood as ideological ways to invent and culturally reproduce units of social organization. We should not think of them as descriptions of an independent reality created by some set of biological imperatives. People could use lineality, especially, to create a highly exclusive sense of descent. Lineality defines membership in a group through the idiom of a direct genealogically reclaimable common ancestry shared by members of the group. Membership can also be gendered when only one of the parental lines is used to reckon common ancestry. Lineal identity tries to mark exclusive membership in a

group: at the same time that it includes people, it also excludes others. But there were limits to this exclusivity.

For example, in the decidedly patrilineal ideology of twentieth-century relations between spouses and their in-laws in Bunyoro, a woman could be the head of a homestead in the absence of any male heirs. The reversal of status was not lost on the woman. She could ridicule a man who married her by asking him, "And where have your cattle urinated?"[7] which might be loosely interpreted to mean: "I haven't seen any of your wealth around here!" Such jewels from the ethnographic record show that a patrilineal ideology of descent and property inheritance never succeeded totally in excluding women from access to property and status.

Still, the project of sorting out how people in the distant past used lineal and residential idioms to reckon descent and control property cannot wholly escape from a terribly difficult trap. Namely, that the great bulk of ethnographic evidence on lineality was produced during the early twentieth century, a time when Lakes societies possessed much that systems of lineal descent could hope to protect and conserve: perennially cropped fields, cash cropped fields, cash itself, collections of glass beads and ivory, and intensively exploited salt sources, to name only a few. When lineal idioms determined both who belonged in the group and who could inherit property and status, then the stakes in "belonging" grew very high indeed. How then may we sort out the historical dimensions of lineality?

Etymologies of terms for ancient social groups offer views into how Lakes peoples conceived of the range of possible group identities. Some Greater Luhyia societies today use a word for lineage, **mulòngò* (from 102), which they share with other communities far to their south and west. It is, therefore, very likely an ancient word, almost certainly invented in that meaning more than 2500 years ago during the Proto Mashariki Bantu era. Christopher Ehret has shown that the meaning "lineage" derived from the older meaning "a line of objects."[8] The word thus states explicitly the key objective of lineal discourse: people may be excluded from a group on the grounds that they do not have a place in the line of descent that connects the living to the departed.

In the last centuries B.C., Lakes communities also expressed lineal thinking by distinguishing between "father's people" and "mother's people." For example, they addressed and referred to the children of their father's sister (or those of their mother's brother) with one term, **babládá* (95), and they used many other words to speak of the children of their mother's sister. By doing so then and by continuing to do so now, we can see that Great Lakes Bantu-speaking people recognized potential group exclusivity.[9]

The key evidence for lineality and its accompanying ideology of descent group identity lay in words that defined exclusive membership and nonmembership in the group. One set of terms of address for in-laws

expressed this by distinguishing between the son-in-law, **mukó* (128), and the wife's people, **bazaara* (94, from *babládá*). These two terms do not by themselves indicate a unilineal descent group ideology because both the mother's people and the father's people form descent groups of potentially equal status for a growing child. The single datum that clinches the case for an ancient form of lineality reckoned through the father's line, comes in the form of **mwìhwá* (120), "child of female clanmate." The name refers to a child or children that the wife's people (*bazaara*) considered "lost" to them and gained by their son-in-law (*mukó*). A firm etymology for this word remains elusive, but two possibilities may be proposed. First, the term may be a passive conjugation of the verb **kupá*, "to give," with a reflexive object infix **-jì-*, thus yielding the meaning "the one who has been given away." In this case, the word makes an explicit statement about patrilineal descent group identity: a wife's children belong to her husband's lineage not to her own.[10] Secondly, the item may be a deverbative of a passive construction of **-gÌp-* (112), "to pull out or cut (grass)," describing the removal of the child from one lineage to the other. Whatever the final word might be, all three terms (*bazaara*, *mukó*, and *mwìhwá*) are quite widespread in Mashariki Bantu and were very early developments in the social histories of those dialect clusters.[11]

For the Great Lakes Bantu-speaking communities living between Lake Victoria and the Kivu Rift Valley in the last centuries B.C., lineality expressed group identity in a world of profound agricultural change. It helped define the character of their settled areas, and the character of relations between the groups of people who made their settlements productive, by ceding the control of children to lineages. Lineality may thus have been a vessel for group identity in the context of cultural interaction with Sudanic, Sahelian, and Cushitic groups and with groups of autochthonous gatherer-hunters.

Clans: A Strategy for Alliance

Units of social organization might cover wide, even discontinuous stretches of territory. Individuals could seek patrons, political support, or spouses within these units. The *rugàndá*, was one such unit in Great Lakes Bantu society. It was a group of people who recognized deep common lineal ancestry. It was also a group whose members could not marry each other—what anthropologists call an exogamous group. Members of a *rugàndá* might live near one another or in widely dispersed homesteads, confident that their sense of belonging would be protected by referring to each other as sharing both a distant, common ancestor and a common avoidance, **-gIdò* (288). The "avoidance" might be abstaining from eating the meat of a certain animal or abstaining from hunting a certain animal. Members of *ngàndá* (plural of *rugàndá*) formed them in part so that allied homesteads that were separated by considerable distance could still maintain ties of mutual aid.

The underlying sense of *rugàndá* was attached to a building, to a place.[12] This was probably an older meaning of the Great Lakes Bantu word for "lineage" and the social practice it described. The oldest meanings of the word may well have referred to the firstcomers who welcomed newcomers and incorporated them into a *rugàndá*. As mixed farming communities sought to widen their settlement options by emphasizing different parts of their eclectic food system, accepting newcomers would have been a key to success. Later, during the era of Great Lakes Bantu, as the size of *ngàndá* (plural of *rugàndá*) increased, the association with a place waned, perhaps being reserved for stronger lineages within clans, which could better stake and defend claims to sacred places over time.[13] The association with lineality, especially with patrilineality, grew in importance. The *rugàndá* and the *mulòngò* (until it was replaced) were the largest groups in which Great Lakes Bantu speakers expected to have any regular contact with each other during a single agricultural cycle.

Early in the first millennium A.D., institutional innovation kept pace as some Great Lakes Bantu communities expanded beyond the wetter zones where they had first settled into drier and more open environments. Communities that were becoming West Nyanzan, Greater Luhyia, and East Nyanzan[14] societies introduced a new term for a unilineal, dispersed, exogamous group: the **eka* (123). Linked clearly to one of the older Great Lakes Bantu words for a head of cattle, **nka*, (52, itself a loan word from Eastern Sahelian in the meaning "homestead") the new term tells us that, by A.D. 500, accumulations of wealth in animals were stable enough to warrant their conservation by developing unilineal principles for inheriting them. People who used this innovation (*eka*) won an advantage over their less differentiated relatives in developing webs of clientship. It therefore stimulated later developments in unilineal inheritance systems, which grew in importance during the last few centuries of the first millennium A.D.[15]

Other words for group identity that came into use after A.D. 500, as the Great Lakes Bantu dialect chain broke up, played on metaphors of the body and the house to define one's place within the group. The word **ndáa* "children of one mother, cognatic group" (134) played on the word **ndàa* "belly, womb" (98). Many other examples could be given. Metaphors connecting "houses" and parts of the female body to units of social organization strongly suggest a matrifocal dimension to this sort of group identity, because, as Christopher Ehret has observed,[16] a woman's house is her preserve. In East Nyanza society, the connection is explicit: the term for house, **nyùmbá* (155), also refers to a wife, her children, and any other dependents attached to her.[17] A woman's "houses" and her fields were both metaphors and contexts for her control over children's labor and socialization.

"Families" in Great Lakes Bantu society were the minimal unit for a successful community, they formed the units of settlements, they were the group

through which tasks were carried out: fishing, hunting, farming, and herding, the bearing and raising of children, and the practical tasks of craft production, house building, and caring for the sick and the departed. Families probably ranged in size from 10 people to hundreds. Descent principles, marriage and blood brotherhood alliances, and access to fields, pastures, and woodlands all shaped the size of families and the patterns of their settlement on the land. Forms of marriage were multiple and principles of group identity were malleable up to a point.[18] These families must not be imagined as neat units of husbands and wives, with only their biological children and grandchildren sharing the house and its lands. Families were compositions of many different people rather than accumulations of biological relatives. Friends, blood brothers, followers (196), and poor people (198) could also form parts of families and they could even have been vital parts of a family's success in retaining environmental control over their fields and putting new fields under crops.[19]

Family relationships generated a great variety of practical and discursive opportunities for social action and social control, especially around the bearing, raising, and legal control of children. Men and women in Lakes societies struggled over these questions in part through metaphors of gendered social space and gendered descent. Beyond the metaphors used to define gendered identities, this struggle is not clearly visible in the comparative linguistic evidence. But men and women must have bargained repeatedly over the form and content of gendered identity. Although we cannot see this exchange in its earliest historical terms we must imagine that negotiations over gendered lineal descent proceeded in a decidedly nonlinear fashion. In Great Lakes Bantu societies, as in our own, this battle never reached any final resolution. But as the stakes grew—in decisions on property inheritance, in the divisions of juridical responsibilities, in responsibilities for child socialization and for healing—so too grew the historically visible discursive forms through which the struggle took place. These changes form one of the story lines pursued in Part III.

Circumcision and initiation practices were practiced in some Great Lakes Bantu societies. They provided a means to cut across family and clan identities by forming a foundation for alliance based on age alone. Individuals in a circumcision and initiation group went through rigorous and lengthy education, often at temporary settlements in the wilderness far from home. Such an experience created an *esprit de corps* not unlike that felt by members of the same graduating class.

Only some of the societies in the Mara, Greater Luhyia, Forest, and Rwenzori branches of Great Lakes Bantu have maintained these institutions. The ancient word for a young, marriageable man, **mutabani*, may be the last remaining feature of the old circumcision and initiation institutions. Elsewhere, in the northern parts of Mashariki Bantu, the word is a verb and means

"to circumcise."[20] Between the Great Lakes, the emergent hierarchy of political institutions, religious institutions, and clientship probably replaced circumcision and initiation as means to integrate persons to common goals (even if carried out under unequal power relations). This seems likely since circumcision and initiation persist precisely in those parts of the Great Lakes Bantu world where political and religious hierarchies seem to have developed recently, only in the last two or three centuries.

Summary

In the last few centuries B.C. and the first few centuries A.D., Great Lakes Bantu societies reckoned descent through both parents' lines; they did not feel the need to differentiate between the lines when they thought about composing their communities. They inherited this practice (and the ideology that its terminologies encoded) from their Mashariki Bantu ancestral communities. However, some of these Great Lakes Bantu communities could have emphasized unilineality, perhaps better to conserve hard-won accumulations of domesticated lands and animals. Words that suggest both lineal and nondifferentiated descent ideologies may be reconstructed to the Proto Great Lakes Bantu era, between roughly 500 B.C. and A.D. 500.

It seems that the greatest challenges to reproducing the homesteads and settlements built by Great Lakes Bantu speakers lay in securing access to people—children and followers—not in controlling access to land. Like nondifferentiated descent, an ideology of inclusiveness may have made it easier for newcomers to join the community. Circumcision and initiation groups may have played a role in securing access to people during the earliest phases of Lakes social history.[21] But other Great Lakes Bantu communities could, if they chose to, deploy a distinctly unilineal ideology in defining the terms and conditions for full membership in their settlements. Those who chose this tactic may have done so in times of relative shortages of land: a successful *rugàndá* or *eka* may have been one capable of controlling access to land. Archaeological evidence for intensive iron production in southern Rwanda, northern Burundi and northwestern Tanzania suggests that these zones were relatively densely settled. The pollen record also tells us of fairly massive environmental change, even soil degradation, which could have only heightened relative shortages of farm land and increased relative amounts of pasture. These were precisely the places where communities might have invented unilineality in order to exclude some people from access to productive property and knowledge.

The initial development of lineality facilitated certain refinements in modes of reckoning descent and inheritance. East Nyanzans appear to have emphasized matrilineal principles of descent and inheritance, perhaps so they could incorporate male newcomers from neighboring Southern Nilotic and Southern Cushitic groups more easily.[22] East Nyanza-speaking groups may have been settled rather thickly in the zone of wetter lands in the Tarime highlands, inland from the comparatively drier lakeshore area. On the other hand, West Nyanza and Western Lakes societies (and probably the Greater Luhyia as well) developed principles of patrilineality so that men (or women who acted on behalf of the patrilineage) could control lineage wealth in land and livestock in the large drier patches of the Karagwe Depression that were settled far more thinly by Sudanian, Sahelian, and Cushite peoples, and by some pioneering Great Lakes Bantu societies. These developments will be discussed more fully in Chapters 4 through 6.

Complicating a woman's lineage identity at marriage was the key development in the emergence of lineality between the Great Lakes and the Western Lakes and West Nyanza eras, some 2000 to 1500 years ago. After that, between 1500 and 1000 years ago, the institutional and inheritance-related innovations which assured this potentially divided lineage identity for women were consolidated as part of the attempt to address the environmental and productive crises that arose between A.D. 400 and A.D. 800. Marrying a woman out of her natal lineage was an old practice. What was new, then, was the value of a patrilineage's control (exercised differently by male and female members) over wealth and alliances brought to them by marrying "their" women "out".

The social world of individuals who lived between the Great Lakes more than 2000 years ago would have been structured by a pyramidal sense of identity and difference. The **bihúgo* (plural of *kihúgo*) and the *mahanga* (plural of *ihanga*) were their largest imaginary, location-based units. Residential groupings of dispersed and exogamous units, described by the *rugàndá* and the *eka*, gave individuals their primary social identities and located them in a physical place. But the lines of these larger-scale units converged in the individual who always possessed several specific, if evolving, social identities. These identities were gendered (by house and body metaphors) and described by age (circumcision groups and their age-sets). Kinship terminologies helped to define them as well. All these identities marked subordinate and superordinate social relations (junior/elder; unmarried/married; childless/parents), as well as other forms of unequal status (landed/landless; homestead owner/dependent). Yet the practical considerations of land, labor, and procreation that defined this variety of group identities also formed the means to build fundamental conceptions of political and healing power. Together, units of group identity and the specific agricultural and environmental challenges that they faced constituted the stuff of discursive and semantic creativity, of philosophy, ethics, and ideology. They offered to people the resources to remake themselves and to remake the core social relationships of material struggle.

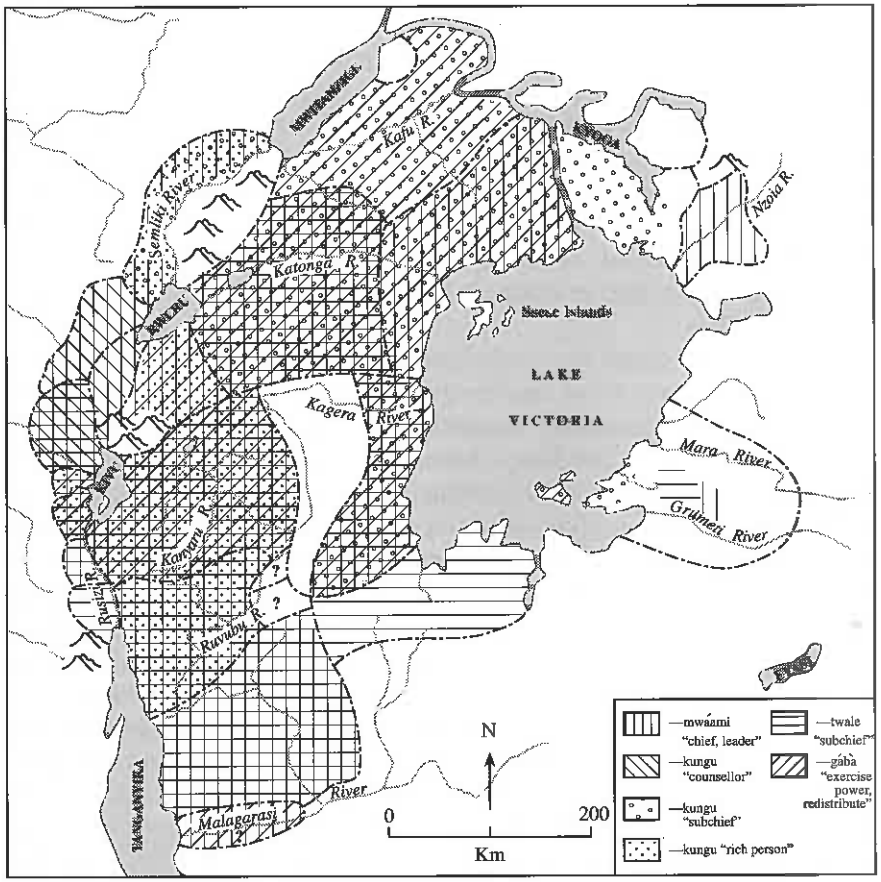
CULTIVATING POLITICAL COMMUNITIES

What are the general purposes of and relations between units of social organization and political practices, just how do "politics" intersect with "institutions"?[23] Politics refer to relations of power and to the strategies and means used to maintain, contest, and transform those relations. Politics are also activities directed at powerful authorities that involve appeals to collective identity and mobilization of resources. Practices that reproduce, challenge, or transform ideology are also political practices. Institutions might thus be understood as locations and means through which political activity is practiced in its many guises. In this formulation, institutions tend to obscure or blend the individual within a collectivity and thus to merge the individual into collective action. In the early history of the Lakes region the boundaries defining the individual and the collective cannot be discerned easily. But by understanding institutions as groups of people who compete or collude with each other, no single institution assumes a dominant position. There is no essentialist "institution" apart from the individuals and collectivities that invest it with meaning and power. But the bundles of power relations, the collective actions aimed at powerful authorities, and the bundles of practices that constitute or transform ideology become visible historically in the domain of the institution. For all its shortcomings, institutional history tells us how people could achieve their hopes and it tells of the places where they suffered defeats. The individual made the institution but they did so within ideologies of power that directed their choices of which institutions to use and when to use them. What is more, their actions in institutional contexts could redefine ideologies of power.

Between the Great Lakes, social institutions and practices provided arenas of interaction, accommodation, and conflict across social spaces, and these arenas gave character and dynamism to typologies of social life. In daily routine, the various parts of dispersed and rooted space defined the practical range of places for Great Lakes Bantu persons to win their livelihoods. But the affairs of daily life animated and were animated by theories of power and by the institutions that embodied social action. Those institutions and practices that define a certain geometry of social, political, and medical life will be outlined here.

The Instrumental Challenge

Redistribution of wealth and at least the illusion of a tightly woven social fabric were achieved mainly through a leader's instrumental power and ritual control over people and property. In the early periods of Great Lakes Bantu settlement, that leader was the **mwaámì* (261; **baámì*, plural) whose power, whose ability, lay partly in dividing up and redistributing wealth. This attribute was neatly expressed by the verb **kugábìra* (164) "to divide up, distribute," associated with a leader's art and responsibility (Map 3.1).



Map 3.1 Political Offices in Great Lakes Bantu.

Was the *mwaámì* a big "man" on the model Vansina has offered for Western Bantu social history?[24] It seems only partly so. The major difference appears to have been that the *mwaámì* of Great Lakes Bantu societies gained her or his office in part through their lineal identity,[25] whereas unilineality seems to have played little or no role in sustaining the big "men" of early Western Bantu social life. In some areas of the Lakes region the *mwaámì* was primarily a kin-group leader, a role seemingly analogous to that of an elder (**mukúrú*, 204) in societies where the *mwaámì* had become a king. However, whether a kin-group leader or a king, a *mwaámì* could not expect to win such standing through his kinship relations alone. So, Vansina's model

has much to offer in understanding why a *mwaámì* should have come into existence. As a divider and redistributor, the *mwaámì* may have been the hub around which outsiders—persons not sharing the *mwaámì*'s lineage—could be drawn to an area settled first by the *mwaámì* and members of her or his lineage. The *mwaámì*'s ability to offer to a newcomer the protection of a settled group in return for that newcomer's labor in opening up unused lands to agricultural production (and in return for the newcomer's help in defending lands already settled) meant that the earliest Great Lakes Bantu communities could expand their settlements into new areas and swell their numbers at the same time.

Chiefs (*baámì*, plural of *mwaámì*) partly detached their authority and status from webs of reciprocal kinship obligations by exploiting their presence on the crowded political stage alongside homestead and lineage heads, healers, smelters and other notables. Chiefs relied on food systems that yielded surpluses in order to support a growing number of dependents. In Western Lakes societies, each chief could claim certain products (foods, beer, small stock, certain hunted animals) from a territory specifically under his control. This territory was called the *kihúgo* (118) in the Kivu Rift Valley.[26] The diverse and presumably highly productive food systems came under the ritual and (much less clearly) the extractive control of a set of leaders, the *mwaámì* and the **mutwále* (260), a "subchief" who did not command a *kihúgo*.

A subchief (*mutwále*) possessed a blood tie to a more powerful leader (the *mwaámì*) and controlled a defined unit of territory. The hereditary and territorial association probably developed in the Western Lakes period, or up to about 800. To the east, in West Nyanza societies, the available evidence does not allow a clear statement about whether or not hereditary links or territorial control, or both, inhered in the office of the *mútwále*, which by about 1000 meant "subchief of a ruling group."

Another institution, that of the **bakungu*, (209, 210; *mukungu*, singular) a "hereditary group of leaders,"[27] extended the duties and powers of the *mwaámì*. These leaders appear to have been appointed by the *mwaámì* and to have possessed general ritual and juridical responsibilities. A *mukungu* was also a rich person, a person with land and followers. Ethnographers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries described the *bakungu* as having been the *mwaámì*'s agents, probably her or his clients.[28] Great Lakes Bantu peoples derived the noun from the older, Proto Bantu verb **kukúnga* (208) "to gather, assemble," an extension of meaning which underscored the idea that leaders should compose communities by incorporating followers into them.

Great Lakes Bantu-speaking leaders and followers understood their relationship to be mutually beneficial. Metaphors aside, the etymologies of their words for clientship explicitly reveal a discourse about the two-way streets that were patron-client relations. Because clients could vote with their feet, patrons could not place onerous burdens on them.[29] On the other hand, a

client who was kinless (**bucweke* 158, 275)—that is someone who had no preordained place on the social map—often sought through clientship to achieve just such an identity. But a root in a family, lineage, or clan took generations to grow strong. Clients who hoped that their grandchildren or great-grandchildren might enjoy the benefits of full membership in a *rugàndá* or an *eka* could not afford to be too hasty in casting a vote of no confidence against a cruel patron by moving on to another. New clients and "real" family members did not automatically have the same status, even though they both had more access to a group's political and productive resources than outsiders could hope for.

Political leaders with integrative control over land and people thus emerged partly from families organized along principles of lineal descent and partly from the successful integration of followers. These two features may have organized the expansion of settlement through the leaders and the new lands their clients could clear and put under crops. That is, the *mwaámì*, the *mutwále*, and the *mukungu*, through the practice of *kugábìra*, wove webs of reciprocity between patrons and clients that increased the chances for surviving periods of stress on the food system.[30] These stresses may have created *kugábìra* in the first place, namely as a means to organize marginal persons as land developers in return for legal, spiritual, and political protection. These patron-client functions also included a ritual role for the leaders, a role that paralleled that of the Great Lakes Bantu healing complex, which may have come into existence simultaneously.

Consolidation and Resistance

Integrating people of unequal status into large social groups created problems for leaders. These problems revolved around both practical and discursive matters. Settling disputes over inheritance, theft, failed marriages, and other material issues lay at the center of one part of a leader's responsibility (**kulàmula* [216], "to arrange, judge," and **kutegeka* [248], "to govern, put in order"). Success in these matters reduced the possibility of flight by disgruntled members of the village or neighborhood. The controlled environments of a tribunal offered individuals of differing status a context in which to meet and contend with each other over practical, material concerns. The successful resolution of disputes, that is, successful in the eyes of the litigants and of the audience, certainly reinforced a chief's and his subchief's legitimacy in the minds of followers.[31]

But the bond between leader and follower also required a periodic reaffirmation through which people might even reformulate that bond. This seems to have been achieved, in part, through large-scale feasts, such as those that took place during the harvesting of first-fruits or the first planting of main crops. During such agricultural festivals, which sometimes lasted for days,[32]

large numbers of clan members and other friends might assemble to participate. The mere fact of such broad participation reminded *baámì* (plural of *mwaámì*, "chief") and *bakungu* (plural of *mukungu* "wealthy leader") that they ruled by the will of their adult followers.[33] Still, such ceremonies might have masked a leader's privilege behind rituals whose offers of renegotiation or reaffirmation were withdrawn in daily life, during the rest of the agricultural cycle. Even if these ceremonies occurred in the homestead, and involved only the leader of the homestead and her or his kinspeople and clients, they achieved the same result.[34] Such a celebration existed in Mashariki Bantu times, and seems to have revolved around root crops.[35] If that ancient celebration existed in Great Lakes Bantu societies, it was replaced by **kuganura* (175), "to celebrate first-fruits," a harvest festival celebrated over grain crops and pulses.

Between these two poles of political and social life—conflict resolution and popular participation in leadership—lay the central challenge to political leadership in the ancestral tradition. A leader's success depended on their supporters' achievements in farming, fishing, gathering and hunting as well as on their success in composing healthy, cohesive communities. One threat to leaders lay in the potential for either successful or alienated followers to become sources of instrumental power—of access to wealth and people—independent of them.[36] The agricultural festivals together with sanctioned roles of settling disputes may well have involved roles reserved for those who were established firstcomers in a territory.[37] Language evidence and the ethnographic record combine to depict political leaders as capable of tremendous instrumental power, but also capable of losing control over it.

Great Lakes Bantu-speaking communities had a word, **ngòmà* (179), that epitomized this contradiction. In the meaning "drum" (180), this word was not their invention: their Proto Bantu-speaking ancestors knew the word. Even the wider association of drums and healing were probably far older than Great Lakes Bantu times.[38] In Great Lakes society, however, communities saw in the drum not only a potent part of healing practice but also a concrete symbol of leadership. For Great Lakes people, as for so many other Africans, the drum created a sense of community identity, it expressed that identity concretely and, thus, in its associations with healing and chiefs, the drum represented the power of leadership.[39] The fact, then, that they created the concept of **kugòma* ("to revolt") from the drum of chiefship tells us beyond the shadow of a doubt that they understood their right to resist the instrumental power of "superiors."

Still, the neat trick of turning an important symbol of a leader's power—the drum—against her or him does not mean that leaders failed to defend themselves and their power. Great Lakes societies made war on each other and they did so through alliances (**kutabala* [243], "to help, aid, make war"). Such conflicts probably reflected clashes between centers of power, rather

than between leader and follower. Territorial leaders concluded treaties of mutual aid, perhaps growing out of the webs of client relationships that helped to knit together neighborhoods and their territories. These same leaders possessed the capacity to convert adults into warriors and to mount military expeditions of unknown size.

Warfare by alliance existed alongside the even older concept of fighting expressed in the verb **kudùana* (159), "to fight (with each other)." However, the struggles waged by fighting in this manner were most likely restricted to interpersonal quarrels or intractable feuds: the verb often means "to quarrel" in Great Lakes Bantu languages.[40] Making pacts of mutual aid which could have been easily converted into military alliances (*kutabala*), implies both that regular people were expected to bear arms (spears and the bow) and that there was a far greater degree of regional political complexity during the centuries between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200 than has so far been thought.[41] Indeed, there is no cause for surprise because environmental, archaeological, and language evidence combine to suggest that concentrated populations lived in certain parts of modern-day Rwanda, Burundi, and northwestern Tanzania. When people feel that they are short of space (however subjectively defined), there seems to be a greater propensity for them to enter into violent conflicts.

Warfare and resistance thus must have occurred in Lakes homesteads and neighborhoods. But a far more consistent concern for Great Lakes farmers and herders lay in their fields and pastures—just beyond their homestead gates—and within and between those homesteads. Illness, in its many forms, called forth from Lakes societies a flood of erudite contest and accommodation, a rich tableaux of philosophy and practical learning about the roles of health and healing in setting the moral terms of a social order concerned mainly with fertility. The history of health and healing completes the story of the social side of the Great Lakes Bantu ancestral tradition.

HEALING PEOPLE

Great Lakes Bantu speakers built theories of power and health which expressed a tremendous concern for the fecundity of land and the fertility of people. Eugenia Herbert finds a paradigm of socially regulated fertility at the heart of African metallurgical practice.[42] John Janzen and other scholars have also weighed the importance of fertility and the social control of its power by healers.[43] This paradigm brings together African concern for balanced fertility with their understanding of the power of speech to rally the spiritual and social forces necessary to ensure and to regulate continued fertility.

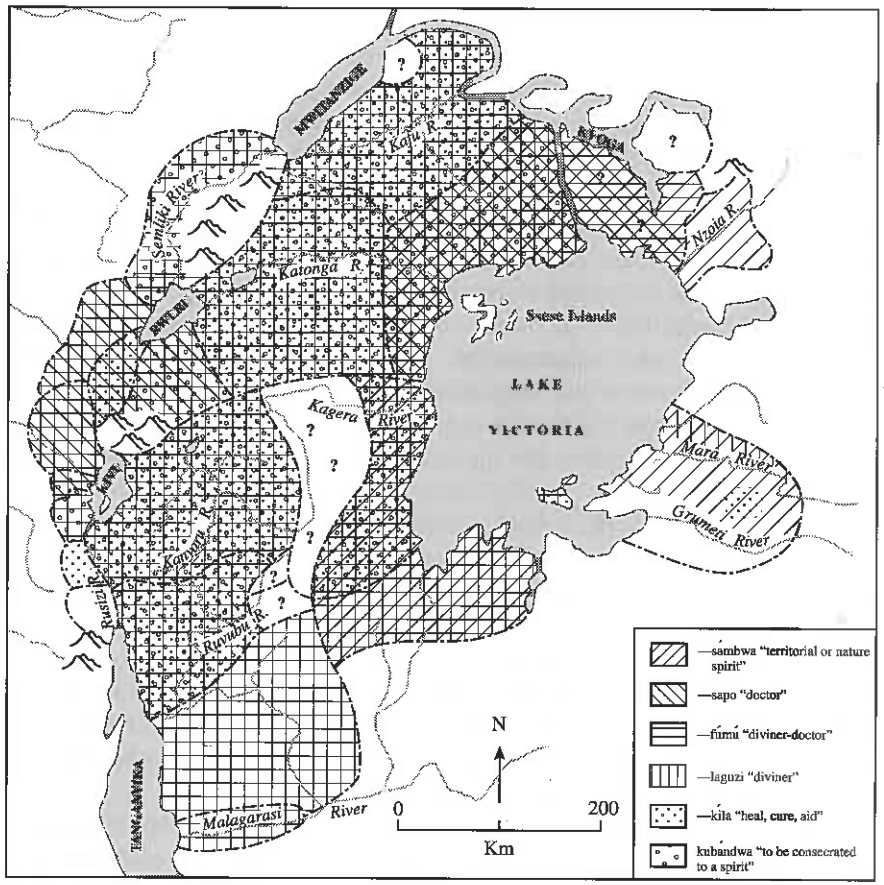
John Janzen suggests that "A synthetic picture of an institution is correct not because it reflects the statistical averages of all practices but because it explains the underlying logic. And this may not correspond to any particular

local tradition."[44] It is just such a synthesis that will be attempted here. But the causes and effects of such reasoning are not sealed within the logic of the institutions. Historically specific material conditions shaped the forms in which the synthetic logic played out. It was not only the personnel and strategies of healing complexes which gave to them their historical shape. The challenges of settling new lands, of relying on new sources of food and technology, and of living within changing arrays of group identity and political process also drove the development of healing practice between the Great Lakes. If, in the best of times, politics and group identity located individuals in social space, healing grappled most powerfully with how to restore that grid when it dissolved.

The Challenge of Prosperity

Great Lakes people understood that health and prosperity went hand in hand. On the one count, their diviner-doctors, the **bafÚmÚ* (313; **mufÚmÚ*, singular) possessed a variety of powers, among them the power of healing, **kukíla* (310; "to surpass, overcome, heal, cure"), which also meant, for Lakes peoples, "to prosper." On the other hand, that same word, *mufÚmÚ*, derives from Proto Bantu **kukÚma* "to become honored," a verb that derives the Proto Bantu noun **mukÚmÚ* (207), a term Vansina glosses as "leader, big man."[45] Where the statuses of "healer" had been contained within a single term, **mugàngà* (284), and those of "leader, honored person" expressed in a single term, *mufÚmÚ*, Great Lakes Bantu communities innovated new terms for leadership; they gave to *mufÚmÚ* the specific meaning "diviner-doctor" and used *mugàngà* to name specific sorts of healers, some of whom might practice divination (Map 3.2). Great Lakes Bantu speakers thus created a division between divining and chiefship that prefigured the emergence of formalized political structures through which people could concentrate instrumental power. In a diversified agricultural system, the new importance of fecundity and prosperity also found a voice in the person of the rain controller, **mugimbi* (291 and others), an ancient ritual role that sometimes had a territorial reach.[46]

The meaning "diviner-doctor" for *mufÚmÚ* in Great Lakes Bantu represents a semantic shift. As those communities began to emphasize the importance of creative power to a *mufÚmÚ*'s legitimacy, the explicit ties between ritual power and wealth and the *mukÚmÚ* made by other societies in the Bantu-speaking world decreased in importance.[47] Healers used the creative power of prophecy to maintain or restore social balance. Together with the authority of the rainmaker, and regardless of whether these new meanings could be practiced by a single individual, ideas about power diversified between 500 B.C. and A.D. 500. The Great Lakes Bantu agricultural synthesis



Map 3.2 Healing Practice in Great Lakes Bantu.

brought with it innovations on older theories of an individual's ability to act upon the world.

Because it took place at the same time that Great Lakes Bantu speakers were experimenting with new crops and domestic animals, this change in meaning was probably part of that process. The *mufÚmÚ* filled a gap that had grown up between the abilities of a *mwaámì* and the abilities of a *mugàngà* to maintain social and political balance. What was new, in the last centuries B.C., was that people faced novel challenges to the prosperity of their food systems and to the integrity of their group identities. The accumulated effects of iron production and farming in chronically constricting forests challenged food productivity by placing soils at risk of erosion and nutrient depletion. Prosperity for early pioneers, who sought relief from these conditions, may have been thwarted by the unfamiliar progress of the wet and dry sea-

sons at the fringes of the better-watered lands they tried to settle. And the continued presence of Sudanian, Sahelian, and Cushite peoples, once vital sources of agricultural and pastoral expertise but now merely established communities in areas that were coming to be considered desirable for setting up homesteads, might have been a source of social tension.

Not all Lakes homesteads could have hoped to face these problems with the same success. The inequalities in status and wealth that existed within and between homesteads and neighborhoods may well have worsened under the conditions for experimentation with new lands imposed by these challenges. If so, even the redistributive and ritual duties of a *mwaámì* would have been considerably taxed and the *mufÚmÚ* might have been called upon to fill the gap. The *mufÚmÚ* may even have been originally a controller of rain. In any event, the *mufÚmÚ*'s creative power of prophecy stood in contrast to the practical expertise of the *mugàngà*, the **musapo* (349),[48] and the midwife (Map 3.2).

Doctors and midwives should not be thought to have been in any way inferior to the *bafÚmÚ*. They were consummate experts at everything from bonesetting to successful deliveries.[49] The main difference between them seems to have been that *bafÚmÚ* were seen as effective because of the power of their speech over the objects or medicines they used. They could place and remove spells; they understood (indeed, they helped to create) the proper fields of the spirit world. In short, they could deal with the disruptions in the balance between the land of the living and the land of the departed that resulted from the social tensions of daily life.[50]

With the invention of the *mufÚmÚ's* office Great Lakes Bantu speakers recognized highly versatile experts with ties to ancestral knowledge, that special knowledge that centers power over life, death, and nature.[51] The *mufÚmÚ* was also the diviner. Though there came to be specialized diviners (**balàguzi*, 318; **mulàguzi*, singular) and spirit mediums (**mbándwa*, 271), the *mufÚmÚ* was often called upon to divine. Indeed, many Lakes Bantu societies conceive of *mulàguzi* and *mbándwa* as a specific kind of *mufÚmÚ*.[52] The *mugàngà* was not bound by the moral injunctions that seem to have described the limits of a *mufÚmÚ's* authority; the *mugàngà* (and *musapo*) may have become wealthy in ways that would not have attracted the same community concern about witchcraft that similar accumulation in a *mufÚmÚ's* homestead would attract. Because a diviner-doctor (*mufÚmÚ*), a diviner (*mulàguzi*), and a spirit medium (*mbándwa*) all had regular contact with the powers that their clients understood to direct life, death, and nature, they might deploy these powers to antisocial ends, they might become a **mulozi*, a "witch." The *mufÚmÚ* and the *mwaámì* may have had shared interests insofar as they were both responsible for protecting and restoring the welfare of people in their districts by mediating the potentially terrible and potentially beneficent forces of nature, death, and life. Such responsibility enjoined

them to follow moral codes of conduct, ritual sanction, and special behavioral requirements.

Their power revolved around the central theme of speech. In the case of political leadership, the power of speech appeared to flow from the legitimacy of an office (a chief's or a judge's). Powerful political speaking mixed the importance of instrumental control over persons with the importance of creative control over knowledge. Such leaders may also have been seen as teachers.[53] In the healing labor of *bafÚmÚ* and *balàguzi*, speech appears to have been directed toward the restoration of balance, to be achieved in part through a material object whose creative power a diviner's speech activates (**kikomero* [312], "efficacious thing, activated medicine;" **-sango* [348], "charm;" **-gica* or **-gico* [286], "amulet, charm; blessing;" and **mapembe* [334], "medicine horn").[54] Distinguishing the powers of the *mugàngà* from those of the *mufÚmÚ* may have turned on the *mufÚmÚ's* use of words to activate or deactivate medicines, to activate the power of *kukíla* implicit in medicines or to "tie up" dangerous medicines. When a *mufÚmÚ* speaks to make a medicine "hot" (activated) or "cold" (deactivated) considerable opportunity exists for the healer, the patient, and anyone else present to transmute dominant elements of the views expressed by the medical complex in general.[55]

The power of speech overlapped political and healing complexes. Both verbs **kulàgila* (387), "to promise" and **kulàgula*, "to make divination," had their origins in the complex of meanings attached to the powers of speech expressed in the ancient meanings of "to promise," "to say farewell," "to teach," "to show," and "to command," all meanings that Great Lakes Bantu speakers could have expressed with forms of the root **kulàga*. It is well known that healers developed their great concern for fertility, especially for the fertility of women and the fecundity of land, in order to secure a more general social balance.[56] However, this relation to society may have placed healers (*bafÚmÚ* and *balàguzi*) in an ambiguous position with respect to political leaders and it may have led at different times either to healers forming alliances with political leaders or to their resisting political power.[57] These are themes that were no doubt important to Great Lakes Bantu communities but they do no emerge clearly in the historical record until rather more recent times. Thus, they will occupy us in Part III.

The powers of healing (*kukíla*) and divination (*kulàgula*) could be abused, they could be used by healers for antisocial purposes and by leaders for self-aggrandizement. Here, the philosophy of binding speech is expressed by **kulòga* "to curse, bewitch," where the power of speech resided in the intentions of a speaker who had acted in selfish or antisocial ways.[58] Great Lakes Bantu speakers generally reckoned ethics as a function of the marriage of speech to a person's intention, to specific powerful things. Ethics emerged as the set of judgments passed on human or natural actions, not on intention

alone.[59] Moral power and its effects were not abstractions, they were inherently and ultimately social.

For example, in addition to the three types of illnesses that Janzen[60] recognizes as part of many different Bantu speaking medical systems—natural or God-caused illnesses, human-caused illnesses, and those illnesses resulting from the misuse of medicines or the mishandling of spirit forces—Great Lakes Bantu speakers named a general state of misfortune and suffering with the verb **kuduáda* (279). This condition stood in contrast to purely physical injuries, a contrast that expressed a fundamental divide in the understanding of disease etiologies.[61]

In addition to the morally powerful speech of diviners, individuals could also rely on spirit possession to diagnose illness and, more importantly, to produce new healers. The Great Lakes Bantu term **kubándwa* (271), "to be seized in the head by a spirit and consecrated to it," captures this idea. Historians have studied *mbándwa* priestesses and priests during the era of the kingdoms, but this healing complex has much older roots (Map 3.2).[62] What is common to all periods is the notion of consecrating an individual to a spirit, quite commonly in association with a specific shrine. The institution thus had at its ideological heart the power to speak for departed persons and other types of spirits (nature and animal). And there appear to have been few restrictions on who could be possessed (and, therefore, few restrictions on who might become a medium). In descriptions of *kubándwa* from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, possession and initiation into its activities involved a personal transformation that mirrors a rite of passage in which, as John Janzen offers, "the sufferer becomes the healer."[63] *Kubándwa* thus also gave people the opportunity for creative, discursive acts whereby their affliction might become their strength.

Summary

The compositional metaphors of political power and the balancing metaphors of healing power served to organize social life and convert misfortune and adversity into stores of further healing power.[64] Around A.D. 500 these organizational and healing practices may have sought to resolve tensions in unilineal inheritance systems, tensions induced by shortages of the best agricultural lands at the heart and the frontiers of the Great Lakes Bantu world. The healing complex developed together with these and with other forms of social organization, such as territorial chiefship, partly by elaborating on old themes in social philosophy, such as the power of speech. These institutions and ideas drove the intensification of agricultural activity in two ways. First, political leaders channeled a new expansion of settlement northeast and southwest and also consolidated the denser settlements in the heartland. Secondly, healers may have helped

to manage the new challenges to settlement by offering new interpretations of disease and health to the pioneers.

Even though it may seem that political leaders mainly wielded an instrumental power and that healers wielded a creative power, such a division is misleading. Both healers and chiefs may have sought to concentrate their authority, chiefs over relations between people and property and healers over relations between people themselves (whether departed or still living). But both figures experienced contradictory results because they needed each other in order to succeed. The problem lay in the impossibility of monopolizing creative power.

The key datum here is the Great Lakes Bantu word **mahàno* (299), "marvel, horror, wonder," a potentially excessive moral force, very difficult to direct, which flows from certain conditions and occurrences.[65] This noun takes different meanings in different subgroups of Great Lakes Bantu: it meant "counsel" in Proto Kivu and "misfortune" or "punishment" in Proto West Highlands. It retained its most general meaning of moral power in West Nyanza societies. Lakes people derived it from a Great Lakes Bantu verb **kuhàna* (294), "to chastise, punish," which clearly expresses the element of moral justice implicit in the noun's more abstract referents. In the kingdom of Bunyoro, this power was extraordinarily dangerous;[66] it was impossible to achieve central control over it beyond the lifetime of a single person, even a king. The ideology of *mahàno* argued that only legitimate kings, chiefs, and healers might safely come in contact with *mahàno* and direct or deflect its power for the good of all. Ordinary persons were to try to stay clear of it.[67] But, like *kukíla*, *mahàno* seems to have expressed the sense of social balance that accompanies the achieving of unitary political control.[68] Remember that *kukíla* meant both "to prosper" and "to heal" in Great Lakes Bantu. These associations differ from those of composing communities through redistributing people and property, both of which were ideological associations serving the patron-client complex and its needs to settle new lands. Might there have been a fundamental tension between the potentially centralizable instrumental power of *kugábìrà* "to redistribute" and the dispersed, creative power of *mahàno*, powers that a leader constantly sought to unite but ultimately never could?

WEALTH: WHAT DOES IT EXPLAIN?

Before we examine the later changes in the social side of the ancestral tradition between the Great Lakes, we need to discuss ways of identifying surplus production in the historical record. The dynamics of surplus production illuminate the historical relations between material well-being and instrumental power, on the one hand, and between material well-being and creative power on the other hand. They show how the two sorts of power

overlap each other in practical consciousness even if they appear to have had their distinct realms of operation in discursive consciousness. Surplus allows accumulation and accumulation invites both inequality and followers. Surplus, in its cultural and practical definitions, drives the growth of bounded units of social identity and it shapes the divisions that develop within and between these units. It is thus important to understand the forms and meanings given to surplus in Great Lakes Bantu societies.

Unfortunately, we do not possess the detailed regional studies of the floral, faunal, and technological aspects of sites for the Great Lakes region that exist for the Greater Kalahari.[69] Thus, we lack a firm basis for ranking the importance of productive potentials for the earliest settlements (before about 800) within a regional system of exchange in the Great Lakes region. Should we succeed in quantifying different forms of surplus, even the more visible pastoral forms, we might be able to perceive a hierarchy of Early Iron Age sites.[70] Even if we cannot yet model regional political economy during the Great Lakes Early Iron Age, strong hypotheses about the potential for surplus production can nevertheless be posed.

The storied past of ironworking between the Great Lakes offers an excellent beginning. S. Terry Childs' and Peter R. Schmidt's work in Buhaya has revealed that a complex technology of iron production existed there by 500 B.C.[71] Other scholars working in Rwanda and Burundi have revealed that equally complex iron production existed in the uplands east of the Kivu Rift Valley in the middle of the last millennium B.C.[72] It is possible to argue that advanced technical expertise implies the production of sufficient agricultural surplus to support the seasonal activities of specialized smiths and smelters. But it is also possible that ironworkers labored during the dry season, when work in the fields was minimal. Actual archaeological recognition of concentrations of wealth, currencies, or other symbols of surplus production might come with the excavation of Early Iron Age burials, should archaeologists be fortunate enough to locate any.[73] Despite the extreme scarcity of these data, the presence of iron-producing technology around the western Great Lakes region by 500 B.C. itself provides circumstantial evidence for surplus food production, even if deployed in support of a specialist's activity for only a portion of the agricultural cycle.

At the level of the individual homestead or lineage, access to labor and land shaped the potential for surplus production. For this reason alone, cross-cultural interactions very likely involved strategies of intermarriage and clientship aimed at garnering vital agroecological knowledge about unfamiliar environments, and perhaps, the seed stocks of the farmers who dwelt in those unfamiliar places. The result of such interactions may have been new social relationships that generated increasingly complex patterns of land tenure and use.[74] Widening claims on land, delineated by and helping to create the reciprocal obligations of kinship ties and of clientship, might have gradually bound together different ecological zones in a single homestead's use rights. In this scenario, significant advantages would accrue to the homestead able to use the widest variety of lands for grazing, as well as for farming. Such a well-placed homestead might also have been better able to weather the vagaries of rainfall and crop pests and to have sustained itself into and beyond the centuries of environmental stress early in the first millennium A.D. We might easily imagine that such well-placed homesteads existed precisely in the zones of intensive smelting activities.

These potential advantages of marriage across social boundaries might have encouraged homesteads to bring "outsider" men or women into their communities. Indeed, contemporary historical research often shows certain clanspersons or family members deploying strategic marriage practices to gain advantageous access both to land and labor for themselves and their clan or family group.[75] The potential value of in-laws thus underscores the pivotal importance of marrying well if lineage-heads hoped to increase their labor force, the lands over which they had use rights, and their potential for producing the surplus that could be used to purchase iron goods and to patronize ironworkers.

However, we must be dissatisfied with the underlying implication that marriage alliance and the abundance of ecological choice alone account for the differential development of political and medical relationships between the Great Lakes. By reconnecting their technical and botanical repertoires to the social relations that put that knowledge to use, one soon perceives the tension in the equation. Why should the creation of new social relations and ideological sanctions have accompanied increases in food production and the struggle to control and allocate any available surplus, if 2000 years ago and more, homesteads under onerous burdens from chiefs could easily relocate since they had at their disposal such a wide variety of methods to collect and produce food? To approach an answer to this question we must consider the historical relationship between technological change and cultural processes of securing subsistence. When farmers in a given environmental milieu confronted a new tool or crop, they made a series of practical decisions. Embracing new material forces altered both economic and social life by altering the possibilities for meeting basic subsistence needs.[76] As specializations and experiments with differing combinations of food producing and food collecting strategies showed optimal returns[77] and as social relations adjusted to the labor profiles needed to work those strategies, it would have become increasingly difficult to vote against an onerous leader or to abandon a trusted healer by moving.

CONCLUSION

The interrelated developments of agricultural diversification, environmental degradation, the rise to prominence of Great Lakes Bantu speech, chiefship

and healing complexes, all implicate the centuries between 500 B.C. and A.D. 500 as a period of vital social change. The contours and content of ancient theories or metaphors of power repeatedly emerge as important parts of understanding this social history because farmers and herders used these theories to explain the effects on their personal and social lives of their practical abilities as producers and as social actors. These theories of power were also ideologies that bound together knowledge of environment, economy, and society to give meaning to important social acts in fields we call medicine, politics, and technology.

The spirit medium transformed or domesticated potentially dangerous power into benign mystical energy, into potentially beneficent capacity.[78] This was something very much like what smelters did with iron ore when they made metal out of it and it was similar to what chiefs did with communities of diverse individuals and families when they settled disputes and redistributed material wealth. Recent work on African metallurgy has shown that Africans developed theories of ironworking from theories of human parturition and the dangers of creative acts.[79] The link between these theories is historically linear. It began with an analogy that connected the medical notion of the power of *kukíla* to that of the smith and the smelter. Next, people attached the compositional and "powerful speech" metaphors to chiefs. Because the metalworking complex is younger than the medical complex, at least so far as taxonomies from the former are not reconstructible to Proto Bantu or Proto Mashariki Bantu, and taxonomies for the former are well-developed in Great Lakes Bantu, this must have been the sequence.

Redistributing wealth and integrating followers were ideological statements about "good" leaders, as well as practical statements about the art of building and expanding communities. The practice of sorcery and attitudes toward it expressed moral judgments against antisocial individuals and grappled with the realities of inequality in an increasingly agricultural world. The risk that these inequalities could become dangerous to social life in a homestead or in a neighborhood is expressed clearly in two verbs which were part of Proto Great Lakes Bantu speech, **kuteega* (370) and **kutamba* (87), both of which carry two meanings: "to set traps" and "to bewitch someone." The Great Lakes Bantu notion of chastisement and wonder, expressed by *mahàno*, was part of a theory of moral justice that enjoined humility in its exercise. The ideology of *mahàno* argued that a leader should possess special abilities and powers to be able to come in contact with *mahàno* and that contact with *mahàno* was a necessary part of a leader's just action.[80] The idea of speech as a binding act, a creative act, and a fluid, contradictory feature of oral culture runs throughout these tenets of Great Lakes Bantu social philosophy.

Great Lakes Bantu-speaking intellectuals built theories about health, healing, and evil—and the proper domains for each—which expressed magisterially the risks to the homestead and hamlet of social disarray. Together with

chiefship and control in the homestead, the healing complex between the Lakes added new flourishes to the Great Lakes Bantu philosophy of power as dispersed, dangerous, and very difficult for individuals to control. Here, at the heart of this complex lies a theory about social and personal health that emphasized balance, an equilibrium within the body and between the contending social forces that touched on the life of a person, the life of her or his natal homestead, the life of the new homestead they began after marriage, and the life of the hamlet they lived in.

Unique challenges lay ahead for Western Lakes and West Nyanza societies and their descendants. They experienced considerable environmental change and developed expertise in banana farming and cattlekeeping that differed radically from the eclectic food systems of their Great Lakes Bantu predecessors. These changes were accompanied by equally radical shifts in the roles of clientship and of unilineal systems of reckoning descent and inheritance. People hoped to draw new boundaries between the proper domains of male and female power by creating newly gendered identities. They expressed these identities through a hierarchy of political leaders and social ranks as well as through a growing prominence and power for spirit possession and healing. Part III turns to these social histories.

NOTES

[1] Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low, "The Built Environment and Spatial Form," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990), 453-505; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 87-95.

[2] Archaeological evidence for the presumably dispersed settlements of herders has not yet been found; see Reid, "Research in Karagwe," 5. For seemingly dense concentrations of settlements, see Schmidt, "Industrial Locales," 87-88, 93-94; MacLean, "Late Stone Age," 300-301.

[3] Kamba Muzenga, "Les mots pour 'maison' en bantou," *Bulletin des Séances de l'Academie royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer* 38, 4 (1993), 595-623. The word for these houses may be a loan from Central Sudanic **dzo* "house;" see Ehret, *Classical Age*, 78, 112-16; Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 121 and 122.

[4] Ehret, *Classical Age*, 116; but see photographs of Nande (Zaire) villages in a classic western Bantu layout (Vansina, *Paths*, 78) in Jean Annaert, *Contribution à l'étude géographique de l'habitat et de l'habitations indigènes en milieu rural dans les provinces orientale et du Kivu* (Brussels: Académie royal des sciences coloniales, 1960), 156, 157.

[5] Lucy Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1934), 15; Walter H. Sangree, *Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 12, 115; Edmond Césard, "Le Muhaya," *Anthropos* 32 (1937), 29; for Ukara (Tanzania), see Léon Roussez, "L'Île d'Ukara" (Ukara and Mwanza, 1930, manuscript), 3.

[6] Vansina, *Paths*, 74-75.

[7] John H. M. Beattie, "Nyoro Marriage and Affinity," *Africa* 28, 1 (1958), 3, n. 1; see also Jan Vanhove, *Essai de droit coutumier du Ruanda,* Mémoires, Collection in-8°,

Section des sciences morales et politiques, t. 10, fasc. 1 (Brussels: Institut royal colonial belge, 1940), 9, fn1.

[8] Ehret, *Classical Age*, 149-50. Vansina (*Paths*, 268) derives the meaning "large social group" from CS 657-9 *-dóng- "arrange, heap up, pack carefully" rather than from "line of objects," CS 644. But the latter has a wider distribution. His derivation may thus be only Proto Western Bantu and not Proto Bantu in the meaning he gives.

[9] Luise White argues that the comparative study of who is believed to contribute what to the making of babies would take us a long way into the social history of gendered kinship systems. See L. White, "Bodily Fluids and Usufruct: Controlling Property in Nairobi, 1917-1935," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 24, 3 (1990), 418-38, especially 423-44.

