
Morality Plays: Marriage, Church Courts, and Colonial Agency in Central Tanganyika, ca. 1876–1928

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IN AUGUST 1923, DAVID NDAHANI, an Anglican pastor-in-training, came before the Kongwa church court in central Tanganyika to accuse his wife, Nenelwa, of adultery. They had been married in a Christian ceremony some years earlier, but Ndahani had never fully paid the bridewealth he owed to Nenelwa's relatives. Nenelwa, disgusted with her husband, had in early 1923 left her conjugal home to live with her parents. Before the church court that August day, David Ndahani said nothing about the unpaid bridewealth. He complained that Ezekiel, a church teacher, had cuckolded him. His accusation led the church court to dismiss Ezekiel from his duties; the errant wife, Nenelwa, was ordered to submit to Ndahani. But on Christmas Day 1923, David Ndahani himself confessed to an adulterous relationship with the communicant Elizabeti. Elizabeti had spent several nights outside Ndahani's door, loudly accusing him of sinning with her. Kongwa missionaries brokered a *détente* between Ndahani, Elizabeti, and her husband, Ishmael, committed their agreement to writing, and posted the notice on the church door. They hoped thereby to chasten the adulterous communicants. By 1929, however, Ndahani was in prison for thievery, and the missionaries were lamenting that "adultery was the norm rather than the exception."¹

In Tanganyika, churchmen gained control of converts' conduct by keeping records. Their bureaucracy was meant to formalize spousal relationships, making sexual behavior subject to outside authority. But lovers also represented themselves. Self-interested litigants such as David Ndahani sifted through their spouses' marital and social relationships, looking for evidence that could capture the church courts' attention. They actively recast conjugal arguments over bridewealth, residence, and other issues, using the language of the courts to make their marital debates look like simplified morality plays. In Vicente Rafael's nomenclature, litigants such as Ndahani and Elizabeti "contracted" administrative power, adopting some of its nomen-

My work in Tanzania and England was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Historical Association's Bernadotte Schmitt Grants program, and the College of New Jersey. The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology kindly granted me clearance to conduct research. Earlier drafts of this essay were presented at seminars at the University of Birmingham and at Cambridge University. Gregory Maddox, Thaddeus Sunseri, James Brennan, Timothy Parsons, John Lonsdale, Jean Allman, and five anonymous readers from the *AHR* offered astute comments and criticisms. Martin Brett and David Smith guided me through English legal historiography. Philippa Bassett and Martin Killeen helped me secure the photographs from the Church Mission Society Archives, and CMS archivist Ken Osborne gave me permission to publish them.

¹ Diocese of Central Tanganyika Archives, Dodoma, Tanzania (hereafter cited as DCT), Kongwa Station Log Book, entries for October 10, 1922; February 11 and December 25, 1923; January 4, 1929; and "Mafupizo ya minutes," January 1924.

clature while also shaping its hold over them.² They followed churchmen's script while also molding the courts' efforts to regulate their lives.

It is the theatrical work of agency that the scholarship on African legal history ignores. Legal history in Africa has too often been conceived as a clash between the textualized, bureaucratic practice of modern governance and the oral, flexible *mentalité*.³ Sean Hawkins's *Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana*, for example, studies the "encounter between the LoDagaa and 'the world on paper.'"⁴ Before colonial conquest, says Hawkins, LoDagaa social order was flexible and negotiable: conjugal relationships and ethnic identity were crafted out of the back and forth of human interaction. Colonial rule worked to "subjugate and regulate [this] oral culture and force it within the conceptual framework of a literate society."⁵ In legal writs, in ethnographic writing, and through mapmaking, colonial officials used foreign categories to gain control over the changeable LoDagaa world. This "world on paper," Hawkins argues, was divorced from the real world; its simplified categories belonged to the British and their successors in government. Peter Pels follows a similar analytical line in his study of Catholic marital regulations in eastern Tanganyika. Where Luguru personhood was in reality built up through human relationships and ritual processes, Catholic missionaries sought to create individuals to convert and discipline. They fixed Luguru people's names on church registers, charted their life cycles, and plotted their biographies around a standard set of legal events. This individualized morality, writes Pels, was "untrue" and "in direct opposition to the context of reality."⁶ Like Hawkins, Pels argues that legal bureaucracy was a vehicle by which foreign modes of subjectivity were imposed on Africans.

The distinctions that scholars make between the real, oral world and the artificial, textualized practice of governance have shaped the discipline of African history more generally, not only in its analytical agenda but also in its methodology. The record books that church and government officials kept are catalogues of decisions made, sins disavowed, and judgments rendered. They make complicated human situations look deceptively simple. Scholars of legal history have therefore wondered about the extent to which court records can convey real insights into people's lived experiences. Legal historians of England lament that plaintiffs and witnesses couched their state-

² Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham, N.C., 1993).