[10] This etymology was first proposed to me by Jan Vansina, letter to author, 19 June 1991.

[11] But the reflexes of *-*jì*- are irregular in Forest Bantu languages; see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 119, 137, 138.

[12] See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 105-10; see also Ehret, *Classical Age*, 151-55.

[13] I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 37; Rene Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi, Tome III: Religion et Magie* (Brussels: Institut royale colonial belge, 1956), 49; Pauwels, *Imana*, 143-48; L. Viaene, "La religion des Bahunde (Kivu)," *Kongo-Overzee* 18, 2/3 (1952), 394; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 47-51; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 193; Alexis Kagamé, *Les organisations socio-familiales de l'Ancien Rwanda* (Brussels: Académie royal des sciences coloniales, 1954), 53-57; David S. Newbury, "The Clans of Rwanda: An Historical Hypothesis," *Africa* 50, 4 (1980), 389-403, especially 394, 398; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Les arbres et les rois: sites historique au Burundi," *Culture et Société* 1 (1978), 35-47.

[14] In East Nyanza-speaking communities, where stock-raising was ancient and where the best well-watered lands were rarer, people emphasized descent ideology in order to conserve property through marriage alliances. Different bundles of property were inherited through the maternal house and through the patrilineage. See Roots 35, 43, and 155 in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*; Jan Bender Shetler, "The Landscapes of Memory: A History of Social Identity in the Western Serengeti, Tanzania" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1998), 169-85; Edward C. Baker, "The Bakuria of North Mara Tarime, Tanganyika Territory" (Musoma, 1935, mimeographed), 62-68; Hugo Huber, *Marriage and the Family in Rural Bukwaya (Tanzania)* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1973); Otto Bischofberger, *The Generation Classes of the Zanaki (Tanzania)* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1972); Eva Tobisson, *Family Dynamics Among the Kuria* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1986), 98-103; Thomas N. Håkansson, "Descent, Bridewealth, and Terms of Alliance in East African Societies," *Research in Economic Anthropology* 12 (1990), 156-57, 163; Thomas N. Håkansson, *Bridewealth, Women and Land: Social Change Among the Gusii of Kenya* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1988), 33-34, 38.

[15] For the Congo Basin see Vansina, *Paths*, 106-14.

[16] Ehret, *Classical Age*, 152.

[17] Richard A. Levine, "The Gusii Family," in *The Family Estate in Africa*, ed. Richard F. Gray and Phillip H. Gulliver (Boston: Boston University Press, 1964), 70; Tobisson, *Family Dynamics*, 128-37.

[18] See John H. M. Beattie, "Nyoro Kinship," *Africa* 27, 4 1957, 335, for evidence of nondifferentiated descent in Nyoro (Uganda) society. Also, childless men in Rwanda might adopt a sister's son (or a brother's son), see Vanhove, *Essai*, 8.

[19] Vanhove, *Essai*, 8; May Edel, *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969 [1957]), 9-10.

[20] See Ehret, *Classical Age*, 157, 319.

[21] See Ehret, *Classical Age*, 155-58.

[22] See footnote 14 for ethnographic references.

[23] This discussion relies on Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 55ff.; and Feierman, "Struggles for Control," 74-85.

[24] Vansina, *Paths*, 73-83.

[25] Ehret, *Classical Age*, 146-47, 154-55.

[26] Richard Sigwalt thinks the meaning in Western Lakes languages was "area ruled by *mwami*" ("Early Rwanda History," 140). See also Daniel Biebuyck, "L'organisation politique des Banyanga: La chefferie Ihana," *Kongo-Overzee* 22, 4/5 (1956), 312. In Koonzo the noun refers to "a section of the Mountain (Rwenzori) under the control of a chief." The *kihúgo* is also subject to curses over its entirety, see Lieven Bergmans, *Les Wanande Tome II. Croyances et Pratiques Traditionnelles* (Butembo: Assomption Butembo-Beni, 1971), 100-103. The *mukúrú*, or chief, is responsible for restoring balance, see Bergmans, *Les Wanande*, 101. These matters are developed further in Chapter 4.

[27] See D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 55 where he notes that *bakungu* possessed an hereditary status with "the power to call public meetings, to decide on succession, to consult public oracles, or to set in motion certain rituals"; see also Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 283; L. Viaene, "L'organisation politique," 116; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 22; Eugène Hurel, "Religion et Vie domestique des Bakerewe," *Anthropos* 6, 2 (1911), 69-71.

[28] Speke, *Journal*, 461; Lloyd A. Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy: A Century of Political Change Among the Basoga of Uganda* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 147.

[29] Igor Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 68ff.; see also the following roots in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*: *kusenga* (Root 234), *-jldù* (Root 196), *mugaragu* (Root 169).

[30] Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Exchanges and Hierarchies in the East African Interlacustrine Kingdoms," *Research in Economic Anthropology* 4 (1981), 19-30, especially 22-23.

[31] Colle, "L'organisation politique," 664, 667-68; Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 70-71; M. Bradfer, "Palabres territoriales et de frontiers," (n.p., 1925); Edel, *Chiga*, 118ff.; Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 241.

[32] Michel Bahenduzi, "Le muganuro et l'umwaka: deux fêtes rituelles du Burundi ancien" (Mémoire de Licence, Université du Burundi, Bujumbura, 1977); Frances M. Rodegem, "La fête des prémices au Burundi," *Africana Linguistica* 5 (1971), 207-54; Jan Vansina, *La légende du passé: Traditions orales du Burundi* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1972), 5-6; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Les années de l'Eleusine, du Sorgho, et du haricot dans l'ancien Burundi. Ecologie et idéologie," *African Economic History* 7 (1979), 75-92, and, "Le sorgho dans l'agriculture, la culture, et l'histoire du Burundi," *Journal des Africanistes* 52, 1/2 (1982), 145-62, especially 145-51; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 201-209; Eugène Simons, *Coutumes et institutions des Barundi* (Elizabethville: Éditions de la revue juridique du Congo Belge, 1944), 108-13; George Smets, "L'Umuganuro (fête du sorgho) chez les Barundi," *Culture et Société* 3 (1980), 58-64; Julien Gorju, *Face au royaume hamite du Ruanda* (Brussels: Vromant & Co., 1938), 42-50; Gille, "L'Umuganuro," 370. See also descriptions of the *ovusyano* harvest ceremony in Bunande (Zaire) in Bergmans, *Les Wanande Tome II*, 84-88.

[33] Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Roi, religion, lignages en Afrique orientale précoloniale: Royautés sans état et monarchies absolues," in *Les Monarchies,* ed. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986), 120-22; Jan Czekanowski, *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet, I: Ethnographie: Zwischengebiet, Mpororo, Rwanda* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1917), 263; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 209-15, 219-24; Sangree, *Age, Prayer and Politics*, 38, 87-88; Smets, "L'Umuganuro," 59.

[34] Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 236-41; Edel, *Chiga*, 11, 122-23; speaking of Bagisu from Masaaba (Uganda), John Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 167-68; Bernard Zuure, *Croyances et pratiques religieuses des Barundi* (Brussels: Bibliothèque Congo, 1929), 21; Chrétien, "Le sorgho," 152; Gille, "l'Umuganuro," 371; John Roscoe, *The Bakitara or Banyoro* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 201-203.

[35] See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 220, "*kulimbula*" which means "to eat first fruits; uproot a tuber." **Kuganura* is discussed further in Chapter 4 and the Epilog.

[36] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 44.

[37] Chrétien, "Les années," 145-51, and, "Le sorgho," 85-88; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 209-11; Bergmans, *Les Wanande*, 85; P. Colle, "Les clans au pays des Bashi," *Congo* 2, 1 (1922), 351.

[38] John M. Janzen, *Ngoma: Discourses of Healing in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), Ch. 2.

[39] The idea that drums create identity was proposed to me by Jan Vansina, letter to author, 16 November 1996.

[40] Where centralized states formed, the meaning could have rather more violent content. See Ishumi, "Kingdom of Kiziba," 723.

[41] Christopher Ehret, "The East African Interior," *UNESCO General History of Africa Volume III: Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century* (Paris, London, and Berkeley: UNESCO, Heinemann, and University of California Press, 1988), 640.

[42] Herbert, *Iron, Gender and Power,* passim.

[43] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 153-72; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa: The Bakongo of Lower Zaire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), Ch. 3 and 4; Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology*, Ch. 1; Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, Ch. 4; J. Matthew Schoffeleers, *River of Blood* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), Ch. 2 and 3.

[44] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 86.

[45] Vansina, *Paths*, 274; see also Ehret, "The East African Interior," 636-37.

[46] See Schoffeleers, *River of Blood*, 44; John H. M. Beattie, "Rainmaking in Bunyoro," *Man* 64 (1964), 140-41; Zuure, *Croyances*, 144-50; Bergmans, *Les Wanande*, 88-91; Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, 28-34. See also Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 272 and 374.

[47] MacGaffey, *Religion and Society*, 34-39, 65-69; Vansina, *Paths*, 97.

[48] This specialist possessed ritual duties in Western Lakes societies. See Chapter 4; see also Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 59-60, 293; Diane L. Zeller, "The Establishment of Western Medicine in Buganda" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1971), 20-60

[49] L. Viaene, "La vie domestique des bahunde (nord-ouest du Kivu), *Kongo-Overzee* 17, 2 (1951), 111-56, especially 124; Zeller, "The Establishment," 53-56.

[50] John M. Janzen, "Ideologies and Institutions in the Precolonial History of Equatorial African Therapeutic Systems," *Social Science and Medicine* 13B (1979), 318, argues "...it is clear that [in African medicine] an important dimension of its preoccupation is

that of building up a sound moral order—a preventive social construction—rather than of chasing down minute pathologies as they appear."

[51] Feierman, "Struggles for Control," 73-85; MacGaffey, *Religion and Society*, 65-72.

[52] Cohen, *Womunafu's Bunafu*, 192, n. 5; Edel, *Chiga*, 141-48, 162-64, 170; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 207; Susan Reynolds Whyte, "Knowledge and Power in Nyole Divination," in *African Divination Systems*, ed. Phillip M. Peek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 156-57; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 133ff.; Joseph Nicolet, "L'Uganda en général et le Rwenzori en particulier," (n.p., 1951, typescript), 10; L. Viaene, *Table d'Enquête des Bashi* (Bukavu, 1954, typescript), 474; Hurel, "Religion," 83-87.

[53] Suggested by relict distribution of the root **-dàg-* "to teach" and its deverbative in Nyoro and Nkore *omuragizi* "commander, instructor." See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 250.

[54] Vansina, *Paths*, 95-99; Janzen, *Ngoma*, 67-68; MacGaffey, *Religion and Society*, 139-45; Edel, *Chiga*, 132; Bergmans, *Les Wanande*, 25ff.; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 92; Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 70-71.

[55] Phillip M. Peek, introduction to *African Divination Systems*, 11; Janzen, *Ngoma*, 128-29; Whyte, "Knowledge and Power," 167-70.

[56] Schoffeleers, *River of Blood*, 53-70, 297, n. 19. For healers in rituals which include royalty, see Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology*, 35; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 209-15; Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 69-93; Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 63.

[57] Feierman, "Struggles for Control," 116-18; Janzen, *Ngoma*, 74-77; Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology*, 61ff.; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 67ff.; Tantala, "Early History," Ch. 8 and 10; Freedman, *Nyabingi*, 81-83.

[58] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 65-66. After A.D. 1000, subtle differences emerged in the shape this axiom took; see Chapters 5 and 6. See Vansina, *Paths*, 299, for linguistic evidence.

[59] MacGaffey, *Religion and Society*, 160-68; Malcolm J. Ruel, "Religion and Society Among the Kuria of East Africa," *Africa* 35, 2 (1965), 295-306, especially 297-98.

[60] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 65-69.

[61] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 64.

[62] See Iris Berger, "The *Kubandwa* Complex of Interlacustrine East Africa: An historical study, c. 1500-1900" (Ph.D. diss., Univesity of Wisconsin—Madison, 1973) passim; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Pouvoir État et autorité mystique: L'infrastructure religieuse des monarchies des grands lacs," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 68 (1981), 112-30. The later history of *kubándwa* appears in Chapter 6, for the ancient roots see Ehret, "The East African Interior," 640.

[63] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 105-7.

[64] Janzen, *Ngoma*, 105-6.

[65] John H. M. Beattie, "On the Nyoro Concept of *mahano*," *African Studies* 19 (1960), 145-50; Tantala, "Early History," 265ff.; Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 72; Viaene, "La vie domestique," 129-31.

[66] Beattie, *The Nyoro State*, 117-22; Tantala, "Early History," 441.

[67] Tantala, "Early History," 265. This is reminiscent of the Shambaa conception of *he nguvu*, "locus of power," see Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 92. But situations like *kubándwa* initiation and blood brotherhood ceremonies brought regular people into contact with *mahàno,* which specialists then had to cleanse them of; see Beattie, "Mahano," passim.

[68] Tantala, "Early History," 266, 392; Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 72.

[69] Hall, *Farmers*, 74-102; James Denbow, "Congo to Kalahari: Data and Hypotheses about the Political Economy of the Western Stream of the Early Iron Age," *African Archaeological Review* 8 (1990), 139-76, especially 169, 171.

[70] For a study of regional concentrations of iron production in Buhaya see Schmidt, "Industrial Locales," 77-94; for salt production in western Uganda see Connah, *Kibiro,* passim. For later periods, new research in southern Uganda promises a better understanding of pastoral ecology and ceramic and iron-manufacturing, Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping," in press; and D.A.M. Reid, "Ntusi and the Development of Social Complexity in Southern Uganda," in *Aspects of African Archaeology: Papers from the 10th Congress of the PanAfrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies,* ed. Gilbert Pwiti and Robert Soper (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996), 621-27.

[71] Schmidt and Childs, "Innovation and Industry," 92; Schmidt, *Iron Technology in East Africa,* passim.

[72] Van Grunderbeek et al., "L'âge du fer ancien," passim; Van Grunderbeek, "Chronologie," 53-80.

[73] See Pierre de Maret, *Fouilles Archeologiques dans la Vallee du Haut-Lualaba, Zaire* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1985). For the period after A.D. 1000, see Francis Van Noten, *Les tombes du roi Cyirima Rujugira et de la reine-mère Nyirayuhi Kanjogera: Description archéologique* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1972); Connah, *Kibiro,* 132-57; Peter T. Robertshaw, "Munsa Earthworks: A Preliminary Report," *Azania* 32 (1997), in press; Reid, "Ntusi Social Complexity," 623ff.; Jean Hiernaux and Emma Maquet, *Cultures Préhistorique de l'Age des Métaux au Ruanda-Urundi et au Kivu (Congo-belge), deuxième partie,* Mémoires in-8°, Académie royal de sciences d'outre-mer, Classe de sciences naturales et médicales, n. s., t. 10, fasc. 2 (Brussels: Académie royal des sciences d'outre mer, 1960), 5-102, especially 31-53.

[74] See Parker Shipton, "Strips and Patches: A Demographic Dimension in Some African Land-Holding and Political Systems," *Man (N.S.)* 19, 4 (1984), 620-30.

[75] For marriage alliance in equatorial Africa see Vansina, *Paths,* 82-3, 184-88. For the Great Lakes region see David William Cohen, *Womunafu's Bunafu: A Study of Authority in a Nineteenth-Century African Community* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 98-101, and, "The Political Transformation of Northern Busoga, 1600-1900," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 22, 3/4 (1982), 470ff.; Håkansson, *Bridewealth, Women, and Land,* 27-39; Abel G. M. Ishumi, *Kiziba: The Cultural Heritage of an Old African Kingdom* (Syracuse, New York: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1980), 88-92; Lawrence D. Schiller, "The Royal Women of Buganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23, 3 (1990), 472.

[76] For experiments and "specializations in eclecticism" see Vansina, "A Slow Revolution," 22-25.

[77] Jan Vansina, *Habitat, Economy, and Society* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1992), 8ff.

[78] Janzen, *Ngoma,* 173-79.

[79] Childs and Killick, "Indigenous African Metallurgy," 326-28; Herbert, *Iron, Gender and Power,* 115-27; Peter R. Schmidt, "Cultural Meaning and History in African Myth," *International Journal of Oral History* 4, 3 (1983), 167-83.

[80] See Tantala, *Early History,* 265, and Beattie "The Nyoro Concept of *mahano,*" 148-49; L. Viaene, "L'organisation politique des Bahunde," *Kongo-Overzee* 18, 1 (1952), 29, and, "La vie domestique," 125, 129-30.

PART III

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, 800 TO 1500

One branch of the inheritors of the Great Lakes Bantu ancestral tradition remained in the Kivu Rift Valley. They spoke Proto Western Lakes Bantu as the middle of the first millennium A.D. approached. Beginning in the ninth century, they developed banana farming and cattle pastoralism but they did not always do so in the same places. Against the background of these agricultural developments, they changed the social world of their ancestral tradition. They restricted access to land by developing patrilineal idioms of inclusion and exclusion based on land-holding groups who promoted themselves as "firstcomers" in the region. Women who lived in the Kivu Rift Valley between 800 and 1100 responded to this emphasis on patrilineality by developing motherhood as an institution for garnering access to land: as mothers they gained standing and political clout. Groups that succeeded in controlling access to land through these institutions attracted larger and larger followings because their communities offered the best chances for social health and mobility. After 1000, they invented the office of the **bajinji* (178), non-kin based ritualists who intervened in the sometimes tense relations between the living and the dead, especially the dead of the political collective that the chief represented. The *bajinji* served as a sort of council that checked the potential excesses of chiefs whose instrumental power over land had won them considerable control over people. Gendered identities drove much of this burst of political and ritual invention, none more so than that of motherhood. Mothers engaged with the heart of patriarchal ideology to convert their children into immediate sources of instrumental power and into sources of ease later in life. All these changes were accompanied by the creation of social identities for lower-status persons—the dependents or poor persons who entered patrilineages as underlings. Within lineal,

[70] For a study of regional concentrations of iron production in Buhaya see Schmidt, "Industrial Locales," 77-94; for salt production in western Uganda see Connah, *Kibiro,* passim. For later periods, new research in southern Uganda promises a better understanding of pastoral ecology and ceramic and iron-manufacturing, Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping," in press; and D.A.M. Reid, "Ntusi and the Development of Social Complexity in Southern Uganda," in *Aspects of African Archaeology: Papers from the 10th Congress of the PanAfrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies,* ed. Gilbert Pwiti and Robert Soper (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996), 621-27.

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[79] Childs and Killick, "Indigenous African Metallurgy," 326-28; Herbert, *Iron, Gender and Power,* 115-27; Peter R. Schmidt, "Cultural Meaning and History in African Myth," *International Journal of Oral History* 4, 3 (1983), 167-83.

[80] See Tantala, *Early History*, 265, and Beattie "The Nyoro Concept of *mahano*," 148-49; L. Viaene, "L'organisation politique des Bahunde," *Kongo-Overzee* 18, 1 (1952), 29, and, "La vie domestique," 125, 129-30.

PART III

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, 800 TO 1500

One branch of the inheritors of the Great Lakes Bantu ancestral tradition remained in the Kivu Rift Valley. They spoke Proto Western Lakes Bantu as the middle of the first millennium A.D. approached. Beginning in the ninth century, they developed banana farming and cattle pastoralism but they did not always do so in the same places. Against the background of these agricultural developments, they changed the social world of their ancestral tradition. They restricted access to land by developing patrilineal idioms of inclusion and exclusion based on land-holding groups who promoted themselves as "firstcomers" in the region. Women who lived in the Kivu Rift Valley between 800 and 1100 responded to this emphasis on patrilineality by developing motherhood as an institution for garnering access to land: as mothers they gained standing and political clout. Groups that succeeded in controlling access to land through these institutions attracted larger and larger followings because their communities offered the best chances for social health and mobility. After 1000, they invented the office of the **bajinji* (178), non-kin based ritualists who intervened in the sometimes tense relations between the living and the dead, especially the dead of the political collective that the chief represented. The *bajinji* served as a sort of council that checked the potential excesses of chiefs whose instrumental power over land had won them considerable control over people. Gendered identities drove much of this burst of political and ritual invention, none more so than that of motherhood. Mothers engaged with the heart of patriarchal ideology to convert their children into immediate sources of instrumental power and into sources of ease later in life. All these changes were accompanied by the creation of social identities for lower-status persons—the dependents or poor persons who entered patrilineages as underlings. Within lineal,

gendered, and clientelist identities, life after the banana revolution in the Kivu Rift Valley between 800 and 1500 involved considerable negotiating room for persons to craft themselves however they saw fit. Chapter 4 tells these stories.

Another branch of the inheritors of the ancestral tradition remained near the shores of Lake Victoria. They spoke Proto West Nyanza Bantu during the middle centuries of the first millennium A.D. They faced the end of the millennium by embracing bananas and specialized pastoralism and by embarking on radical changes in their social worlds. This period was marked by the end of about 500 years of climatic stability, which was followed by alternating periods of high and low rainfall amounts. As a result of these developments, West Nyanza Bantu-speaking societies faced two major challenges. They had to devise new ways to manage mounting pressures on access to the richest farmlands near the coast of Lake Victoria. And they had to manage the tensions created by concerns with land and environmental uncertainty. They addressed the first set of issues by creating principles of property inheritance designed to restrict the dissipation of property from generation to generation and by emphasizing the importance of being first in a territory. They faced the second challenge by retooling some ancient concepts of health and healing both to treat troubled persons, like those with no heirs, and to reserve for firstcomers a special relationship to the health of the land—a relationship that newcomers expected their firstcomer patrons to maintain.

At the opening of the second millennium A.D., these arrangements began to shift dramatically. The principal strategy for composing communities shifted from a policy of wholesale incorporation of newcomers around a longer-established firstcomer group, to a policy of crafting hierarchical access to land and the protection of community through the creation of hereditary concepts of nobility and royalty. Conflict arose between older clan-based land controllers and the new institutions of kingship and nobility, especially in the old core areas of settlement by Lake Victoria. This conflict drew people into new forms of healing practice in response to new concepts of danger and social health that grew out of changes in the geometry of gift exchange, clientship, and the politics of kingship. The new royal groups, who were initially highly successful community builders, colonized the idiom of kinship to create a class of persons with noble standing. These nobles were probably successful chiefs whose standing might be inherited. Royalty and nobility posed a direct threat to older clan-based land controllers, the firstcomers who had incorporated newcomers into the growing communities between 400 and 800. In order to maintain their high standing, firstcomer groups converted their ancestral ghosts into territorial spirits, **basámbwa* (347), which were capable of blessing their power over their lands. Groups and individuals who left the core areas of settlement near Lake Victoria for the drier grasslands to

their west converted these territorial spirits, the *basámbwa* (plural of **musámbwa*), into portable spirits concerned with specific combinations of fertility, fecundity, and the general prosperity of certain classes of territory (such as lakes or wilderness). The portability and wide scope of their efficacy meant that these new, named territorial spirits and their retinues of officiants offered a counterweight to the royal ambition to concentrate political power. Chapter 5 presents the history of this region.

The same period of environmental uncertainty that framed the invention of nobility and portable territorial spirits near Lake Victoria, drew some people into the central grasslands between the Kagera and the Kafu rivers. This development, the subject of Chapter 6, had profound implications for those who lived in the Kivu Rift Valley and near the shores of Lake Victoria. Between 900 and 1100, as they moved into the savannah and settled at places like Ntusi, Munsa, Mubende Hill, and sites south of the Kagera River's great bend, pioneers exploited the mobility and territorially expansive character of the patron-client ties that they could create with cattle. New challenges to social health in the savannahs caused the pioneers to build on the sometimes uneasy alliances between healer and chief to manage their territorially expansive societies. These challenges also caused them to build new relationships to the worlds of creative power in the institution of spirit mediumship.

The six hundred years of environmental shifts, between 900 and 1500, encompassed the opening, consolidating, and closing of the savannah frontier. That long historical process created new social tensions between herders and farmers practicing mixed agriculture over healing practices and access to property. One way they addressed these tensions lay in innovations by spirit mediums in the *kubándwa* institution. Some of these priests and mediums converted the deceased leaders of local ruling lines into figures of creative power. Through the healing work of the mediums, these ancestors could help communities meet the challenges to social well-being caused by inequalities in the concentrations of instrumental power over cattle and by rulers' attempts to separate women (in their status as wives) from cattle. Two famous transformations of spirits' territory took place. One occurred in the northern sphere of the savannah around the figures of the Cwezi and the other occurred in the southern sphere of the savannah around the figure of Ryángombe. Ambitious leaders of local ruling lines deployed new forms of clientship, through cattle gifts, to create the territorially larger debt and service relations that marked political growth after 1200. After 1500, kings drew upon these networks of debt and service to mount military expeditions, which created severe social tension on the closed savannah frontier. All these facets and phases of the social history of the savannah revolved around environmental uncertainty, cattle, and grain farming.

Part III tells the social history of these three regions; the Kivu Rift Valley, the lands immediately west of Lake Victoria, and the central savannahs. They are histories that have at their center the dialectical interplay of environment, agriculture, and social practice in shaping historical experience and consciousness. They are histories whose distinctive contours of political complexity owe a great debt to the historical development of gendered identities and healing practice. They are histories that repeatedly show an enormous flexibility in the joins and divides between creative and instrumental power that were crafted by the most recent of the many Great Lakes Bantu speech communities.

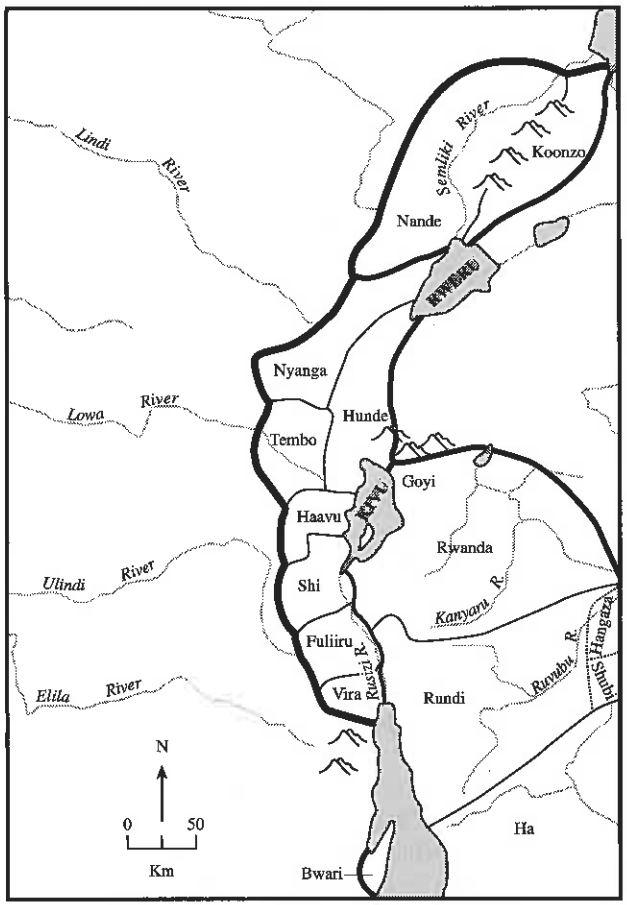
4

The Kivu Rift Valley

The highlands were folded, dense interconnections between widely divergent environments. One had merely to walk down the hill from her *rugó* to enter the different worlds of the swampy lowland. Two ancient communities of Western Lakes speakers gradually settled the zones that stretched from the low, hot plains of the Rusizi River valley, where the river meets Lake Tanganyika, to the dramatic fingers of the Rwenzori mountains which peer down on Lake Mwitanzige from the heights at their northern tip. These communities, the Kivu and Rwenzori, inherited the agricultural tradition of their Western Lakes ancestors, which, together with their institutional innovations in the social, political, and healing arts, led eventually to the entire area around the Kivu Rift Valley coming to be Bantu-speaking (Map 4.1).

This chapter will review the course of that settlement and suggest how people in the Kivu Rift Valley combined some of those institutional innovations to craft a history that is at once distinctive and also very much in the tradition of the ancestral Great Lakes Bantu cultural world. The creation of patriarchal units of social organization and the development of new forms of patron-client relations prompted profound changes in gender relations and laid bare the different aims of leader and follower. Continued adherence to ancient principles of social justice, which were at the core of healing practice, signaled the care with which Kivu societies nourished their cultural heritage, even if people disagreed about what was important in it.

While some parts of life in the Kivu Rift Valley at the end of the first millennium A.D. would have been familiar to Great Lakes Bantu speakers who lived in the last millennium B.C., other parts would have seemed strange and foreign. On the one hand, communities living in the Kivu Rift Valley still built hierarchical social relations to ensure healthy growth and to promote continued productivity by concentrating ritual and instrumental power



Map 4.1 Western Lakes Linguistic Geography.

around individual leaders. Leaders understood that they needed to integrate their followers, by ritual and by bonds of gift exchange. At the same time, they knew they had to maintain the boundaries that defined these social inequalities in order to protect against the possibility of the community's dissolution, should followers vote with their feet. This ancient calculus continued to be a core feature of Kivu social history.

However, a long-departed ancestor who might return from the last millennium B.C. to the Kivu Rift Valley of a thousand years later, would be shocked by several things. First, the social distance that separated leader from follower had widened considerably. Secondly, the number of political offices and the institutional separation of instrumental from creative power would seem bizarre and overdrawn. The ancestor's descendants had also invented new ways to struggle over their social landscapes: they had created the ideas

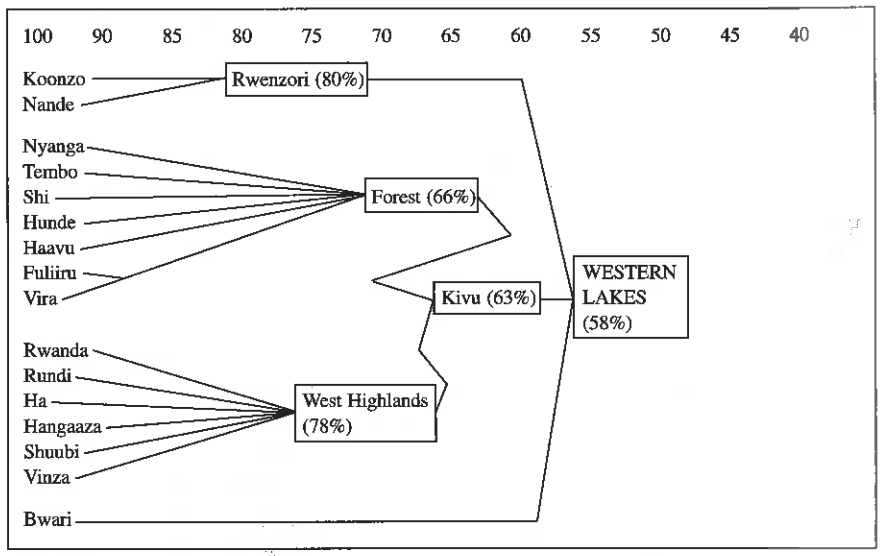


Figure 4.1 Tree Diagram of Western Lakes Bantu. Glottochronology reckoned at a shared retention rate of 73-74% per thousand years.

of "official history" and of the "official historian." Indeed, the world of the Kivu Rift Valley would have seemed both familiar and strange to a visitor from the era of Great Lakes Bantu society.

This chapter will focus on the historical development of these continuities and innovations by arguing that, between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries A.D., societies in the Kivu Rift Valley faced and overcame the characteristic challenges of a frontier environment. Up to the middle of the first millennium A.D., the biggest challenge for their ancestors had been attracting and keeping followers. Kivu societies solved that dilemma only to confront a different one. They had to invent ways of managing and superintending social hierarchies in contexts of increasingly densely settled environments. This was an entirely different challenge indeed and it marked Kivu society as irrevocably different from its Great Lakes and even from its Western Lakes ancestors. In order to appreciate these novelties we need first to trace the expansion of Bantu speech in and beyond the Kivu Rift Valley.

SETTLEMENT IN THE KIVU RIFT VALLEY TO 1500

The ridges of the eastern and western walls of the Kivu Rift Valley either drop down into the lakes that nestle at the bottom of the Rift or gradually dissolve into several isolated plains that themselves melt into one or the other of the Rift lakes. Whether they end in Lakes Tanganyika, Kivu, Rweru, or

Mwitanizige (Map 4.1) or in the plains of Buhaya, Kinyaga, Rusizi or Busongora, the ridges of the Kivu Rift Valley connected the highlands to the lowlands. Thus, as Western Lakes communities perfected grain farming and livestock raising, the rich possibilities for settlement in the higher or in the drier parts of the zone opened up before them. The comparative linguistic evidence summarized in Chapter 1 suggests that this expansion was extremely rapid, begun some 1700 to 1800 years ago.

Two new communities came into existence as a result of this expansion. They spoke Proto Rwenzori and Proto Kivu languages. Rwenzori speakers settled the Semliki valley and the lower spurs of the Rwenzori and Mitumba mountains.[1] Kivu speakers settled around Lake Kivu.[2] Kivu speakers formed a short-lived community. The slight difference between Proto Kivu's 63 percent group average rate of cognation and the 66 percent group average for one of its dialect groups, Proto Forest, suggests that a very brief interval (perhaps as brief as five or six generations) marked the time between the existence of one speech community and the next. During that short time, those few additional cognates shared by Forest languages were lost in what were to become West Highlands languages. Though brief, it was during this interval that Proto Kivu speech spread throughout much of the Rift (see Map 4.1).

The Proto Forest and Proto West Highlands communities display considerable differences in their group averages. West Highlands languages include Rwanda, Rundi, Ha, Haangaza, Shuubi, and Vinza. All share more items of core vocabulary (76 percent) among themselves than any of them shares with any language of the wider Western Lakes or West Nyanza groups, even when compared with those Western Lakes or West Nyanza languages that are spoken in areas adjacent to the West Highlands tongues.[3] In other words, Proto West Highlands formed a tightly-knit bundle of speech communities whose members were and have continued to be in contact with each other much more intensively than they were with any of their neighbors.

The same may not be said for the Forest languages: Nyanga, Tembo, Hunde, Haavu, Shi, Fuliiru, and Vira. These form a north to south chain of languages whose cognate percentages drop as one moves away from the mid-point of their geographical distribution. For example, Vira and Tembo, two languages of the Forest group spoken in areas that lay at opposite ends of this line, share only 59 out of 100 core vocabulary items. But Vira and Rundi (a member of the West Highlands group), neighboring languages from different groups, share 64 of those same core vocabulary items. It might help to think of Proto Forest as having consisted of Northern, Central, and Southern dialect clusters for a long time.

These cases reveal that two distinct forms of sociolinguistic change were underway in the Kivu Rift after 1700 or 1800 years ago. Groups like Proto Rwenzori and Proto West Highlands formed as discrete new speech communities at the peripheries of the old sociolinguistic ecumene: Rwenzori at the northern extremes of the ancient Proto Western Lakes community and West Highlands at the eastern edges of the Proto Kivu community. Groups like Proto Kivu and Proto Forest, on the other hand, which formed at the center of the Kivu Rift Valley, produced both a lower mutual intelligibility and a higher linguistic diversity along a north-south continuum. In the Kivu Rift Valley some groups consistently chose to move off into the nearby "frontier," for one reason or another.

These two sociolinguistic conditions characterized the fifteenth century as much as they did the seventh century, but they did so as part of radically different material conditions and social configurations. The centuries after 800 were marked by increasing experimentation with banana farming and livestock-keeping, as discussed in Chapter 2. The centuries before and after 1500 were marked by increasing political hierarchy and the creation of kingdoms. Still, the sociolinguistic conditions hinted at by lexicostatistics permit us to recognize two major eras of historical change. First, between A.D. 200 and A.D. 700, when Western Lakes communities shared and then lost a common social world. And, second, between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1400, when the distinct but intercommunicating social universes of Forest and West Highlands communities emerged and flourished.

CONSTRUCTING DOMINION OVER THE LAND

Between 200 and 700, Western Lakes societies understood that to have dominion over the land required access to two sorts of power. On the one hand, control over the land necessitated access to instrumental power over the use of the land and over the disposition of its produce. On the other hand, this instrumental control could not occur without access to the creative powers through which people could superintend the boundaries between natural and social life and thereby define relationships within their social worlds. To join these two goals, they innovated new forms of political and social organization where individuals and the groups they belonged to might wrangle over who would occupy the higher level in the emerging hierarchy, among other things. Hierarchy, then, came to define the politics of cultivating political communities, the arts of composing communities and of keeping them alive across the generations.

How did these early Western Lakes communities and their immediate successors define dominion over the land? How did they build a language of power over the land that accommodated leader and follower, herder, farmer, and hunter, as well as old and young, male and female? In short, what were some of the categories of social life crafted by the increasingly specialized agriculturalists who spoke, first Kivu, and then Forest and West Highlands languages between 700 and 1400?

Several of these categories of social life emerged largely intact from Great Lakes Bantu eras, but they sustained crucial innovations. Unilineal, dispersed, exogamous groups took new forms beyond the amorphous *rugàndá* and the *mulòngò* of ancient times. In addition, relations of patronage and clientship included a wider variety of forms, obligations, and social consequences. These seem to have expanded on the ancient idiom of political culture, where chiefly power and responsibility were tied to followers and their rights. Kivu speakers created new idioms of political culture, where the potential for tensions between leaders and followers over instrumental control of resources was pronounced. One of these innovations involved redefining the qualities that people could use to distinguish newcomers from firstcomers and to assign a different set of instrumental powers over people and productive property to each of those two groups. Instrumental control over access to land and cattle was the most important issue at stake in distinguishing newcomers from firstcomers. But innovations in the character of instrumental power were not by themselves enough to make Kivu communities successful in building social hierarchies.

In the four or five centuries before 1400, Kivu communities also elaborated on the foundational statements of the creative and healing powers of spirits, things, and socially gendered relations. To be sure, the distinction between creative and instrumental powers probably never was clear in practice—a patient and her healer always discussed what the healer was to receive for her work (**-higu* [301], "diviner's fees")—but the historical semantics of terms for types of power and authority reveal an ideology that distinguished between the two. The distinction limited chiefly influence by arguing that healers, diviners and ritualists (to name but a few of the people that a visitor to a chief's court might come across) possessed roles and responsibilities—and forms of legitimacy that authorized them—that differed from their instrumentalist counterparts, the judges, advisors, court favorites, and (later) military leaders. The semantic histories of words for different kinds of power show how people defined the territories where chiefs and healers were powerful.[4]

The earliest societies to speak Western Lakes languages inherited a much older understanding that two sorts of power were at work in the world. One was the power of creation from nothing or the power of the prime mover (**kuhángà*, 333). The other was the power of creating from the act of ordering, of assembling, of building something new from other things already in existence, such as stringing a bow (**kulema*, 388). This latter sort of power, an instrumental power, was what followers understood their leaders to possess. Creating from nothing, on the other hand, was the province of a distant divinity. These two words with these two meanings turn up as cognates in all of the Western Lakes languages (and even in some of their West Nyanza neighbors). They were, thus, part of the social consciousness of ancient

Western Lakes speakers who lived in the Kivu Rift Valley between 200 and 800.

But with characteristic flourishes, people in the Kivu Rift Valley expanded the range of the meanings that they assigned to these words. The creative power of *kuhángà* included the power to prevent rain (296)[5] and the power of *kulema* included the power of leadership (218). While controlling the natural environment and possessing the capacity to lead had been verbally distinct in Great Lakes culture, around the turn of the last millennium B.C., the powers of creation and of political leadership were joined together in the Western Lakes-speaking societies living in the Kivu Rift between 200 and 800. In their language, the same root, *kulema*, represented both creative power and the ability of a leader to dominate others. It seems thus quite likely that ancient Western Lakes communities understood that their leaders must possess both of these qualities.

Another conception of power, this time of power over land, grew up in the crucible of dramatic social change that marked the dissolution of Proto Kivu society, at the end of the first millennium A.D. People who spoke dialects of the Forest branch of these expanding, frontier societies invented the abstract noun **buhashe* (384), which represented the capacity to transfer land use rights to someone else, whether a newcomer or a kinperson.[6] The transfer itself (**kalinzi*, 222) was marked by other gift exchanges (**bushobole*, 394) and will be discussed more fully below. At this point, the significance of the invention of *buhashe* is the fact that the power people gave to it flowed mainly from instrumental concerns. The invention of *buhashe* indicates that ideologies of social integration had come to revolve around access to land in a fundamentally material fashion. A new era in the social history of power had opened during Proto Forest times, between 1100 and 1400.

In constructing dominion over the land, leaders and followers inherited ancient notions of integration (*kukúnga*) and conflict (*kudùana, kugòma*). But they did so under the influence of an expanding agricultural base, an expansion that generated a boom in the creation of new frontiers. To be sure, some of these zones were not entirely free of people, an impression that seems to be supported by the explosion of settlements in the grasslands after the tenth century (see Chapter 6). And those frontiers in the drier grassland zones probably were extremely sparsely populated until high levels of pastoralist expertise allowed people to settle there permanently. In both cases, newcomers saw or constructed these frontiers as "uncivilized" places that lacked recognizable social order.[7] The combination of expansion and the cultural constructions of open lands drove a dynamic process of societal growth which Igor Kopytoff has named the "internal African frontier."[8]

In the Western Lakes and Kivu eras, during the greater part of the first millennium A.D., the internal frontier called forth a tremendous creative burst of new forms of social organization and variations on the older forms, all of

which were intended to help revitalize political institutions, and invigorate or reform the healing arts. The familiar intersections of political and healing philosophies with the social units through which people practiced these philosophies generated a host of variations. After roughly 1100, three important variations stand out. First, people elaborated clear concepts of firstcomer rights to land and their ritual responsibilities for ensuring a balanced relationship between people and land. Second, men and women crafted a strong patriarchal ideology for descent politics through which they sought (among other things) to direct the inheritance of productive property. And, lastly, they added new dimensions to the leader-follower bond by emphasizing the transfer of productive wealth by building ties of patronage that involved rather more than the simple granting of use rights in return for a vague "allegiance." The gendered politics of patronage began to take shape.

At the end of the first millennium A.D., two interrelated social processes were thus involved in the construction of dominion over productive lands in the Kivu Rift Valley. First, people further developed the language of authority over land. That is, they organized and agreed on the terms and conditions of access to land and to the people needed to make the land yield food and resources. These terms and conditions had both local and regional or territorial sway and they changed shape depending on whether they were centered on bananas, on cattle, or on the older grain and root complex. Next, and equally important, they innovated forms of social identity in which membership was highly negotiable. These categories were deemed to correspond to the occupations of potters, herders, or farmers. But each had local faces with an enormous range of expressions. Access to land and access to social standing differed for people on either side of the familiar divides of age, gender, and wealth. But, together, they tell much of the social history of the Kivu Rift Valley between 1100 and 1400.

Patriarchalism and Political Hierarchy

One way to organize access to the social relations of land use was to restrict access to land itself. In the old Great Lakes Bantu units of social organization, people had been relatively noncommittal to principles of exclusion so that they could attract and integrate followers. This indifference to exclusivity waned in the Kivu Rift Valley, as the first millennium A.D. drew to a close. The evidence for this change is the invention of patriarchal reconceptualizations of the character of many of the units of social organization and the rights and responsibilities people could make them bear.

The first, and the larger of these units, were not patriarchal at all. The Forest and West Highlands versions of the old Western Lakes notion of "clan" (*rugàndá*) retained the open character of their ancestral forms. **Mashanga* (142) or **milala* (in Forest) and **bwooko* (154; in West Highlands) refer to

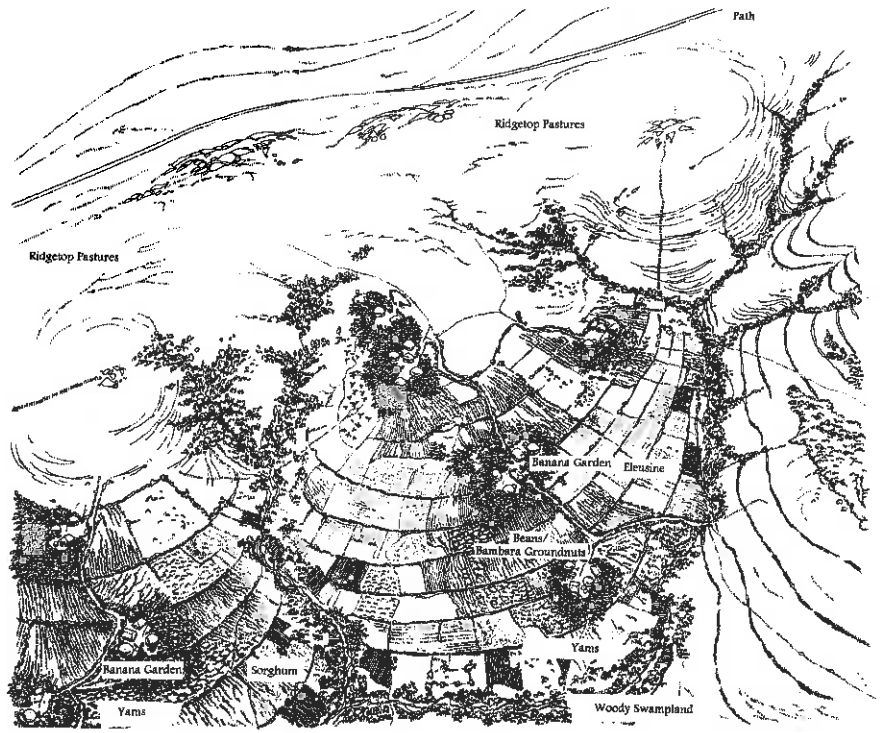


Illustration 4.1 A Hillside Neighborhood in the South of the Western Highlands, ca. 1200. [Drawing by Christian Seignobos in Jean-Louis Acquier, *Le Burundi*, (Marseilles: Editions Parenthèses, 1986), p. 76.] Reprinted by permission of Editions Parenthèses.

groups (not even solely of people) that share something in common. When it came to defining groups of people, the item they shared was an avoidance, a *muziro* (288, from *-gIdò*). Thus, even where people claimed descent from a common ancestor to distinguish membership in these groups or clans, such descent was merely one of many possible and interchangeable ways to establish clan identity.[9]

Within those large, intentionally amorphous groups emerged other groups with decidedly patriarchal idioms for their membership. The **nzu* (122) of Kivu society and the **muryààngó* (135) of West Highlands society stand as examples. The Proto Kivu root *nzu* meant "patrilineage" and its invention in this meaning suggests that both the ideology of patrilineality and the sociomaterial conditions for its emergence already existed in the old Kivu cultural world, before its member communities had dispersed. Thus, between 800 and 1000, Proto Kivu speaking societies invented a radically new way to organize part of their local political life that employed a strategy designed to dispose of certain sorts of heritable property. Before discussing this new strat-

egy, we shall review the chief characteristics of the Kivu patrilineage (*nzu*) and of the West Highlands deep patrilineage (*muryààngó*).

In such widely dispersed languages as Rwanda and Nyanga, the term *nzu* refers to a residential group which shared certain corporate responsibilities among its members and employed a patrilineal idiom for reckoning who was and was not a member (Map 4.3).[10] The leaders of these groups had vested control over granting access to land to newcomers. The leaders incorporated clients and followers and the groups themselves formed the discursive location for lineage spirits.[11] The patriarchal dimension in this unit of social organization was far more developed in West Highlands society than it ever had been in Proto Kivu society. In Kivu society, the lineage looked rather more like what Vansina has called a "house,"[12] that is a group of families living near each other who used lines of descent as one way to define relations between them and between generations.

Patriarchialism does not reserve for men the capacity to act nor does lineality imply that any action taken by a lineage member always implicates her or his lineage mates. These were, rather, new forms of social consciousness that emerged in changing material circumstances of agricultural intensification. They were also new ideological divides across which people who lived in the Kivu Rift Valley early in the second millennium A.D. conducted the business of making social groups and supervising their boundaries. The invention of patriarchalism and lineality heralded a new era in the discursive consciousness of Kivu cultural history.

The practical politics of patriarchalism and lineality saw men come increasingly into positions of "public" authority. This public sphere potentially included all those who lived in a given homestead or all those who belonged to a localized lineage. The invention of this public sphere, and the specifying of its gender, was the single most important legacy to Kivu Rift communities of the emergence of patrilineality around the turn of the first millennium A.D. The discursive authority of masculinity in the public sphere may have taken its most prominent form in the reserving for older, married males the rights and responsibilities of interceding with lineage or immediate family ancestors on behalf of the group. The verb **kutérekeera* (372) meant "to sacrifice to ancestral ghosts in order to restore balance" in Proto Kivu speaking societies, a task male elders tried to reserve for themselves.[13] In homesteads throughout the region, supplicants made offerings to their ancestral ghosts at the **ndaaro* shrine (316), which was normally located behind the male homestead head's house.[14]

The practical matters over which ancestors might have been expected to intercede on their descendants' behalf (or through which they might have been angered by their descendants' actions) may have partly revolved around struggles over heritable property in the form of lands and cattle. Few moments in a man's life seem to have caused him as much tension with his

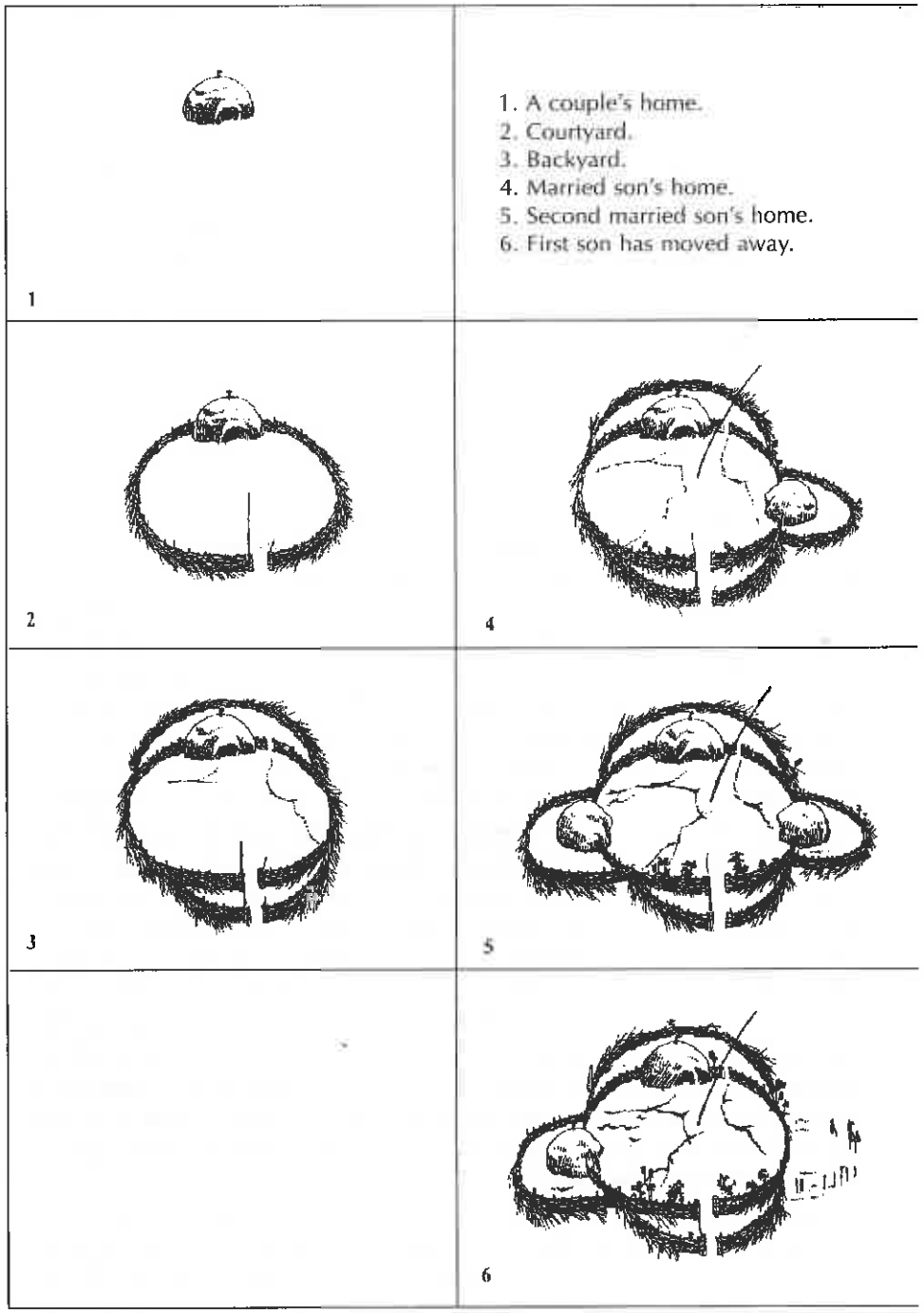


Illustration 4.2 The Development of a *rugó* in Southern Burundi, ca. 1200. [Drawing by Christian Seignobos in Jean-Louis Acquier, *Le Burundi*, (Marseilles: Editions Parenthèses 1986), p. 28.] Reprinted by permission of Editions Parenthèses.

brothers as the moment when their father, on his death bed, named his heir (**musigwa* [238], **-fura* [160] and **muluzi* [224]). This moment can be considered to have been nearly as momentous as initiation into marriageable adulthood, marriage itself, parenthood, or other classic rites of passage.

Should you be named the heir, the work that you had then to do in parceling out to your brothers the material wealth held by your father could shape all future relationships with them. Brothers who received nothing, for whatever reason, would most likely move away from the localized patrilineage to seek lands of their own. Those who received lands or animals sufficient to set up their own homesteads or to enter the world of clientship and contracts could certainly have been expected to stay around to do so. The language of patriarchal authority invited such loyalty from a favored son or brother. It also invited some unique innovations in the institutions designed to ensure the survival of a community against the fissiparous tendencies of patriarchal descent ideologies.