³ The scholarship I have in mind here includes Martin Chanock, "Making Customary Law: Men, Women, and Courts in Colonial Northern Rhodesia," in Margaret Hay and Marcia Wright, eds., *African Women and the Law: Historical Perspectives* (Boston, 1982), 53–67; Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1998); Marjorie Mbilinyi, "Runaway Wives in Colonial Tanganyika: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage in Rungwe District, 1919–1961," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 16 (1988): 1–29; Margot Lovett, "'She Thinks She's Like a Man': Marriage and (De)Constructing Gender Identity in Colonial Buha, Western Tanzania, 1943–1960," in Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, eds., *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2001), 47–66; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1992); and Diana Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894–1930* (Oxford, 1993).

⁴ Sean Hawkins, *Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana: The Encounter between the LoDagaa and "the World on Paper"* (Toronto, 2002).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶ Peter Pels, *A Politics of Presence: Contacts between Missionaries and Waluguru in Late Colonial Tanganyika* (Amsterdam, 1999), 287–288, quoting Bronislaw Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic: The Language of Magic and Gardening* (Bloomington, Ind., 1935), 239.

ments to correspond with the protocols that governed the court.⁷ Africa's scholars likewise worry that court transcripts are "but a shadow of a much more complex understanding of wrongs and the complex set of interactions that actually went on in court."⁸ The discipline of African history was, at its founding in the 1960s, conceived methodologically as a foray into oral research. Jan Vansina's 1965 book *Oral Tradition* argued that historians could, by excavating the original text from the accretions of later generations, engage directly with the precolonial African past through the spoken word.⁹ Vansina's book set out an agenda for Africa's scholars to pursue. Of the twenty-one articles printed in the first two volumes of the journal *History in Africa* (1974 and 1975), ten considered the methodology of oral history.¹⁰ By the 1980s, a new generation of Africanist scholars were problematizing the notion of oral tradition.¹¹ But the emphasis on African "voices" remained. In the 1980s and 1990s, a flurry of "life history" publications heralded the methodology of oral history as closer to real African experience than any text produced by European bureaucrats could be.¹²

By marking real life off from the written record, scholars have made it possible to identify an apparently authentic repository of African history. But the identification of African history with orality has made it hard to see how texts could shape Africans' relationships, form their imaginations, and lead them to act. The book-keepers of central Tanganyika were not standing back from real life. Nor were church archives located in a textualized otherworld. Record books reached outside the archives' walls, and reformed Africans' real-life relationships. British missionaries and church elders regularly called errant parishioners before the courts, asking them to live up to the promises they had made on paper. Using their lists of decisions made and loyalties declared, church officials invited adherents to conform their lives to the book, to orient their behavior to accord with the model portrayed in the record. As distilled, clarified models of conduct, missionaries' lists and record books gave Africans characters to play in the real world. And Africans played into Europeans'

⁷ See, for example, Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1987), 20.

⁸ Richard Roberts, *Litigants and Households: African Disputes and Colonial Courts in the French Soudan, 1895–1912* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2005), 238.

⁹ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, trans. H. Wright (London, 1965).

¹⁰ *History in Africa* 1 and 2 (1974 and 1975). Texts on the methodology of oral history in Africa include David Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford, 1974), and Joseph Miller, ed., *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Traditions and History* (Folkestone, 1980); see also Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 1978).

¹¹ An early expression of doubt was T. O. Beidelman's "Myth, Legend, and Oral History," *Anthropos* 65 (1965): 74–97. See also C. A. Hamilton, "Ideology and Oral Traditions: Listening to the Voices 'from Below,'" *History in Africa* 14 (1987): 67–86; Karin Barber and P. F. de Moraes Farias, eds., *Discourse and Its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts* (Birmingham, 1989); Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: South African Voices in History* (Charlottesville, Va., 1991); Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge, 1992); and most recently, Luise White, Stephan Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington, Ind., 2001).

¹² See Allen Isaacman, ed., *The Life History of Raul Honwana* (Boulder, Colo., 1988); Margaret Strobel and Sarah Mirza, *Three Swahili Women: Life Histories from Mombasa, Kenya* (Bloomington, Ind., 1980); Patricia Romero, ed., *Life Histories of African Women* (London, 1988); Susan Geiger, "Women's Life Histories: Method and Content," *Signs* 11 (1986): 334–351; Tim Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa* (Athens, Ohio, 1988); Mary Smith, *Baba of Karo* (New Haven, Conn., 1981); and Jean Davison with the women of Mutira, *Voices from Mutira: Lives of Rural Gikuyu Women* (Boulder, Colo., 1989).

archetypes. They signed their names to missionaries' wedding registers and wrote notes confessing their sins. Some of them took missionaries' characters off the page, restaging textualized ideas, sentences, and plots for their own purposes. In front of church courts, husbands and wives reinterpreted nonmarital sexual relationships as adultery. Through their representational work, litigants roped missionaries into their private arguments over marital rights and obligations. As actors within missionaries' morality plays, Africans obligated churchmen themselves to play out a part.