In North Forest society, beginning shortly after the fifteenth century, patriarchal and lineal idioms of inheritance and descent politics gave rise to a unique institution in Kivu Rift Valley society: the spirit wife (*kehanga*, "creator's wife"). This woman was consecrated by her lineage to a spirit who either resided on one of the many nearby volcanoes or was the ghost of a departed member of her father's lineage. As such she remained in her natal lineage. She controlled her sexuality in ways not available to legally married women, and most crucially whatever progeny she and her lovers produced belonged to her lineage.[15] Spirit wives thus wielded a different sort of power than either the men who occupied the political offices whose authority had come to be legitimated in part by reference to a patriarchal template or the women who hoped to turn their maternity (**bugole*, 114) in their husband's patrilineage into the coveted status of **mwáàmikazi* ("wife with grown children," [225]; **báàmikazi*, plural) and bargain for improvements in their lives from within the patriarchal idiom. Spirit wives wielded a power that combined the creative power of departed spiritual forces with practical control over their sexuality and reproductive power.[16] To put it another way, where spirit wives had been consecrated to lineage spirits they could, by carrying out acts of sacrifice, draw on the discursive power of lineage spirits to direct social actions. They also retained control over their bodies and provided their lineages with more members.[17]

The institution of the spirit wife, in North Forest Society, reveals that a commitment to lineages and patriarchalism (in preference to the "house" of Western Bantu-speaking societies) brought with it certain risks, perhaps best distilled in the question: how can a lineage reproduce without men? The missing men, in this case, would have been those married men with rights in children and in land. The spirit wife allows lineages to continue to exist in real terms—by producing sons for the residential group—and she allows the lineages to continue to exist in

discursive terms—by sacrificing to and consecrating herself to lineage spirits. And she herself enjoys a special kind of status.

The related developments of patrilineages and spirit wives took shape within larger struggles over the corporate character of kin groups. The image of the egalitarian kin group appears to have dissolved in the middle of the first millennium A.D. As seasonal occupational specialization and individual expertise led to conditions where individual homesteads or territories produced wealth at unequal rates, the egalitarian principles that gave life to notions of corporateness no longer operated easily, if they had ever done so.[18] Whether it was easy for them to do so or not, more productive groups of people might have sought to convert their productive advantage into autonomy while their less productive relatives might have insisted on their rights to the group's resources.

At the end of the first millennium A.D., the continued elaboration of systems of rights in persons, governed by emergent patriarchalism, suggests a consistent need to attract people to join social groups, keep them there, and define the terms and conditions of their membership. This process characterizes Kopytoff's "internal frontier," a place where group size often dictated the character of the instrumental power over people, land, animals, and knowledge that leaders commanded. Thus, ancient Western Lakes communities inherited and elaborated on one of their Great Lakes Bantu speaking ancestors' greatest achievements: making social groups open.

The calculus seems to have changed somewhat in the Kivu era, between 800 and 1000 but especially in the succeeding Forest and West Highlands periods after A.D. 1000. A principal cause for the change was a boom in agricultural specialization which placed new emphases on herds and on certain sorts of land (**bukoonde*, 203) and, by extension, invited those who were better off in land and cattle to narrow the means that outsiders could use to gain access to these resources. Indeed, it invited those who were better off to work hard to define a vast range of outsider statuses. Innovations in egalitarian forms of group membership ceased and were replaced by innovations in contracts,[19] superior-subordinate relations, and bridewealth exchanges for women, the ultimate maker of people. Rights in persons, the object of ancient Great Lakes and Western Lakes units of social organization now revolved around discriminating and limiting access to productive property. People continued to be the supreme measure of wealth, but the objects of their labor now changed form to include perennial croplands, cattle herds, and banana gardens.

"One Hand Cannot Beat Two Drums"[20]

Dominion over the land, so energetically constructed by both leaders and followers, required more than policing the boundaries between civilization and nature, the homestead and the wilderness. In Forest and West Highlands times, between 1100 and 1400, productive wealth could be concentrated and,

thus, access to it could be controlled. The new leaders did this, and they did it over (or alongside) the old, firstcomer leaders. They also did it by developing new sorts of patron-client relationships that revolved around contracts, no longer solely around notions of firstness.

Firstcomer status shared dynamic contradictions with kin groups. What made the principle of "firstness" powerful was its explicitly linear sense of primacy. But this very principle also rendered it prone to fragmentation. This paradox flowed from the geometry of segmentary lineages, so familiar to students of anthropology.[21] At one of the centers of lineal ideology, the center that emphasized firstness as a principle of legitimacy, lay a contradiction. The longer a set of kin groups were in residence in a given area the less clear it was just which of them were "first" because each possessed a variety of special, local rights. What, then, drew concepts of lineality to the foreground to help build the new political hierarchies just discussed and what new purposes did the architects of this principle hope it would serve?

Lineal descent groups grew in importance in West Highlands and Forest societies for two related but different reasons. First, they incarnated the principles of firstness. Second, they introduced a clear means to exclude non-kin in order to establish legal control over children, and to assign responsibility for bridewealth, debts, and other legal issues. The new leaders who helped to craft ideologies of lineality may well have hoped to conserve certain forms of material wealth and to protect that wealth against the burden of responsibility for the debts of followers not related by lineage ties.

One result of such a social strategy was the invention of a new notion of wealth in the form of a mother's and father's sons, their **bagála* (104).[22] This meaning was extended from the older meaning of the verb **kugala*, "to be rich, prosper" (a meaning from the Great Lakes ancestral tradition). The inclusion of a set of sons inside the semantic territory of the word for wealth tells unambiguously of the appearance of patrilineal ideologies and of the work those ideologies would do for both men and women who spoke Proto Forest languages in the central Kivu Rift Valley. Around Lake Kivu and the Rusizi River, grown sons protected the homestead's or localized lineage's lands and animals and they sought to extend the holdings in the name of their families. Sons were the product of a fertile woman and a virile man, they were the product of an artful midwife, and they defined a vital part of a wife's *bugole*, her status in the community as a producer of children.[23]

This development opened the door for wealthier (because larger in numbers) localities in the central Kivu Rift Valley to integrate followers into a social hierarchy that they constructed in lineal and gendered terms. Within this hierarchy men (as husbands) and women (as mothers) promoted their different but interconnected goals. The goal of collecting sons (*bagála*) was important to both husbands and wives. But spirit wives, as well as fertile and fortunate *bagole* (plural of *mugole*) and *báàmikazi* (plural of *mwáàmikazi*),

who had succeeded in the quest for sons, could use that achievement to subvert male ideologies of female submission (Map 4.3). We have heard a little about how wealthy husbands and wives might fill the categories of "sons" and "motherhood" to their liking. But how did they define their relation to the lineal outsiders who found themselves in a wealthy locality?

Alliances and conflicts between wealthy male and female leaders in a neighborhood or large homestead differed from certain goals of socially inferior members of a homestead or neighborhood (**musiga*, 237), such as poor persons or widows.[24] Because of this difference, wealthy leaders may have been alternately in conflict or contract with the socially inferior people. The men in this subordinate class of people who belonged to a localized patrilineage would have sought out contractual ties to the land. Such contracts bound leader and follower together under a language of authority and status that at once confirmed the superiority of a leader's standing and made it possible for a client to become a patron himself, should he and his wife succeed in producing the much desired *bagála*, the collection of sons who could protect and extend their parents' holdings.

A woman in Kivu society who had achieved the status of a married mother (*bugole*) might have sought to convert that status into virtually the same sort of security that their husbands sought: the survival of their homestead in the future. But notions of *bugole* are much older than the development of patriarchalism and contract-based hierarchy. They were invented by the Proto Western Lakes communities who lived in the Kivu Rift Valley between the Rusizi River and Lake Rweru after 500. This suggests that an important renegotiation of the meaning of *bugole* took place when localized patrilineages and a growing male control of property (and, through that, of instrumental political power) grew prominent after about 1100. We can know very little about either the Proto Western Lakes contexts that gave rise to the connection between motherhood and *bugole* in the centuries after about 500 or about the transformations that may have taken place early in the second millennium A.D. However, we cannot ignore the implications of the combined historical development of patriarchalism, contract, and the ideologies of motherhood for the poorly understood period in Kivu Rift Valley history that predated the formation of centralized states.

One such implication is that groups that succeeded in balancing the politics of descent ideology with the arts of negotiating contracts (including blood friendship) could gain for themselves a named status in local oral histories. Their *nzu*, *muryààngó*, or *ishanga* (singular of *mashanga*, 142) could live on as sites in histories about leaders and leadership—leadership such as that of **buluzi* (from *muluzi*) and **bwaámì* (from *mwaámì*)[25]—in the Forest-speaking societies which lived in the central and southern Kivu Rift.

Another implication is that controlling access to land came to be something that only certain members of those Forest speaking societies could carry

out. This, it seems, was achieved by regulating access to land by generating principles of inheriting the right to grant access to lands to others. Forest speaking communities managed to do so through the institution of *buluzi* and the possession of *buhashe*, of control over land and people. Forest speaking societies innovated both terms at the same time, and ethnographers who worked in Forest societies during the early twentieth century described them as going hand in hand. The first term echoes a kinship relation, meaning variously "sons of a man," a "designated successor to a father's title," and in Bushi, "member of a ruling clan."[26] The verb *kuluga* "to be numerous" (in Shi dialects) has been offered as a derivation for *buluzi*;[27] it explicitly connects the hoped-for abundance in people with principles of patriarchalism. The ideological equation implicit in the derivation of *buluzi* suggests that a house becomes numerous because it has many sons, but its abundance remains intact because only one of its sons controls its wealth.

Buhashe, on the other hand, expressed the material conditions that underlay the ideology of *buluzi*: possession and control over land and people. The kinship idiom of *buluzi* coopted *buhashe* discursively, by gendering its power and by making access to it dependent on climbing a hierarchy. But the kinship idiom at the heart of *buluzi* also fostered a struggle over several other matters. Namely, who shall be the *muluzi*? What size will his territory be? Will it be merely that of his father, or a larger unit? Or will it be that of the chiefdom itself? If *buhashe* was the discursive means for preserving instrumental control over land, its invention by Forest speaking communities may have been a response to increasing shortages of lands in the central Kivu Rift Valley. Firstcomer lineages may have expected to exercise *buhashe* in the struggle to retain their own members as well as to attract and retain followers.

The institution of *buluzi* was patriarchal and patrilineal, and it was part of the machinery for extending instrumental power over people and land. All Forest-speaking societies understood and practiced *buluzi*, but each developed important differences in meaning. These differences are less important in their details than that they exist at all, for they reveal that the core features of *buluzi*—its patriarchal cast and its connection to *buhashe*—are shared by speakers of the Forest branch. This fact tells us that the institution emerged after 1000, during the time when Proto Forest dialects enjoyed easy mutual intelligibility.

The concept of *buluzi* employed the kinship idiom to define a set of male relatives who had managed to increase their instrumental power over land and people. Their having "managed" this may have been the result of hard work by all, but especially by women, to produce sufficient food surpluses to accumulate followers and cattle. And it may have been the result of savvy contracts (cattle loans, marriages, blood brotherhood) that brought individuals with superior knowledge and abilities in farming, fishing, and craftwork into the group.

Forest communities felt that the condition of a person dying without any sons to act as heirs and sacrifice to their departed spirits warranted a special word, *nshuuzo*. This confirms that the historical development of landed property unfolded within a small, well-defined group: the immediate male progeny of a male property owner.[28] The evidence for this consists in the coinnovations of *bagála* ("sons"), *muluzi* ("male heir to control over father's lands"), and the term *nshuuzo* ("the condition of being without male heirs") by Forest-speaking communities. The importance of this sort of property control reflects the struggles over wealth (land, wives, daughters, cattle) in a decidedly gendered fashion and marks a fairly recent stage in the emergence and development of patriarchalism. It may stand, here, as a capstone to constructing dominion over the land because it sought to exclude women from the offices that sanctioned male control of propertied wealth, even if it was ultimately impossible to ensure that no women would inherit wealth. Why else invent a term designating the lack of male heirs?

People unrelated by biological ties could wield descent idioms without waiting for the passage of time to work out the kinks. The ancient practice of making the blood pact brought together equals and those of different social statuses in ways that mimicked the kinship idiom but also subverted it.[29] The bundle of social obligations surrounding blood brotherhood was used as means to offset or strengthen the glue of kinship in early stages of the elaboration of the Great Lakes Bantu ancestral tradition, as we saw briefly in Chapter 3. But it can also be seen as a way to draw together different individuals. This pact always involved reciprocal gifts of sorghum beer or paste and the sharing of blood from an incision made on each person's stomach.[30]

Throughout the Kivu Rift Valley, this pact was reserved for men, and only men, who had different patrilineages (*miryààngó*; plural of *muryààngó*). Indeed, a particularly well-placed elder (*mukúrú*)—such as a wealthy chief (**muhinza*, [192]; **bahinza*, plural) in the highlands beneath the Virunga volcanoes—may have expressed his family's wealth—and his own ability to gather followers thereby (other than courtly dependents and favorites)—through the cattle at pasture, or the children herding the sheep and goats or at work in the fields. If his barkcloth wrap fell away slightly when he bent over to reach for the straw so he could sip a bit of the gift of beer that a would-be blood-brother had brought to initiate the blood pact, the visitor might see that his future blood friend was already well-connected. The wealth of past pacts would be richly displayed to him right there on the *muhinza's* scarred stomach.[31]

Thus, as kin groups closed and control over newly valuable resources in land and cattle were confined to the office of the chief, the means to negotiate additional access to loyal and subordinate followers changed as well. Two innovations marked this transition, and they had distinctly contractual dimensions to them, dimensions intended not only to reinforce ancient ideas of

reciprocity in the gift exchanges that marked the links between *kugábìra* and the *mwaámì*, but also to convert that reciprocity into a mask for hierarchical relations between each partner in the contract.

These developments marked subtle shifts in the boundaries between instrumental and creative power and they drew on concomitant innovations in the discursive forms that wrangling over increased practical knowledge of farming and herding offered to Kivu Rift Valley societies after 1000. Followers viewed some chiefs more as sources of material and physical protection and less as the arbiters of balance between community and ecology. This shift in perception appears to have been the result of both the accumulation of nuances in the meanings of classical notions of power and the innovation of entirely new social relations that revolved around access to material wealth. To be sure, matters pertaining to the creative power underlying social health probably never disappeared from the patriarchal language of patron and chief. But, as Proto Kivu-speaking societies came to be Proto Forest-speaking and Proto West Highlands-speaking societies, after 1100, divisions between chiefs and healers deepened. We shall tackle this matter below. But we need to look more closely at how the history of contractual relationships changed the ancient face of patronage.

One of the bundles of innovations alluded to above surrounded land use rights and, in Bushi, Butembo, and Buhaavu, west of Lake Kivu, was marked by a payment designed to secure these rights.[32] The payment was called *kalinzi* and the power or rights gotten thereby inhered in the familiar *buhashe*. The relationship between someone who gave *kalinzi* and someone who received *kalinzi* was one of subordination that included a set of mutual responsibilities, one of which was that the subordinate would be available to help (*kutabala*) the superior.[33]

In the sixteenth century, central Forest societies very likely added to this contractual tie the additional subordinate relationship marked by *bushobole*, a contract that inflicted debt on a subordinate by giving him a cow.[34] In colonial Ngweshe, a Shi speaking society southwest of Lake Kivu, Elinor Sosne has observed that the *kalinzi* payment and the *bushobole* gift mutually implied one another.[35]

The semantic histories of the verbs **kushobola* (394) and **kulinda* (222) reveal their central role in the elaboration of new languages of authority over land and people. The first verb had a more general meaning of superiority in wealth and status which came to mean something like "inflicting debt" when Central Forest speaking societies converted it into the abstract noun *bushobole* in the sixteenth century. The verb from which *kalinzi* was invented had two interconnected and very widely distributed meanings: "to wait patiently for someone to arrive or for something to happen" and "to watch over, guard, or protect someone or someplace." The semantic connections, made with familiar grace by Proto Forest-speaking communities, changed the language of

authority in their lives. Wealthy individuals who possessed *buhashe* (the rights to assign land to someone for their use) over large enough *bihúgo* (territories; plural of *kihúgo*) to attract followers recognized their paternalist responsibilities to protect their supporters, "to wait patiently" for their presence to improve a wealthy individual's position. On the other hand, the gift exchanges expressed the hierarchical and exploitative character of such relations in a clear and unambiguous manner. In the sixteenth century, in Central Forest-speaking society, to settle under a new *mwaámì* and to receive his *bushobole* gift was to accept an inferior status. People could reverse this inferior status in one of three ways. They could inflict *bushobole* on someone else less fortunate than themselves and thereby improve the status of their descendants; they could flee; or they could rebel.

People drew on very old concepts of reciprocity and exchange to forge bonds of friendship (**bwira*, 266), which they might call upon in situations where flight or revolt formed their only options. Members of central Forest communities sometimes exchanged cattle to create a condition of friendship and mutual aid between individuals (see Chapter 6).[36] This condition of friendship amounted to a statement of solidarity either between individuals living in a single territory or between traders or other mobile persons (like hunters) and their potential clients or hosts. Through gift exchanges and the friendships that those exchanges brought into being, people built social ties that stood outside of hierarchical political institutions. Even if the language of authority claimed a putative priority for hierarchical political relationships, friendship might form the basis for new associations of people to move off toward an "uncivilized" and "uninhabited" internal frontier and there begin again to meet the challenges of composing a community with a future. Friendship might also form the basis for a rebellion against the onerous exactions of a mean-spirited or desperate chief.[37]

Hierarchy and allegiance went easily together when times were good, when harvests were abundant, herds were healthy, and rains, pastures, and children all fell, grew, and gathered in balanced proportions. But we rightly suspect that these conditions of abundance, conditions of verdant goodness, did not always exist. Balance and proportion, whether seen from the short end of a hierarchical relationship or not, were fleeting, the best efforts of leaders and healers notwithstanding. Language evidence for warfare and military tensions proves this. Together with new sorts of illnesses, new charms, and the new spirits that the familiar battery of healers were to serve and mentor, the social world of the Kivu Rift Valley clearly suffered its share of conflict as the second millennium opened and moved through its first few centuries.

People expected the new units of social organization to produce and superintend two sorts of wider social relations, one familiar from Great Lakes Bantu times and the other rather new. The ancient matter of the social responsibilities and status that were attached to firstcomers on the land which

distinguished them from newcomers was mediated by the notions of **busangwa butaka* (233), "the condition of being found already on the land," and *bukoonde* (203), "the condition of having cleared the forest to create useful land." The first phrase, *busangwa butaka*, referred to a set of clans—the Abazigaaba, Abasinga, and Abagesera in Rwanda—whose members, it was universally agreed, had "always been on the land." The second word, *bukoonde*, was the way that one established rights over land, whether newcomer or firstcomer. But newcomers would first have to secure permission to clear the land.

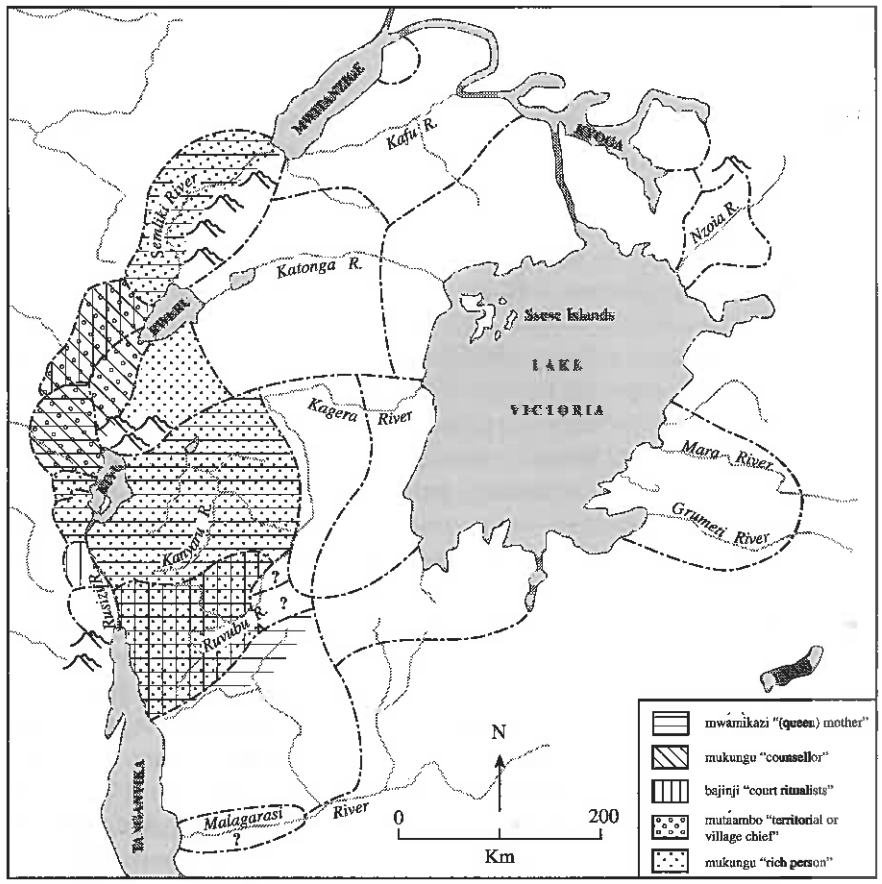
As the best lands for bananas dwindled and as communities grew in size between 1100 and 1500, the transformation in the character of social integration discussed above unfolded. Political officeholders, some heritable and others appointed, seized on the patriarchal idiom that had emerged in the homestead to add a new twist to the rules for negotiating access to instrumental power: "descent" became a means for delineating claims to the coveted firstcomer status in a territory.

POLITICAL OFFICES IN KIVU RIFT VALLEY HISTORY

Perhaps the most important alteration of the Great Lakes cultural template that Western Lakes communities undertook was the innovation of the concept of a territory over which a chief held extractive control. Whereas in earlier times no single term had represented the spatial extent of a *mwaámi's* or a *mukungu's* extractive power—a power that may have been limited to a single settlement or a small collection of neighboring settlements—Western Lakes societies invented just such a word. This territory, the *kihúgo* (118), must have emerged in the centuries after 800 because the term is not found in any other set of languages except the Western Lakes group, yet all their neighbors developed their own terms for the idea of a territory controlled by a chief. The Western Lakes invention of the *kihúgo* is the earliest such indication of territorial chiefship anywhere in the region. And it came into existence along with other vitally important developments in the repertoire of the political arts of attracting followers and building hierarchies.

In the ancestral tradition, as we learned in Chapter 3, each *mwaámì* could claim certain products from the *kihúgo* under his control.[38] As the first millennium drew to a close the highly productive food systems of the Kivu Rift Valley came under the ritual and extractive control of a set of leaders: the *mwaámì*, the *mutwále*, the **mutáambo* (247), the *mukungu*, and much later, the *muluzi* and the *muhinza*. The powers of the *mutwále* and the *mutáambo* were especially important in this hierarchy (Map 4.2).

A *mutwále* possessed a defined unit of territory and a kinship-tie to a more powerful leader, the *mwaámì*. The hereditary and territorial association, common to all meanings for *mutwále*, probably developed in the



Map 4.2 Political Offices in Western Lakes Bantu.

Western Lakes period, up to about 800. Thereafter, and proceeding beyond 1400, societies and their *batwále* (plural of *mutwále*) added new meanings for the institution, some of which displaced the hereditary links. These renegotiations of the source of legitimacy for this office took place in West Highlands societies where *butwále* (the condition of ruling as a *mutwále*) came to be an appointed position that drew its authority from a more powerful *mwaámì*.[39] These offices commanded authority over adjudication and tribute collection but they did not enjoy authority over disputes surrounding witchcraft, divorce, or land use rights. These disputes were critical points of tension; their successful resolution could have profound consequences for gaining and retaining followers. Most of these disputes continued to be settled by local healers and homestead heads, only going "up" to the *mwaámì's* court and his judges (**bagula*, 181) in

certain cases. Chiefs (*baámì*, plural of *mwaámì*) thus concentrated certain responsibilities for adjudication and tribute collection by controlling how they were delegated and thus may have ushered in the conditions for new social relations between groups based on contractual ties. Though the long-standing basis of ritual power that undergirded the *mwaámì-mutwále* hierarchy had by no means disappeared (they had important roles in planting and harvesting ceremonies), nevertheless by 1100 A.D., it had shifted to emphasize decidedly more instrumental concerns.

Forest-speaking societies who settled in the central Kivu Rift Valley between 1100 and 1400, innovated a wholly new term, *mutáambo* (*batáambo*, plural), for a territorial village chief who possessed rights in land but was not of "royal" blood (Map 4.2). It seems likely that these *batáambo* emerged as discrete institutional locations for political action in response to the growing power of the *baámì* and *batwále*. Perhaps heads of local residential groups, who held rights to land corporately, perceived a need to conserve control over assigning land use rights in the context of the new nodes of instrumental power which emerged with the *mwaámì's* ability to appoint subchiefs (*batwále*) as proxies within his territory (*kihúgo*).

Though depicted as acting under the *mwaámì*, as an extension of his redistributive capacities within the *kihúgo*, the *mutáambo's* rule was territorial and not restricted to lineage members. Early-twentieth-century ethnographic descriptions of the *mutáambo* depict an office that possessed control over land and especially control over collecting tribute.[40] The relationship between the *mwaámì* and the *mutáambo*, which looks rather peaceful in the ethnographic record may have been fraught with considerable conflict. Ultimately, in both West Highlands and Forest political history, the *mwaámì* went on to lay claim to the institution of kingship. He and the queen (*mwáàmikazi*) thus would lord it over *batáambo* in the scale of the *mwaámì's* instrumental power. But after the fifteenth century, even as a king, the *mwaámì* would still need the support of two other parts of the ancestral tradition: ironworkers and farmers.

Royal funerals and rituals of accession and installation reverberated with imagery linking kings and chiefs to the health of the land. Even the much-discussed roles of ironworkers were embedded within the symbolism of land, its clearance (for farming and as a means to establish rights of tenure) and its productiveness for agriculture.[41] In his discussion of the succession of *bwaámì* (the intact condition of chiefship) and the accession of the *mwaámì* (the chief himself) of Bushu, west of the Rwenzori massif, Randall Packard reveals the importance of ironworkers and their creative and instrumental powers: they must purify the new *mwaámì* during the period of mourning that followed the death of a sitting *mwaámì*, a critical and dangerous passage in the process of making it possible to return to normal life.[42] Still, as historian David Newbury has shown,[43] throughout the Kivu Rift Valley, land and plants suf-

fused the ritual practices in which people crafted their differing discursive consciousnesses of instrumental and creative power, especially the ritual processes connected to chiefship and kingship.

Thus, the first fruits ceremony of **muganur-* (175), exemplified the historical relationship between the instrumental power of political office and the practical and discursive importance of agricultural fecundity that existed after the fifteenth century. Where highly centralized state structures emerged—in Rwanda and Buha, for example—this celebration embodied the historically subordinate role of kingship to that of household production. Newbury observes that on Ijwi Island in Lake Kivu, every time a *mwaámì* celebrated a *muganuro* festival, he was enthroned.[44] In Rwenzori societies, the planting ceremonies (*vusyano*) were not tied overtly to kingship; they reenacted the ancient association of ritual power with agricultural health. In Rwanda and Ijwi, leaders politicized the festival in a new way by trying to take control of its shape and content away from local people by making the king play a central role in its performance.[45]

Any political leader had to perform ritually in order to display her or his wealth and position publicly. Planting ceremonies were probably especially important occasions for such displays and for aspiring leaders to stake claims to the public dimensions of the office they wanted (see Epilog). Usurping the *mubande*, "the sacral ceremony of propitiation through which the king and his ritualists initiate the new planting season,"[46] reveals the value of this ceremony for legitimating royal power and authority, even if it does not reveal its age. But *mubande*, *vusyano*, *kurya mwaka*, and *muganur-*, all agricultural festivals celebrated in and around the Kivu Rift Valley, played this role. The oldest such ritual was the *kurya mwaka* ("eat the new year") celebration, which coincided with the planting of grain crops. In the nineteenth century, this was practiced in communities as far apart as those at the Mrima coast of Tanzania,[47] and the Rundi of Burundi.[48]

NEW DIVISIONS OF POWER: THE BAJINJI

The abundance of instrumental power over the land and over the people who brought out its wealth to fill their granaries, cook pots, and the storerooms of their chiefs, exacted a social cost that mirrored the emerging forms of new sorts of hierarchy. Concepts of evil and threats to personal property created new kinds of practitioners, new sorts of spiritual beings, and new theories of health. These concerns coalesced around managing relations between people and their ancestral spirits.

Political control was not centered on the abolition of violence but on the leader's or chief's right to approve violence. Concepts of gathering and uniting followers, of coolness (**buhóro*, 335), and of abundance (**bugaara*, 383), all helped to define a leader's duties discursively. They implied that chiefs

had to maintain or restore these conditions by whatever means necessary. Thus, the political side of health and healing might have required violent actions by leaders.

Bajinji (178) stood guard over many of these discursive formulations by intervening in the sometimes tense relations between the living and the dead, especially the *mwaámì's* dead, the dead of the political collective that the *mwaámì* represented. *Bajinji* stood apart from the apparatus of material wealth, the apparatus that *baluzi* controlled, thus revealing another aspect of the fundamental ideological divide between instrumental and creative power that Great Lakes people had sought to establish. Though the *bajinji* were the sources of a *mwaámì*'s arcane knowledge, they did not belong to the *mwaámì*'s clan. They remind us of Rwanda's dynastic ritualists, the *abiiru*. Like the *bajinji*, they were exempt from royal pillage or repossession (**kunyaga*, 226); they were also able to revoke the legitimacy of a reigning *mwaámì*[49] and to overrule a *mwaámì*'s attempt to repossess anything he had granted to one of his subjects.

The *bajinji* behaved as original rulers of the land might have behaved. They established contact with the spirits who ensured or disrupted the health and fecundity of wider units of sociopolitical life (the *kihúgo*). The work of *baámì*, *baluzi*, *batáambo*, and *batwále* would all be for naught should *bajinji* and rainmakers fail to maintain a balance between the land of the living and the land of the dead (**okuzimu*, 278). The balance between right wholeness and evil fragmentation was to be achieved ritually by *kutérekeera* ("sacrificial acts of offering something to a spirit") and by integrating relevant units of social organization during key celebrations like those connected to planting and harvesting (see Epilog).

Bringing leaders and followers together several times a year for these celebrations was insufficient to ensure social health. The celebratory occasions of planting and harvesting festivals were chances to resolve conflicts and to carry out negotiations over the terms of social balance even if the philosophical sense of what was to be balanced (relations between living and dead) did not change. The ideology of chiefship appeared placid in its hermetically sealed logic but it could be volatile in the hurly-burly of its practice. The simple fact that would-be kings could usurp the right to eat the *mubande* in public, a potent occasion for renegotiating social relations, reveals the validity of this argument.[50]

It is possible that *bajinji* became important in new arenas because instrumentally powerful chiefs came into existence.[51] But their identity as leaders seems older than this sort of chiefship because their ritual control over ancestral communications normally flowed from their claims to have been firstcomers. But, *bajinji* could "disappear" politically, if their counterpart, the *mwaámì* and his royal ritual, fell into disuse. This is the key to understanding how *bwaámì* became kingship: kingship not only emerged from the

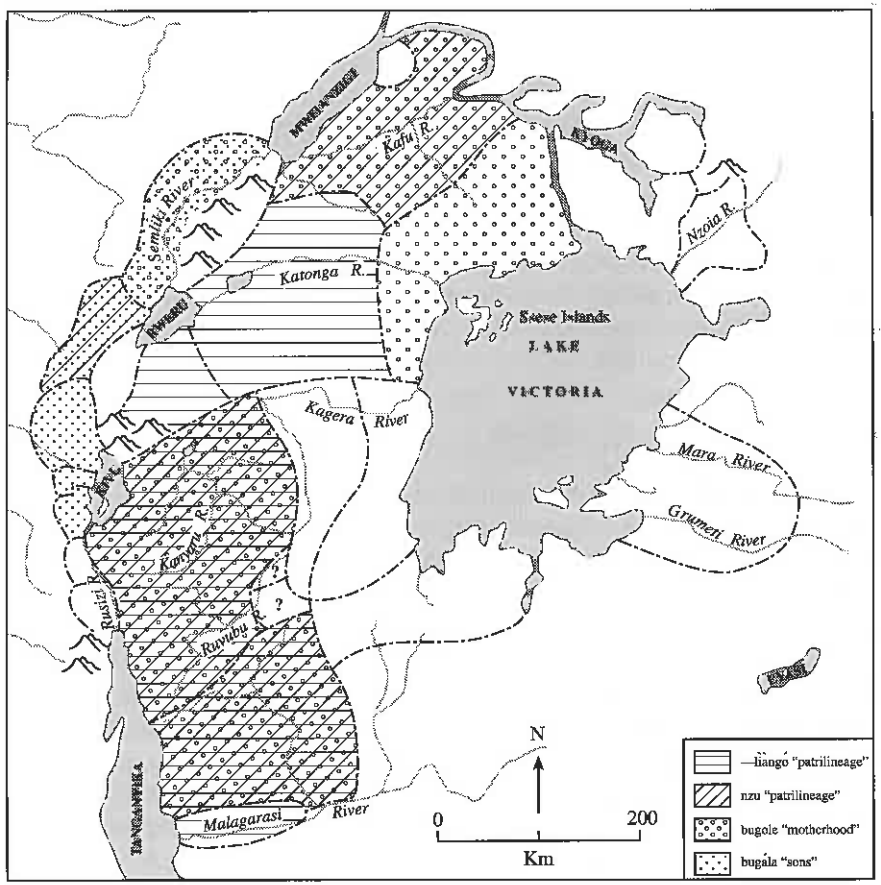
will of "subjects," but also required their active participation in its rituals of legitimation. Later, after the sixteenth century, when population densities reached new peaks (in Rwanda, for example) and contract relations converted extractive hierarchies into hereditary hierarchies, however ephemeral they might have been, the participation of commoners in royal rituals atrophied.[52] The role of commoners receded and could no longer be seen to wield effective sanction over kingship. Despotism then loomed. Or at least despotism could arise more easily once the option of ambulatory voting had disappeared. Ironically, this freedom of movement was what had, in part, generated the notion of firstness, a notion that beat at the heart of the institution of **bujinji* or "ritual authority".[53]

MOTHERHOOD AND PATRIARCHALISM

Between 800 and 1500, one axis of the social history of the Kivu Rift Valley organized politics and health around controlling access to land and integrating subjects and rulers through contracts and ritual. These relations straddled concepts of power, authority, and health. Another axis of Kivu social history organized social life around gender relations. Indeed, gender relations drove the emergence of patriarchalism and of kingship. But gender had an especially important impact on women. Gendered identities channeled men and women into different forms of social agency, which generated different sorts of social power.

Gender played a leading role in the changes so far discussed for the Kivu Rift Valley from the ninth to the fifteenth century. Concepts of motherhood and patriarchalism combined to mark off spheres of influence in a variety of domains, from the homestead to the royal court and in the various shrines common to both. As an important labor force in the fields, women developed agricultural expertise and stimulated demand at local markets for iron hoes, salt, and jewelry made of woven grass (**butéga*, 25). Moreover, women acted as alliance makers between patrilineages. Since the women who married into a patrilineage would ultimately replace elder wives as reproducers of the household, elder wives had a compelling claim to be consulted on potential marriages. Because elder wives had been hard at work helping raise the necessary bridewealth for their husband or a brother-in-law to marry, they had a material interest in approving a new wife. They wanted to learn as much as possible about her agricultural expertise, her care with the cook pot, and her sense of social decorum. All of these qualities weighed heavily on the senior wife's work of superintending an ever larger homestead or lineage.

Within the homestead's economy, **bugole* ("the concept of maternity") conferred direct material rewards on women, not just strategic advantages. For example, ethnographers of Forest societies have noted that a majority of the gifts exchanged in the course of public, first-marriages, moved to and



Map 4.3 Motherhood and Patriarchy in Western Lakes Bantu.

between married women with children (*bagole*).[54] Only the portion of the bride-price made up of cattle and several rounds of gifts of beer passed between men.[55] Thus, women appear to have either generated or conserved the ability to act as individuals inside the institution of gift exchange, an institution that can mark unequal statuses or cement relations of equality. This stood in stark contrast to the conditions of married women in some other parts of the Great Lakes region where they acted as agents of social hierarchy, as markers and makers of boundaries between social statuses. These comparisons will be drawn out more fully in Chapter 6.

In the patriarchal idiom developed in the Kivu Rift Valley and beyond, after A.D. 800, one of the hoped-for results of fecund maternity was the production of "sons," *bagála* (Map 4.3). Sons were an extremely important form of "wealth in people," which a mother could provide to her adopted lineage.

Their male gender might signal that a reversal of the exclusive claims to power over life contained in the notion of *bugole* (the Great Lakes Bantu concept of maternity) occurred in Western Lakes societies with a strong commitment to patriarchy. The distributions of these roots and of the variety of their meanings suggests strongly that such a transformation did in fact occur. But the very same material conditions that generated this also generated for certain women a new set of negotiating tools for the improvement of their lives. Strategic marriage and hard work could bring to senior wives (*báàmikazi*) increasing ease later in life.[56]

NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES

After the banana revolution, between 1100 and 1500, it became possible to create clearly hierarchical categories of social identity whose membership could change. The banana revolution had increased the productivity of labor, it had reduced the pace of frontier expansion, and it had given to land-rich groups a confidence of material tenure. This new confidence could have allowed these groups, according to Kopytoff, to "offer enough protection to new adherents to be attractive to them yet be sufficiently sure of itself not to be too anxious for their support."[57] Such a balance of wealth and group stability seems to have characterized Proto Kivu societies and may have helped to form the nodes of stable population and settlement that, on the one hand, grew into Forest dialect chains within the central Kivu Rift Valley and on the other hand ejected the Pre Proto West Highlands speakers who would settle the uplands along the eastern side of the Kivu Rift.

The historical change of greatest consequence was that new social categories of lower-status identities came into existence. This change was marked by the achievement of balance between productive wealth and the dynamics of group social relations, a balance which led either to expansion or to stability. These new people were "dependents" or "poor persons" and others who had entered a *muryàángó* or an **ishanja* (142) as underlings. In Proto West Highlands and Proto Forest times (between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries), these developments heralded the appearance of a new social dynamic of inequality, mirrored in part by the efflorescence of contractual ties. The new dynamic of inequality between firstcomers and newcomers challenged lower status persons (newcomers or clients) to articulate new meanings for these patron-client ties and for the structural relations of low status that clientship threatened to institutionalize.

The negotiability of identities highlights the fluidity of the social change that could occur, even when institutions flourished that superintended and sought to create or circumscribe social groups. The building blocks of practical consciousness—food and land—combined with those of the discursive realms—gender, age, firstness, and clientship—to describe the boundaries

within which identities were sculpted and negotiated. These were flexible but stable bounds. But the ability to negotiate new identities lay at the intersection of the discursive and the practical forms of knowledge and gave a distinctive cast to social life in the Kivu Rift Valley.

The identity of a woman or a wife, a farmer or a herder had both an individual and a group dimension. The cultural frontier was more than the next ridge over, where a family group might hope to set up for the future. The cultural frontier was also the threshold of a house (**muryáángò*, 101) which, once crossed by a young wife, signaled her new journey toward *bugole* and the instrumental power over other wives that a *mwáàmikazi* might exercise through her expert knowledge of cultivation and agricultural economics. The cultural frontier also lay at the entryway to an enclosure (the *iréembo*) where would-be clients sought to initiate their own new journeys into patronage by deploying the language of gift exchange, disputing (**buháka*, 186), and the recognition of superior status (**-tiinwa*, 397). In short, the social history of the Kivu Rift Valley, from 800 to 1500, sparkled with innovation and conservation, with strivings for achievement, wealth, health, and security and with a fierce dependence on or trust in the social institutions through which these might be won and preserved.

Negotiable identities also flowed from the discursive arrangements surrounding chiefly power. As we saw in Chapter 3, these arrangements worked to allow both leaders and followers to imagine the other as their creation. Rulers created conditions of unity of power and were remembered as having introduced the conditions of "civilization." Subjects saw the double-edged meanings in the relationship between their allegiance, the tribute they offered, and the protection they could expect from the royal drum of chiefship.

We must take care to consider contradictions in people's consciousness[58] of the meanings they gave to identities on either side of the familiar divides separating elder from junior, female from male, and ruler from subject. The importance to the house or lineage of youths who herded and fought and the importance of the **rugolí* (114) crown of maternity (a sign of a woman who had born many children) could be used by young men and mothers, respectively, to redefine portions of their social contract or of the ideology of patriarchy. Young men hoped to increase their status and thereby to improve their position in the inheritance chain. By overcoming the risks of childbirth, mothers hoped to increase the amount of domestic labor available to them in order to raise the output of those who lived in the patrilineage (*muryàángó*) by consolidating their instrumental power over the others in the *muryàángó*. Identities within gendered categories changed as individuals moved through the life cycle.

Identities could also change as individuals turned their social standing within established hierarchies into a source of authority. This emerged clearly in negotiations and reaffirmations of firstcomer status and the particular rights

attached to it. Principles of precedence connected firstcomers to those who followed them and people used these principles to think about legitimate authority. This occurred repeatedly in Kivu royal ceremonies, which had incorporated autochthonous *batúá* clans and ruling groups into a ritual hierarchy that not only reflected precedence in time, but also constituted a blueprint for local instrumental power relations.

Anthropologist Igor Kopytoff has analyzed this paradox, the paradox in which "no one...could ever claim to be really first."[59] He suggests that two possibilities lay open to those who would struggle to resolve this conundrum. A group could either claim to have displaced completely all earlier groups or it could recognize the earlier presence of various groups and work to redefine the significance of their having already been there. In nearly every available oral tradition concerned with such questions, the latter option appears to have been chosen by societies living in the Kivu Rift Valley.[60]

Kopytoff's observation opens up an answer to the question of the historical development of what are today the hierarchical ethnic categories named *batúá*, *bahutu*, and *batuutsi*. (In the lands to the east and north, *baírù* is used instead of *bahutu* for "farmer," and *bahima* or *bahuma* instead of *batuutsi* for "herder"). In the past, the categories were two things at the same time. They were relations of situated authority and status and they were reflections of earlier frontier dynamics. Of course, only the *batúá* (though not necessarily with such a title) may be expected to have "always been there," in so far as gathering and hunting is very ancient indeed! The familiar story of the "origins" of these "groups," told by travelers and at royal courts and taken up by colonial-era writers argued that farmers and hunters had long resided in the West Highlands, but that herders came later and that they came from the north.[61] Yet the evidence presented in Chapter 2 showed that farmers and herders, as such, have been living between the Great Lakes for more than 2500 years. Their identities developed first at the frontiers of neighboring, non-Bantu speaking farming and herding groups. Then, they incorporated cereal raising and livestock keeping (through processes of cross-cultural contact), following which some communities left their cultural homelands. In contrast, so the travelers and court historians would have it, in veritable tides of expansion, West Nyanza and Western Lakes farming communities supposedly led the way, followed later by specialists in the herding arts who hailed from the far north.

"Tides," "waves," and "bursts" hearken back to an older, colonial semantics for describing what then seemed hardly historical to its chroniclers: the eras prior to the kingdoms.[62] Great care must be taken by the reader when allowing images to form around these words because, for individuals, the historical reality of movement and experimentation was likely to have been profoundly, even agonizingly slow. It must be argued that, initially, the relations of situated authority and status that today (as in the nineteenth century)

distinguish farmers from herders, and both of them from hunters were, in their earliest eras, so flexible and open that they were fundamentally different than they are now. The same individual could and did hunt, farm, and herd. The stakes at risk to those on either side of the divides were little more than lifestyle differences and probably only rarely matters of life and death before the fifteenth century. However, after the fifteenth century, when people could no longer easily combine these lifestyles because of centralized, militaristic political force, the categories began to harden and it became difficult for individuals and for kernels of individual units of social organization to move between them. But it never became impossible to do so.

Before the sixteenth century, in West Highlands-speaking and Forest-speaking societies, there may have been specialist hunters and herders, but most everyone possessed practical knowledge of parts of each of those "lifestyles." Thus it is heartbreakingly difficult today to reclaim a sense of being Rwandan or Burundian, because "the myth of a single ethnicity"[63] has never been reconciled with the extent to which a single origin is not in fact shared. The diverse historical origins for the productive aspects of the West Highlands identities called *batúá*, *bahutu*, and *batuutsi* did, very long ago, come from outside the region. But there is no evidence in the historical record—archaeological or comparative linguistic—that the process of perfecting combinations of specialized hunting, farming, and herding knowledges required violent conflict. That dimension to West Highlands ethnicity did not emerge permanently until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

SUMMARY

After A.D. 1100, as experiments in banana farming and in herding the new, long horned cattle proceeded apace, a series of challenges faced those who succeeded in developing either highly productive farming economies based on bananas or highly productive cattle herds. Their successes created two kinds of needs: they increased the rate at which herders required more pasture lands and they increased the need for the kind of fields on which bananas would do best. These needs for more land generated conflicts with peoples already living on the lands the expanding farmers and herders wanted. Where they could not remove inhabitants by vanquishing them or where considerable populations already lived, the farmers and herders faced three options. First, expanding lineages or houses could recognize the prior existence of the people already on the land and assign to them a particular ritual role in the political culture of the area. This seems to have happened repeatedly between *batúá* and farmers in the Kivu Rift Valley. Second, the expansionists could recognize firstcomer status for those who controlled access to the desired fields or pastures but they could render this status politically impotent by withdrawing from it any role in instrumental control over land.

This may have been what happened in the earlier stages of an emergent Rwandan state, where older ritual leaders were coopted in the persons of the *abiiru*, a college of dynastic ritualists who shepherded a set of sacred royal installation and other rituals but who made no decisions about allocating land or cattle to newcomers or clients, after 1600.[64] Third, firstcomer chiefs could be incorporated into an emergent "administration as titled 'owners of the land.'"[65]

This last option seems to have been exactly what happened in Forest speaking societies which integrated the *mutáambo* and *mukungu* offices into the *mwaámì* and *mutwále* hierarchy, a hierarchy that had hitherto been conceived of discursively as sets of hereditary offices. The grafting of offices whose instrumental power was legitimated through non-descent idioms onto offices whose instrumental power over land and people was legitimated by descent ideology occurred repeatedly in Kivu history. Successful expansions of Kivu political culture may have left their marks in places like Bugoyi, Bushiru, and Busozo (in contemporary Rwanda), all of which were long-standing strongholds of resistance to control by the central court of the Tuutsi-led Rwandan state, after the fifteenth century. Other successful expansions of Kivu political culture may have left their marks in Bunyanga and Butembo which stand as polities on the Kivu model but also sit at the frontier of the Western Bantu model of highly dispersed instrumental power.[66]

CONCLUSION

In the Kivu Rift Valley, the material conditions of agricultural change had several kinds of social consequences. Families organized the actual physical form of their enclosure (*rugó*) around the protection of animals from raiders or predators and the need for easy access to permanent banana gardens. But the fencing and the different buildings within the enclosure also expressed the "structural properties of domination."[67] Larger enclosures (*ngó*, plural of *rugó*) represented to those families without cattle or prosperous banana gardens their inferior status, whether in their own eyes or in the eyes of their better-off neighbors (see Illustration 6.1).

The homestead also possessed potent images of patriarchal and matriarchal culture. In the uplands east of the Kivu Rift Valley, the semantic connections between three terms for different parts of the space within the homestead express such images clearly. The patriarchal idiom that helped to define the West Highlands *muryààngó* (135), or "maximal patrilineage," was amplified by the fact that the homonym *muryáángò* (101) meant the doorway into the house itself. That doorway is the exact place where a bride marks her formal and public "entry" into the status of someone who hopes to wear the crown of maternity, to bear children for her husband's lineage, his *muryààngó*.[68] The two meanings are differentiated from each other only by

the tonal qualities of the "*a*"s. To be sure, tonal differences were as important to West Highlands speakers in distinguishing meaning as were phonological differences, which is to say that *muryáángò* and *muryàángó* sounded as different to them as *house* and *home* sound to English speakers. Yet neither we nor they would mistake the overlapping of meanings displayed by both sets of terms.

Similar resonance may be heard in another term, *iréembo*, which means, in Rwanda, both the homestead gate and the first visit of a newly married couple to the wife's parents.[69] In Rwanda, *iréembo* also means a patron's power to dispose of the cattle offered to him by a client and the cattle themselves.[70] *Maréembo* (plural) also were friends or goods that could be acquired. The debts and obligations that weighed on two families joined by marriage or by ties of clientage could have carried over to new family heads upon the death of those involved in the initial relationship,[71] because they were understood to inhere ideologically in the minimal patrilineage, the *nzu*. The *nzu* was also the name for the home itself, the building in which married people had sex, slept, and ate.

These sorts of semantic links between gendered space, on the one hand, and both instrumental and creative power, on the other hand, could be multiplied many times over. The metaphor was a rich one for Kivu societies and it helped their members to talk about and struggle over redefining the norms of responsibility that were to characterize the institutions of social practice discussed in this chapter. Whether we speak of chiefship or motherhood, conflict between those in office, those subject to the powers of the offices and those wishing to gain office or to remove themselves from an office's control, all caused those institutions to remain alive and vital across long time spans as much as did the material conditions that helped create the cleared lands, cattle, harvests, and children so central to the instrumental power of chiefship and motherhood.

In Chapter 3 we observed that the historical development of chiefship and the emergence of surplus production went together only uneasily. And we saw that it is not a simple matter to understand just what it meant to be chiefly more than two thousand years ago. But, by 800 to 1100, we can see more clearly some of the transformations that underlay the social history of chiefship. People in the Kivu Rift Valley transformed chiefship from a widely dispersed form of economic and ritual power that bound leader and follower together to forge a "solidarity...based on an implicit contract between the rulers and the subjects."[72] For them, chiefship emphasized wealth in persons and reproduced relations of formal inequality within homesteads and neighborhoods and chiefship produced unequal relations between those localities and neighboring groups. These changes were supplemented by new ideas and social relations of power, which accompanied the growth of pastoralism and banana farming after 1100.

New contractual relations of instrumental power introduced forms of inequality and dispute no longer restricted in scope to residential localities or confined to the divides of age and gender. As land and livestock ceased to be combined easily in abundant quantities by each and every homestead, new identities for leader and follower emerged. These developments heralded the birth of new forms of chiefship with both broader geographic reach and a clearer separation of authority based on the creative power accessed through such acts as sacrifice, divination, and healing more generally (including controlling rain). For example, as cattle became concentrated unequally, their concentrators came to possess new allocative powers. But the instrumental powers of the contract—that is, the capacity for redistributing or allocating material wealth—were not easily divorced from ancient political philosophies. Those philosophies held that a successful leader's instrumental power could succeed in integrating followers because of its ties to the land as an object of spiritual and productive health.

The finer points of arguments between leader and follower cannot be recovered for the eras prior to the earliest ethnographic observations made in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But the reality of such conflict may be established by other means. The comparative method can be used to recover an ancient, ancestral geometry of power in Western Lakes society. The configurations of power incorporated local and regional interests, on the one hand, and marked divides between creative and instrumental forms of power, on the other hand. Thus, innovations in these geometries of power that distinguish regional geographical-linguistic traditions from one another might be the residue of a process of disagreement over the rights and responsibilities within the older, Western Lakes geometry of power.

While West Highlands societies developed patriarchalism through the idiom of patrilineal descent, the practice of patrilineal inheritance emerged during an era of increased competition over forms of material wealth (labor, land, and animals). It also ushered into existence novel facets of the old role of the *mugole* (singular of *bagole*). Through the political power of motherhood, women could mold the achievement of having borne children into a social status visible both within and beyond the patriarchal household in the form of the maternity crown.

Such continuities and innovations did not always grow from a dependable agricultural base like the one enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Kivu Rift Valley. To their east, along the shores of Lake Victoria, rather different agricultural developments presaged a profound division in West Nyanza society, the split between herders and farmers. This division was deeply implicated in the emergence of centralized political entities there and in the West Highlands. That story occupies the last two chapters of the book.

NOTES

[1] Pollen evidence from the eastern flanks of Rwenzori reveals the almost total destruction of ridgetop forests after A.D. 1000; see Daniel A. Livingstone, "Postglacial Vegetation of the Ruwenzori Mountains in Equatorial Africa," *Ecological Monographs* 37 (1967), 25-32. The divergence of Proto Rwenzori from the Western Lakes dialect chain was entirely separate from the movements recalled by oral traditions collected since the 1960s by Father Lieven Bergmans and Randall Packard in the Semliki and Mitumba regions, even though these traditions claim to reach back some fifteen generations. See Lieven Bergmans, *L'Histoire des Baswaga* (Butembo: Editions Assomption Butembo-Beni, 1970), 26-31 and the discussion in Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology*, 58-64.

[2] A third branch of Proto Western Lakes is today represented by a single language, Bwari, spoken on the Gome peninsula of Lake Tanganyika, see Schoenbrun, "Great Lakes Bantu," 6, 25. In this chapter, only the histories of the Kivu group and its descendant communities, Forest and West Highlands will be discussed directly. Rwenzori history figures into the story peripherally.

[3] See Schoenbrun, "Great Lakes Bantu," Figure 2, 0.

[4] See David L. Schoenbrun, "An Intellectual History of Power: Useable Pasts from the Great Lakes Region," in *Aspects of African Archaeology: Papers from the 10th Congress of the PanAfrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies*, ed. Gilbert Pwiti and Robert Soper (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996), 693-702.

[5] The art of controlling rain, unlike so many of the political arts, was heritable through the mother's line in Buha. See Johannes Van Sambeek, "Croyances et coutumes des Baha," 2 vols. (Kabanga, 1949, cyclostyled), 1:126-28.

[6] Elinor Dee Sosne, "Kinship and Contract in Bushi: A Study of Village Level Politics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1974), 108, 119, 130, 176-86; Viaene, "L'organisation politique," 119-20; Richard D. Sigwalt, "The Early History of Bushi, an Essay in the Historical Use of Genesis Traditions" (Ph. D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1975), 37-40.

[7] For Buha see Wagner, "Environment, Community," 181-86. See also Randall Packard, "Debating in a Common Idiom: Variant Traditions of Genesis among the Bashu of Eastern Zaire," in *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 149-61; Richard D. Sigwalt, "The Kings Left Lwindi; the Clans Divided at Luhinda: How Bushi's Dynastic Origin Myth Behaves" in *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History*, ed. Joseph C. Miller (Folkestone, Kent: Dawsons, 1980), 126-56; and David S. Newbury, "Kamo and Lubambo: Dual Genesis Traditions on Ijwi Island (Zaire)," *Les Cahiers du centre de documentation africaine* 5 (1977), 2-47.

[8] See Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 21ff.

[9] D. Newbury, "The Clans," 391-400; Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 307-8, 336ff.; Joseph Scherer, "The Ha of Tanganyika," *Anthropos* 54, 5/6 (1959), 867-69; Colle, "Les clans," 340ff.

[10] Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 306, 309; Marcel d'Hertefelt, *Les clans du Rwanda ancien: Éléments d'ethnosociologie et d'ethnohistoire* (Tervuren, Belgique: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1971), 14-5; Scherer, "Ha of Tanganyika," 868-69.

[11] Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 309.

[12] Nyanga society has been influenced profoundly by Western Bantu cultural traditions. The residential basis for group action, the distinctions between ritual and material patrimonies, and the nondifferentiated descent ideology used by an individual to choose which line to join up with in the few corporate functions of the group all hearken back to Western Bantu cultural practice (Vansina, *Paths*, 75-76, 116-17). But the political and social importance of special lineages, ranked by seniority, which existed within the residential "villages" retain elements of the ancestral tradition of the Great Lakes Bantu cultural world. Senior lineages were called *bUtaambo* and councilors were called *bakUngU* (*mUkUngU*, singular). Nyanga society also possessed the philosophical concept of *mahàno*, in the Proto Forest meaning of "prescriptions" or "proper behavior". See Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 338-40 and D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 46-60.

[13] Van Sambeek, "Croyances," I:26-28; L. Viaene, "La religion des Bahunde (Kivu)," *Kongo-Overzee* 18, 2/3 (1952), 394-98; Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief*, 206; Pauwels, *Imana*, 141, 143-48. As mediums, women sacrificed to ancestral ghosts in the privacy of their homestead, see Pauwels, *Imana*, 152-60, 181-88.

[14] Of the many sorts of spirit houses, I speak here of those dedicated to male ancestral ghosts. See Van Sambeek, "Croyances," I:30-31; Alex Arnoux, "Le culte de la société sécrète des imandwa au Ruanda," *Anthropos* 7 (1912), 273-95, especially 287-88. For more on the general term *ndaaro*, see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 316; Pauwels, *Imana*, 182.

[15] Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 305-7; Viaene, "La vie domestique," 136, 144.

[16] Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 305-7; Pauwels, *Imana*, 159-60; Viaene, "La vie domestique," 144.

[17] Biebuyck notes that where *kehanga* belonged to royal descent groups, leaders could offer them to other men in order to secure their political allegiance, see Daniel Biebuyck, *Rights in Land and Its Resources among the Nyanga* (Brussels: Académie royal des sciences d'outre-mer, 1966), 26-27. It is unclear if royal spirit wives enjoyed the same freedom and authority as commoner spirit wives.

[18] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 42ff.

[19] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 50.

[20] Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 116, quoting A. Ouchinsky, "Éléments de codifications des coutumes foncières du Bushi," in *Trois siècles chez les Bashi*, by P. Masson, 2nd ed. (Bukavu: La Presse Congolaise, 1966), 147.

[21] See Aidan W. Southall, "The Segmentary State: From the Imaginary to the Material Means of Production," in *Early State Economics*, ed. H. J. Claessen and Peter Van de Welde (The Hague: Mouton, 1991), 75-96.

[22] An older root **-yaali* "a man's and woman's daughters" does not play the same role, but reminds us that nondifferentiated descent was important to parents as well as to children. Parents could look to both their sons and daughters for support later in their lives. See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 152.

[23] Pauwels, "L'Héritage au Rwanda," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Etnologico già Lateranensi* 28 (1964), 32 n. 45.

[24] For other similar statuses see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 145, 237, and 254.

[25] These are abstract nouns made from the words for chiefs, in this case *muluzi* and *mwaámì*. By replacing the *mu-* prefix with a *bu-* prefix, people can use the new words, *buluzi* and *bwaámì*, to describe the condition and capacity of ruling as chiefs.

[26] Sigwalt, "Early History of Bushi," 47; Richard D. Sigwalt and Elinor D. Sosne, "A Note on the Luzi of Bushi," *Études d'Histoire Africaine* 7 (1975), 141; Colle, "L'organisation," 658; Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 326.

[27] Sigwalt and Sosne, "Note," 140.

[28] Other terms reveal the development of patriarchalism and property control. See also **nfula* (160), **mwáàmikazi* (225), and words for bridewealth such as **-kwé* (133), in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*. On *nshuuzo*, see Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 55-56; Aramazani Birusha, "Description de la langue Haavu," (Thèse de doctorat, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1985), 3:312; Viaene, "La vie domestique," 146. See also the further discussion in Chapter 5 of *bucweke*, with the same meaning as *bushuuzo*.

[29] Luise White, "Blood Brotherhood Revisited: Kinship, Relationship and the Body in East and Central Africa," *Africa* 64, 3 (1994), 359-72.

[30] Marcel Pauwels, "Le pacte du sang au Rwanda," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Etnologico già Lateranensi* 22 (1958), 17 and n. 18.

[31] See Kagamé, *Les organisations socio-familiales*, 219-20. *Bahinza* were considered chiefs and protectors of agricultural fecundity; see J. de Konink, "La sorcellerie indigène, territoire Rutshuru," (Rutshuru, 1946, Typescript), 1; Marcel Pauwels, "Le Bushiru et son Muhinza ou roitelet Hutu," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Etnologico già Lateranensi* 31 (1967), 205-322, especially 268-70; P. Bragard, "Les Bavira," (Uvira, n.d., typescript), 5-7; M. Dubuisson, "Légende sur la origine des Watembo," (Rutshuru, n.d., typescript), 3.

[32] Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 140-41; M. Willaert, "Coutumes des Bashi," *Bulletin des juridictions indigènes et du droit coutumier congolais* 13, 4 (1945), 108; Shigeki Kaji, *Lexique Tembo* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1985), 255.

[33] See Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 133.

[34] Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 99-101; Augustus Moeller, "Les diverses sortes de cheptels dans le droit coutumier des pasteurs du Kivu," *Bulletin des juridictions indigenes et du coutumier congolais* 2, 10 (1934), 212.

[35] This discussion owes a great debt to Elinor D. Sosne. Please see her "Kinship and Contract," Ch. 3.

[36] Though males usually entered into this friendship pact, female household heads could do so as well. See Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," Ch. 3; Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 213.

[37] Friends might also form cooperative occupational groups like fishermen, joint owners of livestock, smithing enterprises, or honey-gathering groups. The root for such groups was **-yama*, class 7/8.

[38] See Sigwalt, "Early Rwanda History," 139-40; Biebuyck "Organisation politique," 305, 312-13. Sigwalt, "Early History," 124-25, mentions a Shi royal drum *Kalyamahugo*, which can be translated as "the eater of political districts."

[39] On Ijwi Island, they are direct male descendants of the king, see D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 35; Scherer, "Ha of Tanganyika," 880; Hans Meyer, *Les Barundi*, trans. Françoise Willmann, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outremer, 1984 [1916]), 120; Emile Mworoha, *Peuples et rois de l'Afrique des lacs*, (Dakar: Les nouvelles éditions africaines, 1977), 226; Catharine Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 40-46; Emanuel Ntezimana, "L'arrivée des Européens au Kinyaga et la fin des royaumes Hutu du Bukunzi et du Busozo," *Études Rwandaises* 13, 3 (1980), 1-29, especially 3-8; see also Bragard, "Les Bavira," 5.

[40] For administrative functions, see Colle, "L'organisation," 662; D. Newbury *Kings and Clans*, 36-37; Viaene, "L'organisation," 17-18; Dargent, "Organisation politique et juridiction de secteur Buhunde" (Walikale, 1924, manuscript), 1-4. For ritual functions, see Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 327.

[41] Peter R. Schmidt, ed., *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996).

[42] Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology*, 11ff. and 30ff.

[43] D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 200-26.

[44] D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 318 n. 28.

[45] For Rwenzori see Bergmans, *Les Wanande*; for Rwanda and Ijwi Island, see D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 219-26.

[46] Sigwalt, "Early History of Bushi," 67, see also 72-73 for example of a new *mwaámì* seizing the right to practice *mubande* as sign of revolt against central control.

[47] See Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 170-74.

[48] Chrétien, "Les années," 84.

[49] P. Colle, *Monographie des Bashi*, 2d ed. (Bukavu: Centre des études des langues africaines, 1971), 265.

[50] Sigwalt, "Early History of Bushi," 67-68, 72, 88.

[51] Sigwalt, "Early History of Bushi," 29, 49, 136-39; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 200-19.

[52] Sigwalt, "Early History of Bushi," 161.

[53] Sigwalt, "Early History of Bushi," 165; if the Abajiji clan from Burundi has any connection to the *bajinji* under discussion here, the fact that they provided the Mukakiranga (Kiranga's wife) and tended the royal tombs lends support to the argument for *bajinji* being older than kingship (*bwaámì*) in its instrumental dimension; see Vansina, *La légende du passé*, 200, 202; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 78ff.

[54] See Viaene, "La vie domestique," 137-43; Bragard, "Les Bavira," 11.

[55] See Viaene, "La vie domestique," 137-38; Bragard, "Les Bavira," 11; M. Braun, "Mariage chez les Bahavu," *Bulletin des juridictions indigènes et du droit coutumier congolais* 14, 12 (1946), 393-403.

[56] Joining motherhood and queenship appears clearly in the ethnographic record. See W. B. Tripe, "Tribal Insignia of Heru," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 16 (1943), 4-5, where the Queen-Mother, guardian of royal regalia, wears a *lugoli* band of motherhood.

[57] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 47.

[58] Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, 17-19.

[59] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 54.

[60] See Packard, "Debating," 154-56; Sigwalt, "The Kings Left Lwindi," 128-39; D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 66-80; Daniel Biebuyck and Mateene Kahombo, eds., *The Mwindo Epic from the Banyanga*, recited by Candi Rureke (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 15-16; d'Hertefelt, *Les clans*, 3-7.

[61] This story was first told in print by John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864), 241-54 and repeated my many others. For an early version from the West Highlands see Johannes M. M. Van der Burgt, *Un grand peuple de l'Afrique equatoriale: Éléments d'une monographie sur l'Urundi* (Bois-le-Duc, Netherlands: Société de l'illustration catholique, 1903), passim.

[62] See Chubaka Bishikwabo and David S. Newbury, "Recent Historical Research in the Area of Lake Kivu: Rwanda and Zaire," *History in Africa* 7 (1978), 26-29; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Confronting the Unequal Exchange Between the Oral and the Written," in *African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa?* ed. Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David S. Newbury (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), 75-90.

[63] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 55.

[64] Jan Vansina, *L'évolution du royaume de Rwanda des origines à 1900*, (Brussels: Académie royal de sciences d'outre-mer, 1962), 10.

[65] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 55.

[66] See Vansina, *Paths*, 180ff.

[67] Anthony Giddens, *Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 28-29.

[68] Van Sambeek, "Croyances," 2:50, 102.

[69] Irénéé Jacob, *Dictionnaire Rwandais-Français*, 3 vols. (Kigali: Institut national de recherche scientifique, 1987), 2: 614.

[70] Jacob, *Dictionnaire*, 2: 615.

[71] Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 54; C. Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression*, 78-80; Scherer, "Ha of Tanganyika," 877; Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 330; Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 211.

[72] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 67.

5

By Lake Victoria

In the latter part of the first millennium A.D., on the other side of the still sparsely settled central grasslands from the Kivu Rift Valley, the communities that had settled by the shores of Lake Victoria faced a profound challenge. Their long-fruitful fields of grain and yams, their rolling pastures, and the abundant schools of fish in the offshore waters no longer could easily support the kinds of permanent, expansive, but scattered settlements that had characterized the Early Iron Age. As that long period drew to a close, after A.D. 800, and as the ancient Proto West Nyanza speech community formed and dissolved with it, the people of the lakes and rivers made themselves into very different social groups. Some emphasized cattle pastoralism and some embraced the banana tree. The implications of these choices for the history of their units of social organization, leaders and healers, and the forms of power which gave life to them will be discussed in this chapter.

The riversides and lakeshores of the ancient West Nyanzan lands were linked to the highlands of the Kivu Rift Valley by two watery corridors. One flowed with the Kagera River and the other followed the Katonga River. The connection provided by the Kagera River between the West Highlands region and the Rutaran region was ancient.[1] The same cannot now be said of the Katonga River, which ties the North Nyanzan lands to Lake Rweru, between the Rwenzori and Virunga volcanoes. Nor can the same be said for the Kafu River, which ties the Victoria Nile to Lake Mwitanzige.[2] Though the Kivu Rift Valley and the regions by Lake Victoria differed profoundly in their social histories, they shared common roots in the ancestral tradition of their Great Lakes Bantu-speaking predecessors.

The character of the lands reveals some of the enduring features of their social histories. Lake Victoria dominates the eastern part of this region and the dry central grasslands dominate the western part of the region (Map 1.1).

[64] Jan Vansina, *L'évolution du royaume de Rwanda des origines à 1900*, (Brussels: Académie royal de sciences d'outre-mer, 1962), 10.

[65] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 55.

[66] See Vansina, *Paths*, 180ff.

[67] Anthony Giddens, *Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 28-29.

[68] Van Sambeek, "Croyances," 2:50, 102.

[69] Irénéé Jacob, *Dictionnaire Rwandais-Français*, 3 vols. (Kigali: Institut national de recherche scientifique, 1987), 2: 614.

[70] Jacob, *Dictionnaire*, 2: 615.

[71] Sosne, "Kinship and Contract," 54; C. Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression*, 78-80; Scherer, "Ha of Tanganyika," 877; Biebuyck, "Organisation politique," 330; Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 211.

[72] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 67.

5

By Lake Victoria

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In Buhaya, south of the mouth of the Kagera River, ridges roll back from a knife-edged lakeshore like earthy waves frozen just before they curled and crashed. In greater Buganda, east of the mouth of the Katonga River, the lake shore twists and turns to form thousands of fingers of habitable land, many of which are surrounded on three sides by papyrus-fringed lake water. Away from the lake itself, the land retains its rolling quality but loses some of its moisture.

The gentle rise of land between the Katonga River and the Victoria Nile was far more important than its unassuming relief might suggest. Because the Katonga and the Nile are the only two rivers that breach this low ridge, all other drainages flow to the north, into the River Kafu, Lake Kyoga, and the Victoria Nile. Over the millennia, rainfall has excavated long, sloping fingers of flat-topped land separated by the clogged swamplands that accept the rain. The early North Nyanza communities lived on these fingers at some distance from the lakeshore. Still, the climatic regimes that shaped West Nyanzan and, later, North Nyanzan agriculture were driven by the proximity of Lake Victoria and their stories thus belong with the stories of other lakeside communities.

The environmental conditions that made all this possible have not always been as regular as herders and farmers would have liked. Evidence for forest clearance and constriction, combined with evidence for low Nile floods in Egypt, all point to two difficult eras of alternating dry and wet periods, the first between about 900 and 1200, the second between 1200 and 1500.[3] This information, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, reflects the environmental inducements to some of the historical changes analyzed in this chapter. Long periods of lower rainfall followed by long periods of higher rainfall may well have spurred Lakes communities to develop further their interregional trading systems and their agricultural specializations as hedges against environmental stresses. But environmental change alone cannot account for the enormous political and religious creativity displayed by West Nyanzan communities and their descendants as they negotiated their social identities and generated forms of social wealth.

AGRICULTURE AND SETTLEMENT NEAR LAKE VICTORIA

In Chapter 2, we saw that West Nyanza society broke up into two daughter communities after they developed expertise in both pastoralism and intensive banana farming. One of these daughter communities spoke a set of dialects that linguists have named "Rutara," and they continued to live in the lands north and south of the mouth of the Kagera River. The other community spoke a set of dialects linguists have named "North Nyanza," and they lived in the lands between the mouths of the Katonga River and the Victoria Nile (see Map 5.1 and Figure 5.1). Both societies perfected intensive banana

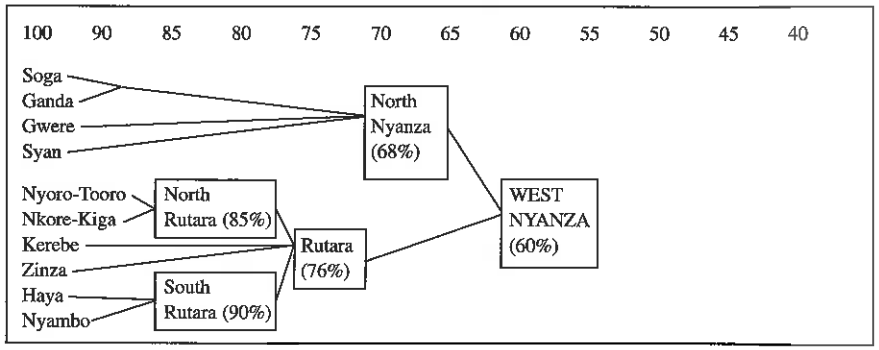
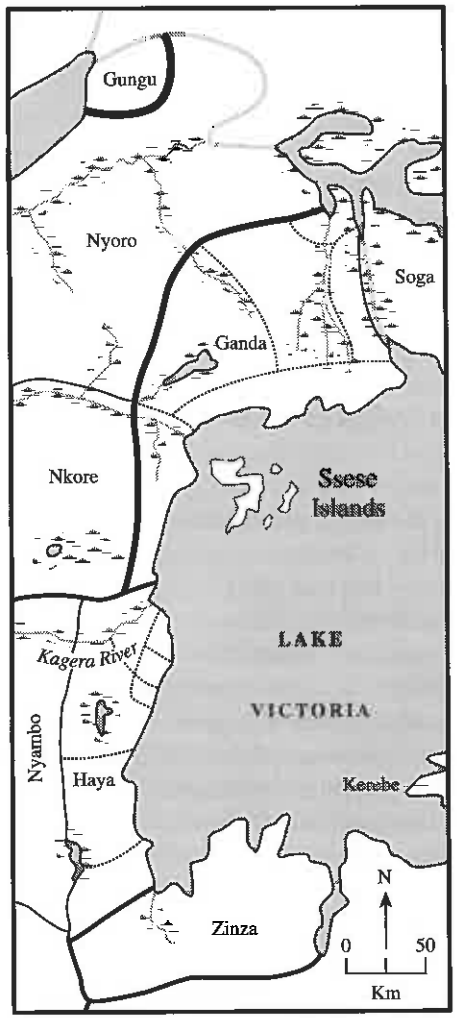


Figure 5.1 Tree Diagram of West Nyanza Bantu. Glottochronology reckoned at a shared retention rate of 73-74% per thousand years.

farming, but one, the Rutarans, also developed pastoralist expertise, which allowed some people to settle in the dry central grasslands during the wet and dry periods between 900 and 1500.

North Nyanzan and Rutaran farmers invented a host of words for individual varieties of banana and plantain, as well as for generic types of bananas. They did so as they came to depend more and more on banana gardens for one of their staple foods. The growing dependence on such perennial crops converted the locations of the best banana-bearing lands into attractive places for large communities to settle. We do not know how many people lived in such communities. But we can say with certainty that they would have been more populous and more densely settled than those round about, which were not blessed with the capacity to raise and sustain bounteous green banana gardens. Discontinuous banana-bearing lands, then, meant that larger communities dotted the lands near Lake Victoria and smaller ones either occupied the interstices between the larger ones or were spread more and more thinly over the woody grasslands that covered the lands behind the rich littoral. To the extent, then, that differences in community size meant differences in instrumental power for leaders, the banana revolutions of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries drove the productive side of the politics of power around Lake Victoria's shores.

Advances in cattle breeding and herding, embodied in the incorporation of the long-horned Ankole breed into local herds, drove the Rutaran community in two very different directions. After the first period of low rainfall, between 900 and 1200, some Rutaran speakers followed their cattle into lands hitherto unsettled in any permanent manner. This will be discussed in Chapter 6. Others of the Rutaran community stayed put and placed their collective agricultural fate in the banana plant and in the enduring riches of Lake Victoria. For these and other reasons the stories



Map 5.1 West Nyanza Linguistic Geography.

of the North Nyanzan and Rutaran communities belong together. Perhaps one of the more compelling reasons is trade.

TRADE AND WEALTH

As one descends from the 500 meter high Rift edge to the eastern shore of Lake Mwitanzige, one will see small groups of women climbing the other way, bearing bundles wrapped in green banana leaves. The glittering waters of the lake at their back, they make their way up the escarpment to the regional markets of Kigorobya and Hoima with their valuable loads. They carry fine white salt (**nsero*, 23), from Kibiro, which they have "grown" in the salt "gardens" that form at the base of the escarpment where hot spring water, which has leached salts out of the earth, can be collected in flat-bottomed pools and left to dry.[4] The salt is of the highest quality and brings now, as it surely did long ago, a high price.[5]

Kibiro was first used for salt production in the thirteenth century, in the middle of the era of economic and social transformation here under discussion. By analogy with the nineteenth century, the archaeologist Graham Connah has suggested that this site was a major source of wealth for the kingdom of Bunyoro, from the sixteenth century onward, and for other chiefdoms and communities before and since.[6] Besides the trade value accruing to the producers themselves (who, in the past, may well have been women, as they are today), this wealth probably took the form of tariffs paid to the kingdom by the traders who carried the valuable commodity through Bunyoro on their way to markets in Buhaya and Buganda, near Lake Victoria.

The lakeside communities probably purchased salt with the fine barkcloths made from the gigantic *Ficus* trees (**mutumba* or **mudumba*, 28) which thrived in people's gardens near the lakeshore.[7] Nineteenth-century travelers, missionaries, and ethnographers repeatedly remark on the high quality and vigorous demand for Ganda and Haya barkcloths.[8] These same reporters often note that the red cloths from Buganda were especially desired. People used barkcloths for a great variety of purposes: they made simple gifts of them, used them as burial shrouds, and (along with foods, beer, and fowl) initiated patron-client relationships with the offering of a barkcloth.

Even though salt and barkcloth must be considered necessities—salt for the human diet (and for cattle) and barkcloth as an indispensable part of adorning the body—the production and trade in metals was equally important. Ironworking was central to the latticed structure of royal instrumental power but it also received some of its value from the tools, weapons, and jewelry that smiths could produce from the magical fruit of the smelter's furnace. Making iron and fashioning iron things symbolized male "fecundity" through a metonymic appropriation of female fertility.[9] In many of the region's states, and indeed far beyond the boundaries of the Great Lakes region, the king was buried with iron items (axes and anvils) or ironworkers were involved in royal installation rituals.[10] Through such associations, kings hoped to create a close relationship between royal responsibility for fertility and fecundity and the smith's and smelter's possession of the practical knowledge to commit acts of creative power: making metal from rock and making useful things from metal. Metalworking and struggles over its control and over the nature of its symbolic expressions bridged the instrumental and creative realms of power. Therefore, though to a lesser extent, the symbolic ideology of ironworking, so rich with echoes of human fertility, may be expected to have

borrowed from the central concerns with fertility that characterized the difficult but territorially expansive centuries after A.D. 800.

The excellent work of archaeologists on Lakes ironworking notwithstanding, it seems clear that trade in another sort of metal was at least as important as iron for adorning bodies and objects, especially powerful ones. That other metal was copper, Africa's "red gold."[11] Copper turns up throughout the Lakes region as an important part of a leader's ornaments of office, even though the nearest source probably was the Katanga region of modern day Republic of Congo. Copper must have been quite an expensive trade item, given the costs of transport over the fifteen hundred miles from Katanga. And the linguistic and ethnographic evidence combines to tell a story of copper armbands, copper wire bracelets, and copper wire wound around staffs used by wealthy men and women and by political and religious leaders.[12]

We noted in Chapter 1 that iron-bearing ores were distributed discontinuously in the Great Lakes region (Map 1.1). The most conspicuous gap existed in Buganda and may have induced early North Nyanzan communities to generate surpluses of desired goods which they could trade for the rich iron blooms of Bukooki or Buhaya or Wanga (in Buluhyia). It is perhaps worth noting that Ganda and Soga royal rituals (funerals and installations) do not feature ironworkers or iron items with any prominence, as befits two societies who depended on trade for the bulk of their iron bloom.[13]

However far-flung was trade in salt, metals, and barkcloths, the entire system almost certainly depended on the movement of foodstuffs, especially livestock. These basic products anchored the larger and contemporary long-distance trading systems of the Saharan and Indian Ocean worlds. In the Lakes region, evidence for trade in plant foods and cattle will necessarily be harder to come by, but two ancient verbs from Proto West Nyanza (**kusàka* [80] and **kugèmura* [177]) suggest their central importance not only to trade but also to relations between wealthy and poor individuals.[14] The first word describes trade in foodstuffs and the second describes the act of bringing food to a superior on the occasion of entering her or his house. Indeed, it would be fair to argue that the exchange and giving of foodstuffs and cattle as gifts come to represent fundamental aspects of hospitality and social hierarchy.

As West Nyanza societies differentiated themselves into North Nyanzan and Rutaran hubs, their trading activities linked a growing number of healthy productive communities of farmers and herders spread across a landscape whose principal environmental differences shaded subtly one into the other. The gradual differentiation from wet banana-bearing lands to dry pastureland meant that transport costs for goods from one zone that were desired in another zone were the single most important factor in setting exchange values. Still, we cannot calculate the exchange value of each item involved in the trade because we do not know anything about volumes of production or about relative rates of exchange. However, the practical and discursive uses to which

Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies put some of the items mentioned above expressed some of the other values they attached to those goods. Barkcloth, iron, copper, and the skins of some hunted animals all possessed a ceremonial currency that must have formed part of the market in which they circulated. Foodstuffs, cattle, and salt all came into circulation directly from local units of production and their values must have reflected to a large degree the differing climatic, epidemiological, and political conditions for their production. Where a localized drought may have suppressed grain production it may also have boosted the exchange value of cattle. In these ways environmental differences and shared cultural roots combined to tie together far-flung centers of specialized production.

These speculations aside, we turn now from the practical matters of production systems to consider the changes in the discursive construction of the meanings of community, land, and health in the mouths of healers, chiefs, and homestead heads. The social value of land underpinned settlement expansions as much as rainfall amounts and soil profiles. The productive systems which generated salts, barkcloths, and metal objects were certainly shaped by the distribution of natural resources like salinated water and iron ores, but they were also superintended by the intellectuals most involved with building a social vision of land. West Nyanza communities combined land with political and healing institutions to give a distinctive texture to the social history of the lands by Lake Victoria. In profound ways, this social history turned on changes in gender relations and units of social organization.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES AND GENDERING IDENTITIES[15]

Careful thinking about gendered identities should help us to mark both male and female as categories requiring historical analysis. We can no longer imagine that to gender a historical problem means to study the role of women in its unfolding, even if the original impulse to study gender flowed from the need to redress the overwhelmingly male-centered character of so much historical scholarship. To study gendered identities in the ancient past of the Great Lakes region poses even more formidable problems because we must respect the content that Lakes societies gave to the categories "male" and "female" at the same time as we search for changes in that content and for signs of conflict or compromise in the making and defending of boundaries between the two categories. When we add, as we must, considerations of how gendered identities changed with the progress of the life cycle, with differences in wealth and status, and with differences in the material conditions of food production, then the task becomes truly enormous.

The task may be carried out with the profit of gaining historical understanding if we focus on the relationship between the material conditions of

food production and the units of social organization through which children and access to land were controlled. This focus respects the limits placed on historical reconstruction by our sources and directs the story back to one of the book's central themes: that changes in social life and environment mutually reinforce one another. How, then, did persons occupying different institutions employ socially constructed gender relations to distribute work and to garner access to surplus? And in what ways did these same persons form gender hierarchies in West Nyanza societies?

Rutara and North Nyanza speakers 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 people gave to those larger units of social organization. A few cases will be discussed below that throw some light on the gender of the household and its property.

Ethnographic evidence tells that "the hearth" and "the house" were female domains.[16] The extension of meanings for these words, in Rutara and North Nyanza, to include patrilineage and patriclan thus reflects the outcome of a struggle over the gendered control of material and cultural resources referred to by the new meanings—children, productive lands, livestock, and jural process—added to the old words.[17] In order to appreciate the historical character of these innovations, we must search for the ways in which gendered identities, property, and labor intersected in each of two ethnographic contexts, one from Rutaran and one from North Nyanzan society. By studying these intersections we can recognize patterns in the relations between gender, property, and labor. The "just-so" character of these patterns should not cause alarm because I intentionally emphasize the ways in which Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies differed in their conceptualizations of gendered identity, property, and labor before pursuing an historical explanation for these differences.

North Nyanzans replaced the older West Nyanza word *rugàndá*, in its meaning "dispersed patriclan," with a new term, **kika* (123) which meant "dispersed patriclan." They exchanged these two words at the same time that they innovated a host of new words and of new meanings for old words related to agricultural experiments with intensive banana farming. During this period (between 900 and 1100), the concentrations of population around the best banana-bearing lands made local collections of homesteads the new centers of the social relations of clanship. This differed from the extremely dispersed character of clans (*rugàndá*, singular) in many Rutaran societies like Nyoro and Nkore. 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. Moreover, this era coincided with a period of reduced rainfall amounts that very likely rendered the best banana gardens less numerous than they have been at any time since.

Photograph 5.1 A Family and Their Banana Garden in Buganda, ca. 1900. [Photograph by Sir Harry Hamilton, *The Uganda Protectorate,* (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1902), 2: plate 83, opposite page 98]

This argument is not determined by environmental conditions. It embraces the relationship between the noncontiguous, relatively rare lands best for bananas and the ability of local collections of homesteads to provide the labor required to convert these "better" lands into banana gardens. Localities did not provide labor automatically. They did so through marriage ties and through gendered divisions of labor. As wives, women were the knot in the marriage tie between patrilineages. Why all this should have taken place may become clearer if we consider the role of the cognatic family group (**lulá*, 98, 134; **ndá*, plural) in this scenario.

The center of *lulá's* semantic domain is "inside" the body, quite often the womb itself. The North Nyanza referents specify that cognatic family groups (a mother and all the children she bore) rarely attained the status of lineages capable of establishing legal claims to the land based on firstcomer status (and, later, as granted by the king). Nor did family groups succeed in establishing ritual claims to productive land, a right normally achieved by burying three or four generations of its members on the same plot.[18] In twentieth century Ganda society, the cognatic family group (*lulá*) is generally fewer in number than the maximal patrilineage (**ssiga*, 117, singular) (see Photograph 5.1). This contrast 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 Nyanza speakers drew this line around those sharing real or putative patrilineal descent and not around those sharing matrilineal descent cannot now be known.[19]

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 women could improve their positions as wives. Expert pastoralists lived in the central grasslands by 1100 or even earlier.[20] One of the possible outcomes of struggles for control over pastoralist knowledge may have been the exclusion of women from herding. This exclusion perhaps followed men's success in developing control over cattle in the first place, through an ideology of patrilineal descent and inheritance. This would have put livestock in male hands at the sort of mixed farming sites where specialized pastoralism flourished, such as Ntusi, Munsa, and, later, Bigo.[21]

After the thirteenth century, when the internal frontiers were closing—frontiers that had been formed by the specialists in herding or in banana farming who had settled just beyond or within nodes of ancient mixed-farming communities—the size of the primary social group through which access to land was gained was very important. With respect to perennially cropped banana gardens (*kibánjá* or *lusuku*), small cognatic families

(*ndá*) 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 it could be devastating when the head of a small family (*lulá*) died heirless and its holdings reverted to the "homestead or patrilineage head" (*mukúrú*[22] in Rutara and West Highlands; *bakúrú*, plural) or to the "person holding lands in the name of the clan" (**mutàkà*, 147, in North Nyanza), for reassignment to strangers. Where larger cognatic families lived, the loss of heirless plots to a chief would have been rarer because it would have been correspondingly more likely that when a brother died another member of the succession lineage (a collateral group of classificatory brothers in North Nyanzan society) had reached adulthood and could inherit the lands.[23]

On the early internal frontier, where land was plentiful but labor was scarce, leaders of small families (*ndá*; *lulá*, plural) or clans (*bika*; *kika*, plural) would thus have been more often in a position to remake the content of their group (by allocating land to outsiders) than leaders of larger families or clans. This condition emphasized the importance of unequal amounts of instrumental power over land and people because the Rutaran lineage head (*mukúrú*) and the North Nyanza holder of clan lands (*mutàkà*; *batàkà*, plural) both held reallocation rights to much of the land. Wherever the most desirable lands were in short supply, as they probably were around North Nyanza and South Rutara banana gardens, the only way a cognatic family could grow was through having more children, hence the value of marriage and wives. And it is precisely in these contexts that the house and belly metaphors came to represent small and large patrilineages. Where lands or pastures were abundant (as, perhaps, at Munsa), enterprising homestead heads (*nyineka* or *mukúrú*) could add strangers to their group when they granted the strangers rights to cleared land or new rights to clear new fields. In these homesteads (*maka*; *eka*, singular), wives' fertility provided the ultimate insurance against a clan's or a cognatic family's disappearance.

The varying emphases that men and women in Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies placed on lineality and residence patterns created distinctive forms of settlement and social concepts of community. The novelty of the patriarchal idiom for crafting control over access to land seems to have appeared in the context of the opening of the internal frontier, at the turn of the first millennium A.D., just as it did in the Kivu Rift Valley. Joining male-centered kinship idioms to the practice of building communities around land-use rights turned on the social meaning of land. Changes in the social meaning of land reflected an attempt to restrict access to certain types of land. Attempts to control access to land created new social hierarchies in the older core areas of settlement and ejected landless people into the internal frontier.

"A HOUSE SWALLOWS THE FIELD": OBLIGATION AND INEQUALITY

West Nyanza communities faced two overwhelming challenges as the first millennium drew to a close. One lay in their having to devise new means to superintend growing pressures on gaining access to the richest farm lands found by Lake Victoria as well as controlling the possibilities for generating material forms of wealth through trade. A host of terms for leaders who undertook such powers was innovated by West Nyanza speakers and the invention of offices (or of new official rights and responsibilities for those already occupying an office) continued into the Rutaran and North Nyanzan periods. All of these developments represented the elaboration of preexisting institutions that controlled who would have access to land and under what terms newcomers might be integrated into established communities. What stands out are the relative dearth of innovations of the latter type. It seems that there was a critical difference between the challenges faced by West Nyanzan societies and those faced by their North Nyanzan and early Rutaran descendants: West Nyanzan societies had to integrate newcomers, and North Nyanzan and Rutaran societies had to restrict access to key community resources, like banana lands. Hence the observation—implicit in the phrase "a house swallows the field"—if you allowed someone to build a house you also allowed them access to fields.[24]

The second challenge West Nyanza societies confronted issued from these instrumental tensions but centered on matters of illness and health. New terms for healers and for the results that their patients expected from them, emerged alongside some redefinitions of ancient Great Lakes Bantu theories of health and disease. In the frontier zones of the central grasslands, the risks to social health appeared most formidably to herders who entered a novel environment, heretofore classed as wilderness, and who developed a novel social system centered on livestock rather than on land. These concerns will be taken up in Chapter 6. For farmers in the Rutaran and North Nyanzan communities, concerns with social illness seem to have focused on matters of fertility. The overlapping character of social health and social wealth described what was common to each regional history and also set apart what was unique to each region.

These differences and similarities emerged in historical contexts that are reflected in the many meanings of the root **-bánjá* (156) in North Nyanza and some Rutaran communities (Map 5.2). Today, people who understand the term to mean both "banana plantation" and "debt," depending on which class prefix they attach to the root, speak languages belonging to the recently dissolved Rutaran and North Nyanza communities (Figure 5.1).[25] They have inherited this word and its meanings from those who spoke those ancient languages and who taught them to newcomers and to their children. In a

single sentence, a Rutaran or a North Nyanzan speaker of the twelfth century could simultaneously refer to the location of her house and its banana gardens and also indicate the nature of the obligation she incurred by getting access to it. That the word for one's home and fields should have been asked to do the work of naming a debt relation as well reveals the connection between inequality and access to land with stark efficiency.

The most widely spread meaning for *-bánjá*, "home-building site," surely hints at the source of the more narrowly distributed innovation of the meaning "debt, obligation." Building a house quite commonly involved shared labor that was recompensed when the new owner provided food and beer to the helpers.[26] The "debt" that the owners incurred by accepting their neighbors' labor may well be settled just then, with the offer of food and beer, but it was in practice a perpetual and rotating debt. Housed families "owed" their labor to new families who needed a home built. If this condition offered the initial occasion for adding the meaning "debt" to the meaning "home-building site" for the word **kibánjá* (from **-bánjá*), then the range of obligations one could name with the word *kibánjá* were even more varied. Because the possibilities for incurring and inflicting debt far outran the conditions of shared labor, semantic creativity in generating new words to signal such inequalities also moved beyond this simple analogy.[27]

In early-twentieth-century Nyoro society *kibánjá* tenants were not linked to any sort of kinship group.[28] They formed communities of people who came from different places but shared a single identity and territorial interest around a land controller. This was true for Haya society in the early twentieth century as well. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnographic and linguistic evidence from those societies that are descended from West Nyanza societies reveals that they possessed this term in these meanings. But many other subgroups possess unique terms to describe the tenant and the landlord. The core meanings of *kibánjá* in the West Nyanza and subsequently in the Rutara, and the North Nyanza eras revolved around productive land and debt, but these two referents were not necessarily isomorphic.[29] Other terms describe patron-client relationships that emerged later in the Rutaran and North Nyanzan periods, relations that kingship sought to coopt and redirect to its ephemeral centers.

We see in the semantic history of *kibánjá* connections between inequality and communities that contained groups who defined themselves by other than purely kinship idioms. Differences in wealth and standing took shape among people who lived in the same community but who did not necessarily share the same conception of who their founding ancestor was. If such diversity characterized the settlements by Lake Victoria or on the internal frontier after 1000, who superintended debt and property relations? On the frontier and in the old core areas of settlement, who mediated them and benefited from their instrumental capacity to generate a following? The offices that could do

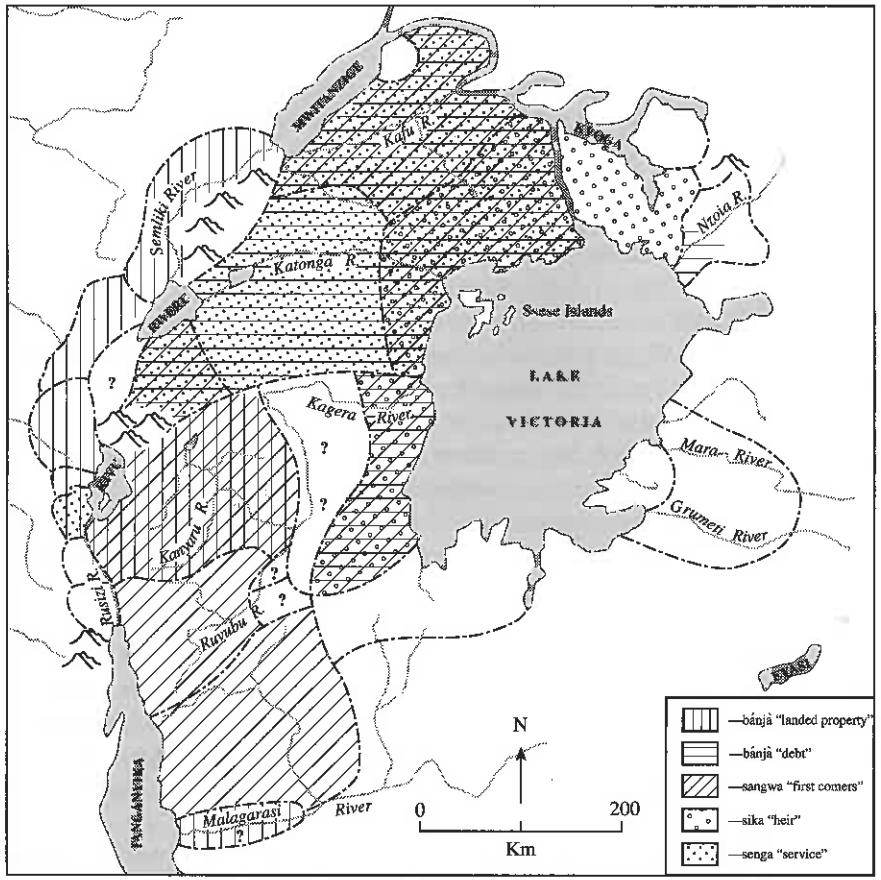
such things converted persons into beneficiaries. Their histories constitute the continuing story of chiefship.

FIRSTCOMERS AND NEWCOMERS: COMMUNITY, LAND, AND INHERITANCE

Before 1000, West Nyanzan speakers shared their villages with many people from different lineages.[30] The fact that nearly all the people who today speak languages descended from West Nyanza name this village an **ekyaaro* (153), among other terms, testifies to the fact that their ancestors had built such places long ago. In addition to building them in the older core areas where Proto West Nyanza speakers lived, their immediate descendants probably founded new settlement areas as part of opening up the frontier in the central grasslands. Because both Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies shared this sense of the variety of people who lived in an *ekyaaro*, we should imagine that frontier settlements of the same name included both Rutaran- and North Nyanzan-speakers.

The distribution and number of different field types used by a household which filled the space between the houses in a *ekyaaro*, reflected the different investments of labor which farmers poured into their land. The importance of lands enriched by labor for sustaining a core group in an *ekyaaro* comes out clearly when we study the historical development of rules designed to direct the inheritance of such lands. For example, the transfer (**kusika* [239], "to inherit") of productive land (**butàkà*, "soil, dirt, productive property," and *kibánjá*) from one member of the family to another, at the time of death,[31] expressed relationships of production and the instrumental power that they bore within the household (Map 5.2). Cleared land represented a labor investment and assigning it to a son expressed a relation of domination, a sort of social debt, because such a transfer would have been contingent upon the son accepting the new responsibilities to relatives that accompanied his simultaneous acquisition of junior status and of a piece of productive land.[32] Because a new family required new land to form a separate productive hub, the transfer of a cleared parcel had a practical value as well. The social histories of the tensions between labor needs and family obligation reveals why some West Nyanza speakers moved off into the drier lands west and north of Lake Victoria.

West Nyanzans recognized problems of inheritance and inheritor (*musika*), but their descendants, Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies, resolved these issues differently as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries opened. The semantic history of this term for "heir" explains that the West Nyanzan societies who used it understood inheritance to be an act of perpetuating descent-based groups. The noun comes from a verb which means "to follow," found far beyond the Great Lakes region. But, to this basic commonality in the meaning of the noun to West Nyanzan communities, the North Nyanzan and Rutaran societies added their own flourishes of meaning after 1000, meanings that reflected the unique conditions they faced as farmers of perennial crops, as herders, or as farmers practicing mixed agriculture.



Map 5.2 Obligation and Land in West Nyanza Bantu.

In the late nineteenth century, Ganda and Soga societies emphasized succession to the position of family head and dispersal of property by distinguishing the person who succeeded to the role of family head (normally a brother of the deceased) from the persons who inherited his productive property in land and animals.[33] Usually the late man's eldest son inherited the lion's share of the property. An heirless man knew that upon his death, his property would go to a classificatory brother, chosen by his clanmates. But this distinction seems to have been a recent one. It probably emerged during the growing commodification of wealth that began in the mid-nineteenth

century. Commodification and monetization produced new conceptions and forms of wealth, which were concentrated in the immediate family and were conserved through patrilineal inheritance. The practice of collateral succession and inheritance threatened the creation and protection over time of new patrimonies because clanmates could use the practice to disperse the wealth of a successful "new" man beyond his immediate family members. Scholars seem to agree that before the nineteenth century, because very little patrimonial wealth existed that adhered to individual laborers or officeholders, both succession to the role of family head and inheritance of land and livestock were passed into the collateral line, to one or more of the deceased's classificatory brothers.[34] These banana farmers thus used the institution of **busika* to maintain control of clan lands, the **butàkà*, in the face of heirlessness, conflict, or the predatory designs of kings to divide up their lands.[35] The collateral system insured that land and the families who made it productive, remained under the control of clan leaders.

Rutaran societies emphasized genealogically based inheritance as well. In South Rutaran societies, after the fifteenth century, the lack of a descendant meant that the heir came from the collateral line; just as in North Nyanza society, he was one of the brothers.[36] This seems to have been a feature common to communities who put great store in continued access to perennial croplands. However, in the frontier communities of North Rutaran society, after the fifteenth century, where herding and mixed farming predominated, the lack of a male lineal heir could be filled by a daughter.[37] Here, the principal concern seems to have been retaining for the patrilineage control over the movable property—herds of cattle.

In ancient agricultural settlements, people built inheritance and succession systems that were based on succession lineages. Through them, they hoped to solve the problems of developing and maintaining a following, as well as being prepared to accept newcomer groups that might arrive later. After the fifteenth century, the North Rutarans created a system of inheritance and succession that emphasized passage from father to son as part of their solution to the problems associated with domesticating the increasingly crowded internal frontier. Patrilineal inheritance of some forms of property improved the chances for local lineages to achieve firstcomer status, with all of its benefits, and to augment their number by emphasizing the lineage principle itself.

Before the rise of banana plantations, between 800 and 1300, North Nyanzan societies were dispersed. But North Rutaran societies were concentrated around centers of mixed-farming (like Ntusi and Munsa) prior to the emergence of specialized pastoralism in, perhaps, the eleventh century. Banana farming and specialized pastoralisms reversed this equation after the eleventh century. As the internal frontier began to close, North and South Rutarans further sharpened their pastoral skills and North Nyanzans improved the yields of their banana gardens. North Nyanzan communities concentrated

themselves around the best banana lands and the two Rutaran groups dispersed themselves to minimize risks to their herds.[38]

The concept of the firstcomer and the challenges they faced sum up observations about inheritance and property. A word for "firstcomer" existed in West Nyanza speech: **basangwa* (233), "those who were found." We feel confident that West Nyanza speakers knew this word because several of their descendant communities—but not all of them—retained the term and the idea it represents (Map 5.2).[39] Those who did use it derived it from the widespread verb for "to find" which, by adding a suffix that renders the verb passive, comes to mean "be found, be already there when one arrives." If we consider the ideological and the practical importance of firstcomer-status, we can see why the idea should have kept its value for more than 1500 years.

The firstcomers in an area possessed incomparable advantages. They had special ritual power over local gods; they controlled land use arrangements in their area; they maintained special positions within an emerging kingship; and they attracted newcomers to established communities through the society, safety, and cultural services available there. Firstcomers could use these advantages to pursue strategic patron-client relations (including marriage alliances) with newcomers and with neighboring firstcomer groups.[40]

In the ebb and flow of environmental pressures on communities that had increasingly specialized in either herding or farming, the importance of being first meant that other groups would challenge a given set of *basangwa* for the privilege. A firstcomer group always had to guard their status with vigilance and foresight; they could not take it for granted.[41] Successes in this regard might be seen when a single clan retained a central role in managing a healing center or in running royal rituals (like taking the throne or burial).[42] Success could also be insured through inheritance of valuable land and through succession to the offices that superintended access to land.

Such vigilance was warranted because the growing number of layers of extractive instrumental power enjoyed by the robust institution of Rutaran and North Nyanzan royalty threatened the control of access to land enjoyed by clan leaders. The complex of royal and appointed persons—which West Nyanzan societies named **mukama*, **mulangira* (217), **muruka* (223), and *mukungu* (all of which will be discussed below)—who wielded judicial and tribute-gathering instrumental power, hovered over and sought to coopt the descent-based system of allocating rights to land and directing property transfers through inheritance. The practical and discursive knowledge that firstcomers insisted was their unique province faced a sustained challenge in the persons of local representatives of royalty. Yet, the local face of a kingdom also sought the mantle of firstcomer status. This appears time and time again in dynastic oral traditions which claim that newcomer ruling groups established a connection by descent or marriage with the preexisting ruling group, the people who had been the earlier firstcomers! Thus,

the goal of achieving and defending firstcomer status has had the effect of generating a great number of claims to that status. An exhaustive comparative study of regional clan historiography and ethnography would take us far in recovering both the order in which these claims were prosecuted and the contexts for the success or failure of the effort. But such a task lies far beyond the scope of this study.[43]

Firstcomer status surely marked a coveted goal for any community builders, whether they were the elder men and women of a local lineage or of a more widely dispersed clan. And royalty sought to attach itself to this status by co-opting persons and offices that were attached to the status itself. But other ambitious persons could usurp the status by deftly deploying patronage. Established clans and lineages could not always fight back successfully because the concepts of debt and service that underwrote some forms of patronage were dispersed throughout the region, they were part of the common discursive property of all Lakes peoples.

One other way for communities to grow was through using the kinship idiom to forge ties between persons. "Blood brotherhood" was the most common of these alliances, or at least was the alliance most often reported by travelers and missionaries.[44] The general term for the act of making this alliance and for the relationship it created comes from the verb "to drink together" and it is likely, on strictly linguistic grounds, that it formed part of the deepest levels of the ancestral tradition. However, between 400 and 800, West Nyanza societies invented their own term for "blood brother", **mukago* (197), and this fact clearly reflects the renewed importance of such alliances to West Nyanza community builders in the old core areas of settlement. They derived their noun from a verb which meant "to protect by means of medicine." They thus made explicit that one of their purposes in making blood brotherhood was protection and that the exchange of blood was also the exchange of a type of medicine.[45] The two people who had cut their bodies and had mingled their blood (and, by public witnessing of this event, had mingled the lives of their families as well) could expect protection from each other from any number of potential threats: from the potential for heirlessness to the depredations of cattle raiders.[46] The importance of the coffee berry in making the pact seems to underscore that its origins were in the ancient zones of perennial croplands near Lake Victoria.[47]

Blood brothers could protect each other's ability to pass on property and standing in the face of heirlessness. Luise White has noted that an heirless man in Buganda could expect his blood brother (or his blood brother's child) to become his heir without opposition from the clan. But White reminds us that blood brothers could craft a variety of relationships.[48] Conditions of heirlessness thus would not have been the only driving force behind the institution. **Bukago* ("the institution of blood brotherhood") ensured access by a man to another man's family resources, resources beyond the control of his own lineage and beyond the constraints of his standing in his own lineage. In the tumultuous eras of environmental uncertainty faced by West Nyanzan societies after 900, at the end of that speech community's life, the institution of *bukago* furnished men with another means to construct social relationships that, in addition to marriage, reinforced the value of the descent idiom. Indeed, blood brotherhood may be conceived of as offering to men a relationship somewhere between marriage and clientship, a relationship that employed the profound imagery of descent ideology and gave them the opportunity to venture to the edges of the old core areas of settlement and make new villages. Blood brotherhood helped men create bonds between themselves and it ensured the continuity of their property and social standing, but it did not by itself help them gain access to productive resources like land. For that task West Nyanzan societies drew on elements of their ancestral tradition and innovated a new concept of service.

Patron, Client, Service, and Contract

West Nyanzans and their descendants inherited from their Great Lakes Bantu speaking ancestors an idea that they used to talk about building communities and to build a moral core into their communities. This male-centered moral core built on the old idea of redistribution implicit in the verb **kugàbá* (162) which Great Lakes Bantu peoples had used to generate other words for leadership and making loans.

But this old idea was supplemented by a newer one, which West Nyanzan societies understood to cut both ways. This was the idea of service by a newcomer to a preexisting landholder. In the early twentieth century, for communities spread as widely across the Great Lakes region as Kigezi, Busoga, and Bukerebe, the concept of service, or **kusenga* (234), announced that leaders and followers who entered into a relationship around land use rights had mutual obligations. The semantic history of the verb reveals how this announcement of reciprocal obligation came into existence and how it was understood by those who invented it (Map 5.2).

The word is ancient. Its most widely distributed meaning is "to ask for something," and in the Great Lakes region, in the Interlake zone of areal contact which existed during the middle centuries of the first millennium A.D., its meaning seems to have implied that a difference in status was inherent in the asking. The person who asked for something held a lower standing than the person who received the request. However, none of the meanings makes clear just what one asked for through *kusenga*. The West Nyanza meanings, invented between 600 and 800 retained this older center of meaning, but added clarification. West Nyanzans used "*kusenga*" to ask for land and to enter the social relations that land tenure mandated.