It was not only Africans who recast their characters. Historians have shown that litigants in medieval and early modern England were similarly contracting with bureaucratic procedure. In the fourteenth-century Christianity of York, litigants Agnes Huntington and Simon Munkton bent the church courts toward their own ends.¹³ Against Agnes's wishes, Simon was planning to sell the land she had inherited from her father. Agnes knew that the church courts would annul marriages only in cases where a technical flaw could be shown to invalidate the original marriage vow. In court, therefore, she produced evidence to show that she had married another man before she pledged herself to Simon. For his part, Simon argued that Agnes's unwillingness to cohabit with him showed her to be an adulteress. He hoped that the court would confirm his marital rights. Both litigants used the framework of canon law to recast an argument that was really over the disposition of Agnes's property. With examples such as this one in view, historian Lawrence Stone has described the law of marriage and divorce in medieval and early modern England as a "fig leaf inadequately covering the very different reality of human behavior."¹⁴ Couples desiring a clandestine marriage in the early eighteenth century could obtain official-looking certificates from clergy jailed at the Fleet Prison in London. By 1740, at least half of Londoners were being married in a clandestine fashion.¹⁵ The Marriage Act of 1753 put the Fleet marrying shops out of business by nullifying any marriage not carried out by regular clergy, and by requiring couples to sign the parish register. Those who counterfeited marriage registers were liable for the death sentence. Even this reformed bureaucracy, however, could not squelch lovers' efforts to secure a respectable married life. After the Marriage Act, prospective brides and grooms arranged clandestine marriages by seeking out accommodating parsons in anonymous urban churches.

Litigants such as Agnes Huntington, David Ndahani, and the lovers of early modern London were practicing theater. They were reading the moral archetypes and the legal procedures outlined in church law as scripts, as directions on how best to play the courts. Litigants were not shuttling between a textualized, artificial legal process and a real oral world. The characters defined in church and government bureaucracy could be taken off the page and acted out, in a theater where church officials and litigants alike were bound to play a part. Litigants were representing themselves as wronged husbands or sinful penitents, and thereby generating social capital, making allies, and getting leverage over spouses and parents-in-law.

¹³ Frederik Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London, 2000), chap. 2.

¹⁴ Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: A History of the Making and Breaking of Marriage in England* (Oxford, 1995), 19. See also David Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex and Civility in England, 1660–1740* (Cambridge, 2002), chap. 5.

¹⁵ R. B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England, 1500–1850* (London, 1995), 31; Stone, *Road to Divorce*, chap. 4.

Seeing marriage litigation as a theatrical performance helps us rethink the analytical category agency. Africa's scholars have very often equated agency with resistance. Inspired by E. P. Thompson and James Scott, social historians in the 1970s and 1980s set out to document "the ongoing, if prosaic, struggle between peasants and those who sought to extract from them their labor, rent, food, and taxes."¹⁶ Where an earlier generation of scholars had celebrated Africans' heroic wars of resistance against white conquerors, social historians looked for resistance in the mundane: in the quotidian negotiations between plantation workers and their overseers, in independent church members' subtle appropriations of missionaries' symbols, and in workmen's efforts to defend their own conceptions of time against white employers' clocks.¹⁷ This focus on the mundane was made possible by the use of oral interviews, which lent a first-person immediacy to the analysis of everyday resistance. Critics have noted that the sovereign, self-aware, speaking agent celebrated in social history was largely derived from liberal political theory.¹⁸ By focusing attention on the relationship between resisters and oppressors, the resistance paradigm made it hard to see that colonized people were themselves divided by generation, class, and political theory.¹⁹

Social history needs to inquire into the anthropology of colonial power as vigorously as it has analyzed human agency. Colonialism in Africa was not simply an invasive force, working to subordinate African subjects. Neither was colonial power very often resisted by heroic agents who were self-consciously defending their ways of life. Colonial government most often worked through routine, by patterning Africans' marital, religious, and political identities in predictable forms. With identity cards, passbooks, and marriage registers, officials stereotyped Africans' shifting ethnic, conjugal, and social identities, so as better to discipline them as members of tribes, as wives, or as sinners. For Africans, the bureaucratic form of power was at once a structure constraining the possible range of action and an opportunity for novel forms of discourse. Africans leveraged themselves into the characters that Europeans defined, playing the characters delineated in court records and government writs. Through their theatrical work, African agents laid out courses of action for missionaries and government officials to follow. Legal bureaucracy was an in-

¹⁶ James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn., 1985); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963). The quotation comes from Allen Isaacman, "Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa," *African Studies Review* 33, no. 2 (1990): 31.

¹⁷ The literature referred to here includes Allen Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: The Zambezi Valley, 1850–1921* (Berkeley, Calif., 1976); Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938–1961* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1996); Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago, 1985); Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, N.J., 1985); and Keletso Atkins, *The Moon Is Dead! Give Us Our Money! The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1993).

¹⁸ Talal Asad, "Thinking about Agency and Pain," in Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif., 2003); Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power," *Theory and Society* 19, no. 5 (1990): 545–577. See also Rosalind O'Hanlon's critique of the Subaltern Studies school in Indian historiography: "Recovering the Subject: *Subaltern Studies* and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 22 (1988): 189–224.

¹⁹ Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking African Colonial History," *AHR* 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1516–1545.

strument of colonial governmentality, but Africans could open up grooves of representation that shaped the courts' judgments.

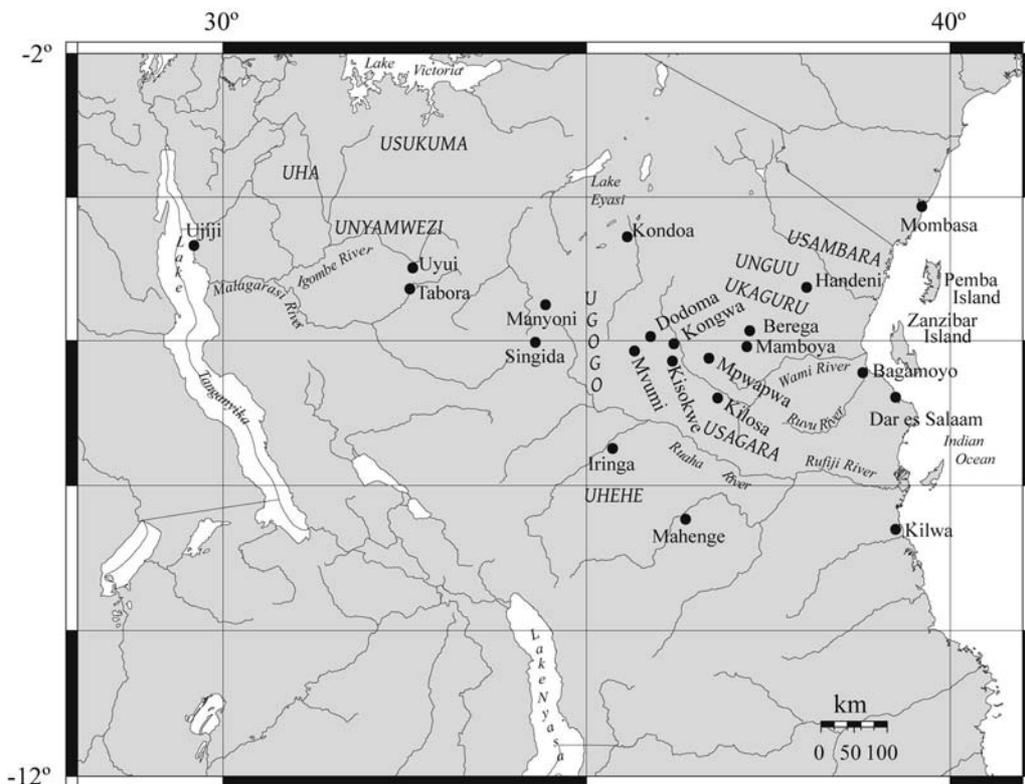
English missionaries first settled in Ukaguru and Ugogo, in the protectorate of German East Africa (later the British protectorate of Tanganyika), in the late 1870s. From that time until the 1920s, when the postwar British administration inaugurated a system of African-run courts, missionaries exercised extensive legal powers over their converts' lives. The German colonial government was represented in central Tanganyika by a cadre of Swahili-speaking functionaries brought in from the Indian Ocean coast. They took little interest in Kaguru and Gogo people's marital disputes. Church courts were therefore virtually the only formal legal venue where antagonistic husbands and wives could redress their grievances. Confronted with converts' ceaseless marital arguments, church officials kept records on who had married whom, took notes on adultery cases, imposed fines, and suspended adulterers from communion. Their bureaucratic work solidified dynamic conjugal relationships, creating standards by which to judge deviant sexual conduct. But it was not only missionaries who were participating in the legal definition of adultery. African husbands and wives stereotyped their spouses' sexual and social relationships. They employed the legal categories authorized by missionary judges to reframe arguments about property, marital deference, or work. By accusing their spouses of moral indiscretions, litigants reconvened the church courts in their favor.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY CENTRAL TANGANYIKA was a place of uncertain environments and uneven opportunities. Its people were therefore entrepreneurial about their social relationships and ethnic identities.²⁰ The people who came to be called the "Gogo" lived in the dry plains of the Rift Valley. Rainfall there was erratic and unevenly distributed, and the Gogo suffered at least nine killing famines during the nineteenth century. Different regions suffered more than others. During an 1888 trip through the eastern plateau, the missionary John Price found that hunger was "dreadful" at Chilomwa, but at Nayu, only five miles away, "there was said to be plenty of food."²¹ The disparate ecology of their homeland invited Gogo people to defend their local interests. Clan leaders, called *watemi*, did not acknowledge a coordinating political authority. "Each town is entirely independent of its neighbor, and they frequently amuse themselves by running off with one another's cattle," wrote Dr. Baxter in 1881.²² Ecology and economics did not encourage the inhabitants of the central plains to think of themselves as members of an overarching ethnic community. One popular account has it that Swahili-speaking caravanners named

²⁰ The literature on nineteenth-century eastern Africa emphasizes the fluidity of ethnic categories. See, for example, Charles Ambler, *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, Conn., 1988); Bill Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and Their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800-1950* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1998); and Justin Willis, "The Makings of a Tribe: Bondei Identities and Histories," *Journal of African History* 33 (1992): 191-219.