In West Nyanza society, near the western shores of Lake Victoria, *kusenga* expressed the idea of asking for and entering into a relationship of mutual

obligation that revolved around land. It gave the settler a moral basis for her or his desire to defend their rights to subsistence. Through *kusenga*, through providing support to a land controller, the settler received land to work. Obviously, the relationship also gave to the land controller the instrumental basis for gaining access to resources, like beer, that were critical to promoting and maintaining (through redistribution and feasting) his or her status as a leading member of the settlement area. Through *kusenga*, the land controller could expect to receive these sorts of contributions. *Kusenga* bound together people and families on different ends of the land holding continuum.[49]

Establishing such a relationship between themselves and a settler could well have been one of the ways that a family transformed itself from newcomers into firstcomers. Over the course of generations, families who had initially gained access to their community by entering a *kusenga* relationship, could consolidate the land-holding status of their descendants through the institution of *busika* ("inheritance"). And they could confirm that status by rendering some important service, such as healing or hunting, to the community. Perhaps the most common way to consolidate such land use status would have been through marriage alliances.[50] A newcomer family, who was content in their adopted community, might try earnestly to marry into the local land controller's lineage. Over the next several generations, if the new family had children who survived to adulthood, those children could begin to claim historical relationships to the older land-controlling lineage, ties that they could parley into their own lineal inheritance of land through the principle of *busika*. They could use these claims and this principle to set themselves up as granters of *kusenga* relations to still other newcomers.

Lest we feel an element of compulsion in the service relationship, we should respect the fact that West Nyanza societies and their descendants understood *kusenga* to favor the settler to some extent.[51] No penalties could be imposed when a settler's family chose to terminate their *kusenga* relationship with local land controllers. Of course, if one gave up such ties, they had to find other land to work! After the fifteenth century, South Rutaran society clarified the risks to land controllers that lurked in the *kusenga* relationship. Out of the verb *kusenga*, they made a noun that meant "rebel," which they used to name someone who changed sides in a political conflict.[52] Relations of debt and service, created through gifts of land, seem to have occupied a central place in the risky business of building chiefly followings.[53]

ROYALTY AND THE KING'S PEOPLE: REDISTRIBUTION AND A FOLLOWING

The history of chiefship echoes in the history of *kusenga* during the one or two centuries before A.D. 1000. If the social history of *kusenga* underscores the capacity for communities to integrate outsiders, then the social

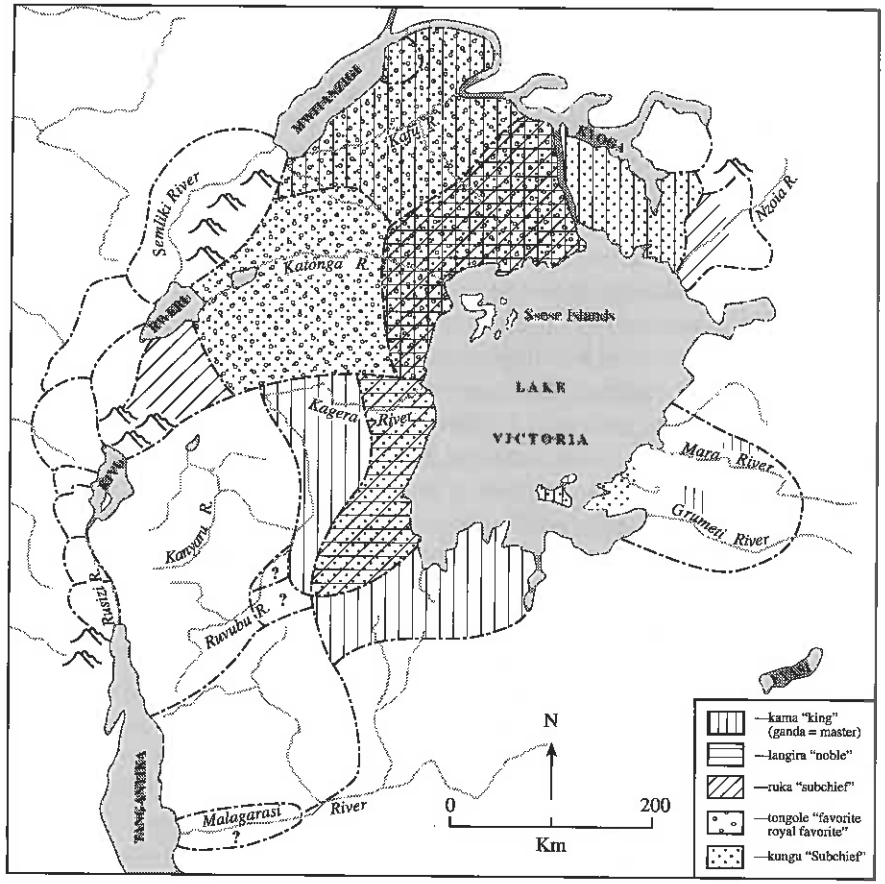
history of chiefship reveals the invention of the offices that benefited from this "capacity" for integration. These histories conserved some of the older achievements of communities that had developed sets of political offices both within and beyond the units of social organization defined by concepts of lineality. Some of these offices were introduced in Chapter 3: *mwaámì*, *mutwále*, and *mukungu*.

With the development of such offices, the era of the kingdoms dawned because the means to tie together centers of instrumental power existed in the persons of *bakungu*. Royalty, whose instrumental and creative powers had probably been confined to the exalted status incumbent upon firstcomers, now sought to coopt the fact that some firstcomer communities would have been more successful than others in converting their ritual and political advantages into larger and larger followings. The *bakungu* were the bridge between a would-be expansionist royalty and the followers who were to be so critical to the success or failure of that expansionism.

The storied past of kings and kingdoms between the Great Lakes had its roots deep in the social history of wealth, land, and healing. Its familiar contours of nobility, kingship, and courtly life took firm shape, however, during the period between 800 and 1100, when West Nyanza communities began to break up and form Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies. The widely successful institutions such as descent-based succession and inheritance, *kusenga*, and the debt-service relations embedded in the term *kibánjá* survived the invention of instrumentally powerful kingship. But this new kingship altered their character permanently.

The revolutionary innovation of the period between 800 and 1100 lay in the invention of concepts of hereditary nobility and the link that was created between nobility and the institutions of instrumental control over people. This connection had profound consequences for the social history of kingship and health in the second millennium A.D. because its origins lay firmly within the orbit of redistributing wealth and of creating and maintaining a political following. A thorough consideration of the historical evidence for this change reveals the vital importance of transformations in the office of *mukungu* to the development of concepts of royalty (Map 5.3).

David William Cohen's work in Busoga may offer a template for understanding the transformation of *bukungu*, "wealth" into *bukungu*, "appointed office." Cohen notes that *bakungu* were appointed personnel under a *mukama* or a *mwaámì*, and that they were drawn from among the community's wealthy or high-status persons, regardless of the attributes assigned to them by their membership in a particular clan or lineage.[54] In other words, *bakungu* were successful persons whom chiefs desired to tap as their deputies precisely because their status was not tied exclusively to their positions in local, lineage-based firstcomer groups. Their eventual inclusion in the nexus of royalty represented a major challenge to the clan-based land controllers discussed earlier, who controlled smaller, more dispersed lands.



Map 5.3 Royalty in West Nyanza Bantu.

Cohen argues that, at least in the nineteenth century in southern Busoga, the *bakungu* chiefs appointed by Inhensiko I to rule over his sons and over other Karuoth (Luo) men possessed the power "to assign lands and offices to other commoners."[55] A *mukungu* assigned lands and offices as part of composing his own following, which she or he could then use to control members of the community and even members of the newcomer Luo-speaking Owiny Karuoth. *Bakungu* could expand their following in several ways. They could craft rhizomatous connections among long-established communities through blood brotherhood or marriage alliances. They could lead their followers into new territories that were settled only very thinly and develop rhizomatous links between far-flung settlements by forging descent ties or raising the male children born of marriages between a *mukungu* and local women.[56] All these techniques for increasing a *mukungu*'s wealth in people

formed models for opening internal frontiers, which were driven by ambition, conflict, or the ejection of landless and kinless people from their home areas. An ambitious *mukungu* need not have preyed on the misfortune of others to increase or fortify the support of his following. He could exploit his own reputation and standing to draw off a set of supporters to the frontier.

In Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies, the *mukungu* held his office at the chief's pleasure. He sometimes controlled access to uncleared lands but never controlled access to the far more valuable banana gardens, which remained under the firm hand of the clan's land controllers and their inheritance systems.[57] The meaning "appointed subchief" was added to what must be considered the older bundle of meanings about wealth and standing. In Buganda, "*mukungu*" referred to each and every person of importance, including all chiefs.[58] But the term was interchangeable with *mwaámì* in the same meaning.[59] It was not interchangeable in Soga, where *omwaámi* (a Soga form of *mwaámì*) always appears to name a superior to a *mukungu*, and where *bakungu* might have been appointed by a *mwaámì* or a senior *mukungu*, or where the office might have been hereditary.[60] The Soga meaning is the more common arrangement and marks Ganda as the innovator. On the island of Bukerebe, in the southeastern corner of Lake Victoria, the *bakungu* were village chiefs who held their office at the *mukama*'s pleasure. The fact that they did not have to be from the royal clan, but had merely to be a friend of the king, signals a prior condition, when *bakungu* of large villages were first among equals before a king. The preponderance of early-twentieth-century ethnographic description of *bakungu* living in societies whose languages have descended from Proto West Nyanzan speech, agrees that they were wealthy village leaders on whom kings came to depend for labor and collecting tribute.[61]

West Nyanza societies also innovated a word for a subchief or subdistrict, the *muruka* (223). They may have derived it from an older Bantu verb, **kudùka* "to plait," suggesting that the *muruka* exemplified the art of weaving together a political fabric through redistributions of wealth and influence. On the other hand, people may have invented the noun from another old Bantu verb of the same phonological shape that means "to name." Should this derivation prove the strongest, it tells that, in addition to the redistributive responsibilities of chiefship, Lakes peoples understood that chiefs also "named" their favored followers *muruka*; they gave them the responsibilities and standing in the office of the *muruka*.[62]

We cannot determine from the available evidence if these offices were hereditary or if chiefs could name others to them at will. A middle ground between the two statuses was most likely the rule. Upon their appointment to the post of *muruka*, the new subchief might feel a special debt of gratitude and allegiance to the king. They might be counted on to carry out the king's bidding, to behave much like one of the king's people. But over time and

with the support of the followers who lived in the locality under his control a *muruka* could hope to create bonds of loyalty that his sons and daughters could exploit to keep the office in their family. A prudent king, who desired to maintain flows of tribute and currents of allegiance, would not tamper with such arrangements. He and the queens would likely leave well-enough alone and might even seek to coopt such successful chiefs.

The signal achievement of the new kingship in West Nyanza society lay in creating institutions to attract and integrate a body of instrumentally powerful leaders, like *bakungu*. One part of this achievement, the importance of a courtly following, seems quite old in West Nyanza history. What had begun as a collection of courtiers working closely with a king and queen, as virtual equals to them, grew into a retinue of "king's people," or officers who held their positions by the legitimating authority of royalty.

The growing importance of a royal retinue of courtiers comes clearly to us through a set of new terms that Rutarans innovated, after about 1200, terms denoting the status of being a chief's favorite or preferred subject.[63] Of this set, the term **mutongole* (257) stands out as worthy of extended discussion, if only because of this office's later military and economic importance in Buganda (Map 5.3). The invention of the office of *mutongole* represents another step in the development of a set of royal followers with complex loyalties to the court.

In Bunyoro, in the nineteenth century, the *mutongole* chief occupied a level of chiefship beneath the high-status *munyoro* chiefs.[64] In Buganda, a *mutongole* chief might be appointed to his status in the same territory as a *mukungu* and might have to coexist with him. But the *mutongole* had responsibilities for calling up military forces and for guiding police and raiding activities in and around his territory. He thus occupied the point position in the militarily expansionist Ganda state of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[65] Other descriptions suggest that **batongole* (plural of *mutongole*) chiefs held important positions in the kingdoms of Buhaya during the nineteenth century.[66]

The linguistic evidence for the history of this term betrays its origins as rather similar to those of the *bakungu*: in the courts of local chiefs, the very chiefs who so successfully parlayed their firstcomer statuses into territorially expansive royalist desires. The *batongole*, like the *bakungu*, hoped for a share in kingly expansion. Like the *bakungu*, *batongole* appear to have already achieved a modicum of wealth and standing in their communities, which attracted the attention of a powerful *mwaámì* or *mukama*. *Batongole* may well have achieved that wealth and standing through making shrewd sets of loans and through creating strategic patron-client relations with others in their communities. From these positions they could negotiate ties to a king's court by converting some of their wealth into gifts to the *mukama* and by seeking to distinguish themselves in the king's eyes through acts of loyalty and allegiance. Having succeeded in these tasks, a *mutongole* may well have been

the person or agent on whom the *mukama* depended for delivering to his court the goods and services that the king had a moral right to expect from commoners as a function of his kingship. West Nyanzan societies invented the noun *mutongole* from a verb which means "to claim or reclaim what belongs to one by moral right." The creators of this office thus understood its holder to have the moral power to collect things on behalf of a chief or king, or in their own right.

The term turns up in many West Nyanza tongues, but this fact must be treated with care. The privileged position gained by the kingdom of Buganda in the workings of the British colonial state, early in the twentieth century, led eventually to colonial promotion of a Ganda administrative structure as a template for running other kingdoms in the area. The office of *mutongole* was one of many imported outside of Buganda.[67] Great care must thus be taken when inferring cognate forms from attestations in areas adjacent to Buganda. The claim for a West Nyanza innovation of this office, then, must rest on twentieth-century evidence from societies not involved in this expansion or on evidence from the nineteenth century, before the British and Ganda representatives began to export Ganda administrative structures to other areas of their colonies. The case thus rests on the fact that we possess nineteenth-century evidence for the presence of this office in Bunyoro. It is still possible that, one way or another, the idea spread from Buganda to Bunyoro, or vice versa.

At the emerging internal frontier between pastoralists and sedentary farmers, a growing number of adherents, outside the strictly hereditary bounds of homestead heads, provided the *bakungu* with a means to detach their power from descent ideology by emphasizing the importance of a diverse following. Royalty captured the *bakungu* and invented other offices, when it began to seek instrumental power. In the nineteenth century, the Ganda innovation of the meaning "king's military chief" for *mutongole* clearly shows the continuing life of this process of innovation.[68] The conversion of *bakungu* into king's people reflects another refinement in the generation of a royal power structure independent from the controllers of clan lands. These new links between territory and follower served the power inherent in claiming, consolidating, and defending firstcomer status for Rutaran groups.

Nobility Colonizes Kinship

In Rutaran society, the groups who instituted new forms of social wealth in people (beyond those created through kinship ideology) shared several historical experiences. They inherited the legacy of a multilingual world from their West Nyanza speaking ancestors. They faced new stresses and strains as their lands filled up with followers and as they lost some of their relatives to the promise of prosperity as herders in the dry central grasslands. All these

factors shaped their desire to create forms of wealth in persons that reached beyond kinship ideology.

These ruling groups did not abandon kinship ideology. They redeployed it in the service of creating a class of persons with noble standing. West Nyanzans named this new group of royals with hereditary standing **balangira* (plural of *mulangira*). And they derived that name from a verb that meant "show to or teach to." Naming nobles as teachers probably expressed a poetics of hierarchy that paid respect to the wealth and standing of these "royals" (Map 5.3). The same people who made the metaphor for nobles as teachers also understood clearly that one of the practical matters that conferred high status upon nobles was that they formed a class who possessed control over use rights to uninhabited land. The group normally defined themselves as descendants of a current king and his wives, including the descendants of past royal unions.[69]

The status of *mulangira* appears to have overlapped with the older status of *mukungu* as a wealthy territorial chief. But it colonized that portion of a *mukungu*'s standing that contained an hereditary basis. Hereditary qualities no longer dominated early-twentieth-century Rutaran meanings for *mukungu* and the taking of such meaning by *mulangira* echoes a similar theft engineered fully a thousand years earlier by the intellectuals who converted *mukÚmÚ* from "honored rich person" into *mufÚmÚ* meaning "diviner-doctor." In the current case, though, the new divide separated ascribed from appointed status in the office of patron. In West Nyanza societies facing the end of the first millennium, the distinction served both to confine clan-based political power to matters of access to land and to consolidate a "noble" instrumental power over both land and people, in the emergent office of the kingship (*mukama* and *bwaámì*). What drove *bakungu* into this subordinate relation to a would-be political center we cannot know for certain. But it does seem more than coincidental that such a thing should receive a name during the breakup of the chain of West Nyanzan communities at precisely the time of the first experiments in specialized cattle raising, reduced rainfall, and increased pressures on land tenure mechanisms. Well-positioned controllers of clan land may have sought to centralize their sway over **bibánjá* (plural of *kibánjá*) in order to curb growing conflict over access to them. This seems to have occurred in North Nyanza as well, where *bakungu* possessed control over people but not control over land.[70]

Not all the king's men were men and not all of them were "his people." Some of the most important political figures were women, such as the queen mother (Illustration 5.1.b). It could be said that the queen mother created the king, in more ways than one. In many of the Lakes kingdoms, the king's maternal relatives had to be rallied to support him against the designs on his throne by other lines. The queen mother often sat at the center of this process of king making, the most important political process that any contender for

Illustration 5.1.a Kabaka (King) Muteesa I of Buganda (r. 1856–1884) touring his capital (*kibuga*) in 1862. [From a sketch by James Augustus Grant reproduced in John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile,* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), p. 285.] Reprinted by permission of Dover Publications, Inc.

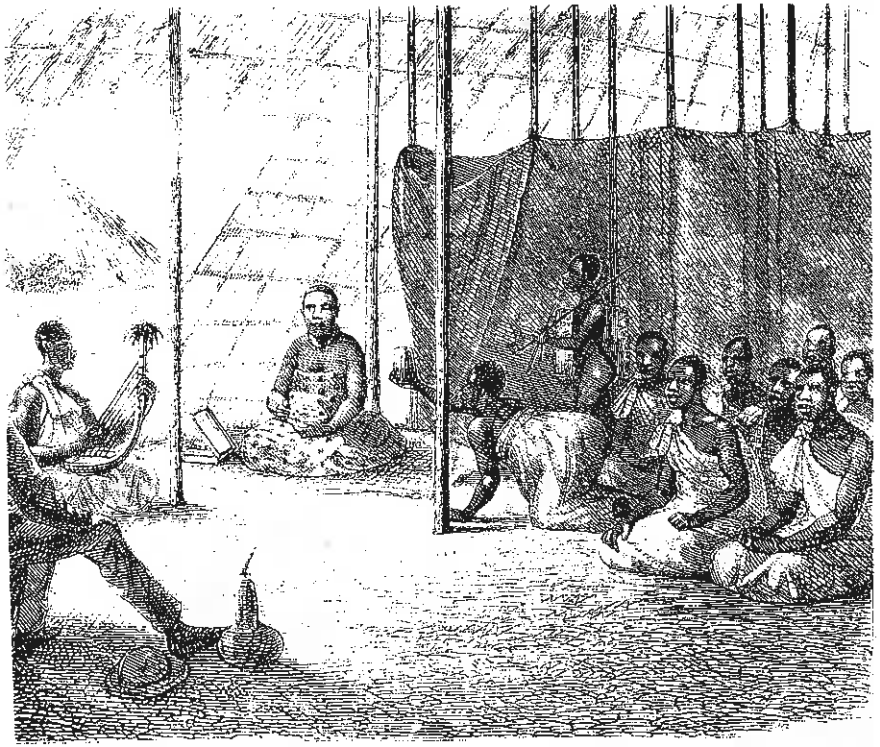


Illustration 5.1.b Muganzirwaza Nakazi Namasole (Queen Mother) of Buganda, with Muteesa's wives (*bakembuga* or "women of the capital"), a royal harpist (*enanga*), and a pipe bearer. She hosted James Grant and John Speke in 1862. [From a sketch by James Augustus Grant reproduced in John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile,* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), p. 285.] Reprinted by permission of Dover Publications, Inc.

the throne faced. Together they had to assemble a group of core supporters whose kinship obligations coincided with the contender's and who were therefore relatively immune to cooptation by competing lines. That core group most often came from the queen mother's lineage and thus placed her in a prominent position in the political fortunes of any kingdom.[71]

The institution of the queen mother turns up in many Lakes kingdoms.[72] But the terms that name the office differ, just as the terms for king also differ. Even if these differences suggest that the office was invented more recently than the West Nyanza era, in many parts of the Lakes region people made the words for queen mother with the same word-building artistry. They added the relevant term for adult woman to the corresponding term for king.[73] Yet, in Buganda they invented a unique name for the office: *Namasole*. This suggests quite strongly that these innovations all occurred after the break up

of the most recent subgroups of Great Lakes Bantu—West Highlands, Rutara, and North Nyanza—and that they all referred to different political processes in those royal domains, processes that unfolded after the sixteenth century. However, it is certainly fair to argue that the office of the queen mother came into existence virtually simultaneously with the named position of king, names that themselves are likely to have been discursive creations intended to capture in their semantic net the principal attributes of such a leader and, most likely, names that were applied originally to a particularly successful *mukungu*. We know from the work of Laurence Schiller that queen mothers played central roles as kingmakers in Buganda and held substantial estates entirely under their own instrumental control.[74]

The emphasis on these powerful aspects of kingship must not obscure the discursive dimension to that social standing. Leaders were also deemed to possess a distinctive "character" that went hand in hand with their standing as wealthy in children and followers or as ritually authoritative in matters of health. A chief certainly had a large family and following, as well as a privileged relationship to local spiritual forces. But a chief also displayed a host of qualities fitting to her or his standing. These qualities included generosity, excellence in speech, and fairness in settling disputes. Chiefs had to demonstrate these qualities on an individual basis but people believed that, potentially, they inhered in the person who succeeded to hereditary offices, like those of the land controllers. The character of a chief, her or his noble comportment, formed an indispensable feature of the office.

The idea that a chief had character comes clearly to us in the term *enfula*, "high status by virtue of birth" (from *-fura*). As a name for the combined qualities of generosity, friendliness, bravery, articulateness, and fine manners, the term formed part of the Great Lakes Bantu ancestral tradition. Adding the descent idiom to this bundle of character traits and thereby "arguing" that they were heritable (along with the offices such persons were to occupy) came much later in the social history of the region. It involved singling out the status of the first-born (boy or girl) as the person most likely to display the qualities of an *enfula*. This concept appeared first during the era of West Highlands and Rutaran interactions on the internal savannah frontiers, a process we will discuss in Chapter 6. However, the underlying concept of joining appropriate forms of behavior to the social standing of leadership, created more than 2000 years ago, surely formed one source for crafting concepts of hereditary nobility and royalty in the late West Nyanza era, at the close of the first millennium A.D. If the nobles and courtiers who formed the shock troops of the royal deployment of instrumental power had one foot in concepts of high character, their followers could be expected to have used these standards to complain about a leader's behavior or they could use them as reasons for leaving and moving to the frontiers. Standards of character cut both ways. However, it is clear that by the turn of the first millennium A.D.,

both leaders and followers constructed their identities in each other's shadow, by recourse to the pool of meaning surrounded by the word *enfula*.

We may never settle the matter of whether southern or northern West Nyanza communities crafted the invention of an instrumentally powerful royalty. Yet, the subtle differences in the relations between *bakungu* chiefs and royalty that twentieth-century ethnographers report for Bunyoro, Buganda, Busoga, and Buhaya, reveal that nowhere did the *bakungu* chiefs disappear into an hereditary group of nobles. Ganda political activists decided against creating royal clans and their decision may have reflected an older set of conditions for the emergence of instrumental kingship. Under these earlier conditions, controllers of clan land struggled to redirect for their own benefit the power of kings to appoint *bakungu* (among other sorts of chiefs). The land controllers could have done so by taking for themselves some of that appointive power by giving the king's appointees their own permanent land holdings.[75] They reasoned that it would be harder for the king's people to ignore local moral economies if they were themselves enmeshed in them. And what better way to weave them into a locality's web of debt and service than to make them part of the politics of clan lands control?

These developments brought into existence the instrumental power of kingship. The fact that *mukama* names a king in Haya, Nyambo, Nyoro, and Soga society surely suggests that the word did so in West Nyanza speech because Haya, Nyambo, Nyoro, and Soga languages descended from the West Nyanza speech community through the Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies.[76] But the claim offered here—that making *bakungu* royal appointees marked the emergence of kings as land controllers *par excellence*—does not turn on this literal glossing of *mukama* as "king." The claim rests on the innovation of both *mulangira* and *mukama*, at the same time that *mukungu* came increasingly to be an appointed status (Map 5.3). That all three should have occurred in West Nyanza society suggests that a kingship with some control over land had developed in that era, namely, sometime prior to the breakup of the West Nyanza dialect chain in the one or two centuries before 1000. The fact that Nkore and Ganda innovated unique terms (*mugabe* and *kabaka*, respectively) for this aspect of kingship, makes the case stronger still for viewing Haya, Nyambo, Nyoro, and Soga kingships as rooted in older, West Nyanza social history while the Ganda and Nkore forms stand out as the more recent.[77]

The contemporary invention, in the two centuries on either side of A.D. 1000, of a political system that ascribed royal power to some persons by birth and also legitimated their right to grant the rights to tribute from neighbors who had become tenants, ushered in a new era of political conflict over land and people. The conflict with royalty flowed from institutions of clan land controllers (*batàkà* and *bakúrú*) who controlled the inheritance (*busika*) of *bibánjá*. Ascribed statuses and appointed offices may well prove to have been inventions latent in the environmental geometry of the period between

900 and 1150, a period of shrinking land resources and reduced amounts of rainfall and a period when sites in the savannahs, like Ntusi and Munsa, were first settled.[78] The determinism of this suggestion is worrisome, and it calls for placing these developments in wider social contexts such as health and healing and changes in the philosophical basis of political power.

The fact that two different solutions to the challenges of superintending access to rich lands were crafted within the same set of semantic nets of terms for chiefship testifies to the creativity of West Nyanza political culture. Rutaran royalty emphasized the joining of authority to allocation in the ancient idiom of lineal descent. North Nyanza royalty did not produce that connection until far later and could not do so because the *batàkà* (controllers of clan lands) also retained control of the descent idiom as the medium of access to land.

The semantic nets surrounding patron-client relations and chiefdom suggest that these new relationships grew from a complex set of meanings associated with the politics of firstcomer status (allocation of land use rights and special relations with local spirits) and the moral economy of gift giving which invited reciprocity and responsibility and conferred respect upon the wealthier party. We have already seen how gendered identities, as well as agricultural and environmental change, governed expansions and contractions in these semantic nets. At this point, another feature of lakeshore social history must be studied. Did the domains of healers expand in size and complexity together with an emergent royalty? The ways in which communities constructed and mediated concepts of danger and social health surely shaped political life as much as did gift exchange, clientship, and the politics of royalty.

ILLNESS AND SOCIAL HEALTH: JOINING INSTRUMENTAL AND CREATIVE POWER

Although the instrumental power of gift exchange served the aims of chiefs and their appointees to gather ever larger followings, sometimes to the detriment of the controllers of clan lands, the accumulation of instrumental power faced a continuing challenge at its core. The challenge appears clearly in struggles against heirlessness and infertility. Heirlessness threatened the integrity of the clan-based, patrilineal inheritance systems surrounding *busika* ("inheritance") and may have stimulated the innovation of nonlineal forms of community-building like clientship, blood brotherhood, woman-to-woman marriage, and appointed chiefship. But infertility surely stood as the enduring challenge to all of the systems of instrumental power in West Nyanza societies.

People in these communities hoped to manage the dangers of infertility and heirlessness through their healers and through the spiritual forces they and their healers could approach for assistance. This section will argue that concepts of heirlessness and infertility emerged in the context of

agroenvironmental crisis and that people grappled with them through complex healing processes explained by the theories of creative power that healers could enunciate and deploy.

There can be no quantitative statement about the demographic processes that operated in West Nyanzan, North Nyanzan, or Rutaran communities. We do not know if population growth rates sped up or slowed down between 800 and 1400. We do not know whether any such changes reduced or increased regional land-carrying capacities. In short, we cannot discuss the matters of infertility and heirlessness either as parts of an historical demography of West Nyanzan societies or as parts of an epidemiological history of disease in those same societies. They appear to us as objects of study only because West Nyanza speaking societies saw the need to innovate a word, *bucweke* (275), for these two concepts and because we can perceive in West Nyanzan social history a collection of healing processes that dealt with human fertility. The innovation of *bucweke* reveals that West Nyanzan people grappled with the challenges to community making that lay outside a chief's capacity for redistribution and alliance building. Indeed, it is fair to say that infertility or, more precisely, childlessness, posed the ultimate threat both to established regions of agricultural settlement (such as Buhaya, Buganda, and Bunyoro) and to pioneering communities on the internal frontier.

This term *bucweke* names a condition where an adult has no children either because of failure to reproduce—most often the result of infertility—or because they suffered the loss of their children in infancy. Some West Nyanzan societies specified *bucweke* as the condition of dying with neither male offspring nor any male relatives.[79] This condition produced stores of land that could revert to a chief's control, which he could use for any number of purposes. In those circumstances, a clan or a lineage stood to lose a portion of its land holdings.[80] Children and land, then, were intimately bound together.

Avoiding this unhappy result was a common object of *kubándwa* possession and an anxiety—a sort of illness—afflicting men and women.[81] Obviously, in societies developing a male-centered ideology of both property inheritance and of public political representation, this dreaded condition meant very different things for women than for men. Women faced the loss of their principal champions in the public sphere—their sons—and they faced the loss of a principal source of solidarity and companionship—their daughters—and they faced the loss of their principal form of public social capital—their status as mothers. On the other hand, men faced the loss of the heirs to their property, obligations, and social identity. The community as a whole faced the loss of future members and also faced the creation of a potentially dangerous **kizimu* (278, a spirit who afflicted the living because it had no one to remember it). The possibility of *bucweke* struck fear in young adults and stood as a haunting presence throughout the community.

Communities inherited and invented a host of techniques for grappling with this and with the other challenges to the survival of families. Some of these, like the ancestral ghosts (**bazimu*, 278; **muzimu*, singular) served family needs. Territorial nature spirits, **misámbwa* ([347]; plural of *musámbwa* or *risámbwa*), served local communities larger than households. Others still, like the *babándwa*, served both large communities and the needs of individual homesteads. The histories of these spirits reveal how West Nyanzan society, and Rutaran and North Nyanzan society after it, made one of their sources of creative power—their spirits—respond to the changing circumstances of concentrations of instrumental power in the political realm. Healing, then, joined the two powers in important ways between 800 and 1400.

The Living Dead

Great Lakes Bantu speakers called the ghosts or spirits of departed persons *bazimu*. This word and its meanings are ancient, one can find Bantu speakers from Cameroon to Natal and coastal Kenya who understand this word to mean ghost or spirit of a dead person (Map 5.4). It is a noun derived from an equally ancient, Proto Bantu, verb **kudĺma* "to become dim."[82] Jan Vansina argues that the deverbative noun first referred to ancestral ghosts who had "gotten lost," whose names had "become dim" in the memory of living persons and who might then come to be known as "heroes."[83] The common ground in all these meanings is that death alters the character of the spirit.

But death does not succeed in banishing the ghost forever from the affairs of the living. Proto Mashariki-speaking communities and their Great Lakes descendants understood that *bazimu* went somewhere at their birth (the death of a person's body): they went to the land of the dead; they went to *okuzimu*. But, fortunately or unfortunately for the living, they did not always stay there! *Bazimu* could "return" in the form of other living things, mammal or reptile or amphibian. Many ethnographers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Great Lakes societies noted that snakes (and not infrequently pythons) were a favorite form of life for *bazimu* to enter.[84] Whichever form the returned *muzimu* might take, whether it possessed a person or manifested itself in a whirlwind, Great Lakes people seem to have agreed that a *muzimu* was prone to afflict "its people."[85] *Bazimu* were represented as pernicious forces in the social life of Great Lakes communities. In the twentieth century, *bazimu* were characterized as largely malign spiritual forces who directed their nastiness toward living members of the *muzimu*'s unit of social organization.[86] But, as Renee Tantala's analysis of the Kitara epic reveals, this may not always have been the case. The malign proclivities of *bazimu* who return to involve themselves in the affairs of their living descendants may have been a rather recent

redefinition of their authority, a redefinition that involved a sort of "demotion" from their earlier, largely amoral (or even beneficial) impact on the land of the living.[87]

The common representation today of ghosts as malevolent forces must be seen against the last 600 years of profound political and religious change. The idea of ghosts and their capacities for ensuring family and personal health suffered with the opening of the internal frontier in the central grasslands where the ability to make communities with larger than lineal allegiances was so important.[88] And the role of ghosts suffered further setbacks with the growth of centralized political and religious systems, where the territorial and national structures of power and health were so important to social life. It should come as no surprise to discover that the role of ghosts in promoting and maintaining social health has been severely reduced to matters of affliction and sorcery. Ghosts and those who remember them have had many other sources of creative power to contend with.

The *bazimu* were central to the system of social and religious health which revolved around spirit mediumship, sacrifice, and clan lands. Through the haze of the last six or seven centuries, we can see that these ancestral spirits provided the wellsprings for some of the most important theories of health and power brought to bear on the later political and religious history of the region. Ghosts, like children, were an important link in the chain of being.

It would have been very important for children in West Nyanza society to know their *bazimu*—the spirits of their ancestors—for they could bestow on them either blessings (**ngisha*, 286; made from *-gicol-gica*) or misfortune (like *bucweke*). The transformation of a living person into a dead person had tremendous consequences for those who remained in the land of the living and it involved a fundamental statement about the character of life. The derivation of the term reveals something of West Nyanzan philosophies of being: the state of being of a *muzimu* represented the continuation of existence without the body. The gift of life and the physical force of life, joined together in the living body, were named *mwoyo* and *bugàlá* (382), respectively, in West Nyanzan communities. When the living body died, when *bugàlá* disappeared, the character of life also changed, but it did not cease. What had been the life-force of the living body, *mwoyo*, became the life-force of the disembodied spirit, *muzimu*.

This philosophizing reveals what every West Nyanza speaker understood about her or his existential condition: your life force continued in theory but in practice its continued existence depended on having persons with *mwoyo* to remember you. The *muzimu*, as the disembodied life-force, could only be present in "this" world (the land of the living), through acts of memory by its descendants. Such acts most often included propitiatory sacrifices at shrines to ancestors in the homestead or at the old burial grounds that helped make some North Nyanzan territories "*butàkà*."[89] But they also included acts of

possession and mediumship—the old practice of *kubándwa*—undertaken by homestead heads, interpreted by healers (*bafÚmÚ*) and designed to learn what might be done to appease the ghost who had taken hold of the suffering person. The conceptual and practical connections between ancestral spirits and other creative spiritual forces literally jump out at us. One of the most important of these continuities has to do with territorial or local spirits (*misámbwa*).

Some ancestral ghosts reappeared in the land of the living as snakes. This fact reveals a continuity between ancestral ghosts and territorial nature spirits, because territorial nature spirits almost always took the form of wild animals such as crocodiles, leopards, and pythons.[90] These territorial or locality-based spiritual forces provided for the health of communities larger than the family or the lineage, even though particular families or lineages might have possessed ritual authority over them. The further association between snakes and powerful women suggests that the relation between ancestral ghosts and pythons might have concerned fertility and motherhood. These observations combine to show that West Nyanzan communities built larger territories of ritual authority over fertility and political community.

Though ancestral ghosts could return as pythons, territorial nature spirits seem to have done so with greater regularity. The narratives of outsiders characterized these spirits as evildoers, perhaps because the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were periods of intense struggle over territory and over the moral grounds on which leader and follower might negotiate their relationship to each other. When called *masámbwa* (plural of *risámbwa*), to the southeast of Lake Victoria, they appear to have been rather more generous spiritual forces.[91] But naming *misámbwa* as essentially good or bad obscures the power their mediums had in granting to firstcomers in a locality the ability to articulate and monitor the moral character of all residents' behavior. Above all, acts of sacrifice and dedication, directed toward the *misámbwa* by the firstcomer family on behalf of all in the community, were designed to ensure continued success in farming, hunting, fishing, or herding. Many territorial spirits were the guardians of abundance in their territory. The firstcomer groups in those same territories possessed the ritual authority over the relationship between humans and the local spirits. These firstcomers were thus enormously powerful groups at the intersection of instrumental and creative powers in frontier circumstances.[92]

Forms of this root appear in three of the five branches of Great Lakes Bantu (and in several other Central Tanzanian Bantu languages like Gogo and Sukuma), which might lead us to accept it as a Proto Great Lakes Bantu word that spread later to the south and east. But we must take care with this conclusion because, in Great Lakes Bantu, the word shows up in all the languages that circle Lake Victoria (Map 5.4). And in some of the languages, the word is pronounced in an unusual way. These facts may be taken as easily to represent diffusion within the cultural world encircling Lake Victoria

as to represent the remaining distributional pattern of an inherited form that has been replaced by other terms (or lost altogether) elsewhere in the Great Lakes world. The question of whether territorial nature spirits were part of the ancestral tradition that West Nyanzan societies preserved, or were invented more recently and spread by diffusion may be settled by recalling the overlap between ancestral spirits, their animal familiars, territorial nature spirits, and possession. Such a complex association of different but related ideas most likely represents an ancient inherited feature in the West Nyanzan intellectual tradition.

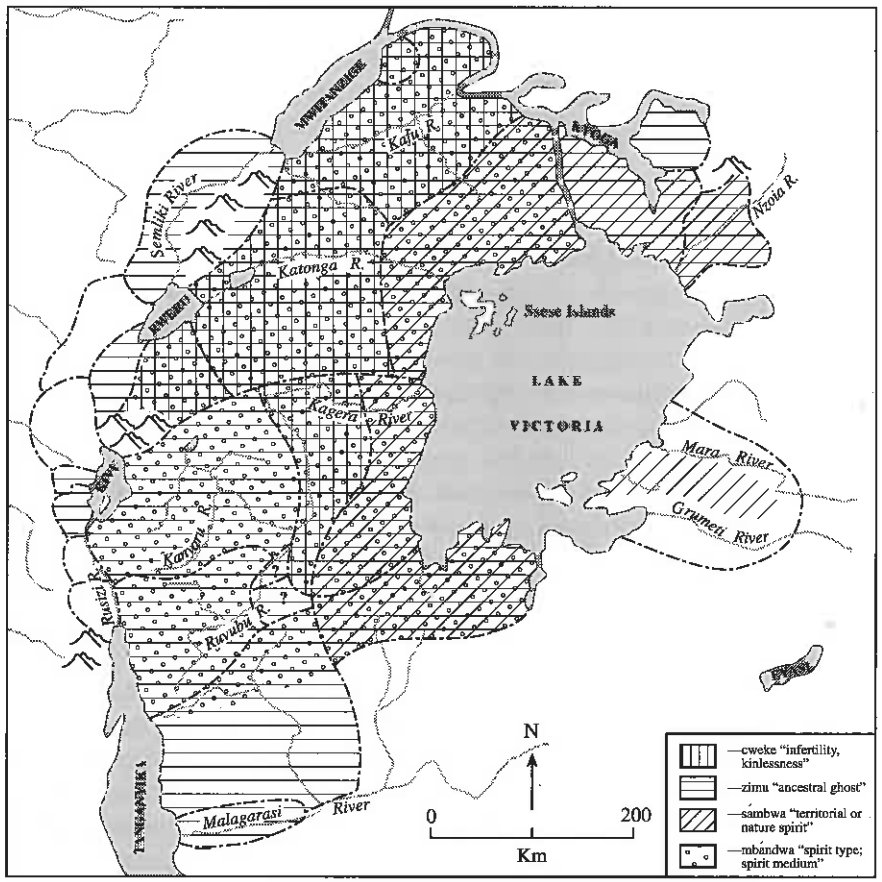
The fact that ancestral ghosts could become territorial spirits seems to explain precisely what the status of being firstcomers (*basangwa*) grants to those who hold it. The success in attracting followers and in providing them with safety which a given lineage enjoyed in its settlement area also meant that their ancestral ghosts could become the spiritual power deemed to guarantee the health of a larger territory. As the sizes of communities and the lands under the responsibility of a firstcomer group grew, so too did the reach of its departed ancestors. But the ancestral ghosts enjoyed their enhanced status as spiritual forces of a different order altogether, as forces resident in the land rather than in the lineage. Firstcomer groups who succeeded in joining lineage ghosts to actual places on the land must have enjoyed a profound grasp on both creative and instrumental powers. A word on the etymology of the term *musámbwa* (singular of *misámbwa*) will clarify this argument.

The only plausible etymology explains that the noun came from the verb **kusámba* "to judge, render justice" (229). But so little ethnography speaks of the various aspects of *misámbwa* that it is difficult to know if any of the performances of mediums possessed by a *musámbwa* had legal overtones or if the members of the audience who heard them (or who heard of them) held that the mediums restored a just balance to the community. However, the anthropologist Lloyd Fallers characterizes the *misámbwa* as nature spirits that could grant successes in farming and fishing.[93] That which can grant success can also withdraw it and both of these capacities could be seen as acts of justice.

> His [the Zibondo of Bulamogi, a chief] special relationship with the royal ancestors [*bazimu*] and nature spirits [*misámbwa*] served both to support the ruler's position and to prevent his misuse of power, for these supernatural forces [the *misámbwa*] were believed to favor the general welfare and to punish rulers who became cruel or tyrannical.[94]

It seems that, at least in Bulamogi, *misámbwa* were understood to possess the power to render judgment, through their mediums, on the just behavior of political leaders, especially newcomers.

At the turn of the mid-first millennium, in the context of cultural interaction and resource competition, new needs for ritual control over both ancient



Map 5.4 Spirits in West Nyanza Bantu.

settlement areas and newly established ones may have induced people to emphasize unilineal descent groups as templates for defending established firstcomer rights to land. By sacrificing to *misámbwa*, the spirits of a territory controlled by a lineage and its ancestors, homestead-heads expressed ritually the importance of the concepts of residential or territorial social identity.[95] This ritual expression of solidarity and exclusiveness could easily have moved along with the group of firstcomers who established new settlements at the fringes of the core areas of settlement. It could even have assisted their gradual creation of a group identity tied to the new lands in which they had settled.[96] This process unfolded quite differently in the central savannahs than it did within the core areas of ancient settlement. We will study the social history of territorial spirits on the grasslands frontier in Chapter 6. However, in order to appreciate those innovations, we must go further in understanding

how territorial spirits could have become portable in the zones of ancient settlement inhabited by West Nyanzan communities.

The crucial link in that part of the social history of territorial cults appears in the person of the medium, the *mbándwa*, and in the institution of *kubándwa*, through which the ancestral ghosts and the territorial spirits could communicate with their communities of rememberers (Map 5.4). In Chapter 3, we learned that this institution involved consecration to a spirit, after a doctor had determined that, indeed, the spirit had seized you by the head. West Nyanza societies worked with this supple institution to craft a new role for the mediums of territorial spirits.

Territorial spirits and ancestral ghosts wielded instrumental and creative power. People gained access to those powers through specialists and through practices of propitiation and consultation. The historical connection between *kubándwa* and *misámbwa* revolves around the notion of the portability of a set of related ideas about spiritual forces, territory, and the healers who bridged them. "*Mbándwa*" named both a medium and a spirit and "*musámbwa*" named a spirit, its place, and its material cultural form, but did not name its medium. Thus, the *mbándwa* was the person capable of communicating with *bazimu*, with other *babándwa* spirits, and with *misámbwa* spirits other than those from her or his home territories.[97]

As the first millennium drew to a close, perhaps West Nyanza speakers invented the portability of named *misámbwa* by joining the medium with her or his spirit. This claim rests on the fact that a bundle of material cultural items—items that mark the status of a medium as an *mbándwa* medium—occurs in the societies whose members now speak languages that descended from the ancient West Nyanza speech community.[98] Just as we saw with the complex of ideas and offices that marked the emergence of the instrumental power of kingship, parsimony invites the argument that the creation of portable nature spirits who could serve the needs of larger, diverse communities occurred during the close of the West Nyanzan era and was passed on by its inventors to Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies (see A Note on Evidence).

Those innovators worked with the contradictory limitations to the portability of territorial spirits that their very strengths as guardians of the health and fertility of a locality bequeathed to them. How could one hope to translate the capacities represented by a specific territorial spirit to communities in another territory altogether? Healers could have emphasized the importance of the medium's therapeutic pronouncements, rather than the relationship between a particular spirit, a particular location, and a particular healer, in meeting farmers' needs. They also could have generalized what sorts of help particular spirits might be counted on to provide, rather than pointing to which particular locations were protected by territorial spirits. In either case, Rutaran and North Nyanzan societies changed the potential size of the territory where their healers were expected to meet challenges to social health. The progress of this revolutionary development deserves careful study because it offered a counterweight to royal ambitions to concentrate political power.

Transforming the Territory of Healing

West Nyanza societies and their descendants transformed the territory of healing by linking the ritual power of *kubándwa*, the status of firstcomers, and local, territorial spirits.[99] They achieved this linkage by converting some of their territorial nature spirits into *mbándwa*, into named territorial spirits. Mediums and firstcomer groups could carry these named spirits to new settlements by articulating them from an older theory of nature spirits and embodying them in the material cultural items which could represent particular nature spirits. On the frontiers, new firstcomers probably formed the vanguard of this transformation, through coopting controllers of clan lands by integrating them into a layered, appointed chiefship. But on the mature frontier of the central grasslands, after the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, new centers of political and medical power emerged. Their stories form the greater part of Chapter 6. At the fringes of the core areas of settlement, however, the old and local controllers of clan lands were drawn into a larger-scale chiefship through the redistributive powers of royalist groups based within the core areas of settlement themselves.

These developments marked the dissolution of Rutaran and North Nyanzan dialect chains, between 1300 and 1500, and they represented the earliest periods discernible in oral epics from Kitara, Buhaya, and Buganda. They effectively mark the birth of the *cwezi kubándwa* revolution, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. The earlier era of territorial gods was visible in references to spiritual figures linked to particular animals in particular places throughout this region.[100] Scholars underscore the limited range of ritual power for such territorial cults and the difficulty of exporting that power to other areas where other such cults would have been already at work.[101]

But their arguments fail to account for the processes of overcoming firstcomer status, which wealthier newcomers might have achieved through strategic patronage and clientship and by building military alliances. The combination of redistributive instrumental power—directed by a territorially expansive chiefly hierarchy—and the deploying of marriage alliances within a patriarchal descent idiom could dissolve any firstcomer's clan lands base in a welter of debt and service relations—a barrage of symbolic capital (in the form of the chiefly following's presence at marriages, funerals, and other public events) that newcomers could use to co-opt the shrine keeper's local spirit through a discursive joining of territorial spirits by category (water, hill, cave, rock) to the objects of their power (fertility, fecundity, war, rain

controlling, fishing, hunting, and so on).[102] Instead of ensuring the fecundity of life in a particular territory, the new spirits ensured prosperity in entire categories of the environment.

The twin facts of a general theory of territorial spiritual power common to West Nyanzan society and the allocative power of royal institutions of service and tribute had two important consequences. First, controllers of ancient clan lands faced an instrumental challenge to their authority. As territorial chiefs and healers improved their services, the material basis for clan leadership dwindled. Secondly, aggressive community builders could coopt local ritual power, through clientship and various sorts of alliance making.[103] The *basangwa butàkà,* who appear in the historical record of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, might well represent clans that met these challenges and "survived" insofar as people using those clan names maintained control over their lands and their powerful places.

The named temple spirits, like Mukasa/Mugasha, which predate the emergence of the *cwezi* figures associated with kingship in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, represented the successful blending of the principle of the supremacy of local ritual power (expressed in the *misámbwa* concept) with the general healing capacities of *kubándwa* possession experts. Chiefs and healers struggled over extending the reach of a chief's instrumental power over people (and eventually over land) and healers sought to limit the worst excesses of this state-building process.[104] Creative and instrumental power mutually interacted through the full range of persons—from homestead heads and female *mbándwa* to chiefs and royal priests—to generate the roots of the kingdoms known to us as Bunyoro, Buganda, and the Haya states. One of the consequences of this cooperative transformation lay in the kingdom's struggle to control the powerful shrines, to nationalize the gods. Before telling of this struggle, which characterized much of the social history of the region between 1400 and 1600, one in-depth example of a transformed *musámbwa* should illustrate the extraordinary creativity and flexibility that West Nyanzan healing practice offered its followers as the second millennium opened amid considerable environmental uncertainty.

The story of Mukasa and his identity in West Nyanza societies reveals how transforming the territory of healing consolidated several of the societies' most important concerns and aspirations.[105] Mukasa/Mugasha was the spiritual force responsible for healing sickness, giving abundant rain, food, cattle, and children, and insuring safe passage for fishermen on Lake Victoria.[106] His shrine was located in the Ssese Islands. Several curious ethnographic facts suggest clearly that his followers, priests, and mediums understood that a connection existed between Mukasa and the *musámbwa* of Buddu who manifested itself as a python. The importance of this connection is twofold. First, it demonstrates a continuity between the *misámbwa* (territorial nature spirits) and the **balubaale* (327) and *cwezi* spirits. Second, it

reveals the central roles of concerns with fertility and the importance of healers in maintaining social health. The creative power wielded in Mukasa's name by his medium and her priests, offered to commoners and royalty alike the possibility of overcoming the greatest obstacles to keeping the circle of life intact through children.[107]

When West Nyanzans bestowed the name Mukasa/Mugasha on the old nature spirit, they drew on their ancient theories of creative power to find the right term. They named him by converting the causative form of the verb *kugàla* (which would have been *kugàsa*), "bless with good health," into a noun and thereby converting that nature spirit into "the life giver." A more poetic joining of the territory of healing with a new, named source of health cannot be imagined. In Rutaran tongues, people called "the blessing of life" *ekigàsha*, and thereby added another flourish to the semantic territory of the root.[108] From Mukasa, all could expect help in bearing children and in bringing in full harvests of fish and crops.

Other evidence from Buganda seems to confirm the connection between the ancient category of territorial nature spirits (which firstcomers probably used to direct access to a territory's resources and to shape the character of their use) and those firstcomers themselves. Mukasa, it seems, changed his name or at least had more than one name for a time. He was also called Selwanga, the name of the Python-*musámbwa* who lived in Buddu, on the shore of Lake Victoria, a strenuous canoe paddle away from the Ssese Islands. One tradition tells us that Mukasa had three wives, two of whom were members of *bannasangwa* (a Ganda variation of *basangwa*) clans, those clans that were already in Buganda when all the other clans arrived, according to dynastic oral traditions.[109]

Mukasa, the transformed *musámbwa* of the dissolving Proto West Nyanzan community, came to be associated closely with the courts of Bunyoro, Buganda, Kiziba, and Karagwe.[110] His power as a territorial spirit may have followed the early pioneers, or it may even have predated them, but people maintained Mukasa's visibility because of his central role in fertility philosophies. Mukasa even survived the invention by Ganda speakers of a new sort of powerful spirits, the *balubaale* (plural of **lubaale*), and he remained a key figure for "the political and ritual integrity of the kingdom."[111] Mukasa, then, like the Pythoness, stands as an ancient individual territorial spirit demonstrating portability.[112] We can be certain that Mukasa and his medium existed before the priestly hierarchy of either the *cwezi kubándwa* or *balubaale* appeared, because the terms naming those hierarchies differed in North Nyanzan and Rutaran speech communities, whereas Mukasa's name and his *mbándwa* medium were terms known to people in both communities and today bear the marks of regular sound changes.[113] If these priestly hierarchies had been part of transforming the territory of healing during West Nyanza times, along with Mukasa and his mediums, we should expect at

least a part of the terminologies naming priests to have survived along with the names Mukasa and the office of *mbándwa*. They have not done so.

The relations between fertility (especially that of women), iron, water (rain, rivers, and lakes), and fish as food, expressed in the figure of Mukasa, could well represent some of the fundamental practices of survival and conditions of abundance that characterized those ancestral communities settled in the riverine environs from the Rweru corridor to the mouth of the Kagera, so long ago.[114] Indeed, the story that Mukasa moved his shrine from the Katwe lakes area to Bubembe on the Ssese Islands (and from thence to the Ganda mainland)[115] may well mark the gradual passage eastwards of iron-using, farming and fishing communities whose principal challenge lay in building communities and keeping them alive in the face of always unpredictable human fertility.

West Nyanza societies thus innovated a new sort of *musámbwa* or *mbándwa* in the name of Mukasa or Mugasha who was portable and capable of providing all the many sorts of fertility that people required: rain, children, pasture, and healthy soils. They did so as the earliest phases of climatic instability broke across the region, very late in the first millennium. And they did so on a pattern that would have been very familiar to people living as far away as Zimbabwe and Malawi. As the two faces of the internal frontier opened, the local one at the immediate edges of the core areas of settlement and the distant one at the inner edges of the central savannahs, kings and chiefs continued to concentrate their powers of exaction in the old centers of settlement. These developments drove people to the frontiers and rendered the frontiers attractive places to reproduce the political and medical paradigms. A degree of suffering around heirlessness and infertility may have governed this social history. And the successful firstcomer groups, both as royals and as controllers of clan lands, transformed the territory that their healing institutions could hope to serve as the political territory that institutions of debt and service had created grew apace.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that major changes in West Nyanzan environment and society developed hand in hand. Between 800 and 1100, farmers who spoke Rutaran and North Nyanzan dialects and who increasingly understood descent and inheritance in a patrilineal idiom, domesticated the frontiers of the central Great Lakes region. They struggled over forest resources, farm labor, and land rights and they used a complex set of political offices and medical practices to superintend those struggles. Farmers developed unique agricultural specializations and they spread ironworking beyond its earlier centers of development. At the same time the older multilingual context of Great Lakes history almost completely disappeared. This implies that rulers

in West Nyanza societies had succeeded in constructing dominant cultural edifices that induced people to speak a Bantu language. And they had produced an institutional and discursive grammar of instrumental and creative powers for composing communities and for maintaining their social health.