²¹ For nineteenth-century famines, see Gregory Maddox, "'Leave, Wagogo, You Have No Food': Famine and Survival in Ugogo, Tanzania, 1916-1961" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1988), chap. 1; for Price's travels, see Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham (hereafter cited as CMS), G3/A5/O, Price to Lang, December 3, 1888.

²² CMS, G3/A5/O, Baxter to Hutchinson, March 18, 1881.



MAP 1: Tanganyika, showing towns and mission centers mentioned in the text.

the “Wagogo” after the logs (Sw. *gogo*) that local people placed across caravans’ path when negotiating for tribute. But the people named Gogo did not organize around frustrated outsiders’ appellations. As late as 1927, British colonial officers were in despair over their political parochialism. Hugh Hignell, charged with creating a “tribal” authority in central Tanganyika, thought the Gogo chiefs were a collection of “petty despots.” He doubted whether he could give “any outline of the composition of the Gogo tribe or any exposition of its original constitution.”²³

To the east of Gogo territory were the Itumba mountains, populated by a matrilineal people who came to be called the Kaguru. In Kaguruland, as in Gogo country, it was outsiders who gave ethnicity a formal definition. Early Anglican missionaries in the Itumba region thought of themselves as working among Sagara, not Kaguru, people. It was only in 1911 that they decided that their people were really Kaguru. According to German maps, the missionaries reasoned, the district they worked “lies in the country known as Ukaguru, and quite beyond the limits of that known as Usagara.”²⁴ The Anglicans agreed to leave “Usagara” for Catholic missionaries, confining their work to “Ukaguru.” Some Africans protested against this

²³ For the “Gogo” as “logs,” see Peter Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship among the Gogo: A Semi-Pastoral Society of Central Tanzania* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1969), 20; for Hignell’s frustration, see Rhodes House Archives, Oxford (hereafter cited as RH), Micr. Af. 472, Reel 5, Dodoma Provincial Book, “Tribal History and Legends,” June 18, 1927.

²⁴ One early ethnic geography is in CMS, G3/A8/O, Rees, “History of the Church Missionary Society

surveyor's artifice. In January 1912, the headman Kalage came to the Berega mission station, arguing that "his people were Wakaguru, and did not want to be taught by the Roman Catholics." The missionaries agreed with his petition, and German officials ruled that Kalage's people were really Kaguru.²⁵ The borders of the Kaguru homeland thereby seemed to be securely drawn. But even at the school in Itumba, in the mountainous heart of Kaguru country, missionaries found in 1911 that the people "laugh at the [Kaguru language] . . . and associate themselves with the Chigogo."²⁶ Kaguruland was hard to map out.

In this land of uneven opportunities, people were on the move. During times of famine, hungry people moved from place to place, searching for land to cultivate and on which to pasture cattle. During a famine in 1881, missionary observers reported that people fled from Mpwapwa, returning to rural areas in search of food. In 1894, a famine likewise emptied Mamboya of people. "All the people have gone or died," wrote the resident missionary.²⁷ Human communities clustered at places where food could be secured. Missionary travelers commented in 1879 on the great variety of languages spoken in the villages of the well-watered Itumba mountains.²⁸ People in Ukaguru and Ugogo had to be cultural entrepreneurs. Their political economy would not allow them to be dogmatic about their ethnicity. In 1889, the missionary Wood spent several days in the Kaguru village of Chief Sekwao. He was disconcerted to find that some of the girls there had recently been circumcised, because Kaguru did not normally cut their girls. "I asked Sekwao why he allowed them to follow the Gogo custom in this respect," wrote Wood. "He said it was because the women and young girls were so anxious for it."²⁹ Sekwao's daughter would not agree to play a predetermined role. She and other women drew creatively on different traditions, looking for leverage and social advantage.

The body of anthropological scholarship about central Tanganyika frames Africans' social projects in the collective. In a series of prizewinning books and articles published over the past forty years, anthropologist T. O. Beidelman unpacked the structure of moral thought in Kaguru country.³⁰ Beidelman mined stories, songs, and initiation rituals for the insights they conveyed into Kaguru thinking about gender, age, and sexuality. Peter Rigby's classic work on Gogo society similarly focused on important rituals, highlighting how marriage and effective kin relations were constructed through the exchange of property. Rigby and Beidelman did not people their ethnographies with named individuals. Nor did they study how historical

in German East Africa," March 25, 1902. For missionaries' change of mind, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Usagara-Ugogo Mission Executive Committee meeting, August 26, 1911.