After about 1100, in the western portion of the region, the earliest period of political centralization set in. This proceeded together with the closing of the internal frontier, its gradual filling in with people, and a long phase of alternating wet and dry periods. The political and economic concerns faced by the newcomers who had succeeded in coopting firstcomer status for themselves, revolved around the outcomes of the struggles waged in the previous centuries over land, labor, surplus, and culture. These ruling groups, and a few clan-based political and ritual centers, increasingly possessed the means to reproduce themselves as a social stratum, even if particular representatives of the stratum were occasionally overthrown and other social strata constructed and controlled their own cultural paradigms. These may have been the earliest eras recalled in the Kitaran dynastic traditions of the Tembuzi rulers and in Ganda and Soga stories about the clans that accompanied Kintu.

West Nyanzan communities and their descendants lived in a rural world, with important differences in concentrations of population, characterized by a deep sense of social continuity measured by agricultural and ritual cycles, and occasionally punctuated by a disastrous drought or redirected by prolonged climatic shift. The cycles and shifts felt different to those who had moved off to the immediate fringes of the areas of oldest settlement, to western Buganda, western Buhaya, and Bunyoro. For these communities, the local frontier kept them within the orbit of dominant political and medical paradigms.

But the pioneer communities who ventured into the savannahs entered a new world and felt the impact of environmental uncertainty very differently. They used both discursive and practical parts of the West Nyanzan ancestral tradition to compose new communities even though their connections with the ancient areas of settlement were clear enough. Having faced new challenges in the savannahs between Lake Victoria and the Kivu Rift Valley, the social history of these savannah communities bore a distinctive character.

NOTES

[1] Urewe ware has been found at Nsongezi and Kansyore Island on the Kagera River; see Chapman "Kantsyore," 177-83; Pearce and Posnansky, "The Re-Excavation," 89.

[2] No Early Iron Age material has yet been found along either of these two rivers.

[3] See Herring, "Hydrology and Chronology," 39-86; Fekri Hassan, "Historical Nile Floods and Their Implications for Climatic Change," *Science* 212 (5 June 1981), 1142-45; Henige, "Review," 561-63.

[4] W. J. Ansorge. *Under the African Sun* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), 198-201.

[5] Samuel W. Baker, *The Albert N'yanza, Great Basin of the Nile and Explorations of the Nile Sources*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1867), 2:92-93; Roscoe, *Bakitara*, 191; Ruth Fisher, *Twilight Tales of the Black Baganda* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1911), 30-31; Gaetano Casati, *Ten Years in Equatoria and the Return with Emin Pasha*, 2 vols. (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1891), 2:137-38; G. Schweinfurth, F. Ratzel, R. W. Felkin, and G. Hartlaub, *Emin Pasha in Central Africa*, (London: George Phillip & Son), 175-80. In the past, traders probably went to Kibiro to get salt, see Connah, *Kibiro*, 29.

[6] Connah, *Kibiro*, Ch. 8 and 9.

[7] Alan Hamilton, *A Field Guide to Uganda Forest Trees* (Kampala: Makerere University Printer, 1981), 103-4; Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:55-56; Speke, *Journal*, 162; Baker, *Albert N'yanza*, 2:44-45.

[8] Tosh, "Northern Interlacustrine Region," 103-18.

[9] Herbert, *Iron, Gender and Power*, 228-33.

[10] See Childs and Killick, "Indigenous African Metallurgy," 332-33. For such burial practices in the Lakes region, see Packard, *Chiefship*, 42-46; Van Noten, *Les tombes*, passim; Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology*, Ch. 9; Hiernaux and Maquet, "Cultures préhistorique," 31-53.

[11] See Eugenia Herbert, *Red Gold of Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

[12] John Nyakatura, *Anatomy of an African Kingdom: A History of Bunyoro-Kitara*, trans. Teopista Muganwa, ed. Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, (New York: Nok Publishers, 1973 [1947]), 43; Israel K. Katoke, *The Karagwe Kingdom: A history of the Abanyambo of north-west Tanzania* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975), 48; Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:32; Speke, *Journal*, 203; James K. Babiiha, "The Bayaga Clan of Western Uganda," *Uganda Journal* 22, 2 (1958), 125; James A. Grant, *A Walk across Africa* (London: William Blackwood & Sons,1864), 145; H. B. Lewin, "Mount Mubende, Bwekula," *Uganda Notes* 9, 6 (June 1908), 91-92; Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 49, 107 n. 19, 108 n. 29. See Roots 5 and 14 in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*.

[13] But ironmaking regalia was used in making sacrifices to Mukasa at his shrine at Bubembe in the Ssese Islands. See Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 222; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 290; Sir Apolo Kaggwa, *The Customs of the Baganda*, trans. Ernest B. Kalibala, ed. May Edel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 115; and Michael G. Kenny, "The Powers of Lake Victoria," *Anthropos* 72, 5/6 (1977), 724.

[14] Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:137-38; Schweinfurth et al., *Emin Pasha*, 175; see also Michele D. Wagner, "Trade and Commercial Attitudes in Burundi Before the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, 1 (1993), 149-66.

[15] This section draws on Schoenbrun, "Gendered Histories," 481-84.

[16] I build here on an idea posed first by Ehret, *Classical Age*, 150-51; see also Christine Ahmed, "Before Eve was Eve: 2200 Years of Gendered History in East-Central Africa" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1996), Ch. 1, 176-83; Brad Weiss, *The Making and Unmaking of the Haya Lived World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 31-35, 44-45.

[17] See Thomas N. Håkansson, "Family Structure, Bridewealth, and Environment in Eastern Africa: A Comparative Study of House-Property Systems," *Ethnology* 28, 2 (1989), 117-35; Shetler, "Landscapes of Memory," Ch. 1.

[18] Roscoe, *Baganda*, 134; Mair, *An African People*, 164; Lloyd A. Fallers, F. Kamoga, and K. 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 (London: [illegible], 1964), 91.

[19] Fishing groups drew the line differently. The so-called *wakiko* fishers who worked in and around the Malagarasi swamplands southeast of Buha understood that children belonged to mothers. See Macquarie, "Water Gipsies," 65.

[20] Reid, "Changing Social Relations," 22-24.

[21] Reid, "Changing Social Relations," 30-31. For a discussion of the ethnographic evidence for this see Schoenbrun, "Gendered Histories," 471-73.

[22] In class 1/2, the word also means "elder" more widely in Bantu; see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 204 and 205.

[23] Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 84ff.; Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 11.

[24] Hans Cory, *Report on Busubi* (Ngara, 1944, typescript).

[25] The oldest meaning of this root may have been "courtyard" or "politically central place" (Vansina, *Paths*, 171-72). The innovation of the meaning "obligation" is fairly recent and its link with land appears to have been a unique innovation in the Lakes region. See Claire Grégoire, "Le champ sémantique du thème bantou **-bánjá*," *African Languages* 2 (1976), 1-12.

[26] Kalervo Oberg, "A Comparison of Three Systems of Primitive Economic Organization," *American Anthropologist* 45 (1943), 572-87, especially 574; Edel, *Chiga*, 83.

[27] For other innovations see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 156. The innovation in West Nyanza proceeded by extension from an older meaning "property." See Grégoire, "Le champ sémantique," 3.

[28] Beattie, *Nyoro State*, 180.

[29] Both North Nyanza and Rutara speakers named perennial croplands with a variety of terms, all of which refer to gardens inside the *kibánjá*. See Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 121; Wrigley, "Bananas," 65; Lloyd A. Fallers, *Law Without Precedent: Legal Ideas in Action in the Courts of Colonial Busoga* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 207; in Bunyoro, *bibánjá* (plural of *kibánjá*) were the lands and the people who made them productive over which appointed chiefs held extractive power and the web of social relations based on land which tenants used to press their claims for justice, see John H. M. Beattie, "The *Kibanja* System of Land Tenure in Bunyoro, Uganda," *Journal of African Administration* 6, 1 (1954), 24-28.

[30] A neighborhood (*ekyaaro*) could incorporate entire families but the family composition changed over time. See S. R. Charsley, "Mobility and Village Composition in Bunyoro," *Uganda Journal* 34, 1 (1970), 15-27, especially 18.

[31] Césard, "Le Muhaya," 825.

[32] This happened especially in Buganda and Buhaya, where young plantain gardens could represent substantial labor investment with future productivity running to two decades. See Wrigley, *Kingship and State*, 60-61.

[33] Mair, *An African People*, 102-3; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 270; Fallers et al., "Traditional Buganda," 72; Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 10-11.

[34] Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 10-11; Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 90-92; Martin Southwold, "The Inheritance of Land in Buganda," *Uganda Journal* 20, 1 (1956), 93; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 122-23, 270.

[35] Fallers et al., "Traditional Buganda," 89-90.

[36] See Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 1, 266ff., though this seems to contradict Césard, "Le Muhaya," 825. We can trust Cory and Hartnoll rather more than Césard on this point because they conducted intensive fieldwork on Haya legal practice.

[37] Beattie, "Nyoro Kinship," 329. This does not appear to have been possible in Buhaya, at least during the colonial period. See Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 3-4.

[38] See Wrigley, "Bananas," 66, for low population densities in Buganda until quite recently.

[39] See Audrey I. Richards (and Bryan Taylor), "The Toro," in *East African Chiefs: A Study in Political Development in Some Uganda and Tanganyika Tribes* ed. Audrey I. Richards (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 130, where Bryan Taylor tells us that *abasangwa* were found by Tembuzi and then by Cwezi leaders (but appear to have been transformed during the latter's presence so that Bito leaders did not name any clans or lineages *basangwa*). Other scholars who note or name various *basangwa* clans include Roscoe, *Baganda*, 136, 142, 145, 153, 159, 168; M. Semakula M. Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda, From the Foundations of the Kingdom to 1900* (London: Longmans, 1971), 31-32; A. H. Cox, "The Growth and Expansion of Buganda," *Uganda Journal*, 14, 2 (1950), 153; Beattie, *Nyoro State*, 23; Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 258. Though not named *basangwa*, see the long list of pre-Silanga clans on Bukerebe in Gerald Hartwig, *The Art of Survival in East Africa* (New York: Africana Publishers, 1976), 237-42. See also Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 112-17; Frederick Kaijage, "Kyamutwara," *Journal of World History* 13, 3 (1971), 548-49; Paul Betbeder, "The Kingdom of Buzinza," *Journal of World History* 13, 4 (1971), 737-40, names several clans who were rulers before the Hinda royals emerged.

[40] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 53-61; see also discussion in Chapter 4.

[41] Evidence of successes and failures in this regard abound in oral literature from the Great Lakes region. See Packard, "Debating," 151-52; Christopher Taylor, *Milk, Honey and Money: Changing Concepts in Rwanda Healing* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 15-16, 30-31 (on the Abazigaaba clan, one of Rwanda's three *basangwa butaka* clans); Cohen, "Political Transformations," 480-81; Hartwig, *Art of Survival*, 154-56 (on the Abasilanga of Bukerebe); Fallers et al., "Traditional Buganda," 86-87.

[42] For more on this see Ray, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, 91-95; Babiiha, "Bayaga," 124ff.; Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 47-52; Taylor, *Milk, Honey and Money*, 15-16; Roscoe, *Bakitara*, 82, 328-29, mentions that the Bito kings learned important elements of kingly practice (including how to run the New Moon ceremonies) from the women of the Abakwonga clan.

[43] See D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, passim; Sir Apolo Kagwa, *Ekitabo kye Bika bya Baganda* (Kampala: Uganda Bookshop, 1908), passim; Carole A. Buchanan, "The Kitara Complex: The Historical Tradition of Western Uganda" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1973), passim; Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 39-45; Tantala, "Early History," passim.

[44] Speke, *Journal*, 485; Pauwels, "Pacte du sang," 9-40; Hurel, "Religion," 286; Edel, *Chiga*, 25-27; John H. M. Beattie, "The Blood Pact in Bunyoro," *African Studies* 17, 4 (1958), 198-203; F. Lukyn Williams, "Blood Brotherhood in Ankole (*Omukago*)," *Uganda Journal* 2 (1934/1935), 33-41, 252; Y. K. Bamunoba, "Notes on Blood Brotherhood in Ankole," *Uganda Journal* 28, 2 (1964), 217-18; Rene Bourgeois, "Le pacte de sang au Bushi (*ecihango* ou *okunywana*)," *Bulletin des juridictions indigènes et du droit coutumier congolais* 27, 2 (1959), 33-36, and, "Le pacte de sang au Ruanda (*Ubunywanyi*)," *Bulletin des juridictions indigènes et du droit coutumier congolais* 25, 2 (1957), 39-42; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 19; Mair, *An African People*, 70-73; M. A. Condon, "Contribution to the Ethnography of the Basoga-Batamba, Uganda Protectorate," *Anthropos* 6 (1911), 379, notes that blood brotherhood could be revoked for cause by a mutual and public rescension of allegiance.

[45] This last point was proposed to me by Jan Vansina, letter to author, 16 November 1996.

[46] Bourgeois, "*Ubunywanyi*," 40, 42; Bourgeois, "Le pacte de sang au Bushi," 36; Pauwels, "Pacte du sang," 25ff.; Lukyn Williams, "*Omukago*," 34-35; Bamunoba "Blood Brotherhood," 217.

[47] T. S. Jervis, "A History of *Robusta* Coffee in Bukoba," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 8 (1939), 56; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 19; Pauwels, "Pacte du sang," 19 n. 21, mentions the use of a coffee bean to seal the pact in Buganda. The ceremony in Nkore does not appear to include coffee berries but those in Bunyoro did, see White, "Blood Brotherhood," 365. In Bunyoro, coffee berries figured in royal installation ceremonies; see Nyakatura, *Anatomy*, 195.

[48] White, "Blood Brotherhood," 364, 369.

[49] Martin Southwold, "Leadership, Authority, and the Village Community," in *The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*, ed. Lloyd A. Fallers (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 213-14; Fallers et al., "Social Stratification," 74, 89.

[50] Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 135-36.

[51] Mair, *An African People*, 154-59; Beattie, *Nyoro State*, 188; Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 125-26; Southwold, "Leadership," 214.

[52] Hermann Rehse, "Wörtersammlung des Ruziba," *Jarbuch der Hamburgischen Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten* 31 (1913), 111; Alois Meyer, *Kleines Ruhaya-deutsches Wörterbuch* (Trier: Mosella Verlag, 1914), 114.

[53] For extended discussions of the notion of the "following" see Cohen, "Political Transformations," 475ff.; and *Womunafu's Bunafu*, 79-83, 153-65; Southwold, "Leadership," 212-16; Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, Ch. 6, 7, and 10.

[54] Cohen, *Womunafu's Bunafu*, 28-30.

[55] Cohen, "Political Transformations," 485.

[56] Cohen, "Political Transformations," 472-77.

[57] The exceptions are Bukerebe and parts of Buhaya; see Hartwig, *Art of Survival*, 150-51 and Hans Korit-Schoner, "Tribal Structure in Uhaya," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 14 (1942), 10-11. In Kiziba, the office of the *muharambwa*, among other responsibilities, holds rights to use uninhabited lands. See Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 114ff.; see also Priscilla Reining, "Haya Land Tenure: Landholding and Tenancy," *Anthropological Quarterly* 35 (1962), 66; Speke, *Journal*, 201.

[58] M. Semakula M. Kiwanuka, "The Evolution of Chieftainship in Buganda, ca. 1400-1900," *East African Institute of Social Research* 1968/1969:111-21, especially 117-18; Reining suggests as much in "Haya Land Tenure," 66; see also Martin Southwold, *Bureaucracy and Chiefship in Buganda: The Development of Appointive Office in the History of Buganda* (Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research, 1961), 7-11.

[59] Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 139-42.

[60] Miss Laight and Omwami Ezekieri Zibondo, "Basoga Death and Burial Rites," *Uganda Journal* 2 (1934/1935), 133; Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 127-28; Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 13; Lloyd A. Fallers, "The Basoga," in *East African Chiefs: A Study of Political Development in Some Uganda and Tanganyika Tribes*, ed. Audrey I. Richards (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 81, 83, describes *bakungu* as commoners appointed to chiefships by a king (*omwaámi*).

[61] Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 39; Jean La Fontaine, "The Zinza," in *East African Chiefs: A Study of Political Development in Some Uganda and Tanganyika Tribes*, ed. Audrey I. Richards (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 200; Ishumi, *Kiziba*, 25; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 22; Hurel, "Religion," 62, 69; Korit-Schoner, "Tribal Structure," 10-11; Samwiri Rubaraza Karugire, *A History of the Kingdom of Nkore in Western Uganda*

to 1896, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), 55, describes *bakungu* as having been old clan leaders.

[62] Samuel W. Baker, *Ismailïa*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1874), 2:290; Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:49.

[63] See the following items in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*: *-*ganzi* (173), "royal favorite"; **enfura* (16), "courtiers; king's advisors"; *-*gáragu* (169), "court favorite"; and *-*tóngòle* (257), "court servant".

[64] See Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:49; Emin Pasha, *Emin Pasha in Central Africa* (London: G. Philip & Son, 1888), 89; Baker, *Ismailïa*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875), 500.

[65] Dynastic traditions credit the invention to Kabaka (King) Mawanda. See Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, 84.

[66] Though irregular in sound correspondence, A. Meyer, *Kleines ruhaya*, 119, has *mushongóre*, "page, chief's male servant." In Burundi, *abatongore* are persons under the protection of powerful chiefs who herd the chief's cattle on deposit; see A. A. Trouwborst, "L'organisation politique et l'accord de clientèle au Burundi," *Anthropologica* 4 (1962), 21-22.

[67] See Fallers, "The Basoga," 82-88, for an example from Busoga.

[68] See Hanson, "When the Miles Came," Ch. 2; see also Kiwanuka, *History of Buganda*, Ch. 6.

[69] See John H. M. Beattie, "The Nyoro," in *East African Chiefs: A Study of Political Development in Some Uganda and Tanganyika Tribes*, ed. Audrey I. Richards (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 104; Richards (and Taylor), "The Toro," 135; Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:49; Kaijage, "Kyamutwara," 557; Ishumi, *Kiziba*, 23; Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 31; Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 126-27, 137-38; Jean La Fontaine, and Audrey I. Richards, "The Haya," in *East African Chiefs: A Study of Political Development in Some Uganda and Tanganyika Tribes*, ed. Audrey I. Richards (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 181; Speke, *Journal*, 249 (describing Buganda).

[70] Mair, *An African People*, 160-61.

[71] Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 47-48; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 30; see also Luc de Heusch, *Essai sur le symbolisme de l'inceste royal en Afrique* (Brussels: Université libre de Bruxelles, 1958), passim.

[72] Indeed, queen mothers of one sort or another turn up in scores of African states. See Annie Lebeuf, "The Role of Women in the Political Organization of African Societies," in *Women in Tropical Africa*, ed. Denise Paulme (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 93-119, especially 97-109; Tor Irstam, *King of Ganda* (Lund, Sweden: Håkan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1944), 36-38, 167-75. In the Lakes region see Katoke, *Karagwe*, 46-52; Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:32; Grant, *Walk across Africa*, 138; Babiiha, "Bayaga," 125; Schiller, "Royal Women," 458-63; Speke, *Journal*, 246-58; Nyakatura, *Anatomy*, 74-76; Karugire, *Nkore*, 107, 109; Jean-Jacques Maquet, *Le système des relations sociales dans le Ruanda ancien* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1954), 47, 148; Betbeder, "Buzinza," 740-41, tells us that Njunaki, Ruhinda's mother, conferred fame on the founder king; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 59-60; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 36; Johansen Mushwaimi, "The Rulers of Our Country," (n.p., 1956, typescript), 3, remarks that a woman could be a *mukama*.

[73] Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 163 and 225.

[74] Schiller, "Royal Women," 460; Queen Mothers were not the only royal women to hold estates (see Nyakatura, *Anatomy*, 196) or to have followers (see Speke, *Journal*,

[75] Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 154; Southwold, *Bureaucracy*, 6; and hinted at in Beattie, *Nyoro State*, 167. When the Ganda king intervened to "break" such hereditary chiefships people said that the chiefship had been "eaten by power" (*nsowole* means "power" in this phrase); see Southwold, *Bureaucracy*, 5; Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 394; Fallers et al., "Traditional Buganda," 78-81.

[76] Grant, *Walk across Africa*, 138; Casati, *Ten Years*, 2:22; Cohen, *Towards*, 353. The term is very likely a loan in Soga from Nyoro in the meaning "king," but Ganda retains the older meaning of "leader or master"; see Henri Le Veux, *Premier essai des vocabulaires luganda-français d'après l'ordre étymologique* (Algeria: Maison Carée, Imprimerie de Missionnaires d'Afrique, 1917), 299. West Nyanza speakers derived the noun from the verb **kukama*, "to milk, squeeze" and signaled the king's responsibility for "feeding" his people. For the joining of the status of *mukama* to the capacity to grant abundance, see Edel, *Chiga*, 149; Cohen, *Womunafu's*, 34-36.

[77] See Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, 49, for a map showing the distributions of these words for "king."

[78] Hassan, "Historical Nile Floods," 1142; Reid, "Role of Cattle," Ch. 8; Robertshaw, "Munsa," passim.

[79] Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 18.

[80] Beattie, *Nyoro State*, 175-76; Reining, "Haya Land Tenure," 62-66; Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 145-47.

[81] The mental condition of suffering is clear in Moller's discussion. See M. S. G. Moller, "Bahaya Customs and Beliefs in Connection with Pregnancy and Childbirth," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 50 (June 1958), 117.

[82] Vansina, *Paths*, 297; in subgroups of Great Lakes Bantu, like West Highlands, the verb means "disappear, be lost."

[83] Vansina glosses the root as "hero," Guthrie's gloss is "spirit (ogre)," and Schoenbrun glosses it "ancestral spirit." See Vansina, *Paths*, 95, 297; Malcolm Guthrie, *Comparative Bantu*, 4 vols. (Hants, England: Gregg Press, 1967-71), 3:168; Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 278.

[84] For Rundi, see Zuure, *Croyances*, 10, 11, 15, 17, 32, and Francis M. Rodegem, *Dictionnaire Rundi-Français* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1970), 577; for Shi, see L. Viaene, "Table de enquête," 421; for Soga, see Condon, "Contribution," 384; for Ihangiro [Haya] see Césard, "Le Muhaya," 16. Numerous other examples could be cited. The relation between snakes/pythons and spirit possession also occurs in Ganda (see LeVeux, *Premier essai*, 831) and in Nkore (see John Roscoe, *The Banyankole* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923], 61).

[85] See Zuure, *Croyances*, 17; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 206; Nyakatura, *Customs*, 61 n. 4; Hurel, "Religion," 77; Condon, "Contribution," 384; Pauwels, "L'Héritage au Rwanda," 38.

[86] Ethnographers seem to agree that the most pernicious *mizimu* (a plural form of *muzimu*) are those of people who were alienated from the kin group in some way, as well as those of slaves or childless persons. See, among others, Pauwels, *Imana*, 178-79.

[87] Tantala, "Early History," 671-75. Several ethnographers writing early in the twentieth century report that **bazimu* might do good or that they do not have an *a priori* designation as malign. See Condon, "Contribution," 382-84; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 206ff., 220ff.; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 16ff.; and Hurel, "Religion," 76-77.

[88] Contrary to Berger's claims (*Religion and Resistance*, 23), ghosts were not solely a male concern. See Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 244; Zuure, *Croyances*, 17.

[89] Fallers et al., "Social Stratification," 90.

[90] Discussing Wamara and other territorial spirits, Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 48, connects Ntare's queen mother to a snake associated with her shrine at Mikindo. He does not use the term "*musámbwa,*" but the connection between snakes, fixed locations, and female power is clear enough. See also Tantala, "Early History," 270, 607-15, 664 (on python cults); Roscoe, *Baganda*, 292, 318; Zuure, *Croyances*, 17; Francis B. Welbourn, "Some Aspects of Kiganda Religion," *Uganda Journal* 26, 2 (1962), 172, 176; Ubaldo Torelli, "Notes ethnologiques sur les Banya-Mwenge," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Etnologico già Lateranensi* 37 (1973), 556-57. But it was not always so. Some *misámbwa* may well have been "local" animals themselves, especially python, lion, leopard, and crocodile. See Roscoe, *Baganda*, 288-89 and Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 68-70. See also the list of *misámbwa* in LeVeux, *Premier essai*, 1041.

[91] On *misámbwa* see E. M. Persse, "The Bagwe," *Uganda Journal* 3, 4 (1936), 292; Zeller, "The Establishment," 33. For *masámbwa*, see Otto Bischofberger, "Die Soziale und Rituelle Stellung der Schmiede und des Schmiede-Klans bei den Zanaki (Tanzania)," *Anthropos*, 64 (1969), 59; Shetler, "Landscapes of Memory," Ch. 4; Welbourn, "Some Aspects," 174-76.

[92] See Wagner, "Environment, Community," 182-86; *Misámbwa* may have had some connection to *mbandwa eziragura*, the "open" category of spirits in Kitara which did not include *cwezi*. These "black" *babándwa* normally were objects of divinatory discourse; see Tantala, "Early History," 262, 269-70, 335-36. Persse, "Bagwe," 292, mentions sacrificing black chickens or goats to *misámbwa*; the color black provides the link between *misámbwa* and *mbandwa eziragura*.

[93] Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 133-34; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 70-71; Welbourn "Some Aspects," 174-76.

[94] See Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, 134. Bracketed information is my addition.

[95] In Buzinza and Buganda these spirits came to represent recently departed persons in the agnatic group (the *kitako* and *essiga*, respectively) and the **bazimu* remained spirits of long-departed persons. See Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 62-72, 234; Michel Gass, "Croyances, superstitions, sorcailleries chez les Bagwe" (n.p., 1927, typescript), 62; Alexandre Dona Kakaira, "Histoire d'Uzinza," (n.p., 1930, manuscript), 21ff.; and Welbourn, "Some Aspects," 174. In Kuria, *amasambo* are such spirits, see Tobisson, *Family Dynamics*, 91; for Zanaki examples, see Bishofberger, *The Generation Classes*, 22ff.; for Nata and Ikoma examples, see Shetler, "Landscapes of Memory," Ch. 4. This was likely the ancient paradigm, see Vansina, *Paths*, 297. For the importance of firstcomers and their ritual authority, see J. Clyde Mitchell, "Chidzere's Tree: A Note on a Shona Land Shrine and Its Significance," *NADA* 38 (1961), 31ff. Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 52-61, has reformulated the concept for historical study.

[96] *Misámbwa* were also important in controlling land during colonial times. Welbourn reports that European attempts to survey Mulondo hill (northeast of Kalisizo) were thwarted nightly by the local lineage's *musámbwa*, who would remove all survey marks. See Welbourn, "Some Aspects," 175.

[97] Gorju argues plainly that *misámbwa* were sacred places whose power could manifest only through a *mmandwa*; see Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 258-59; see also 227 for dual meaning of *mmandwa* as spirit and medium. Diviners were important in this process because they could diagnose the cause of illnesses as flowing from one or more of these three spiritual sources or from other sources. It is likely that mediums were newcomers and that priests were firstcomers, an arrangement that mirrored the political divide between the two statuses and thus could work to bridge it; see Feierman, "Healing as Social Criticism," 84.

[98] The items are: *kuteendeka* (253) "to initiate someone into *kubándwa*"; the *mukáko* (306) a "headdress"; the *enkinga* (308) a "wand or scepter (often decorated with red parrot feathers)"; and a "woman's skirt," the *ekishansha*, made of dried banana bast and sometimes worn by male priests during possession ceremonies (for this last item see, Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 227; Rehse, "Wörtersammlung," 110; A. Meyer, *Kleines ruhaya*, 111). See also I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 53. Some of these items turn up in *Ryángombe kubándwa*, discussed in Chapter 6, see Arnoux, "Le culte," 279, 545-46, plates between 545 and 546, 550 and 551.

[99] Tantala, "Early History," 477; See also Benjamin Ray, "Royal Shrines and Ceremonies of Buganda," *Uganda Journal* 36 (1972), 45ff.; G. W. Nye, "A Legend of Some Hills in Bulemezi," *Uganda Journal* 7, 3 (1940), 141; the portability of horns surely helped and *esiriba* horn "familiars" may have been especially old forms. Horns have a connection with snakes in Kigezi; see Edel, *Chiga*, 143-44; they are protective amulets in Buganda, see Roscoe, *Baganda*, 329-31. Elephant tusks are also associated with spirits, see Eric Lanning, "Masaka Hill—An Ancient Centre of Worship," *Uganda Journal* 18, 1 (1954), 25, 28, fig. 3; and Shetler, "Landscapes of Memory," Ch. 4.

[100] Tantala, "Early History," 474, 510 n. 29; for Buhaya, see Holger Benettsson, letter to author, April, 1994, 3-4; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 67-68; Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 160-61; for Karagwe see Katoke, *Karagwe*, 48; for Bukerebe see Hurel, "Religion," 92; for Buganda and Busoga see Welbourn, "Some Aspects," 174-76; Cohen, *The Historical Tradition*, 21-23; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 258-59; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 318-19.

[101] For the limited range of the ritual powers attached to a given territorial cult see Schoffeleers, *River of Blood*, 7. For the difficulty in exporting that power, see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 68-70; Tantala, "Early History," 475; Gilbert C. K. Gwassa and Joseph F. Mbwiliza, "Social Production, Symbolism, and Ritual in Buha: 1750-1900," *Tanzania Notes and Records* 79-80 (1976), 18. Some scholars grant that *misámbwa* could "move"; see John Roscoe, "Kibuka, The War-God of the Baganda," *Man* 7 (1907), 161-62; Cohen, *Historical Tradition*, 21.

[102] Schoffeleers recognizes that other divides existed with the firstcomer-newcomer divide; see Schoffeleers, *River of Blood*, 9-10.

[103] Cohen, "Political Transfomation," 476, notes that newcomer Owiny-Karuoth Luo-speaking groups who hoped to rule locally acknowledged or accepted "the preexisting *misámbwa* of the peoples among whom they lived."

[104] This is Iris Berger's core argument, *Religion and Resistance*, 47ff.; see also Cohen, *Womunafu's Bunafu*, 37-38. The Nyabingi complex in Kigezi and northern Rwanda may be the most famous and recent example; see Feierman, "Healing as Social Criticism," 83ff.; I. Berger, "Fertility as Power," 77-81; Freedman, *Nyabingi*, Ch. 5 and 6.

[105] A related history might be written for Irungu, another figure whose powers were expanded from initially territorial bases. He is tied to concepts of wilderness and hunting, a space and an activity very likely to have preoccupied some of the pioneering communities in the central grasslands. See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 70.

[106] Roscoe, *Baganda*, 290-301; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 111; Hermann Rehse, *Kiziba: Land und Leute* (Stuttgart: Strecker and Schröder, 1910), Ch. 13; Nyakatura, *Customs*, 57; Kenny, "Powers," 725ff.; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 74; F. Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle," *Uganda Journal* 6, 1 (1938), 35, describes Mugasha as a giant who made hills and stones and who dug wells and made lakes and rain and who "is now said to live in the Ssese Islands, in Lake Victoria." See also Gorju, *Entre*, 226-30, 245. Mugasha is also noted as one of Ryangombe's or Kiranga's subordinates in Rwanda and Burundi

respectively. See Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi*, vol. 3, 73-74; Arnoux, "Le culte," 545-46; Hurel, "Religion," 79; Gerald Hartwig, "The Historical and Social Role of Kerebe Music," *Tanzania Notes and Records* 70 (1969), 43; Betbeder, "Buzinza," 745; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 45-46. Speke, *Journal*, 250, refers to a "Neptune Mgussa (sic)" from Buganda.

[107] The fact that, in Zambia, Bemba speakers name their founding ancestress "Mumbi Mukasa" hints at even deeper roots for the relationship between Mukasa and female fertility. See Christopher Wrigley, "The River-God and the Historians: Myth in the Shire Valley and Elsewhere," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988), 377.

[108] The original verb seems to have been lost but its former existence may be posited from nouns for "health, blessing, and wholeness" that people derived from it; see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 382.

[109] Roscoe, *Baganda*, 290 (for Mukasa's former name), 292 (for his wives); Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 259. Also see Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 258, for the observation that mediums of *misámbwa* territorial spirits called their clients to their temple by distinct drum beats called *kikasa*; see La Fontaine and Richards, "The Haya," 179, for a general connection between royals and snakes.

[110] Tantala, "Early History," 323; Kiwanuka, *History of Buganda*, 160-61; Sir Apolo Kaggwa, *The Kings of Buganda*, trans. and ed. M. Semakula M. Kiwanuka (Kampala: East African Publishing House, 1970), 8; Wrigley, *Kingship*, 160, 184; Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, 132; A. G. Katate and L. Kamugungunu, *Abagabe b'Ankole* (Kampala: Eagle Press, 1955), 24; Katoke, *Karagwe*, 22, 28 fn 8, 35; Rehse, *Kiziba*, 11, 128; in Bunyoro, Mukasa was recalled as having been either a brother of Ndawula or a follower of his family and as having "received" the Ssese Islands from a victorious Ndawula; see George Wilson's version of Ndawula's story in Harry H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1902), 2:595

[111] Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, 132.

[112] The links between Mukasa, pythons, and the Ssese Islands appear in A. J. Lush, "Kiganda Drums," *Uganda Journal* 3, 1 (1935), 9-10, 18; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 296. Bjerke (*Religion and Misfortune*, 47) argues that Mugasha was a nature spirit prior to his being co-opted into the *cwezi* complex.

[113] See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 271 (*-bándwa*) and 304 (*Kabona*). The alternation of intervocalic /g/ with /k/, in the Rutaran and North Nyanzan forms of his name is not regular. Ganda borrowed this form of the name from a Greater Luhyia language, where the shift from */g/ to /k/ intervocalically is regular. This simply underscores the portability of the named nature spirit and even suggests an older time depth than West Nyanza for the naming of this particular one.

[114] Roscoe, *Baganda*, 297, describes Mukasa's medium as a woman; Iron hoe blades adorned the pinnacle of Mukasa's rebuilt temple at Bubembe; see Roscoe, *Baganda*, 295.

[115] See Katate and Kamugungunu, *Abagabe*, 24; Holger Benettsson, letter to author, April, 1994, 12-13; in Buzinza, Mugasa is considered an autochthonous chief, see Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 45; in Mwenge (south of the Muzizi River) Mugasha is recalled as both the spirit of Lake Nyansimbi and the master of wilderness, including master of Irungu, see Torelli, "Notes," 531, 553; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 227.

6

Into the Savannah

The savannah grasslands between Lake Victoria and the Kivu Rift seemed a dry wilderness of desert and carnivorous animals to people who lived in the shady cool of banana gardens by the rivers and great lakes. Only hunters felt at home in the exposed, rolling hill country between the Kagera and Kafu rivers. For some farmers, especially those who found no room or safety in the chiefdoms near the lakes and rivers, the savannahs would prove to be as welcoming, and as green a place as their old homes had been. Their way into the savannah lay firmly behind herds of cattle, beside granaries filled with sorghum, *eleusine*, and cowpeas, and safely within the cultural orbit that surrounded successful settlements.

The lands from southern Bunyoro to Karagwe encompass this savannah and the social histories of the people who made them their home form the topics of this chapter. In this central swath of territory, communities speaking West Highlands dialects, Rutaran dialects, and sometimes, North Nyanzan dialects, pioneered permanent and large-scale settlements (Map 6.1). Their successes and failures had profound implications for those who remained on either side of the savannahs. Whether in the mixed-farming highlands of Rwanda, Burundi, and Buha or around the banana gardens of Buhaya and Buganda, the pastoralist revolution in the savannahs brought to their social world new challenges and opportunities. Together with the emergence of a powerful set of social and demographic movements in lands near and north of the Victoria Nile (which historians have called the Luo migrations[1]), many of the most powerful impulses for social change elsewhere in the region emanated from the savannahs between 1100 and 1500. Indeed, histories of the kingdoms that arose in these two areas have long dominated the historiography of the precolonial Great Lakes region.

respectively. See Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi*, vol. 3, 73-74; Arnoux, "Le culte," 545-46; Hurel, "Religion," 79; Gerald Hartwig, "The Historical and Social Role of Kerebe Music," *Tanzania Notes and Records* 70 (1969), 43; Betbeder, "Buzinza," 745; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 45-46. Speke, *Journal*, 250, refers to a "Neptune Mgussa (sic)" from Buganda.

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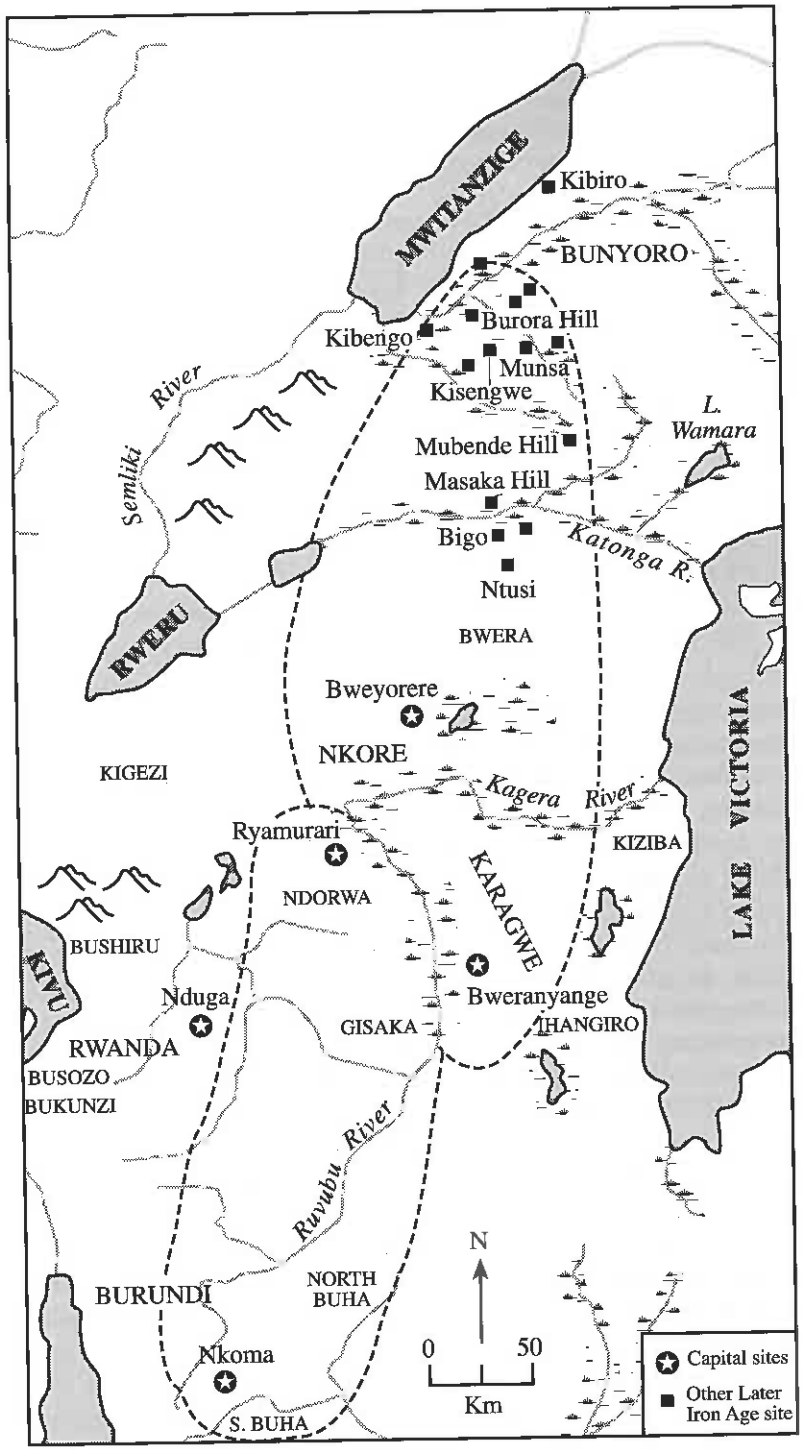


Map 6.1 The Political Geography of the Two Spheres.

Transformations in social and agricultural orientations, which were discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, led people to build new settlements in areas that straddled the frontiers between the older societies of the Kivu Rift Valley and those living by Lake Victoria. A major axis in the central grasslands ran between Bunyoro and northern Buha, linking Bunyoro, Nkore, Karagwe, and Gisaka. A second axis ran up and down the eastern side of the Kivu Rift Valley, from southwestern Buha to Kigezi, Buhweju, and the Rwenzori mountains (Map 6.1). Since the fifteenth century, relations within and between these two spheres were not always friendly. Dynastic traditions from the kingdoms of both Bunyoro and Rwanda recall conflict between them.[2] These dynastic traditions emerged, along with royalty, from the heart of territorial chiefship and locality-specific spirit mediumship but they also represented the ideological efforts of newcomers to legitimize their royal standing by attaching themselves to earlier forms of authority. Dynastic traditions addressed the relationship between preexisting conditions of political and religious power precisely because the royal court could not completely submerge or subordinate local and older centers of political and religious power.

Though tension between kings and chiefs provides the plots for some of the epic dynastic traditions from kingdoms like Rwanda, Bunyoro, and Karagwe, the far more important social history of the communities who domesticated the savannah frontier underlies those oral epics and beckons to us. This chapter will tell that story. It is a story that, in many ways, builds on the ancient themes of patron-client relations and the shifting fortunes of alliances between leaders and healers. The chapter seeks to draw into the social history of clientship and contract a set of histories of the last of the revolutionary changes that this book will narrate: the simultaneous emergence of territorially expansive societies and of new relationships with the worlds of creative power. These themes bring together many of the other themes so far addressed in the book, including agricultural and environmental change, gender, and the negotiability of identities.

PIONEERS, THE INTERNAL FRONTIER, AND DROUGHT

The earliest pioneers to settle in the central grasslands grew grains and herded livestock, between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries. During the following several centuries they emphasized cattle keeping.[3] A long era of alternating periods of poor rains and relatively healthy rains shaped this two-stage process.[4] Agricultural innovation and environmental change marked the societies who opened the savannah frontier, in part, by dividing the savannahs into two overlapping geographical spheres of historical change. One sphere lay in the northern grasslands and was centered on the Kitaran heartland. The second sphere lay in the south, centered on the lands that later formed the kingdoms of Ndorwa, Gisaka and Karagwe (Map 6.1).[5]

The signal discovery by archaeologists working in both spheres of the savannah must surely be that evidence for permanent settlement there only begins to appear in the tenth century A.D. The hunters, fishers, and farmers who had settled in the wettest zones of the region since the middle of the last millennium B.C., steered clear of the savannahs. After the tenth century and proceeding into the sixteenth century, people domesticated the savannah by building large settlements (with smaller homesteads spread widely round about) around prominent hills and near permanent watercourses, sometimes including immense earthworks that, at least at Ntusi, served to collect rainwater for cattle to drink.[6]

Ntusi and Bigo, two sites in the central grasslands of the northern sphere, exemplify this two-stage process of settlement (Map 6.1). Ntusi's inhabitants lived there between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries and they grew considerable quantities of grain and raised large herds of cattle. In the fifteenth century, both Ntusi and its more than fifty satellite homesteads were inhabited. They shared the northern sphere of the savannah with communities at Bigo, Kibengo, Munsa, and Mubende. The Bigo and Kibengo communities seem to have emphasized cattle as did their distant neighbors at Ntusi and Munsa, but Ntusi and Munsa appear to have been settled for a longer time than the other two communities. It seems fairly clear that grain farming in the savannah grasslands provided a platform of food security from which people could perfect their specialization in pastoralism.

The expansion of the savannah frontier away from lakeshore farming and fishing communities and into the drier grasslands may have begun with making homes for new populations in the wetter areas with rich soils, such as Munsa. But, today, Ntusi sits in the driest part of the central grasslands and its settlement most likely marks the outer limit of lands that could support both grain crops and the development of highly specialized cattle pastoralism.[7] The wealth generated by productive pastoralisms emerged from a farming base but never totally eclipsed farming and its associated healing practices and lineage politics. The split between herder and farmer came in later centuries, after the unique opportunities that cattle offered for political strength, cultural capital, and militarism had been fully developed (in the Hinda and Bito eras).[8] During the centuries between 1100 and 1500, specialized herders depended on farming societies as buffers against the unique risks they faced, such as epidemic disease and catastrophic, short-term drought. Understanding the nature of environmental change during this period will deepen our historical study of the character of these social developments on the savannah frontiers. The starting place for this, oddly enough, is Cairo, Egypt.

Beginning in the seventh century and continuing into the twentieth, Egyptian bureaucrats measured flood maxima and minima at the Rodah Nilometer. Their records of these measurements provide us with a mirror of long-term

rainfall regimes in the Great Lakes region and Ethiopia. Between 800 and 1500 these records reveal two major periods of exceedingly low flood minima separated by periods of exceedingly high flood maxima. Following Fekri Hassan's careful distinguishing of Ethiopian from Great Lakes contributions to the flood, we can date these periods of wet and dry weather: wet from 850 to 950, dry from 950 to 1100, wet from 1100-1200, dry from 1200 to 1450 (with fitful recovery of rainfall between 1250 and 1300 and between 1350 and 1400).[9]

The driest of these phases does not represent a drought because it took multiple generations to unfold. Though droughts surely occurred, their impact on the two spheres differed in important ways. Periods of wet and dry followed one after the other in fairly rapid succession. This meant that when farmers who depended on high-rainfall crops, like the banana, experienced stress in their food systems, agriculturalists who depended on dry-land sources of food, like grains and livestock, experienced a relative boom in their production capacities. When dry conditions prevailed, between 950 and 1100 and between 1200 and 1450, herders and grain farmers enjoyed an increase in local demand for any surplus. This integrated, inverse relation of plenty and scarcity in different but neighboring Lakes food systems shaped the social history of wealth, health, and leadership during this long period.

On the savannah frontier wet and dry cycles clearly correlate with the two eras of settlement there.[10] The first dry phase, between 950 and 1100, coincided with the first pioneer agriculturalists making places like Ntusi and Munsa their home.[11] These people were cereal farmers and cattle herders. They established vigorous communities in the savannahs and expanded them during the next wet phase, between 1100 and 1200. During the following period of low rainfall, between 1200 and 1450, some farming communities suffered extreme pressure on the capacity for their fields of grain to yield surpluses. This pressure drove some of them to emphasize pastoralism with a new level of vigor and success. During this era at Ntusi, both the main settlement and its satellite homesteads were occupied and other communities founded Bigo, Kibengo, possibly resettled Munsa, and settled near the famous hill site of Mubende Hill (Map 6.1).[12]

The wet and dry periods between 850 and 1450 affected the two spheres of the savannah frontier differently. Because the northern sphere was larger than the southern sphere, reduced rainfall had a more locally profound impact on herders and farmers. The local character of these effects created dispersed centers of emerging pastoral wealth. Wide swathes of territory might separate two or three areas where conditions for pastoralism were best. On the other hand, the heart of the southern sphere was drier than the northern sphere, and it was a narrower strip of land, squeezed in between the wet zones of the Western Highlands and the Rutaran shorelands of Lake Victoria and cut in two by the northward run of the Kagera River. It contained islands

of higher (and wetter) land on either side of the Kagera. Thus, the impact of environmental shifts there would have been more widespread than they were in the northern sphere.

But higher or lower amounts of rainfall had a local impact on agriculture and probably did not leave such wide swathes of territory between communities. This was the case in the northern sphere. The northern sphere thus weathered the 600 years of environmental uncertainty by creating larger, dispersed centers of agricultural and cultural security, such as those at Ntusi and Munsa. Pastoralisms became important in the northern sphere earlier than they did in the southern sphere in part because they provided a critical margin of food security in places where mutual assistance might lie at a considerable distance. The people who opened the southern sphere of the savannah frontier generated pastoralist expertise there later, in part because the impact of environmental stress on the creation of inverse conditions of scarcity and plenty touched communities living nearer to each other which meant that they could more easily render mutual assistance. Between 1200 and 1450, during the last era of lower rainfall, farmers in the southern sphere faced pressure from northern herders who desired access to the extensive pasturelands on either side of the Kagera River. Together they created more territorially expansive communities.

PATRONS, CLIENTS, AND CATTLE IN A NEW WORLD

Nearly forty years ago, the anthropologist Priscilla Reining observed that clientship was common between the Great Lakes but that it revolved around differing combinations of several issues: cattle, land, and political office.[13] Whereas Reining was not in a position to carry out an exhaustive comparative study of these factors, we may venture such an analysis for members of Rutaran, West Highlands, and North Nyanza societies who settled in the central grasslands. This analysis rests on the social history of obligation and community-building, presented in Chapters 4 and 5, which were the critical mechanisms for consolidating instrumental power in the old core homelands and for driving some people into the emerging frontier. Land-based and office-based clientships held the keys to the opening and closing of the internal frontiers, by Lake Victoria and in the greater Kivu Rift Valley, but they could not by themselves ensure the long-term survival of communities in the savannahs.

We learned in Chapter 5 how clientship and political office were connected to land-based kingships which had themselves emerged out of tensions within institutions of clan land controllers. In the context of environmental uncertainty, land inheritance squeezed out some people and thus offered to land-rich lineages the chance to integrate new sets of followers. Those who succeeded in such expansions became wealthy *bakungu* or *bakama* (plural

of *mukama*). The most successful of these persons created an instrumentally powerful royalty and installed *bakungu* as subchiefs. This was broadly true as well for the history of political institutions in the Western Highlands.[14] The social history of cattle-based clientship now beckons to us because it formed another branch of the social history of building communities. The story of how cattle revolutionized the politics of making gifts introduces some of the fundamental changes in gendered identities and in the joining of creative and instrumental power engineered by the savannah pioneers after 1000.

The range of contractual relations initiated by gift giving, which expressed differences in social standing, even those revolving just around cattle, far exceeds what can be told in a social history such as this one.[15] By studying one aspect of the role of cattle in gift giving, we can focus on how making gifts of cattle could generate territorially expansive networks of clientage and friendship. These networks could then form the basis for innovations in health and healing, the accumulation of stores of movable wealth, and the militarism required to protect them.

We should not lose sight of the equally important and historically related networks of land-based clientage discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Indeed, in the wake of the second cycle of high and low rainfall, between 1100 and 1450, the combination of relatively scarce lands and the success of pastoralisms created opportunities for herders to inject cattle into the art of clientage and to attract farmers into relationships based on a host of concerns that gift exchange could have been expected to protect. Farmers practicing mixed agriculture may well have desired cattle as a utilitarian hedge against crop failure or as a source of manure for their fields. Herders may have used cattle gifts to gain entry to an established community of farmers. Whichever of these motives a person might have had, and there were certainly more than these, people could disperse cattle across space, something they could not do with land. If access to land tended to attract followers to central places its relative scarcity tended to drive the unfortunate elsewhere in search of it. Access to cattle, however, could either disperse networks of social ties or concentrate them around the courts of wealthy herd-managers.

Two sorts of cattle gifts were central to such expansions. One was an alliance created between people who were more or less social equals. This sort of relationship amounted to depositing an animal at the homestead of one's friend, called some variation of **kubitsa* (157). The other was a social tie created by the exchange of gifts, including the all-important transfer of a cow or two, between people of different social standing. In parts of the southern sphere, this relationship was named **umugabire* (165). People knew which of the two had the higher social standing because the person with higher standing gave the cow and did not initiate the relationship. This second relationship created new statuses for each of the two parties: they became client and patron and they undertook mutual obligations toward each other. In the

early centuries of the second millennium A.D., depositing animals with friends near or far was already an ancient practice. But people did not invent **ubugabire* (from the verb *kugábìra*), and other sorts of cattle clientship, until very late, probably in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when speakers of the dialects that formed the last subgroups of Great Lakes Bantu had irrevocably begun to loose regular contact with each other. As we shall shortly see, this was more than a coincidence.

Entrusting cattle to someone else was a version of the ancient practice of depositing something with another person.[16] Through *kubitsa*, a family with cows could spread them around the territory to minimize their vulnerability to raiding and disease or to hide from chiefs the fact that they possessed good-sized herds. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these were open-ended, casual arrangements between friends. This sort of *kubitsa* involving cattle shows a block distribution across the central grasslands which reflects the critical importance of dispersing herds for protection and for dispersing the social ties embodied in the acts of trust and reciprocal obligations marked by such deposits.[17] The spread of this practice into the savannah frontier, revealed by the solid distribution there of different words naming it, tells us that pioneers did exploit the special qualities of cattle as movable and reproducible forms of productive and social capital.

By far the most common means to extend one's influence through cattle giving lay in the art of *kugábìra* (164), that old wellspring of redistributed wealth.[18] The verb names the act of exchanging something between higher- and lower-status persons, an exchange that enjoined obligations on the part of each person. Early-twentieth-century writers described these obligations as heritable, upon mutual agreement.[19] They also observed that the lower-status individual initiated the relationship through gifts of beer. When cattle served as the gift given by the higher status person, the cows embodied or publicized their social relationship. It seems clear enough that *kugábìra* connected people in ways similar to blood brotherhood and it attached a following to a wealthy person and the lineage she or he represented. In Rwanda, the animals used to create these ties received special names and had histories attached to them.[20] They were clearly far more than sources of milk or calves.

These gifts of cattle embodied the relationship between a leader and a follower, they were concrete public expressions of the connections that each person might use to press her or his claims on the other. The client could call on the patron for protection of her property, for example, and the client could redistribute the offspring of the animal to become a patron to a third party. The particular sort of cattle gift contained in terms like *ubugabire* and *butoija* marked a relation where the person who received the cow was subordinate to the person who gave the cow,[21] even if the receiver also gave a cow to a third party.

When such exchanges went awry, when borrowers could not return the animals in good time or in good health, the patron possessed the right to foreclose. This must have been an unhappy event because it meant the loss of followers for the patron and the loss to the client of both the animals themselves and the patron's "protection." But *kunyaga* (226) "to seize one's property," a very old verb in Lakes social history, came to be applied to loaned cattle, a practice that may well have spread into the savannah frontier along with communities who deployed cattle gifts to augment their following and raise their social standing.[22]

People who lived on the savannah frontier after 1000 used a variety of terms for cattle gifts and for the statuses of patron and client. The distributions of these words do not conform to discrete, genetic subgroupings of languages. Instead, they reflect separate innovations in savannah communities of ideas about cattle and clientage some of which had roots in the core areas of settlement on either side of the grasslands. In the southern sphere, the *umugabire* cattle gift turns up across a broad zone of cattle-loaning culture that reached into both the southern Kivu Rift Valley and Buha, but was centered in the western highlands. In the northern sphere, and restricted to Nkore, the *butoija* cattle gift is unique. Different terms for client in Rundi and Ha (*umugabire*) and in Rwanda, Haavu, and Shi (**umugaragu*, 169) make the point a simple one: ancient concepts of redistributive gift exchange served as templates from which savannah communities invented new sorts of cattle gifts and new sorts of patronage.[23] The terminologies for these later innovations show overlapping block distributions that include languages belonging to the two different subgroups of West Highlands and Rutara. Their distributions have taken this shape because people speaking those languages formed the communities that brought pastoralism to the savannah frontier between 1200 and 1450.

In the uplands east of the Kivu Rift Valley, the fundamental relation of debt surrounding cattle was marked by the statuses of patron (**sheebuja*, 194) and client (*mugaragu*).[24] Still further east and north, in Rutaran societies, these relations were marked by a different but overlapping terminology (*mukama* and *mugaragwa*, respectively). The fact that communities in each zone shared the same root for "client"—**-garag*—but innovated different terms for "patron" suggests strongly that they inherited the older concept of clientage and worked with it to craft a new conception of the patron. Moreover, these distributions suggest that people engineered this revolution in patronage after the breakup of both the West Highlands and the Rutaran speech communities, between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. We may infer this from the fact that terms for patron differ within Rutaran and West Highlands societies: several of their descendant dialect communities, including Ha and Haya, have unique terms for the status.[25] The spread of these words across the boundaries defining Rutaran and West Highlands as genetically related

language groups, reveals the spread of the institution of patronage as communities moved into and domesticated the central grasslands and created networks of clients around cattle gifts.[26]

The New Power of Territoriality

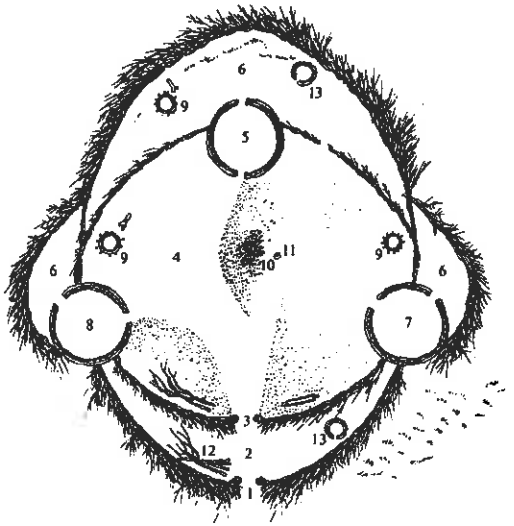
As a movable form of wealth, cattle offered to savannah-dwellers an entirely new way to build communities. Once pastoralisms had been perfected, a process with ancient roots that burst onto the historical stage around the turn of the first millennium (see Chapter 2), cattle held out the opportunity to craft webs of reciprocity and inequality over expanses of territory unmatched by the land-based property relations of the chiefdoms near Lake Victoria and those in the Kivu Rift Valley. Unlike land, cattle reproduced, unlike land, cattle transported themselves. Cattle faced different sorts of challenges to their security and health than did land. Avoiding disease and theft and ensuring access to pasture and water shaped the distribution of herds in the central grasslands. Although the ancient chiefdoms built around mixed agriculture and banana plantations sheltered people subject to political domination and military attack, land and people together could not be removed to a protective or victorious political center. Cattle, however, could be concentrated and dispersed, repeatedly, as the new lineaments of political power and as new markers of gendered identities.[27]

These patronage relations surrounding cattle provided several advantages to community builders who sought to domesticate the savannah frontiers. They allowed herds to be dispersed and thus erased the possibility of catastrophic epidemic, drought, or theft. They created webs of non-kin ties on which herders could draw for judicial, military, and other forms of solidarity. The joining of cattle from a vast array of different homesteads and lineages in a chief's or patron's herds, embodied with startling clarity the mixing of people in the challenging, new settlements at the savannah frontier. With diverse settlements and with cattle dispersed widely and prudently, those who went into the savannah during the two dry periods (950-110 and 1200-1450) met the novel challenges they found there. Their creativity in this instrumental realm generated new tensions in gendered identities and in the relations between healers and chiefs. These tensions played out differently in the two spheres of savannah social history, stories that numerous historians of the precolonial Lakes past have tackled.

THE TWO HALVES OF THE SAVANNAH

A host of scholars has presented a compelling vision of the wider causal factors that shaped the novel character of the bonds and chasms between royal and healing power in the northern sphere of the savannah between the

Homestead of Average Pastoralist. 1. Main gateway (*ireémbo*). 2. Forecourt. 3. Gateway to main courtyard. 4. Main courtyard. 5. Head of *rugó*'s home. 6. Backyard. 7. Married son's home. 8. Guesthouse. 9. Granaries. 10. Fire to warm cattle. 11. Cattlepost. 12. Branches to close gateway. 13. Huts (*ndaro*) for offerings to spirits.



Homestead of Rich Pastoralist. 1. Main gateway (*ireémbo*). 2. Forecourt. 3. Gateway to main courtyard. 4. Main courtyard. 5. Main House. 6. Backyard. 7. Male guesthouse. 8. Shelter for herders and calves. 9. Saltlick. 10. Fire to warm cattle. 11. Cattlepost. 12. Front doorway to head of *rugó*'s home. 13. Rear door. 14. Entry to backyard. 15. Young children's home. 16. Female guesthouse. 17. Hut for offerings to spirits. 18. Location for ritual offerings to Kiranga. 19. Granaries. 20. Bathrooms. 21. Secret passage out of backyard. 22. Branches to close gateway.

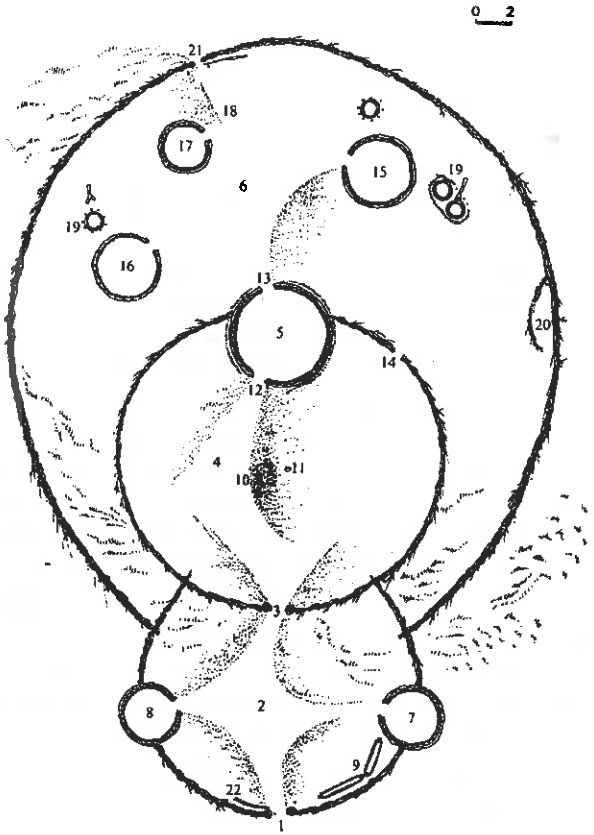


Illustration 6.1 Homesteads in Southern Burundi, ca. 1500. [Drawings by Christian Seignobos in Jean-Louis Acquier, *Le Burundi*, (Marseilles: Editions Parenthèses, 1986), p. 29.] Reprinted by permission of Editions Parenthèses.

twelfth and the fifteenth centuries.[28] Most of these scholars find a necessary and sufficient cause for the political, pastoral, and medical revolutions in the savannahs in the occurrence of a "Great Drought," which northern sphere oral traditions tell of repeatedly.[29] We have already reviewed the environmental evidence for two periods of reduced rainfall in the Lakes region—between 950 and 1100 and between 1200 and 1450—and may thus safely reinterpret the traditions of the Great Drought as referring instead to a long period of climatic shift when swings in rainfall amounts helped several important developments take shape. Renee Tantala's clear and representative narration of these events deserves paraphrasing.[30]

Tantala begins her story with the claim that during the Great Drought forests constricted and pastures expanded. The speedier recovery of cattle herds (as opposed to communities of people) placed a premium on access to pastures and reduced people's environmental control over fields of grain. Thus, chiefs with cattle became powerful patrons in the farming areas most profoundly affected by the swings in rainfall. Pastoralist values grew in importance in the northern sphere, and regional trading systems met the vigorously growing demand for salt among herders. Conflict increased between the old communities of farmers who had survived the period of environmental uncertainty and the "newcomer" herders. Old farming centers viewed herders as interlopers, and did not share pastoralist values with them. The herders, on the other hand, saw farmers as important allies in the struggle against epidemics and the risks of raiding on their herds.

Tantala's story rests on the argument that, prior to the Great Drought, few pastoralists lived around the Katonga River (Map 6.1) and that contact between farmers and herders there revolved around trading and raiding. According to Tantala, prior to the Great Drought, farmers lived in dense populations in Bugangaizi and Buwekula, where they confined herders to the central grasslands. When the Great Drought came, mixed-farming communities and those near sources of iron fared better than those who lived far from such resources and those who emphasized only grain and root crops. Communities with favorable locations near sources of iron could trade hoes for food and could thrive on the livestock component of their food system. They attracted the less-fortunate as refugees and thereby increased the size and strength of their communities. As the Great Drought worsened, even these communities broke up and created openings for herders in once purely agricultural lands. All of the farmers ended up drawn to riverine areas near Lake Wamara, and the Katonga and Kafu Rivers, safe from even the driest years.

How does this reprise square with what we now know of the earlier social history of the communities at the fringes of the savannah frontier? The invention of royal institutions whose occupants controlled access to land may well have played a central role in creating pools of people who moved to the grasslands frontier. They did not move there only to seek relief from the

extractive power of chiefship. They moved there also to seek relief from the exclusionary power of chiefship. By the close of the first millennium, chiefs had created tensions in the property inheritance systems of the old core areas of settlement. They had done so by positioning themselves as the people to whom heirless lands fell for reallocation and as the office that granted people the right to clear uninhabited land. Chiefs could eject people as well as integrate them.

As a crossroads for instrumental power, chiefship generated conflict between leaders over access to resources. This tension could develop into military conflict, which created additional insecurity for villages located between contending chiefs. Chiefship, to be sure, did not disappear in the savannah any more than the ideas that chiefs played key roles in making a territory human. The forces that induced communities to make a living in the savannah were complex and included environmental uncertainty, the two-edged sword of chiefship, accusations of witchcraft against men or women, or a young adult's desire to make new clientage networks. Some people fled to the frontier while others probably viewed it as a dangerous but desirable land of new opportunity. In either case, the savannah frontier was not a uniform nor entirely empty place.[31]

The farmers and herders who achieved permanent and large-scale settlement in the northern sphere of the savannah probably found few people there. But chiefdoms on either side of the southern sphere were separated by a comparatively narrow strip of savannah. The arc of the southern sphere bulged eastwards, with one tip in Kigezi and the other in northern Buha (Map 6.1). It lay across the pasturelands of Gisaka and Karagwe. These pastures were important because they stretched between two old core areas of mixed-agricultural and banana-growing settlements. The impact of pastoralism spread to the two tips of the southern sphere far later than this story can tell.[32]

Centers of wealth and communities in the southern sphere appear to have been vaguely connected with ancient firstcomer groups that are recalled in various dynastic traditions from the area. These included the Abazigaaba from Mubari (in the Kagera River basin), the Abagesera from Bugesera (the northern and eastern borderlands of modern Rwanda, west of the Kagera River), and the Abasinga (who lived under a set of leaders known as the Renge and seem to have come from the Igara-Mpororo area to the north).[33] Some of the members of these firstcomer groups were probably well-connected patrons at the time that royal court historians began to tell stories about the origins of the Rwandan kingdom under the Nyiginya dynasty. Indeed, by naming an earlier group "Renge," court historians and others may have recalled successful communities all along the eastern face of the Nile-Congo divide, from Mpororo to southern Burundi, whose power lay in their redistributive control over property like iron goods, ritual authority, meat, and land. In some of the stories about the Renge, they appear even older than the Abazigaaba and

Abagesera, from Gisaka-Mubari, and they are not recalled as herders.[34] They were probably some of the oldest controllers of clan lands discussed in Chapter 4, who ejected groups into the grasslands frontier. In Rwanda they were important enough for historians there to argue that a daughter of the last Renge king was impregnated by the first king of the Rwandan royal dynasty, Gihanga.[35]

Clientship between established pioneers and newcomers surely helped to build layered, vigorous communities of diverse agriculturalists. Clientship ties or blood brotherhood pacts enhanced the status of local lineage heads and chiefs in savannah frontier communities like Ntusi and Munsa. The rise and fall of various clans and clan heads, recalled in traditions from chiefdoms led by *bahinza* who were beyond the aegis of the Rwandan court, might reflect, merely by remembering their names, the successful outcome of building such status-enhancing connections. Still, any acceptance of central authority interfered with local political autonomy.[36] This could only happen on mature or "closed" frontiers, where each side possessed a clearly expressed awareness of itself as a center or as an edge.

These conditions hardly existed early in the second millennium A.D., when chiefs and their followers moved into the savannahs from all sides. In that period, clientships with an ancient center probably had more to do with establishing legitimate claims to cultural power as civilizers of the wilderness and guarantors of social health, as well as guarantors of safety. As these pioneers transformed their communities into centers of wealth in cattle, grain, iron, and the fruits of hunting, during the several centuries of environmental uncertainty, between 900 and 1450, they became objects of desire in the eyes of the old core areas of royal power and land controllers. These savannah communities thus attracted considerable attention from raiders and wealthy people looking to build new alliances. As centers of wealth and instrumental power for farmers who were tied to pastoralists by gift exchange relationships, other forms of alliance building, and marriage, the savannah communities became the nuclei from which considerable military, medical, and pastoral power was projected outward.

This representation of the central grasslands as an environmental and social bellows—which pulled pioneers in (between 900 and 1100) and propelled them outwards (beginning in the thirteenth century) as potent alliances between princely and military power—reveals the dynamics of this last phase of Great Lakes social history. What attracted persons to the savannahs, what provided them with the material means to build their communities and generate hierarchies, and what pushed the successful triumvirate of chief, healer, and follower outward to expansionism, were the advantages of cattle pastoralisms in an era of uncertain rainfall and constricting access to perennial croplands in the zones of Great Lakes Bantu antiquity. Cattle made kings, cattle made trouble for farmers, and cattle posed new risks to survival.

In the main, this argument is familiar. Scholars and Lakes intellectuals have long spoken of Great Droughts and the economic and cultural upheavals they caused.[37] But scholars may have taken the drought cliché in oral traditions too literally. In light of important new archaeological work in the savannahs, undertaken principally by Andrew Reid, Ephraim Kamuhangire, John Sutton, and Peter Robertshaw, the thesis pursued here revises the older view. Agricultural settlement in the savannah grasslands was indeed pioneering, after 900, and was indeed accompanied by some environmental uncertainty. But both the progress of domesticating the savannahs for mixed-farming communities and the changes in rainfall regimes were gradual and ambiguous.[38] By combining carefully argued analyses of oral traditions with sober understanding of the complexities of climatic and material cultural changes we can proceed to tell how these communities faced entirely new challenges to their social health. The time has come to add to the historical contexts of environment, agriculture, and patronage the social history of gender and health. One of the principal challenges the savannah pastoralist pioneers faced surely lay in the erosion of a married woman's access to productive property in the form of cows.

COWS AND WEALTH: NEW REALITIES FOR WOMEN

The marginalized position of women in pastoral societies is a commonplace in ethnographic snapshots from East Africa. Whether such descriptions captured a quotidian reality for pastoral women, or constituted a male fantasy about the ideal pastoral home, we must be cautious about accepting for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, images of communities that were archly divided by livelihood and gender in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All of the evidence for the cultural practice of people who domesticated the savannah frontier suggests that they were eclectic farmers with a pronounced expertise in raising livestock. Thus, the view that women suffered an extreme political and economic marginalization, which drove them into *cwezi kubándwa* as a form of resistance, even if literally true for the nineteenth century, does not appear to describe gender relations around property during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, the thesis that women suffered the emergence of pastoralisms and political centralization in key ways compels us to consider the preconditions for this historical transformation of gender relations in increasingly specialized pastoral societies.

The instrumental use of cattle gifts to create expansive networks of leaders and followers on the savannah frontiers must not be mistaken for the primary means to construct social hierarchy and community. Instead, the politics of cattle gifts should be understood in light of the dynamic relations between two different aspects of kingship. On the one hand, kingship was an institution that hoped to legitimize its authority through ensuring social health

and abundance. On the other hand, kingship was an institution that strived to achieve this legitimacy partly by redefining gender relations in order to prescribe the character of family organization and draw distinctions between herders and cultivators.[39] This formulation echoes a familiar argument in this book, that a leader's responsibilities to protect and ensure a community's health drew people to her or him. A leader did not lead merely by having land or cattle to give, she or he had those things to give because followers were attracted to the safety and social intercourse of an established community.

Pierre Bonté has suggested that certain elements of pastoralist leadership altered gendered identities and ideologies in several important ways. When these identities and ideologies helped leaders deploy cattle gifts between followers, these leaders acted very much in the tradition of Lakes chiefship. And when leaders assimilated pastoralist symbols to the institutions of kingship they initiated one of the revolutions in the social history of the savannah. Bonté's insights can be used to argue that new gendered identities in the service of a new chiefship (which was seeking to integrate cattle into both the language of chiefly power and into the practical consciousness of making alliances) may have driven some of the new tensions between healers and chiefs over ensuring human fertility on the savannah frontiers.

Bonté searched histories of the kingdoms of Rwanda, Burundi, Nkore, and Bunyoro to learn how cattle gifts concretely joined the abstract concept of a king's capacity to ensure abundance and protect his communities to the social importance of systems of circulation and exchange.[40] He found several things that revealed that pastoralism was added to older facets of chiefship. In those four kingdoms, not all royal clans are deemed to be "pastoralist" clans and not all pastoralists are royals, but all royal groups (as clans, as nobles, or as king and queen mother) display important pastoral symbols.[41] Pastoralist identity and material culture were grafted onto the deep roots of chiefship and royalty in these cases.

What had gender to do with this? The elaboration of cattle clientship in pastoral society involved proposing a new ideology of female power and position. Royal ritual also had to incorporate this reconstituted ideology. Women, like cattle, generated social relations, both established connections between two lineages. But this equivalence required a reformulation of the ancient principles of Lakes Bantu political philosophy that held the leader responsible for ensuring the fecundity and prosperity of his family's line and fields. Bonté has argued that the images and properties of cattle and kingship "express and define relations of political authority and domination and legitimate political power related to the fecundity and prosperity which the kingship ensures."[42] But women were gradually excluded from pastoral production, and their work with cattle came more directly under the control of the male head of the homestead. In twentieth century pastoral Nkore, women

were excluded entirely from cattle production. In Bunyoro, where land mediated struggles over labor and inheritance more than cattle did, women inherited and transmitted livestock. Gender hierarchies, then, partly mirrored the hierarchies through which property passed and circulated.[43]

As people increasingly used cattle to generate social relations, in the manner discussed in the previous section, they implicated cattle in changing gender relations within herding groups. Cattle were used to reaffirm the masculine hierarchies of access to instrumental power. Both that hierarchy and that power were constituted discursively in a patriarchal idiom. The first move in this struggle involved people trying to separate wives from cattle. They did this by simultaneously promoting cattle as makers of social relations and by promoting wives solely as makers of children. The key innovation lay in having successfully introduced into the language of political power the proposition that women established relations between lineages "just like a cow did." This formulation argued that cows had been establishing social relations longer than had women! Although it is surely impossible to date such a discursive invention, its central aim remains clear enough. By reversing the sequence in that analogy, people who used it referred to social efforts to control wives' sexuality (through the moral notion that wives should be sexually available to male visitors to the homestead).[44] They also tried to promote an image of wives as tools in making and maintaining social relations between men, social relations whose strength was understood discursively to be embodied in the herds of cattle that represented all the followers from which a wealthy man could enjoy support.

These conditions of sexual control and of separation from control of productive property emphasized to wives the importance of their standing as mothers. In motherhood lay access to the political power channeled to them through their sons and through the relatives with whom they might caucus in generating support for a son's ambitions. These speculations cannot, however, be substantiated in the historical record for the social history of the savannah frontiers between 900 and 1500. We can tell neither how wives felt about their status nor how mothers used their status to promote a son's political ambitions.

Still, we suspect that something revolutionary lurked in the homesteads and communities of the savannah pioneers who promoted cattle in their political economy. The rumblings surrounded another transformation in the territory of healing, a transformation with far-reaching implications for the social health of all men and women who lived in both spheres of the savannah frontier. Healers there invented a new category of spirit engaged by *kubándwa* which could return from the land of ghosts to the land of the living, through the person of a medium, as ancestral ghosts and territorial spirits had hitherto done. But, unlike those older spirits, this new sort of spirit required its medium to be neither a kinsperson nor a firstcomer in its territory. It required

merely that the medium be initiated into the knowledge of its healing practice.

The simultaneous inventions of cattle gift techniques, of excluding pastoral women from owning livestock, and of this new sort of powerful spirit for the kinless and childless suggest that on the savannah frontier people did not simply copy a cultural mold from the core areas of settlement. The savannah frontier communities called for radical changes and they made gender, kingship, and healing the centers of those radical changes. New spirits went hand in hand with the new risks of pastoralism.

We cannot know whether women increased their participation in *kubándwa* during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, even though nineteenth- and twentieth-century descriptions of the institution report high levels of female participation. The temptation to erase the distinction between the two eras must be resisted.[45] The redundant nineteenth- and twentieth-century descriptions of the exclusion of women from productive pastoral activities and from inheriting livestock, likewise, should not be projected uncritically five centuries into the past. We should, instead, try to learn to what degree pastoralist men actually sought systematically to exclude women from access to productive wealth and how success in that arena might have further identified female power with the power of bearing children. Skepticism in this regard pays rewarding results because we need not reproduce the patriarchal, pastoralist fantasy of supreme male domination, which was propounded in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century descriptions of Tuutsi, Hima, and Huma masculinity, in order to imagine why gendered conflicts may have driven part of the *kubándwa* revolution in the central grasslands of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

With these historical uncertainties in mind, we can see that the revolution in the politics of healing which lay at the heart of the creation of new sorts of spirits reached through *cwezi kubándwa* and *ryángombe kubándwa*, possessed a profoundly gendered dimension. The concern of the politics of healing with human fertility was not new but it may have taken on a new importance in the wider contexts of environmental uncertainty, a robust pastoralism, and the quest for gendered discursive authority over health and healing. It will easily be seen from this geometry how chiefs and kings stood to gain from—and faced challenges to their instrumental authority in—the new forms of *kubándwa* institutions which they spent the next four or five hundred years struggling to coopt.[46]

NEW RISKS, NEW SPIRITS

In the savannahs, on the new frontiers created by settlers at sites like Ntusi and Munsa, intellectuals set about transforming the objects of healing practice in ways that drew on the ancestral tradition of Great Lakes Bantu, the

healing practices of their more immediate ancestral traditions, and their own creativity and innovation. Changes in healing's conceptual and spatial territories and in its personnel represented responses to changes in both the material conditions of daily life and probably also the discursive authority of adult men and women.

The most famous such revolution, that of *cwezi kubándwa*, had its roots in the northern sphere. Historians Iris Berger and Renee Tantala have told this story in compelling detail. The dramatic beginning lay in healers seeking to marginalize and redefine as pernicious and unhelpful the creative power of family ancestral ghosts (*bazimu*). In their place, the healers promoted a new, more expansive sort of territorial spirit connected to a new sort of healing institution, mediumship, in which men and women with diverse clan and lineal identities found succor and status.[47]

In the southern sphere, a similar revolution unfolded around *kubándwa* of a different texture. Old mixed-farming communities invented a figure called Ryángombe who, along with some of the old portable, transformed territorial spirits, like Mugasha, was concerned with fertility. Berger and the anthropologist Luc de Heusch have produced nuanced interpretations of the history and meaning of this innovation. They place it squarely within the tradition of local resistance to the political and domestic impact of an expansionist state which used cattle and land clientships to create networks of patronage.[48]

We should recall that land shortages were not created by environmental conditions alone; cultural conceptions of safety and community also created them. With this in mind, we can see that the risks of life in the savannahs were one source for ideas about safety and community. Wild lands were those lands far from established settlements, and they were dangerous places. As the capacities to compose and reproduce such settlements dwindled during the second of the two eras of low rains, people probably felt that the available lands near successful, established settlements had dwindled as well. Furthermore, a successful settlement had to provide protection and health to its people. After the thirteenth century, as cattle grew in importance for the survival and success of settlements, cattle were incorporated into the politics of healing practice and ritual. Land shortages, social crisis, and environmental change—none of these things were new to Lakes communities. They had faced them before and had drawn on their ancestral tradition to fashion appropriate responses. They would do so again.

We learned in Chapter 3 that healing in the ancestral Great Lakes tradition included the practice of dedicating men and women to a specific spirit as priests and mediums.[49] They called this practice *kubándwa* and they called the mediums and their spirits *babándwa* (plural of *mbándwa*). Though this form of healing had roots 2000 to 2500 years old between the Great Lakes, intellectuals on the savannah frontier radically reshaped its form and content

to meet the special challenges their pioneer communities faced between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries. They invented a specialized form of *kubándwa*, something that Renee Tantala has called *cwezi kubándwa*.[50] Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century descriptions of the institution tell of mediums who were assimilated into a hierarchy of priests after their initial possession experience, or after suffering the symptoms of some other illness, which a *mufÚmÚ* had diagnosed as the work of a special spirit.

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries these spirits, and the mediums who could speak for them, focused on departed persons of royal standing, the fabled Cwezi. Tantala has shown such a focus to have been the result of the tumultuous contests between the priests and mediums of *mbándwa* spirits, debates about the importance of ancestral ghosts, and the persons of would-be kings. The outcome of this contest shaped the contours of formal dynastic rule in the kingdoms of the two spheres.[51] Specialized forms of *kubándwa* emerged in this period: the *cwezi kubándwa*, in the northern sphere, and *ryángombe kubándwa*, in the southern sphere.[52] The ritual practices and priestly hierarchies of these specialized forms of *kubándwa* served alternately to bolster the efforts of a new ruling dynasty and to organize resistance to it.[53] Moreover, the suppression in the colonial period of nearly all non-Christian religious activities, including public *cwezi kubándwa* activities,[54] drove this ancient democratic healing practice inside the homestead, perhaps the very place from which it had first emerged.

Not every Lakes society that practiced *kubándwa* possession shared a priestly hierarchy or a concern with a specific category of spirit. However, they all shared the notion of consecrating an individual to a spirit, quite commonly in association with a specific shrine.[55] The institution thus had at its ideological heart the power to speak for departed persons and other types of spirits (nature and animal). And the institution could create new mediums, through initiation (*kuteendeka*, 253), drawing on virtually anyone in the community or territory.[56] Because there appear to have been few restrictions on who could be possessed, there were few restrictions on who might become a medium. *Cwezi* and *ryángombe kubándwa* created mediums in a territory and furnished them with opportunities for creative, discursive acts whereby they might help sick people, prevent sickness or misfortune, and offer general critical comments on the current state of social health in their territory or village.

The Northern Sphere and Cwezi Kubándwa

Renee Tantala has derived the word *cwezi* from the stative prepositional verb *kucweza* "to spit." She thus places its origins firmly within healing practice because spitting was a common form of bestowing a blessing on someone else. Spitting turns up repeatedly in ethnographic discussions of healing

and of transitions in the life cycle.[57] The *cwezi*, then, were "the spitters," the blessers, the healers who helped with the difficult transitions in life. They may have been especially helpful with the transition from adult to parent, a transition not everyone could sustain.

In nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century descriptions, two spirits, Wamara and Ryángombe, dominated the institution of *kubándwa* in the northern and southern spheres respectively. Historians tell us that, among other purposes, these figures served to organize resistance to expanding state structures; they were the centers of powerful religious movements in the two spheres.[58] Who these figures were—and how men and women who understood their powers and hoped through that understanding to improve the conditions of their social health and political independence—will reveal the deep fractures in the chiefdoms and kingdoms that arose as the savannah frontier filled up in the fifteenth century.

The fullest representations of these figures come to us in a host of oral historical evidence produced by an equally impressive range of intellectuals including family mediums and historians of the royal court. These stories located Wamara and Ryángombe in the middle of the three eras of the Great Lakes past that clan and court histories have recognized. The two spirits belonged to the Cwezi era, which historians located between the Tembuzi period and the more recent Bito or Hinda dynasties. In the Western Highlands, the spirits' stories were told by historical experts in the *kubándwa* complex, not by a king's court historian. A condensed version of the story follows.

Nyamiyonga, the king of Ghostland (*okuzimu*), desired to make a blood friendship with Isaza, the last Tembuzi king of Kitara. Isaza feared this and instructed a follower, Bukuku, to make the pact with Nyamiyonga on his behalf. Offended by this decision, the king of Ghostland sent his daughter Nyamata to seduce Isaza. She succeeded, returned to the land of the ghosts, and eventually gave birth there to a son, Isimbwa. King Nyamiyonga desired to lure Isaza to visit his son in Ghostland. He did so by sending Isaza two cows which then led Isaza's favorite cow back to Ghostland. The plan worked because Isaza pursued the cows into Ghostland where he met his son Isimbwa and Nyamata.

Isimbwa grew up in Ghostland, married a woman there and had a son. One day Isimbwa decided that he wanted to visit his father's kingdom in the land of the living. But, while they had all been in Ghostland, Isaza's follower, Bukuku, had taken his throne. Diviners had told Bukuku that his daughter, Nyinamwiru, would bring him ill luck, in the form of a son who would overthrow him. The diviners told Bukuku to keep Nyinamwiru hidden in a house without doors. Isimbwa, disguised as a hunter, discovered her and she had a son by him, called Ndahura, who was born in the land of the living. Bukuku discovered the child, threw him into a river

where a potter found and saved him. Ndahura was to become the first Cwezi ruler.

Ndahura grew up, killed Bukuku, and took the kingdom that belonged to him by right of succession. Ndahura won many military victories. He had a son, Wamara, who succeeded him when Ndahura disappeared south of the Kagera River. Wamara put down numerous revolts. Two chiefs, Irungu and Mugasha lived with Wamara before all of the Cwezi disappeared into holes in the ground or in the depths of the Katwe lakes.[59]

In her extraordinary analysis of this story, Tantala argues that Isaza's hubris lay in his having loved cattle more than he loved his wife and more than he loved people in general. Cattle were, after all, what lured him into Ghostland, and they had engaged his attentions more than his pregnant wife, Nyamata. Tantala believes that these points in the story served to explain that people who become obsessed with cattle will find only trouble.[60] We might add that the story also explains what drove the Tembuzi kings out of their kingdom: their followers rejected them because they had become obsessed with cattle.

Disciplining leaders whose greed for cattle obliterated their humanity paved the way for the signal achievement of the *cwezi kubándwa* religious movement: bringing into the land of the living powerful spiritual forces that could be used to address pressing concerns with changing circumstances of social health.[61] *Cwezi kubándwa* made it possible to transform a dead person's ghost (*muzimu*) into a new sort of spirit, a *mucwezi*, even if the individual was childless! In the story, Isaza's heir was Isimbwa but Isimbwa was a *muzimu*, a resident of Ghostland. How could he transfer his instrumental and creative power over the living, when his heir "lived" in Ghostland?

The answer lay, Tantala argues, in Isimbwa's introduction of the technique of bringing spirits from Ghostland into the land of the living, even if they had no biological heirs to look after.[62] *Cwezi kubándwa* thus offered hope to people who were kinless, heirless, and childless, people who suffered from the condition they named "*obucweke*." Their hope lay in the possibility of their becoming mediums for a *cwezi* spirit (should a doctor diagnose their illness as the result of possession by a *cwezi* spirit and should they and their families be able to afford the costs of initiation). Once they became a medium of a *cwezi* spirit, a childless or heirless man or woman belonged to an institution that gave them a chance to pass on their knowledge and experience to other mediums. They could be "parents" to new initiates.[63]

These practices must have been extremely attractive to persons relocating to the savannah frontiers, far from their territorial and family roots in the old core areas of settlement near Lake Victoria and in the Kivu Rift Valley. *Cwezi kubándwa* offered heirless persons an institutional location in which they could develop their discursive knowledge of health and healing all the while drawing on their practical consciousness of the difficulties of being *obucweke*.

They were useful people who had access to social standing and material well-being as successful healers.

The attractions of this social innovation placed mediums in competition with royalty and chiefs. The figure of Wamara symbolizes important parts of this conflict. He was the last ruler that tradition remembered as having been a *mucwezi*. For our purposes, the combination of Wamara's heirlessness and his ambiguous association with cattle[64] expressed both the reasons for his demise and the means used by subsequent rulers in Karagwe and Nkore to establish themselves as legitimate leaders in those two prime areas for pastoralism. The figure of Wamara, then, stands for the final struggle of farmers' attempts to stave off the advances of wealthy herding communities. His death on the savannah frontier signals the closing of that frontier. His death is also the death of a mixed farming political economy that people could use to domesticate the two spheres of the savannah.

Traditions about Wamara told at the courts of savannah kingdoms and chiefdoms, after the sixteenth century, agree that he was the last of the *cwezi* rulers.[65] But they disagree about whether or not he was *obucweke*, heirless.[66] Traditions from Nkore and Karagwe tell that he had only one child, by the "slave girl" Njunaki, a child they named Ruhinda. Stories about Wamara told in the Kitara heartland early in this century recall him as childless, though a host of traditions from Buhaya tell that Wamara had many children.[67] We might understand these divergent versions of Wamara's condition (as *obucweke* or not) to reflect the different conditions for the rise of the more expert pastoralisms, which supplanted landed wealth in the two spheres of the savannah between 1200 and 1450.

Where tradition represented Wamara as childless, as an ideal candidate for inclusion in *cwezi kubándwa* networks and as a sufferer sympathetic to the plight of outsiders, we might understand royalty to have struggled mightily to coopt those networks, but with only little success. In such contests, Wamara's attractiveness to childless persons still had merit and power because childlessness continued to afflict people and people continued to seek redress through *cwezi kubándwa*. This appears to have been the case in the Kitara heartland between the Katonga and Kafu rivers, an area that included the archaeological sites at Ntusi, Bigo, Munsa, Mubende and Masaka Hills (Map 6.1).

Historians in Buhaya and parts of Karagwe who represented Wamara as having had many children, might have been telling their audience that his power had been integrated into a subsequent dynasty of kings.[68] Wamara's virility would have underpinned patriarchal royal claims to the same sort of power. His attractiveness to king and follower, then, would have lain in his having represented an abundant creative power, as evidenced by his large family. Either childlessness ceased to be a pressing concern in these areas or *cwezi kubándwa* had ceased to be the main rallying point for relieving the

social anxiety caused by that condition. This appears to have been true of the Hayan heartland, in one of the old core areas of settlement.

Historians at Hinda courts who represented Njunaki, a kinless woman, as the mother of the boy Ruhinda with Wamara, wanted to establish a link between themselves and the *Cwezi*. But they did not seek to efface the memory of these important healers and leaders entirely. In these contexts, a mighty conflict erupted between healer and chief over attempts to concentrate control of the immense social and material capital produced by *cwezi kubándwa*. In Karagwe and Nkore, where this version of Wamara's family life predominated, childlessness and competition for the allegiance of a diverse following continued to be vital mechanisms of political and medical conflict. These concepts drove the elaboration of an expansionist pastoralism, under Ruhinda, which sought to coopt the valuable networks of authority and status generated by *cwezi kubándwa*.

One curious tradition, reported in 1913 by a priest at Rubya in Ihangiro (in southern Buhaya), reveals the heart of the continuing tension between kings and *cwezi kubándwa* healers before 1450.[69] Hinda kings there feared possession by *cwezi* as a threat to their authority. Because Wamara was an *ncweke* (a person or spirit who suffered the condition of *obucweke*), no Hinda ruler might enter his shrine "for fear of being seized by the *ncweke*." This remarkable snippet from the priest's diary tells us in no uncertain terms that royalty feared *cwezi* mediums in Ihangiro. The mediums and their creative power could render the royal body heirless, it could bring a dynasty to an end. Alliances between kings and mediums could be fraught with a tension that played more tellingly in the royal court than in a *cwezi* shrine.

The Southern Sphere and Ryángombe

Oral historians and their audiences understood the idiom of descent to furnish a sense of chronology for the distant past. They could use it to represent both continuity and revolutionary change. The founding king of a new dynasty might be recalled as the grandson of the last king of the old dynasty. Quite often historians represented the intervening generation—or period of dynastic transition—in the person of a woman. The audience knew that she was the daughter of a parvenu to the throne and the mother of the first king of the new dynasty. She was both a king maker and a chronological bridge. In the Kitaran epic, Nyinamwiru was just such a woman: her life spanned the end of the era of the Tembuzi and the beginning of the era of the Cwezi. Her advice for Ndahura helped him win back his grandfather's kingdom; she could be considered to have helped make him king. In the charter myth of the Rwandan state, a Renge princess played the same role.[70]

We will search in vain for such a representation of discontinuity between Ryángombe and the preexisting religious complex. When historians in the

southern sphere of the savannah told of his past, they created both a hierarchical and a chronological structure by identifying his kinship relations to other *imándwa* (a Rwanda variation of *babándwa*), like Wamara or Mugasha. Ryángombe was remembered in Rwanda as having been Mukasa's father-in-law. Elsewhere in the southern sphere, his relations to other *imándwa* and to Wamara were very complex.[71] Historians and their audiences only very rarely converted Ryángombe and his *imándwa* relatives into ancient kings.[72]

In the core areas of his healing complex, at the heart of the southern sphere, he and his relations remained sources of creative power over fertility and fecundity.[73] They thus stood firmly in the way of kings who would proclaim for themselves and their court a special center of such creative power.[74] Ryángombe and his cult made life difficult for royalty in the southern sphere by producing a vast array of local, articulate intellectuals, and everyone in the community understood that they possessed the best means available to ensure the survival of the community from generation to generation.

Two scholars have studied *ryángombe kubándwa* with great care, Luc de Heusch and Iris Berger. They agree that this religious complex galvanized resistance to the expansionist herding groups in the southern sphere of the savannah frontier.[75] In her germinal work *Religion and Resistance*, Berger discussed conflict between pastoralist and mixed-farming communities. She argued that communities that supported the Wamara complex resisted attempts by herding groups to impose their authority on them. She thinks that, in Karagwe and Nkore, these herding groups defeated Wamara's supporters and appropriated him as their own ancestor in order to win acceptance among their new subjects. The old clan leaders whom kings rich in cattle had subordinated invented a counter-ideology surrounding the figure of Ryángombe, with which they hoped to stem the most onerous aspects of centralizing rule.

Ryángombe, as a figure of resistance to the expansionist aims of cattle owners, appeared in the southern savannahs after Wamara had been embraced by people in Karagwe, Nkore, and Buhaya. Several sets of traditions from territories in the southern sphere told that Ryángombe received symbols of leadership, like drums, from Wamara.[76] But Ryángombe's association with hunting and forests (everywhere except Kiziba)[77] strongly suggests his was a healing complex far older than the era of conflict between herders and farmers practicing mixed agriculture.

Initiates to the cult of Ryángombe sought assurance of fertility and insurance against infertility, even in those areas at the fringes of its distribution.[78] The name itself means "hut eater" and some followers of Ryángombe recalled him as an ancestral ghost rather than as a sort of *imándwa* or local spirit.[79] These associations with ancient healing practices place the complex squarely within the ancestral tradition and connect it to the important act of remembering departed persons in order to ensure human fertility, social health, and abundance. We may thus understand the later importance of this cult to

Photograph 6.1 Giving Thanks to *Ryángombe* in Bushi, ca. 1975 [Photograph by Calcio Gaudino in *Lyangombe: Mythe et Rites*, (Bukavu: CERUKI, 1979), plate 18]

the politics of state expansion in Rwanda and Burundi, because it offered to women and men a grassroots means to resist that expansion.[80] But the greater importance of Ryángombe's cult to the social history of the southern sphere of the savannah frontier lay in its training initiates who could claim to heal infertility and resolve domestic ills and who exercised a form of social behavior that amounted to public criticism of instrumental power structures.

These persons were called **ibishegu* (353, 356), in Burundi and Buha.[81] Unlike *imándwa*, *ibishegu* did not name spirits; the new mediums were not assimilated to the category of spirits who spoke through them. They were initiates, adepts, and with that new status they came into possession of the rights and responsibilities to initiate others into the cult. They also had the right to speak rudely, to make importunate requests of food and beer and, upon entry into the status of **ikishegu* (singular of *ibishegu*), they ceased to have a public identity as farmer or herder, rich or poor.[82] Indeed, some senior *ibishegu* sang songs in public that asserted that Ryángombe-Kiranga was the king, the master of delivering on promises of abundance.[83]

The term may well have been derived from the noun **-sègà*, "wild dog" (403), with echoes of hunting (so important to Ryángombe-Kiranga) and unruly dangerous pack behavior. Or it may be a deverbative of the verb *gusega* "to beg impudently, insult," with connotations of the troublesome and persistent requests and comments the *ibishegu* offered.[84] The production of *ibishegu*, through initiation into Ryángombe-Kiranga's complex, underscores the heart of Luc de Heusch's and Iris Berger's claims for the central role of his cult in mitigating the worst suffering inflicted on regular people by an expansionist state with a strong hold on wealth in land and cattle.

Other innovations in healing practice occurred in the southern sphere,[85] but the invention of Ryángombe there signaled a coopting of ancestral ghosts into a nexus of healing practice with local roots and potentially great territorial reach. Old mixed-farming communities deployed these innovations in a struggle to retain control of the terms and conditions for ensuring social health; a struggle they would lose as often as they would win.

Summary

In the northern sphere, the birth of the Wamara possession complex represented the response of healers and farming communities to the challenges faced by the people who opened the savannah frontier between the Kagera and Kafu rivers after 900. Through it, new communities achieved a novel continuity with ideas about how to transform *basámbwa* into portable territorial spirits, ideas they shared in the social history of the old, core areas of settlement. Just as their neighbors had done with Mugasha/Mukasa, the pioneers remade Wamara into a spiritual force whose priests and mediums embodied concerns about the effects of pastoralism on society.[86] Having shorn

Wamara of his purely local identity,[87] like the *cwezi kubándwa* movement, he was made to serve the interests of social health in the diverse mixed-farming communities that conditions on the new savannah frontier demanded.

The difficult relations between mixed farming and herding cultures, which characterized the inventions of both Wamara and Ryángombe, occurred neither at the same time nor in the same sphere of the savannah frontier. Two different contexts for these innovations in the politics of healing must be sought. After the second round of low rains, between 1200 and 1450, *kubándwa* cults faced conditions in which herders could impose themselves on farmers, through cattle gifts or militarism. Traditions from the lands around the Kagera bend connect the increase of herding power to the rise of the Hinda dynasties. These herding dynasties sought to subdue farmers who followed the Wamara complex.

The clash that had generated the Wamara cult in the northern sphere took far longer to unfold in the southern sphere because lands capable of enduring the first era of environmental uncertainty slowed the process of creating expertise in pastoralisms. In the southern sphere, it took several hundred more years to produce successful pastoralisms like those in the northern sphere at Nkore and on either side of the Katonga River. Thus, Wamara succumbed to Ryángombe in an uneven manner in the southern sphere. Ryángombe appears to have risen to prominence or been most successfully promoted west of the Kagera, in the arc of the southern sphere. As a figure of resistance to political centralization, Ryángombe crystallized during the last great era of low rains, between 1200 and 1450, at the same time that the terms of cattle clientship improved dramatically for herders in the Kagera Depression allowing them to extend their networks of clientage to the west and east. Ryángombe also seems to have served the needs of women whose quest for maternity came to mean very different things for those who lived in a pastoral as opposed to a mixed-farming homestead.

The successive inventions of *cwezi* and *ryángombe kubándwa* represented, among other things, a sustained effort by men and women to retain authority over human fertility. They tried to soften the erosion of that authority by the pastoralist patriarchal gender ideologies that had joined herd fecundity to the politics of human fertility. The opportunities enjoyed by mediums (both male and female) to criticize and revise social life were the principal weapons in this struggle with pastoralist culture. These opportunities inhered in the democratic structure of *kubándwa*, where the stakes had been raised considerably by its devastating critique of ancestral ghosts in favor of the efficacy of healing through *cwezi kubándwa* and *ryángombe kubándwa*. These innovations in healing practice successfully completed the transformation of the territory of healing, begun in the old core areas of settlement before A.D. 1000. They transposed onto ancestral ghosts and territorial spirits a complex of spiritual

forces that attracted a wide variety of adherents over a potentially broad territory with a central shrine.

Together with the expertise of specialist diviners (*balàguzi*) and of general practitioners (*bafÚmÚ*), individuals in the savannahs could also rely on spirit possession as a means to diagnose illness and, more importantly, to provide kinless persons with social standing. If diviners walked the fine local line between the social and the antisocial uses to which their powers of speech might be put,[88] *kubándwa* was an institution that could operate on a territorial scale. In some parts of the central Great Lakes region *kubándwa* remained linked with a set of centers usually associated with lakes, hills, and sacred groves. These places and their mediums almost certainly commanded considerable labor (in the form of consecrated persons) and material wealth (in the form of gifts to the shrine and its spirits). They were thus sites for the concentration of a unique combination of instrumental and creative power, which posed a competitive threat to the powers at the king's court or at the tribunal by retaining discursive control over the creative capacity to address key social problems like fertility and fecundity, and by competing with royal patronage to integrate followers into established communities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that farmers and herders from the old core areas of settlement created a new set of frontiers in the central savannahs. They did so in two recognizable spheres which formed during each of two periods of environmental uncertainty. Cattle herding was the foundation for their expansionist territorial networks of patronage. Pastoralisms supplemented the importance of farming, but they did not erase it.

In these spheres of the savannah frontiers people faced novel challenges in pursuit of health and wealth. Their animals faced threats of disease and raiding, their fields suffered the pressures of reduced rainfall, and their communities housed individuals and families with diverse origins. In wrestling with these conditions, some intellectuals created new territories of healing power. They displaced the ancient ancestral ghost and territorial spirit cults with two versions of a portable, gendered complex that could provide succor and social standing to outsiders and childless persons.

These grand social transformations unfolded around homestead, shrine center and royal court alike. Building new shrines both confirmed territorial boundaries and signaled the successful conversion of what had been wild, uncivilized country into a set of safe and prosperous communities. This seems to have taken place around Mubende and Masaka Hills. These concentrated locations for creative power over discursive consciousness both opposed and complemented the concentrated instrumental control over people, land, and animals at sites like Ntusi, Munsa, and Bigo. Both sets of centers commanded material wealth but

each derived its legitimacy from different sides of the ancient divide between instrumental and creative power. Chiefs made communities by acts of gift giving, protection, and adjudication of disputes. Diviners, doctors, and mediums made communities by acts of healing, criticism, and the provision of refuge to marginalized persons. Chiefs hoped to bind together communities through militarism and clientage pyramids. Healers concentrated on the health of local communities and on preventing pastoralist and royal exaction. Kings and mediums needed each other for survival in the frontier conditions of the twelfth century savannahs because neither alone possessed the resources to ensure success and abundance.

As the savannah frontier filled up in the northern sphere, shrines associated with prominent Cwezi figures formed central places in the topography of creative power: Mubende Hill (Ndahura), Masaka Hill (Wamara), and Burora Hill (Mulindwa) (Map 6.1). Once *kubándwa* achieved territorial expansiveness, free from exclusive ties to descent groups or localities, it formed an institutional locus for struggle with royalty and its increasingly militaristic expansionism. It did so because successful shrines and mediums were materially wealthy and because the democratic character of access to creative power for addressing the central concerns with human fertility frustrated royal attempts to co-opt it. In order to make their power whole, kings had to at least try to cooperate with *kubándwa* centers. This struggle characterized the period from 1500 to 1700 and formed a template for some of the most important conflicts between and within the expansionist states of Bunyoro, Buganda, Rwanda, and Gisaka.[89]

NOTES

[1] See David William Cohen, "The Cultural Topography of a 'Bantu Borderland': Busoga, 1500-1850," *Journal of African History* 29, 1 (1988), 70-72; Bethwell Alan Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo, Volume 1* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 40-62.

[2] Vansina, *L'évolution du royaume*, 85; Nyakatura, *Anatomy*, 72-74; Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 44-5; A. d'Arianoff, *Histoire des Bagesera: Souverains du Gisaka* (Brussels: Institut royal colonial belge, 1952), 88ff.

[3] Reid, "Role of Cattle," 264-65, 268-69; Sutton, "Antecedents," 58-63; Schoenbrun, "Cattle Herds," 46-50.

[4] Hassan, "Historical Nile Floods," 1142-43; Schoenbrun, "Contours," 278-80.

[5] I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 67ff., has developed the notion of these two spheres for Lakes religious history. For sites in the northern sphere, see Sutton, "Antecedents," 44; Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 106; Reid, "Role of Cattle," Ch. 11; for sites in the southern sphere see Reid, "Report on Research," passim; Tshihiluka Tshilema, "Ryamurari: Capital ancien de l'ancien royaume de Ndorwa (Mutare, Rwanda). Une interpretation culturelle préliminaire," *Africa-Tervuren* 29 (1983), 19-26.

[6] D. A. M. Reid, "Ntusi and Its Hinterland," *Nyame Akuma* 33 (1990), 26-8; Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 106-12; Tshihiluka, "Ryamurari," 23; Robertshaw, "Munsa," in press.

[7] Reid, "Role of Cattle," 228-54.

[8] Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping Power," in press; Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 35-36; Edward I. Steinhart, "Herders and Farmers: The Tributary Mode of Production in Western Uganda," in *Modes of Production in Africa,* ed. Donald Crummey and Charles C. Stewart (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981), 115-56; Wrigley, *Kingship and State*, 79-121.

[9] Hassan, "Historical Nile Floods," 1143. Pollen evidence and soil studies also reflect massive forest constriction after A.D. 1000, see Schoenbrun, "Contours," 280-82; Henige, "Review of *Chronology, Migration, and Drought*," 361-63.

[10] Tantala, "Early History," 498-99; Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping Power," in press; Reid, "Role of Cattle," 268-69.

[11] Robertshaw, "Munsa," in press.

[12] Sutton, "Antecedents," 58-60; Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping," in press; Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 105-12.

[13] Reining, "Haya Land Tenure," 58; Kaijage, "Kyamutwara," 555.

[14] See I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 43; d'Hertefelt, *Les Clans*, 27, 32.

[15] For a sense of this diversity see Jean-Nepo Nkurikiyimfura, *Le gros bétail et la société rwandaise évolution historique: des XII^e-XIV^e siècles à 1958* (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1994), 110-15; Pauwels, "L'Héritage," 43, 52; Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 211-14; J. Goffin, "Le rôle joué par le gros bétail dans l'économie de l'Urundi," *Bulletin des juridictions indigènes et du droit coutumier congolais* 19, 3 (1951), 61-86; D. Adamantidis, "Monographie pastorale du Ruanda-Urundi," *Bulletin agricole du Congo belge* 3 (1954), 585-670; P. Pagès, "Notes sur le régime des biens dans le province du Bugoyi," *Congo* 2, 4 (November 1938), 400-404. The focus on cattle has been reviewed in Claudine Vidal, "Le Rwanda des anthropologues ou le fétishisme de la vache," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 9, 3 (1969), 384-401; Rene Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi. L'évolution du contrat de bail à cheptel au Ruanda-Urundi* (Brussels: Académie royale des sciences coloniales, 1958).

[16] See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 157.

[17] Pauwels, "L'Héritage," 47; though named by a different verb, *kutungwa*, the Haya have the same institution of depositing cattle with others, see Cory and Hartnoll, *Customary Law*, 169-70; Simons, *Coutumes*, 81; Pierre Bettez Gravel, "The Transfer of Cows in Gisaka (Rwanda): A Mechanism for Recording Social Relationships," *American Anthropologist* 69 (1967), 327-29; Vansina, *L'évolution du royaume*, 60; Pagès, "Notes sur le régime," 400; P. de Briey, "Pratiques usitées au Buhavu concernant le bétail," (n.p., 1932, typescript), 1; R. Hombert, "Enquête relative au bétail," (n.p., 1932, typescript), 1-2.

[18] A. A. Trouwborst, "Le Burundi," in Marcel d'Hertefelt, A. A. Trouwborst, and Joseph H. Scherer, *Les anciens royaumes de la zone interlacustre méridionale: Rwanda, Burundi, Buha* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1962), 152; Simons, *Coutumes*, 79-81; Scherer, "Ha of Tanganyika," 876-78; J. J. Tawney, "Ugabire: A Feudal Custom amongst the Waha," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 17 (1944), 6-9; Hans Cory, "Hangaza Law and Custom" (Ngara, 1944, typescript), passim; Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 211.

[19] Tawney, "Ugabire," 7; Joseph F. Mbwiliza explains that similar relations developed around *bugabire* and salt trading, see his "*Chubyunyu* and the Nineteenth Century Salt Trade in the Kingdom of Heru, Buha," *Kale* 2 (1973), 36-56; C. Kayondi, "Murunga, Colline du Burundi: étude géographique" *Les Cahiers d'outre-mer* 25 (1972), 181.