²⁵ DCT, Berega Log Book, entries for January 18, 1912, and October 17, 1914.

²⁶ DCT, Mamboya Log Book, Rees to Miss Spriggs, June 8, 1911.

²⁷ On Mpwapwa, see CMS, G3/A5/O, Baxter to Hutchinson, February 19, 1881; on Mamboya, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Rees, "History of the Church Missionary Society in German East Africa," March 25, 1902.

²⁸ CMS, C A6/O/14, Last to Wright, June 2, 1879.

²⁹ CMS, G3/A5/O, Wood, journal excerpts, 1889.

³⁰ Beidelman's most significant publications on Ukaguru include *The Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Tanzania* (London, 1967); *Moral Imagination and Kaguru Modes of Thought* (Washington, D.C., 1993); and *The Cool Knife: Imagery of Gender, Sexuality, and Moral Education in Kaguru Initiation Ritual* (Washington, D.C., 1997). His *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington, Ind., 1982) was the first scholarly book to inquire into the anthropology of Christian missionary work.

change shaped Africans' kin relations. For Rigby, doing research in the 1960s, the "traditional' Gogo social system has been, and still is in many ways, present below the surface of the broader changes and political institutions of modern Gogo society."³¹ Beidelman likewise cast his work in the ethnographic present tense.³² He was more sensitive than Rigby to the self-serving, partial, calculated choices that people make in dialogue with their community's expectations.³³ But like Rigby, Beidelman assumed that Africans' social practices could be inventoried apart from their uses in history.³⁴

Seeing Gogo and Kaguru people as tacticians changes our angle of vision. Instead of focusing on the collectivities that Beidelman and Rigby studied, we might better explore the structures of opportunity that women such as Sekwao's daughter faced.³⁵ The latitude with which entrepreneurial women could negotiate was probably greater in Ukaguru than in Ugogo, because in matrilineal Kaguru families, sisters could look to their brothers and parents for support in their marital arguments. Brothers hoped that their sisters' marriages would be weak, so that they could then exercise greater control over the women and their offspring. Wives' families diminished husbands' authority by encouraging women to set up autonomous homesteads.³⁶ The Kaguru woman Persisi, for example, repeatedly ran away from her husband, Ibrahimu, complaining about his drunkenness and abuse. When Ibrahimu died in 1912, Persisi refused her in-laws' demand that she shave her head in grief. She set up an independent household, and mothered orphaned children given to her by the missionaries at Mamboya. When in 1913 her parents-in-law attempted to coerce her to live with them, Persisi rebuffed their overture, arguing that she had a house and relatives of her own.³⁷ Kaguru women such as Persisi could marshal the material and social resources of their kin to get leverage over husbands and in-laws. In 1905, the Kaguru teacher Luka complained that the brother and sister of his wife, Mwendwa, were inducing her to divorce him. In 1910, Mwendwa took their three children to a *mganga*, a "witchdoctor," without Luka's consent. When missionaries berated her, she "got into a temper and left the [mission] village," bound for her brother's home.³⁸ Kaguru husbands always had to compete with their in-laws for control over their wives and children.

Wealthy Kaguru men enjoyed advantages in this contest over conjugal authority. Male entrepreneurs who invested in the nineteenth-century caravan trade were able to trump in-laws' claims, establishing virilocal, patrilineal homesteads. At Mamboya,

³¹ Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 23–24.

³² As he notes in his preface to *The Cool Knife*, xiii.

³³ Beidelman writes that "much of Kaguru social life is a constant negotiation between self-serving, protective ambiguity and cooperative or exploitative explication of social rights and obligations." *Moral Imagination*, 8.

³⁴ The functionalist anthropology on central Tanganyika has been criticized in Robert Jackson and Gregory Maddox, "The Creation of Identity: Colonial Society in Bolivia and Tanzania," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 2 (1993): 263–284; and in Gregory Maddox, "Environment and Population Growth in Ugogo, Central Tanzania," in Maddox, James L. Gibling, and Isaria N. Kimambo, eds., *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania* (London, 1996), 43–65.

³⁵ See Steven Feierman, "African Histories and the Dissolution of World History," in Robert Bates et al., eds., *Africa and the Disciplines* (Chicago, 1993).

³⁶ Beidelman, *Moral Imagination*, 18.

³⁷ The sources for Persisi's biography are DCT, Mamboya Log Book, entries for June 19, 1903, May 25, 1912, and June 22, 1913; and CMS, G3/A8/O, Briggs to Baylis, May 1, 1902.

³⁸ DCT, Berega Log Book, entries for May 27, 1905, and August 28, 1910.