[20] Pierre Bettez Gravel, *Remera, a Community in Eastern Ruanda* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 169; see also the practice of dedicating some animals in a herd to a *cwezi* spirit of the homestead, Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle," 34-36; Alexis Kagamé, *L'histoire*

des armées bovines dans l'ancien Rwanda (Brussels: Académie royal de sciences d'outre-mer, 1961), passim.

[21] Pauwels, "Le Bushiru," 259-60; Tawney, "Ugabire, 6-9; Emile Mworoha, "Redevances et prestations dans les domaines royaux du Burundi précoloniale," *2000 ans d'histoire africaine. Le sol, la parole, et l'écrit: Mélanges en hommage à Raymond Mauny* (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, 1981), 757-60; Hans Cory, "Report on the Cattle Situation in Bugufi" (Ngara, [1944?], typescript), 1.

[22] See Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 226; Gravel, *Remera*, 167.

[23] The ancient idea was expressed by the Proto Great Lakes Bantu verb **kugábìra* "to divide up; redistribute." But an important difference in meaning lurked in a change in suffixation. When people made the verb *kugábùra*, rather than *kugábìra*, they used the reversive suffix *-ura*, and thus indicated that they expected a return gift or obligation. People used this form of the verb to name the act of a father "giving" a daughter in marriage; an act that created reciprocal obligations between two lineages. Saying merely "*kugabira*" implies the prepositional only; one gave something to someone else with no expectation of a direct return gift.

[24] Scherer, "Ha of Tanganyika," 871; Simons, *Coutumes*, 79; Pagès, "Notes sur le régime," 404-6.

[25] In Ha dialects, the term is *-buja*, as it is elsewhere in West Highlands and Forest languages. In Ziba (a Haya dialect), the term is *mukama*, as it is elsewhere in Rutara; see Meyer, *Kleines ruhaya*, 62; Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle," 19, 24; the client was *omushumba*. Still other terms and clientships existed in Kivu, see Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 211-14.

[26] The areal nature of distributions of other parts of cattle-loaning terminologies, like *kwato* ("pledge"), *inshumba* ("cattle given by a chief to followers"), *intizo* ("cow with milk given to a family with ill persons who need milk," and others, reveal the role this institution played in dissolving the linguistic boundaries between West Highlands and Rutaran communities. See Moeller, "Les diverses sortes," 212-13; Simons, *Barundi*, 81-82; E. T. James, "Bahima Cattle Transactions," *Uganda Journal* 17, 1 (1953), 74-75; Cory, "Bugufi," 1ff.; Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle," 96; Willaert, "Coutumes des Bashi," 110.

[27] Bradfer, "Palabres," passim; P. Bragard, "Les Bavira," 11; de Briey, "Pratiques usitées, 1; d'Arianoff, *Bagesera*, 48-53.

[28] See Tantala, "Early History," 478; and Edward I. Steinhart, "Kingdoms of the March: Speculations on Social and Political Change," in *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa*, ed. J. Bertin Webster (New York: Africana Publishers, 1979), 189-214, respectively.

[29] See Tantala, *Early History*, 479; J. Bertin Webster, Bethwell Alan Ogot, and Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "The Great Lakes Region, 1500-1800," in *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. 5, Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century,* ed. Bethwell Alan Ogot (London: Heinemann, 1992), 781-89. Webster et al. depend almost exclusively on oral historiographical material. Had he consulted Hassan ("Historical Nile Floods," 1142-45) they would have learned that the Rodah Nilometer does not provide the kind of dating detail they want from it. I prefer to see the Nyarubanga drought as a cliché that represents the culmination of a long process of agricultural and demographic growth, which had, by early in this millennium, presented Lakes societies with the very real problem of structural failure in their food systems.

[30] Tantala, "Early History," 481-87.

[31] For reasons of space, interactions between these early pioneers of the internal frontier in the Savannah and the hunting and fishing communities who had made use of this environment for a very long time are not considered. See Chapter 1; MacLean, "Late Stone Age," 297-300; Reid, "Social Organisation," 307-11.

[32] Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Le Buha à la fin du XIXe siècle, une peuple, six royaumes," *Études d'histoire africaine* 7 (1975), 12-17; Gwassa and Mbwiliza, "Social Production," 19-20; Freedman, *Nyabingi*, 60-70.

[33] See Jean Hiernaux, "Notes sur une ancienne population du Ruanda-Urundi, les Renge," *Zaïre* 10, 4 (1956), 358, for Abazigaaba and Abasinga as *basangwa butaka* firstcomers; Alexis Kagamé, "La structure des quinze clans du rwanda," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Ethnologico già Lateranensi* 18 (1955), 103-17, especially 106, 111-12; Pagès, *Au Ruanda*, 543-54, for other versions of stories about non-pastoral Renge kings; see also D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 131, 293 n. 17; Bragard, "Les Bavira," 1-15, where the Abasinga and Abayaga clans are among the names connected with a "Lenge migration." *Imirenge* (*umurenge*, singular) are named subdivisions of hills in eastern Rwanda, see Gravel, *Remera*, 141; d'Arianoff, *Bagesera*, 20-23.

[34] Hiernaux, "Les Renge," 353; see also Desmedt, "Poteries anciennes," 181-83, where she argues that *Renge* were ancient ironworkers. In Vira, Renge appears as the name of a spirit associated with a large stone covered in kaolin, possibly a reference to ritual purification of a smith's anvil; see Bragard, "Les Bavira" 8.

[35] See Luc de Heusch, *Roi nés d'un coeur de vache* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 38.

[36] See C. Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression*, 77.

[37] See Steinhart, "Kingdoms of the March," 201-5; Joseph F. Mbwiliza, "The Hoe and the Stick: A Political Economy of the Heru Kingdom, c. 1750-1900," in *La civilisation ancienne des peuples des grands lacs,* ed. Emile Mworoha et al. (Paris and Bujumbura: Karthala, 1981), 100-14; Tantala, "Early History," 479-87, 491-99.

[38] Reid, "Role of Cattle," 271-75; Robertshaw, "Seeking and Keeping Power," in press.

[39] This and what follows in the next few paragraphs relies on Pierre Bonté, "'To Increase Cows, God Created the King': The Function of Cattle in Intralacustrine Societies," in *Herders, Warriors, and Traders,* ed. John Galaty and Pierre Bonté (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 62-86.

[40] Bonté, "To Increase Cows," 73.

[41] Bonté, "To Increase Cows," 69.

[42] Bonté, "To Increase Cows," 80.

[43] Historians might study the introduction of cattle into bridewealth arrangements in West Highlands and Rutaran societies to trace the progress of this transformation and show how cattle-as-bridewealth reflected and drove a growing commitment to a political economy of pastoralism.

[44] See Yitzchak Elam, *The Social and Sexual Roles of Hima Women* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), 182-86.

[45] The principal historian of *kubándwa* does, in fact, resist the temptation to erase that distinction; see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 67ff.

[46] This argument repeats the standard presentation of the main political challenges facing the Bito and Hinda dynasties in virtually all the kingdoms of the central Great Lakes region; see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 82-87.

[47] For the earliest formulation of this view, see Iris Berger, "Rebels or Status-Seekers? Women as Spirit Mediums in East Africa," in *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change,* ed. Nancy Hafkin and Edna Bay (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 157-81; Tantala, "Early History," Ch. 8.

[48] Luc de Heusch, *Le rwanda et la civilisation interlacustre*, (Brussels: Université libre de Bruxelles, 1966), 294-302; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, Ch. 5 and 6.

[49] The following section relies on Chrétien, "Roi, religion," 116-20; de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, Ch. 3; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 67ff.; and Tantala, "Early History," Ch. 3, 4, and 8. See their bibliographies for an introduction to the voluminous literature on both *ryángombe* and *cwezi kubándwa*. For the ancient roots see Chapter 3.

[50] Tantala, "Early History," 257-357.

[51] Roland Oliver, "A Question About the Bacwezi," *Uganda Journal* 17, 2 (1953), 135-37, and "The Traditional Histories of Buganda, Bunyoro, and Nkole," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 85, 1/2 (1955), 111-17; de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 158-67; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 76-79, and "Fertility as Power," 66-67.

[52] I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, Ch. 6; Tantala, "Early History," Ch. 9. I have invented the phrase "*ryángombe kubándwa*," which does not appear as such in any sources I have studied.

[53] I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 82-87; Robertshaw, "Archaeological Survey," 127-28.

[54] The suppression of public *kubándwa* during the colonial period severely distorts the ethnographic record; see John Roscoe, "The Bahima: A Cow Tribe of Enkole in the Uganda Protectorate," *Journal of the Royal African Institute* 27 (1907), 93; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 97, n. 1; Tantala, "Early History," 278ff.; Edel, *Chiga*, 129, 157.

[55] These shrines were usually on lake shores or hills: Mubende Hill, See I. Berger, "*Kubándwa* Religious Complex," 87-91; for Masaka Hill," see I. Berger, "*Kubándwa* Religious Complex," 94-97, and Lanning, "Masaka Hill," 24-30; for Lake Wamara, see Lanning, "Masaka Hill," 101; for Lake Victoria, see Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 45ff. In the case of *misámbwa* and *balubaale*, wells, large rocks, trees, or even elephant tusks were associated with the spirits, see Lanning, "Masaka Hill," 25; Shetler, "Landscapes of Memory," Ch. 4; Mair, *An African People*, 234-35; Zuure, *Croyances*, 29. The word for the shrine used to sacrifice to family *cwezi* is *ndaaro*, see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 361; Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle," 20, calls such a shrine an "*endaro*".

[56] Individuals could also become mediums through formal instruction after being diagnosed by *bafúmú* with symptoms attributable to the effects of certain spirits; see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 17; John H. M. Beattie, "Group Aspects of the Nyoro Spirit Mediumship Cult," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* 30 (1961), 11-38, especially 18-9, and "Twin Ceremonies in Bunyoro," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 92 (1962), 2-11; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 208ff.; Edel, *Chiga*, 146-48; Roscoe, *Bakitara*, 27; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 139ff.; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 16-7; Mair, *An African People*, 230ff.; Zuure, *Croyances*, 104-8. The similarities with territorial "cults" elsewhere in Africa beg comparative study on a vast scale. See J. Matthew Schoffeleers, "Introduction," in *Guardians of the Land*, ed. J. Matthew Schoffeleers (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 1-46.

[57] Tantala, "Early History," 290-91; J. A. Meldon, "Notes on the Bahima of Ankole," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 6 (1906/1907), 143. See Fridolin Bosch, *Les Banyamwezi, peuple de l'Afrique orientale* (Münster: Bibliotheca Anthropos, 1930), 203, for part of a text collected from a Tuutsi informant in Karagwe. See also Hurel, "Religion," 71; Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 49; John H. M. Beattie, "Divination in Bunyoro," *Sociologus* 14, 1 (1964), 50, 53, where, in one of his informants' handwritten texts (p. 50), a diviner spits "lightly into his closed hand (which holds nine cowrie shells) before praying (*kuramya*)"; John H. M. Beattie, "Initiation into the Cwezi Spirit Possession Cult in Bunyoro," *African Studies* 16, 3 (1957), 155, which describes blessings (*emigisa*) conveyed by spitting into cupped hands and rubbing them on the body; Fisher, *Twilight Tales*, 55; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 219; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 16, which quotes an informant from Kigezi who reported that priests there spit beer offerings to *emándwa* in the faces of female supplicants.

[58] de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 345-46; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 45-66; Tantala, "Early History," 660-71, 675-79.

[59] This is essentially a Nyoro version, which I have synthesized from accounts in Luc de Heusch, "Histoire structurale d'une réligion africaine: Le culte des Cwezi et des Imandwa dans la régioni des grands lacs," *Mélanges Pierre Salmon*, 21-22; Fisher, *Twilight Tales*, 84-86; Nyakatura, *Anatomy*, 18-19; Tantala, "Early History," 400-401; and I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 127-34.

[60] Tantala, "Early History," 394-95, points out many other mistakes and misfortunes visited on Isaza by his love of cattle.

[61] Tantala, "Early History," 397.

[62] Tantala, "Early History," 398-400.

[63] Numerous scholars have noted that *cwezi* mediums use the idiom of family structure to portray the structure of their institution, see Beattie, "Group Aspects," 23-25; I. Berger, "Rebels or Status-Seekers?" 163-64; Tantala, "Early History," 291-303.

[64] In Nkore, Wamara's medium carried a cow's tail decorated with beads, see Meldon, "Notes," 145; Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle," 35. Other *cwezi* figures were connected more clearly to cattle but they turn up in far smaller distributions.

[65] Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 21-22; Karugire, *Nkore*, 99; Joseph Nicolet, "The History of the Abacwezi" (Mbarara, 1953, typescript), 18-19.

[66] His name, a collective noun meaning "the people of Imara," comes from the verb *kumara* "to finish, end." This verb may be either transitive or intransitive in many Lakes languages. Holger Benettsson interprets this to mean that Wamara could end barrenness as well as end life, see his "Butakya: A Village Dedicated to Wamara" (Borgholm. Sweden, 1996).

[67] See Katoke, *Karagwe Kingdom*, 22, 28 n. 7; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 132-32; J. Nicolet, "Essai historique de l'ancien royaume du Kitara de l'Uganda," *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Ethnologico già Lateranensi* 34-36 (1970-1972), 185, who claims that traditions from Bwera make Wamara childless but Karagwe and Nkore traditions mention Njunaki and the illegitimate son Ruhinda. For a variety of such stories from the Haya state of Kyamtwara, see Edmond Césard, "Histoire des rois du Kyamtwara d'après l'ensemble des traditions des familles régnante," *Anthropos* 26, 3/4 (1931), 533-43.

[68] For Buhaya, see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 133; for Karagwe see Ruth Berger, "Field Work Methods in the Study of Oral Traditions in Karagwe Kingdom, Tanzania," in *Prelude to East African History*, ed. Merrick Posnansky (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 157-58.

[69] Anonymous, "Diaire de Rubya," 7 December 1913, quoted in I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 76. Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology*, 76-83, analyzed Kyamtwara traditions to reveal how seventeenth-century kings there co-opted *cwezi kubándwa* authority.

[70] de Heusch, "Histoire structurale," 27-28.

[71] See Arnoux, "Le culte," 282; P. F. Géraud, "The Settlement of the Bakiga," in *A History of Kigezi in South-west Uganda*, ed. Donald Denoon (Kampala: The National Trust, Adult Education Center, 1972), 31; Pagès, *Au Ruanda*, 361, 626-33; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 139-41.

[72] This generalization may bother scholars conversant with the fine points of variation in traditions about Ryángombe. In Rwanda some say that Ryángombe had no parents, that he was merely a creature of *Imaana*, the creator spirit; others say his father was one *Babíinga ba Núúndo* and his mother was one *Niraryangombe*, see Arnoux, "Le culte," 280; Zuure, *Croyances*, 39; and Kiziba tradition claimed Wamara was Ryángombe's father, see Edmond Césard, "Comment les Bahaya intreprètent leurs origines," *Anthropos* 22 (1927), 447-55.

[73] Zuure, *Croyances*, 61; Arnoux, "Le culte," 294.

[74] The Rwandan court sought to co-opt *kubándwa* in the mid-eighteenth century, see Vansina, *L'evolution du royaume*, 70; Leon Delmas, *Les généalogies de la noblesse du Ruanda* (Kabgayi: Vicariat Apostolique, 1950), 96.

[75] I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 66; de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 346-48. I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 58-59, finds Mpororo and the border area between Kigezi and Nkore as the most likely source area for Ryángombe; see de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 294-302, 338-53, for arguments that the herders were Nilotic-speakers and that Ryángombe's home area was in Buzinza.

[76] I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 59ff.

[77] For associations with hunting and forests see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 61; for his links to cattle in Kiziba, see Rehse, *Kiziba*, 11; for Wamara predating Ryángombe's cult, see de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 344-50.

[78] Gaspard Gahigi, "Lyangombe et le société," in *Lyangombe. Mythe et rites. Actes du 2me Colloque du CERUKI, 10-14 May 1976* (Bukavu: Éditions du CERUKI, 1979), 115-6; de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 351-52; Louis de Lacger, *Ruanda* (Kabgayi: Vicariat Apostolique, 1959), 276-307; Van Sambeek, "Croyances," 1:61; 2:166-67; Francis M. Rodegem, "La motivation du culte initiatique au Burundi," *Anthropos* 66, 5/6 (1971), 863-930.

[79] In Forest languages, *ingombe* "huts." *Ingombe* are houses in the homesteads of high-status men, where only men gather; see Bunyaswenduku Masumbuko, "La langue de lyangombe et le jargon des *'mmándwa'* chez les bashi," in *Lyangombe: Mythe et rites: Actes du 2me Colloque du CERUKI, 10-14 May 1976* (Bukavu: Éditions du CERUKI, 1979), 78-79. In Rwanda, *ingombe* house livestock inside the homestead; see Arnoux, "Le culte," 280; see also Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 292.

[80] de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 294-302, 348-50; J. Keith Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda: A Reinterpretation," *Transafrican Journal of History* 2, 2 (1972), 11-53; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 66, 76-86.

[81] Zuure, *Croyances*, 85ff.; Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, 155-57; Van Sambeek, "Croyances," 1:56, 59; 2:115. The word names a high-ranking medium in Nyoro *cwezi kubándwa*, see Beattie, "Initiation," 152, 157; see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Root 353.

[82] Zuure, *Croyances*, 47, 64; Van Sambeek, "Croyances," 1:66-67, 72-73.

[83] Zuure, *Croyances*, 91-96; Arnoux, "Le culte," 544. The healing practices of the Ryángombe and Kiranga cults are not the same. They are, however, connected. I have chosen to focus on their links to show the importance of ensuring abundance to concepts of social health and to emphasize the challenges to that health posed by political expansionism. For more on the differences between Ryángombe and Kiranga, see Zuure, *Croyances*, 36-98; Rodegem, "La motivation," 863-930; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, Ch. 5 and 76-87.

[84] Zuure, *Croyances*, 47 n. 2; Arnoux, "Le culte," 110.

[85] See Wagner, "Environment, Community," 176-81. The *amahembe* ("medicine horns") may have been especially productive items for innovation of new cures for new illnesses because the healer could simply attach the new threat to the relevant "horn." These horns often served as the material source for the voice of an *mbándwa* spirit, the voice of spirits contacted by priests (Anonymous [Probably Johannes Van Sambeek], "Table d'enquête sur les moeurs et coutumes indigènes, Diocese de Kigoma. Tribus des baha et des banyaheru," [n.p., 1951-1953, Kigoma] 460). Innovated replacements for territorial nature spirits in West Highlands communities parallel the transformation of the territory of healing studied in Chapter 5; see Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*, Roots 360, 369, and 377, in West Highlands and Forest languages.

[86] de Heusch, *Le rwanda*, 36, perceives a similarity between the end of the Tembuzi era and the end of the Cwezi era: both come to a close following their last king's pursuit of a favorite cow. Could the cliché be a warning about the dangers to kings of focusing only on instrumental power?

[87] Wamara's local identity was probably initially centered around Lake Wamara, where many temples and shrines to him cluster; see I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 51.

[88] MacGaffey, *Religion and Society*, 160-62; Bjerke, *Religion and Misfortune*, 135-36; Nyakatura, *Bunyoro Customs*, 81.

[89] The shifting fortunes of these alternately cooperative and conflictual relations between shrine and court helps explain why, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, another set of internal frontiers opened westward from Rwanda, north and south from Buhaya and west and east from Buganda. See David Newbury, "'Bunyabungo': The Western Rwandan Frontier, c. 1750-1850," in *The African Frontier*, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 164-73; Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology*, Ch. 5; Webster, Ogot, and Chrétien, "The Great Lakes Region," 812-27.

EPILOG: THE TWO POWERS SINCE THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

HEALERS, PEOPLE, AND CHIEFS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Histories of social and intellectual life that unfold over long spans of time fail to capture the tenuousness of the concentrations of creative and instrumental power achieved by leaders like healers or chiefs. They fail to express the subtle negotiations between leaders and followers that underpinned any concentrations of power, however ephemeral such concentrations were. We cannot hope to catch the quotidian dimensions to these negotiations and alliances between the Great Lakes before the fifteenth century, for their texture and contours cannot be imagined from the sorts of historical evidence available to us. But, in more recent times, there were moments when such negotiations crystallized, moments that occurred regularly in the agricultural calendars of Lakes societies. Planting and harvesting festivals were among the most important of all such moments.[1]

Control, dissent, and creative criticism, the contending forces that define the divides between the two powers, entered the public realm at regular intervals during the agricultural calendars created and followed by Lakes societies. In the uplands east of the Kivu Rift Valley, these intervals included planting and harvesting festivals that were separated by about six lunar months. The planting festivals marked the New Year and the most famous such festival concerned sorghum or *eleusine*. In Burundi and Buha it was called *umuganuro*, in Rwanda it was called *umuganura* (175).[2] (These festivals were introduced in Chapter 3 as *kuganura* and in Chapter 4 as *muganur-*.) The precise timing of these events depended on the rains but, in the uplands, they generally began in December, the season for sowing cereals. In their ceremonial structure and personnel, these festivals performed prevailing moral sentiment and social hierarchy. More importantly, they were chances for

people to struggle over the content of those two conditions. The planting and harvest festivals of the uplands were also opportunities for negotiating or renegotiating the social basis of political and ritual power.[3]

I want to recall a notional *umuganuro* festival, from some time in the eighteenth century. Its choreography and social content should reveal a set of chances to wage struggles over moral power and social hierarchy. We cannot know who took these chances—a farmer, a diviner, a chief—but we can tell what techniques they could have used to seize a chance to define moral power in the service of a claim to a higher status. The social history of these techniques is the story of speaking power. The social history of the planting and harvesting festivals is a story of making power.

Agricultural Festivals: Making Power and Umuganuro

In the uplands east of the Kivu Rift Valley, as the short dry season drew to a close in December, farmers prepared their grain fields to receive the seeds. Before they could do so, the king (*mwaámi*) and the homestead head, in separate ceremonies, consumed a special meal of sorghum or *eleusine* before giving the order to plant the new crop. They "ate the new year," they marked the continuation of fecundity and fertility.

Very few descriptions of the homestead ceremony exist,[4] but the twentieth-century royal version is well documented.[5] In the Rwandan and Burundian forms, the sorghum used in the festival was grown far away from the court where the ceremonies took place. Special ritualists, from commoner clans, were responsible for planting and tending the grain, and carrying it to the festival. When they approached the king's court, he greeted them with honey beer, cows, and food. On the hills surrounding the court, chiefly delegations from all over the kingdom, including territories at and beyond the frontiers, built quarters for themselves and for all the cattle, food, and beer they had brought with them. They arrived as many as two weeks before the proper start of the *umuganuro* festival. Diviners searched among their herds for bulls to sacrifice which they then studied to learn the best day to proceed with the festival. On that first afternoon, the king moved to a provisional palace with important parts of his regalia; he appeared with several important female leaders, including the queen mother. The head of the ritualists (the people who had brought the sorghum from far away) prepared the sorghum paste into a large ball. The king ate some and broke the rest into four pieces, which he gave to representatives. He then had sex with a designated woman.

After these fairly private events took place, the king sounded the royal drum and elicited cries of joy from the witnesses, whoops and hollers that rolled outward from the court in waves of excitement. Over the next eight days, delegations, chiefs, and their crowds of followers visited the king to dance and drum for him. Each group offered their territory's best singers and

dancers. The final act of the festival involved the king giving gifts to the ritualists who had organized the festival and to his loyal followers at court. He also gave cows and hoes (from a treasury assembled out in the open in front of the royal enclosure) to his provincial chiefs and his followers. All who received a gift performed a praise poem to the king. All the while, crowds of people watched, sang, drummed, and danced.[6]

The noun and verb that name this festival in Rwanda, Burundi, and Buha, possess a semantic history which betrays a core element in the social history of concentrating power. They were made from the verb **kugàna* (174) "to narrate or tell a story to people." When West Highlands speakers added the reversive suffix **-ura* to the verb stem, perhaps sometime between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, they changed the meaning of the verb stem dramatically.[7] The reversive suffix gave the verb a meaning opposite to the meaning of the original stem. Instead of "to tell a story to an audience," *kuganura* might have meant "to exchange stories," to change the places of the narrator and the audience. By using this construction, people expressed unambiguously the central conceptual importance of reciprocal speaking, of dialog *par excellence*, to the renegotiation of social relations and hierarchy at the conclusion of one agricultural year and the auspicious unfolding of the next.

The poetics of this derivation echo over and over again in the structure of the festival. Kings, ritualists, chiefs and commoners (represented as "crowds" in twentieth-century descriptions) all took part, and all formed different audiences. Moments in the ceremonial structure of the festival created chances for each of these actors in the drama to speak powerfully to the others. During the progress of the celebration but at different points in its unfolding, king, queen, chief, healer, and persons in the "crowd" were in dialog with one another. Although public festival was designed by kings, their courts, and their political followers to reaffirm a royal presence at the heart of social health—food production and human reproduction—it also pushed that royal presence squarely into the public eye, where it had to engage in dialog. Indeed, it is almost certain that the choreography of the festival was the product of dialog between the principal actors themselves.

In his careful and knowing study of *umuganuro* and related agricultural festivals in Rwanda and on Ijwi Island in Lake Kivu, David Newbury finds ample evidence for their deep historical roots. He argues that though kings co-opted harvest and planting festivals from their local and family-centered roots, kings were not the central actors in these festivals. Instead they mediated between various social groups like clan leaders, ritualists, and chiefs. Newbury's studies reveal the degree to which these festivals subordinated kingship to the communion of clan leaders and ritualists, the degree to which a congress of intellectual men and women shaped the social hegemony represented by kingship.[8]

These roots and branches in the social history of planting and harvesting festivals in the greater Western Highlands region not only sheltered kingship but also bore the potential for popular critique of the moral success or failure of the "communing" intellectuals (king, queen, chiefs, diviners, royal drummers, and so on) in providing social health and in recognizing successful newcomers in the social hierarchy. If we look closely at the moments in the festival when the regular people who made up the "crowds" had their chance to speak, then the festival seems more than merely a chance for politicians and healers to display their enduring, if fragile, communion. The pageant itself offered a chance for newcomers to rise in the public eye, as especially generous gift givers or as especially able praise singers.[9] Evidence for such claims, speeches, and expressions comes dearly, but what little there is paints these festivals as risky for established powers; and especially so, we can speculate, during periods of agricultural stress.

Crowds constituted vocal sources of criticism and competitive frustration.[10] Dancing, drumming, and singing were all discursive acts whose contents could as easily have offered criticisms of chiefly deportment and generosity as they could have reaffirmed it.[11] The mention of chaos and moral licence, following the return of the sorghum from Bumbogo to the Rwandan court, reminds us in poetic and concrete terms that the relation between chief and follower required constant lubrication.[12] Abstract concepts of fertility and fecundity were embodied in cattle, food, hoes, and children. The young people who drummed for the crowds of Heru, in Buha, while observing the king's return to court, represented the principal wealth of the kingdom. Their approving or disapproving "voice" came loud and clear to the politicians and healers in the king's entourage in the form of drumming, dancing, and singing styles.

No testimony exists to bear witness to the precise risks of criticism that leaders endured during these festivals or to the content of performance styles. The evidence remains circumstantial but it is suggestive. Many forms of the festival involved "touring" and the public presentation of royal regalia (like drums and copper-bladed spears).[13] Carrying and displaying the flour to be used in the ceremony, the drums to be beaten, and the items signifying kingship exposed the core imagery of the bonds between commoner, king, and healer to the bright light of the equatorial day. Those material items could embody the healthy hierarchical bonds of an established administration and they could be engaged by distant chiefs and wealthy persons. The drums and spears and songs and dances represented the double-sided character of public ceremonies like planting and harvesting festivals.

The two sorts of power that might show their faces here were revealed most clearly in the few references to the provincial delegations, who gathered in makeshift enclosures, together with their wealth in beer, cattle, hoes, and followers. Early-twentieth-century descriptions of the Rwanda and Burundi festivals tell of hillsides covered with such collections of people

and goods. Because the two kingdoms' royal domains were clustered in the central highlands, a particularly successful king's "man" or client-chief from the fringes of the kingdom could very visibly stake his claim to higher standing by bringing a vast herd of cattle, innumerable pots of millet and banana beer, and especially agile and articulate dance troupes. The public spectacle of instrumental power expressed in gift exchange, whether directed by kings or chiefs, could also herald the rise to prominence of wealthy, frontier territories. Their chiefs and their people could signal as much with their large numbers and the stirring language of dance and song.[14]

These festivals displayed the fluid relations between the many social divides in West Highlands societies at the edges of the southern sphere of the savannah frontier. They revealed the interlocking cleavages and joins through which healers, chiefs, and people struggled and cooperated to create a social body. In their nineteenth- and twentieth-century forms, they also showed that the royal court had won considerable control of the terms and conditions by which people understood the shape and content of that social body. Kings, court diviners, military chiefs, and the lineaments of patronage worked with ancient and dispersed concepts of health, wealth, motherhood and patriarchy to craft the joins between their combined instrumental and creative powers. Yet, speech and performance still played vital roles in representing the social body. With kingship, though, a new struggle over speech and its genres erupted. It is fitting that this enduring feature of Lakes discursive consciousness should form such a critical fulcrum on which turned much of what we can say about the social history of the savannah frontiers in the fifteenth century, the eighteenth century, and today.

Inventing Historians: Speaking Power

The semantics of *kuganura* claimed a central role for "speech" in making concentrations of instrumental and creative power. But success in concentrating them defined new kinds of speech and created new roles in which specialists practiced the new sorts of speaking. The persons who filled these roles both articulated and guarded new divides between leader and follower, healer and chief, herder and farmer, agriculturalist and hunter, warrior and mother, and so on. To tell histories of all these sorts of history-making and history-makers would require another book altogether. But some reflections about how the social relations between followers, kings, and healers produced new categories and practices of knowledges of the past concludes this story with a sense of the relentlessly dispersed character of spoken power, even in the presence of more and more deadly concentrations of military force.

Agricultural festivals and other feasts certainly offered to hardworking people the chance to claim publicly their material ability to enter higher ranks,

should they be able to contribute beer and food on a competitive scale. But the concomitant rise of specialized genres of historical knowledge seems to have sought, in part, to "lock out" newcomers from membership in elitist intellectual circles. The cultural democracy of the riddle, the proverb, even of the hunting tale or spirited dance performance was joined by specialist tales of "tradition," "history," and the arcana of royal ritual. This condition invited still further virtuosity by rival tale-tellers within these newer genres. This virtuosity lay at the heart of the multifaceted charter myths from Great Lakes kingdoms.[15]

Genres of oral expression that claimed to tell about "the past" became places for establishing legitimate royal authority, they were born together with the conflicts and contests that had made firstness a matter of political and not just of physical space. This was a momentous break with the earlier geography of discursive knowledge, where healers and chiefs had provided templates for maneuvering and jockeying over healthy and growing groups. A new dimension of reality now appeared, one in which it was difficult for commoners to participate. Unlike the agricultural festivals, the arcana of court histories stood outside the daily lives of farmers and herders.

The connection between memory, speech, and the two powers was ancient. But with the establishment of politically centralized kingdoms, the hierarchy of kings, chiefs, and priests moved to establish authorial control over particular sorts of content for these general types of speech.[16] When a society understands "eminent persons" to possess special knowledge partly legitimated by proximity to a political office, like chiefly court culture, then it has begun to professionalize knowledge production and it has begun to face the challenge of reproducing that control. However, we know intuitively that such an endeavor is futile, even if instrumental control over wealth and its display seems to sanction such professionalizations in much the same way that monumental libraries and university buildings possess a double identity as functional locations for the work of knowledge and as architectural sanctions of the authorial voice of academics, historians or otherwise.

Such institutions create a subset of knowledge, they do not erase local and popular knowledge. A chief's court historians suffered similar limits to their authority. These limits can be seen most clearly in the failure of chiefly power to subdue spiritual knowledge experts, in the failure of the state to subdue the spirits (and their voices among the living). We know that the state tried to do so—the Ganda state wrestled with the *balubaale* temple priests[17] and *kubándwa* court mediums sealed the fate of family-based ancestral ghosts[18]—but the mediums (whose utterances the priest admittedly interpreted) could come from the general public.[19] And so it is in contemporary institutionalized higher education: many university professors and students do not come from the ruling classes!

This severely truncated discussion of oral genres has touched on only one part of the social world of the Great Lakes. As the social boundaries that gave birth to professionalized history making multiplied, so too did the tools for maintaining them, and so too did people take advantage of opportunities for social climbing and opportunities to exploit conditions of conflict. Contradictory consciousness flourished in these contexts of growing social hierarchy. A greater number of social divides meant a greater number of strategies for redefining them and a greater number of potentially conflicting aspirations held by persons on either side of the divides. These negotiations and conflicts are beyond the compass of this study, but they were to form key parts of the social history of the Great Lakes region after the sixteenth century.

The Two Powers, the Banyamulenge, and the Past

In October 1996, a new military force emerged from the mountains above the Rusizi river valley of South Kivu Province, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (ex-Zaire): the fighters named Banyamulenge who sought to overthrow Mobutu Sese Seko. Soon after their initial successes in Bukavu and Goma, a new element in their military ranks emerged in the media: the Mai Mai fighters. These two names, Banyamulenge and Mai Mai, contained historical claims to power and legitimacy.[20] The name Banyamulenge, in particular, provoked considerable discussion on the streets of Kampala about its meanings and, no doubt, on the streets of Kinshasa, Kigali, Bujumbura, and other capitals as well. The Banyamulenge, who fought to remove Mobutu, and the Renge, the ancient people whom they sought to coopt to help them win their war, were two different, but historically related, groups of people.

The dispute that set off the battle in former-Zaire centered on a local governor in South Kivu Province who decreed that "Tuutsis" living in the mountains west of the Rusizi River were not real "Zairois," that they had killed "Zairois," and that they should "go home" to Rwanda. In addition to a military response, some of these "Tuutsis" responded by representing themselves as having come across the Kivu Rift Valley three centuries and more in the past. They were not firstcomers, they admitted, but neither were they the modern equivalent of newcomers, now called "immigrants" or "refugees." Rather, they claimed, they were related to an eighteenth century expansionist Rwandan kingdom. To make this claim stick, in November and December 1996, spokespersons for the emerging military force of Laurent Desire Kabila began to use the name "Banyamulenge" to argue their relationship to the Nyiginya Dynasty of the kingdom of Rwanda. Some claimed that their ancestors had left Rwanda during the reign of Mibambwe I Mutabaazi, in the fifteenth century, under circumstances that remain unclear.[21] Some explained that their distant ancestors were refugees from an aggressive Rwandan court

wary of their wealth and standing. Others explained that these ancestors had been sent as princes to act as the local face of the Nyiginya court in Rwanda, a court very much interested in "civilizing" what was a wild western frontier in their political oratory, at least during the eighteenth century.[22]

A further twist revolves around the question of whence the name itself? Was it self-referential? If so, who came up with it and under what circumstances? Was it pinned on this group, by members of the very same forces who had hoped to force the "Tuutsis" to "return" to Rwanda? It is not clear. But the name served as a moral battle ground for the status of an ethnic minority amidst the complex and extremely dangerous historical forces still swirling around the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, around Mobutu's studied neglect of South Kivu Province, and around the technique of using one-sided representations of ethnic suffering to win or stifle Western military and financial support in the context of retribution and "revolution." To appreciate these interactions between contemporary politics and the language of "spoken power" we have only to consider the ideological currencies of the name itself.

Those who accepted the name Banyamulenge used it to make explicit claims in 1996 to being firstcomers, and very powerful ones at that. Its most general meaning, in Rwanda, may be translated as "people of the hills." However, the fighters could exploit the fact that, in most central and southern Kivu Rift valley languages, "Banyamulenge" can also mean "the people of Mulenge," a sacred hill south of Lake Kivu. The hill was named after a powerful spirit, associated with ironworking, which was linked to the renowned "Renge" groups from the uplands east of Rwanda and Burundi.[23] According to court historians, the Renge were the very people whose last king's daughter was impregnated by Gihanga, the first Nyiginya king of Rwanda (Chapter 6). The Banyamulenge, then, were not only long-time residents in the Kivu Rift Valley cultural world with ties to Rwandan royalty, they were also genealogically connected to even older sets of firstcomer groups in the wider Western Lakes ecumene. The name could signal both the ideological basis for their considerable instrumental and military power and explain a link with the precolonial kingdom of Rwanda.

The repeated use of this name diminished rapidly as the frontlines moved north, and then south and west, away from the Kivu Rift Valley. The bundle of historical and ideological authority imparted by the term "Banyamulenge" had little currency outside the Great Lakes region, and the international media quickly dropped it. As his military and political project grew in scope to encompass the entire nation-state of former Zaire, with all its multinational linkages, Laurent Desire Kabila also dropped "Banyamulenge" and fashioned another title for his forces: the Allied Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL). Whereas words and phrases like Banyamulenge and Mai Mai sent powerful messages to Great Lakes peoples, they seemed exotic or

simply unintelligible to international powers. Acronyms like "ADFL" were familiar to the ears of both Great Lakes supporters and to Kabila's new audiences outside the region. In any event, as 1996 became 1997, the heart of the military revolt had moved far from the sight of Mulenge Hill in the Rusizi River Valley.

A GREEN, GOOD PLACE

Unlike so many stories of ancient African history, this one does not begin and end with Africans conquering a hostile environment and continuing to do their best to maintain that beachhead. This story instead has emphasized a complicated dynamic of historical change which comes from the interplay of environment, society, and knowledge. This history is not merely more "complex" than a single military metaphor, its content has come into existence from the historical inheritance of the people who live today between the Great Lakes. Whether they fought their battles with weapons of destruction or with techniques of composing communities with people from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, they did so in a green, good place.

I have tried to show the interplay of environmental, social, and philosophical change in making the Great Lakes a Bantu-speaking region. This interplay of historical forces developed around the making and unmaking of divides and joins between the two sorts of power, instrumental and creative, that Great Lakes peoples understood to work in their world. The interplay developed around the transformation of practical knowledges into discursive consciousness, and vice versa. But, above all, the interplay of these three historical themes depicts the men and women who lived between the Great Lakes from the last millennium B.C. to the fifteenth century as people who repeatedly savored the joys of social life and wrestled with the gravest threats to their survival.

This book has also tried to show how histories of times and places that have left no written documents could be composed in a new way. Beyond matters of chronology, settlement, and cross-cultural contact, this book has searched for the history of people thinking about health, politics, gender, and social life. The methodology of comparative linguistics, especially the search for semantic histories and etymologies, has secured a wealth of these thoughts and their changing contents.

No, I have not been able to tell of individuals nor to describe the weather on a given morning in the rainy season. The history told here has been the history of ideas, institutions, groups, regions, and centuries. Notional homesteads, ridgetops, courts, and festivals have been called up through the magic of words, but the mothers, fathers, children, kings, healers, and others cannot be given personal names. For some these facts render histories like this one

frustratingly recondite. For me they render this history a relentlessly social one. It tells of the work and thoughts of the many, not of the few.

I hope that the stories told here will contribute to the growing archive of Lakes pasts. It will be this archive that today's children can draw on to craft solutions to the pressing concerns they will face as adults who call the Great Lakes region their home. Some of those challenges are daunting indeed but they can take heart in the fact that their ancestors faced and overcame equally formidable obstacles. They kept their home a green place and they gave it the goodness we have seen it to possess.

NOTES

[1] A fascinating social history begs to be written for the monthly New Moon ceremonies held all across the region and very likely a part of the ancestral tradition. The following citations are a good place to begin: I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 22; Lukyn Williams, "Hima Cattle, Part II," 34; Meldon, "Notes," 142; Hartwig, "Kerebe Music," 47; Roscoe, *Baganda*, 299, 498; Mair, *An African People*, 235; Speke, *Journal*, 221-23; Grant, *Walk across Africa*, 139-40; Beattie, *Nyoro State*, 95-122; Richards, "The Toro," 134; Roscoe, *Bakitara*, Ch. 5; J. W. Junker, *Travels in Africa During the Years 1882-1886* (London: Macmillan, 1892), 529; Nicolet, "L'ancien royaume," 186; Gorju, *Entre le Victoria*, 229-30; Lanning, "Masaka Hill," 24-30, especially 27, which discusses Full Moon ceremonies at Wamara's shrine; Jervis, "Robusta Coffee," 50; Césard, "Le Muhaya," 491, 495; Tantala, "Early History," 153, 239 n. 57.

[2] See Root 175 in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*; see D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 200-26, for a masterful overview.

[3] Jonathan Glassman has recently developed the idea of public festivals as opportunities for social conflict in his excellent study, *Feasts and Riot*, especially 161-74. There are other rich sources for studying these dimensions to precolonial social history: initiation schools for youths, premarriage activities, when young brides-to-be received stern and playful socialization into their new status; and initiation schools for mediums.

[4] See Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Les années," 84; Van Sambeek, "Croyances," 1:46-49. In Bushiru (northwest Rwanda), chiefs (*bahinza*) and homestead heads (*bakúrú*) celebrated *umuganuro* publicly then went home to celebrate with their own homestead and kinmates; see Pauwels, "Le Bushiru," 212-13.

[5] See D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 319-21, for references.

[6] I have made this story from the following sources: Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, 254-62; Chrétien, "Les années," 84-88, and, "Le sorgho," 145-56; d'Hertefelt and Coupez, *La royauté*, 76-93; Smets, *"L'Umuganuro,"* 58-64; Rodegem, "La fête," 209-41; Gille, *"L'Umuganuro,"* 368-71; Tripe, "Tribal Insignia," 2-6.

[7] The suffixation alone does not constitute an innovation that can be used to date the origins of these festivals. However, D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 219-25, finds deep roots for these festivals in the ritual and intellectual history of the Kivu Rift Valley.

[8] D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 211, 213, 223-24.

[9] This analysis was inspired by Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, 161-74.

[10] In 1938, George Smets, a Belgian anthropologist who studied *umuganuro* in Burundi in 1935, could write the following: "Le jour est venu. Les tambours divers, les nouveaux, ceux qui restaient de l'année précédente, et aussi Rukinzo, dont j'ai déjà parlé sont venu

se ranger dans l'enclos qui entoure Iburyenda. *Il y en a bien 200. La foule est là* [emphasis added] ceux qui les ont portés, les grands personnages aussi. Tous avec des baguettes." Smets distinguished the noble from the commoner and pointed out that each one of them carried a stick which they would have used, presumably, to beat the drums, drums which symbolized the very chiefdom (their chiefdom) to be renewed by this ceremony; see Smets, *"L'Umuganuro,"* 60.

[11] Both Chrétien, "Le sorgo," 156-58; and Mworoha, *Peuples*, 262, feel that these festivals were tremendous publicity for kingship. Only D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 200-26, recognizes the ambiguous role of the king and of kingship in them.

[12] Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, 261; d'Hertefelt and Coupez, *La royauté*, 83, lines 126-36.

[13] d'Hertefelt and Coupez, *La royauté*, 83, lines 115-19; Rugomana and Rodegem, "La fête," 209-11; Tripe, "Tribal Insignia," 5-6; Chrétien, "les années," 84-86.

[14] These images have been culled from D. Newbury, *Kings and Clans*, 205-206; Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, 260; d'Hertefelt and Coupez, *La royauté*, 91-93; Rugomana and Rodegem, "La fête," 209-17, 239-41; Tripe, "Tribal Insignia," 2-6.

[15] Kopytoff, introduction to *The African Frontier*, 49.

[16] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 114-16.

[17] Wrigley, *Kingship and State*, 182-87.

[18] Tantala, "Early History," 425-31, 727; I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 85.

[19] Laight and Zibondo, "Basoga Death," 130. See also I. Berger, *Religion and Resistance*, 68-70.

[20] "Banyamulenge" enjoyed an ideological currency which circulated easily between the Great Lakes, but the historical currency of the name "Mai Mai" had a wider east African circulation. "Mai Mai" is the Kingwana (Zaire Kiswahili) pronunciation of "Maji Maji," the famous men and women from Tanganyika whose militant resistance to German Colonial cotton-growing schemes, early in the twentieth century, made the phrase "Maji Maji" synonymous with revolt against tyranny.

[21] Professor Eustace Rutiba, personal communication, Kampala, November 1996. Or a little later, in the sixteenth century, Erich Ogoso Opolot, "Who Are These Banyamulenge?" *The Sunday Vision*, 15 December 1996, p. 24, column 1.

[22] Professor Eustace Rutiba, personal communication, Kampala, December 1996; Newbury, "Bunyabungo," 164-86.

[23] Desmedt, "Poteries anciennes," 181-83.

A Note on Evidence

The reader will have noticed that details of the linguistic evidence argued in the text do not appear anywhere in the book. After careful thought, it was decided not to include tables of language evidence. The decision was taken for a single reason. Unless each word could be presented together with all of its many meanings in each of the Great Lakes Bantu languages, readers could not see for themselves how I had reached the conclusions about semantic histories proposed in the text. Such a presentation of evidence does now exist in David L. Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary: Etymologies and Distributions* (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Press, 1997). I have tried in that work to allow the reader the sort of critical engagement with evidence just mentioned by presenting *all* the attested meanings I could locate in each language for each reconstructed form. People who speak one or more Great Lakes Bantu languages, linguists, linguistically inclined historians or anthropologists, and interested readers of all sorts who desire to make up their own minds about reconstructions, about their proto language of origin, and about the etymological twists and turns the words and meanings have traveled in everyday usage over time, should consult that work.

This book and that book belong together for another simple reason. Whereas the etymological dictionary contains all the necessary evidence on lexical reconstruction and semantic history, this book contains the citations to ethnographic sources that describe the things and ideas referred to by the words and show them in action. One cannot overstate the methodological importance of discovering redundant examples in the ethnographic record of reconstructed language evidence. This is especially central to the case made in this book about the character of ancient social philosophies concerning gender, health, politics, and so on, a case often made on the strength of semantic histories and etymology.

The strength of this case rests on the historian doing three interrelated things: (1) discovering in the ethnographic record, with as many examples as possible, which ideas and things are associated in practice; (2) pursuing the distributions and meanings for each one of those associated ideas and things; (3) finding for each idea and thing all the other ideas and things with which it is associated in the ethnographic and linguistic records. One example of this method, which builds on the information presented in the Introduction and Chapter 1, will suffice to show how it works.

One of the stories I wanted to write was the ancient history of spirit mediumship. I already knew that the verb *kubándwa* was associated with people being possessed by the spirits of the famous Cwezi figures in the region. With this knowledge, I searched the available published and unpublished language evidence for three things. First, which languages had that verb in a meaning connected to spirit possession. Second, which languages had the verb, with regularly corresponding sounds and tones, in any meaning whatsoever. Third, what were all the meanings in any language attached to that verb. I found that the meanings related to spirit possession were limited to the Great Lakes Bantu languages. But, because I knew that the *-*wa* suffix made the verb passive, I searched as well for the distribution and range of meanings attached to a root **kubánda*. I found that *kubánda* appears most widely in Bantu in the meaning "to begin," but a narrower meaning, "to split (transitive)," is still wider than the Great Lakes Bantu meanings relating to spirit possession. I suspected a connection existed between the three meanings. But, I was not sure.

To check this hypothesis, I looked for nouns made from this verb stem. I found a noun meaning "circumcision grove" with an extremely discontinuous distribution in Bantu. This made me suspect it was a very old meaning because it had dropped out of use in so many places. I then rethought my intuitive linking of "to begin" and "to split" and discovered that circumcision could be understood to involve a new "beginning" for initiates. Still, I struggled to find a link between "to split" and "circumcision grove," even though I did think for some time of a link between cutting the body and splitting things. But this did not add up: cutting or marking did not seem connected to splitting or breaking open. I found the link by returning to the language evidence from the Great Lakes region. There I discovered that the Great Lakes Bantu forms of the more widely distributed meaning "to split" for *kubánda* meant "to press down or knock down." The "hitting" action at the center of "to split" had been retained in Great Lakes Bantu languages as being "pressed" or "knocked down." So I had my connection: when a spirit possessed you, it did not "split" you or "cut" you, it "knocked you down." I then searched the ethnographic record for descriptions of being possessed by a spirit and found numerous references to *kubándwa* as naming the experience of being "seized" or "mounted" (especially on the head) by an overwhelming force. Thus, the verb *kubándwa* probably initially described the experience of being knocked over and pressed down by a spirit's entering your head and it may even have played on the likelihood that once you had had such an experience your life was forever changed, it was begun again.

Could I say from this single datum, no matter how exhaustively tracked down, that the institution of spirit possession, its dress, paraphernalia, mediums, other personnel, and shrines were part of the ancestral Great Lakes Bantu medical system? I could say no such thing. I had now to return to the ethnographic record and find the earliest, but eventually all the mentions of *kubándwa* and/or spirit possession and all the mentions of any *thing, role,* or *idea* associated with it. For each such item, responsibility, shrine, or ill that possession was to cure, I then embarked on the same search for distributions, meanings, and descriptions, bouncing back and forth between the ethnographic record and the language evidence in exactly the same manner as I had done initially for the verb *kubándwa* itself.

Thanks to a rich scholarly and ethnographic record of spirit possession, I easily discovered a bundle of ideas, personnel, and material cultural items whose distributions not only were, time and time again, restricted to the contemporary languages descended from Proto West Nyanza but whose distribution also overreached that group and turned up in languages belonging to neighboring groups like Rwenzori and West Highlands. In other words, some of these items, ideas, and personnel turned up in overlapping, discontinuous distributions among the Rutaran languages and the North Nyanzan languages. And others of the group showed a continuous, block form of distribution that reached beyond individual protolanguages and immediately set these items off as likely to have been spread by more recent transfers of knowledge. This was especially true of words for the ranked positions in a *kubándwa* group. However, some of the items, like a wooden scepter decorated with beads and shells and sometimes with red parrot feathers, the *enkinga*, turned up only within the Rutara group of languages. Beyond them, in Ganda, the word meant "fly whisk made of an animal's tail." The diadem or crown worn by a diviner, called *mukáko*, turned up in both North Nyanza and Rutara languages, but only in Nkore, where it names a crown of cowries worn by a newly initiated *mbándwa* medium, could I find it tied explicitly to *kubándwa*.

These overlapping distributions of meanings and paraphernalia relating to *kubándwa* drew me into neighboring fields of healing and political practice. Fly whisks and scepters (*enkinga*) often accompany persons of power and authority who intend to speak in public. In Rwenzori languages, the word names a sort of charm used by healers. In West Highlands languages, the word (with a different vowel at the end) means an amulet, often made with shell, which is designed by rainmakers to protect against lightning. The *mukáko* headdress was worn by diviners who spoke West Nyanza languages. And there were many other related words and actions that my searches turned

up: the whistles used at possession ceremonies; the verb "to initiate" into *kubándwa*, the connection between the threat of dying childless (*bucweke*) and *kubándwa*, the use of kinship idioms within the group of *babándwa* mediums and their novices; the dried banana leaf skirt, normally worn by women, but worn by men during *kubándwa* possession ceremonies in Buhaya. And many, many other such elements of the institution.

What did all this mean for the history of spirit possession between the Great Lakes? By returning to consider the various individual distributions of these overlapping bundles of items, personnel, and ideas that made up the institution as it was described by nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century writers, I could see how they fit with my genetic classification of Great Lakes Bantu. My reasoning was simple: where I found co-occurring regularly corresponding words for the greatest number of items, ideas, and personnel related to *kubándwa* in discontinuous distributions within a subgroup of Great Lakes Bantu, I then knew the period when the institution took shape. It took shape when people who spoke the dialects that composed that subgroup were in regular contact with each other.

It is only in Haya, Nkore, and Nyoro that I could find a preponderance of these items co-occurring and tied to *kubándwa*, even though I could find certain individual items, like the *mukáko* headdress worn by diviners, more widely in West Nyanza languages. From all this I reached the following historical conclusions. Whereas the experience of being possessed by a spirit, expressed by the verb *kubándwa*, was arguably a part of the ancestral Great Lakes Bantu world after 500 B.C., the fully developed institution of spirit possession, mediumship, initiation into the group, and so on, was arguably part of the more recent ancestral world of Proto Rutara speakers, very early in the second millennium A.D. And, since the twelfth or thirteenth century, parts of this institution had spread from societies that spoke languages descended from Proto Rutaran, like Nyoro or Haya, into neighboring societies like Rwanda or Ganda.

This part of the historical method used in this book depends on the repeated interplay between language evidence and ethnographic evidence for its success. The historian who will use it must pursue every possible attestation of a word, in order to learn the boundaries of the full semantic field the word describes, and they must follow into entirely different fields of meaning the leads thrown up to them in the course of each of their searches. I could, for example, write another three or four paragraphs on pursuing distributions and meanings for *kuteendeka*, beyond "to initiate someone into *kubándwa*," which is what the verb means in Ganda and Nyoro. But, it means "to initiate, educate" more widely in Great Lakes Bantu and beyond, thus taking us into the social history of age-sets, educational practice, and the social construction of gender and, it might also be noted, returning us to the initial realization that spirit possession had a connection with the idea of

"beginning" again in life. This is the beauty of the method. If one is willing and patient, one can recover an enormous amount of interwoven revealing detail about social philosophy, medicine, power, and so on.

Much of the language evidence that supports the historical arguments in this book comes from field collections made between March 1987 and September 1988, in Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Zaire. But important bodies of lexical and ethnographic information were assembled (1987, 1988, 1991, 1994) from archival and published sources, as well as from all available dictionaries, vocabularies, and word lists.[1]

NOTES

[1] See Schoenbrun, "Early History," 655-732 and Bibliography in Schoenbrun, *Historical Reconstruction*. I owe a great debt to Christopher Ehret and to the excellent work undertaken by the scholars of the Linguistics Section at the Royal Museum of Central Africa, especially André Coupez, Emile Meeussen, Claire Grégoire, and Yvonne Bastin.

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