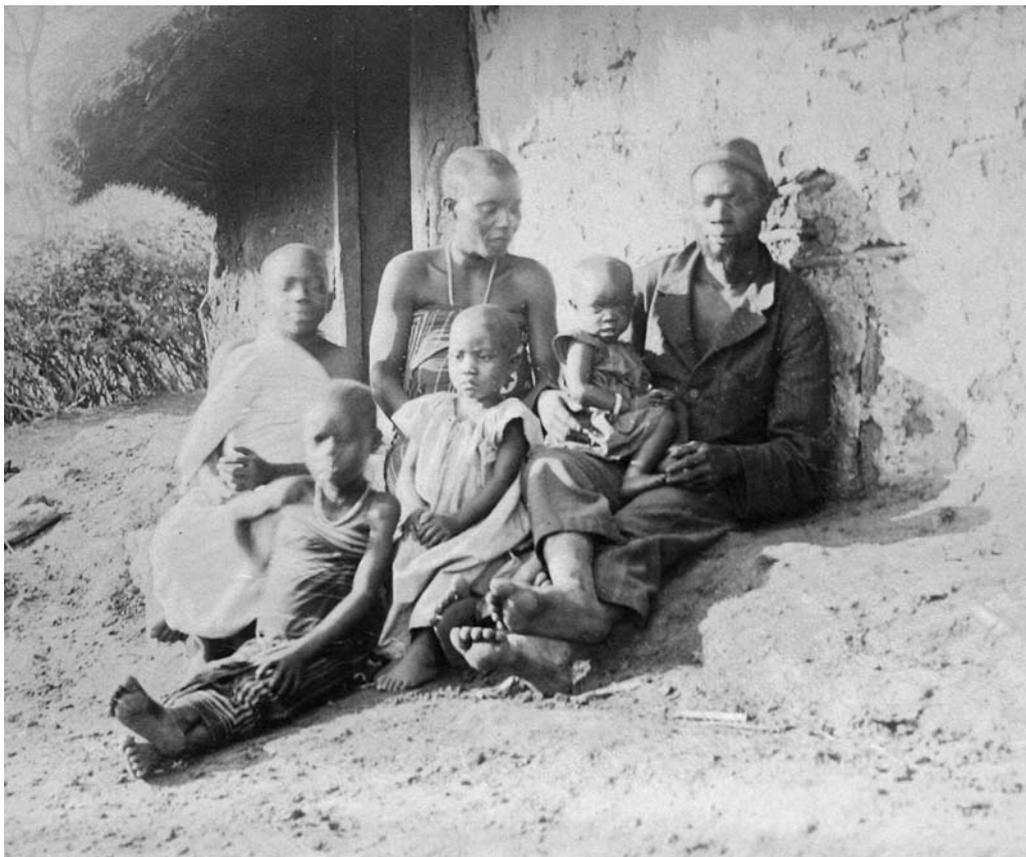


FIGURE 1: "Persisi and Ibrahimu with family, 1904." From Miss Spriggs's photo album, in CMS, Acc. 172 F3/18. Reproduced courtesy of the Church Mission Society.

the Kaguru entrepreneur Chimole accumulated slaves and dependents by trading in foodstuffs with Arab caravans. He took the Arabic title *Saidi* to facilitate this commerce.³⁹ When Chimole's father, the ruler of Mamboya, perished in the late 1870s, his sister's son should in Kaguru practice have inherited the position. But Chimole was able to best his aunt's son, claiming his father's post for himself. Chimole was the founder of his own patriline: his son, Saireni, was in 1897 named chief of Mamboya by the German colonial administration.⁴⁰ But even men such as Chimole had to compete with their wives and in-laws. Early in 1878, *Saidi* Chimole promised J. T. Last that he would send his son to be tutored at the newly established Anglican mission. More than a year later, the boy had not taken up his studies. On making inquiries, missionaries discovered that Chimole's wife had refused to allow her son to leave home.⁴¹ The most powerful of Kaguru fathers could not break a mother's hold over her children.

³⁹ DCT, Daudi Muhando, "Hadithi ya Kanisa, Usagara-Ukaguru," October 1951.

⁴⁰ RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 6, Kilosa District Book, "Notes on Wakaguru and Wasagara," n.d.; see also T. O. Beidelman, "Chiefship in Ukaguru: The Invention of Ethnicity and Tradition in Kaguru Colonial History," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 11, no. 2 (1978): 227–246.

⁴¹ CMS, C A6/O/14, Last to Wright, May 11, 1878; CMS, C A6/O/20, Price to Wright, October 28, 1879.

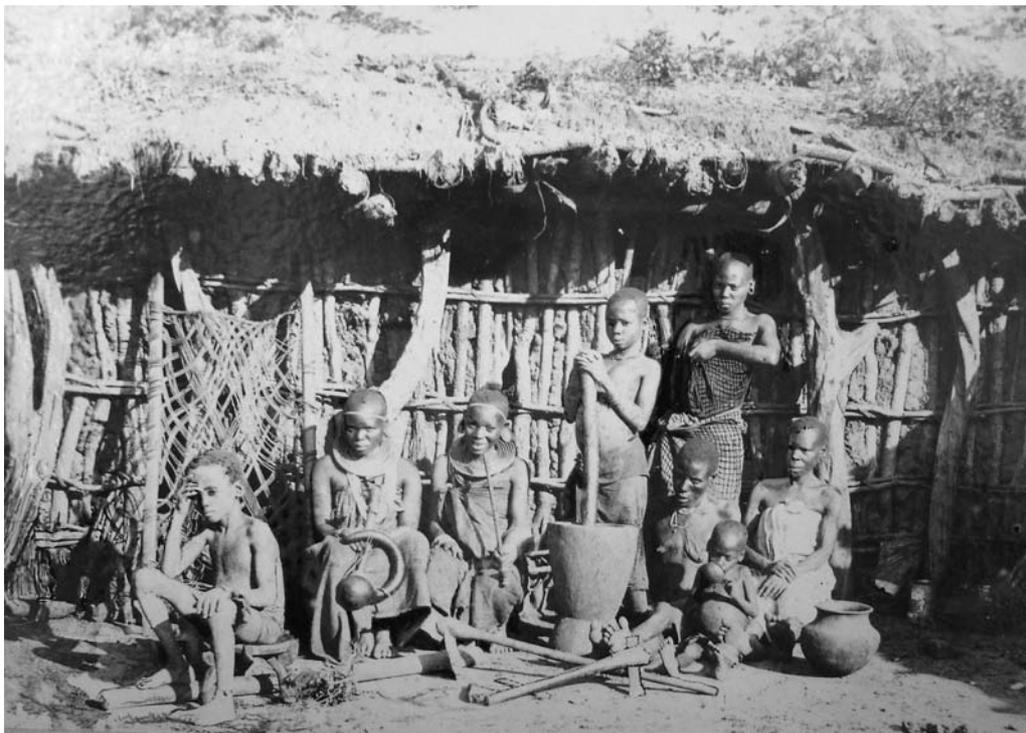


FIGURE 2: “Wamegi [Kaguru] women, Mamboya,” n.d. (but mid-1890s). Like African men, missionaries were exercised about Kaguru women’s sexuality. Here the photographer, Henry Cole, has carefully drawn a calico cover over the chest of the woman standing in the doorway. From CMS, Acc. 402 Z1/1. Reproduced courtesy of the Church Mission Society.

The strength of Kaguru mothers’ hold over their offspring made husbands fret about their wives’ sexual appetite. Regardless of their fathers’ identity, Kaguru children could find a place in their mothers’ family. Husbands’ worries over their wives’ promiscuity are evident in the songs that the anthropologist Beidelman recorded. A vagina was like a man-eater, went one Kaguru song. “Gaping, gaping the head of a leopard! It never fills up.” Like the nose of a cow, a woman’s vagina was always moist. It was a husband’s burden to be an adequate sexual performer. Unfulfilled wives were liable to seek outsiders for sexual satisfaction. “That baobab tree is big for nothing because even a little one can climb it,” went one song. Even a young man could seduce a much older woman. Lustful men were confident that they could find a lover in another man’s wife. “I cut the tree to carry the nurturer, and if not that nurturer, then my neighbor’s,” went one song.⁴² Kaguru husbands knew their wives to be inconstant.

Conjugal unions were more permanent in patrilineal Gogo country than in matrilineal Kaguruland. “Petty quarrels do not cause husband and wife to separate,” went one late-nineteenth-century proverb. “The relationship of brothers in law is sweet,” went another. A contemporaneous folktale described how an unnamed husband, cuckolded by his wife, enlisted the aid of a hobgoblin, who chopped the errant

⁴² Songs analyzed in Beidelman, *The Cool Knife*, 200, 212, 215, 199.

woman to bits.⁴³ In 1930, Gogo elders were compelling men who committed adultery with a married woman to pay at least one head of cattle to the aggrieved husband.⁴⁴ By 1954, the ethnohistorian Mathias Mnyampala could look back on the precolonial nineteenth century as a time of sexual and social harmony. “There were no deceivers of the wives of other people; it was a very shameful matter to entice them away,” he wrote. “Wives in the past were very trustworthy, because they did not covet wealth, as modern wives do.”⁴⁵ The evidence is laden with nostalgia, but it shows that Gogo norms demanded disciplined fidelity of wives.

But the evidence also shows that in Ugogo, as in Ukaguru, husbands’ mastery over their wives’ sexual conduct depended largely on their wealth. In 1902, missionaries reported that men who could not pay the minimum bridewealth had to live like “slaves” in the homes of their wives’ fathers. Some fathers-in-law were so strict that young men are said to have starved, denied the right to eat with their lovers’ families.⁴⁶ By the 1930s, British officials could identify a scale of sexual and conjugal rights that men earned by offering livestock and labor to their fathers-in-law.⁴⁷ Poor men contracted *kupanga* marriages, paying one cow and one goat for sexual access to a prospective bride, then working for years on the father-in-law’s land to marshal bridewealth.⁴⁸ Any children born to the couple belonged to the wife’s family. Wealthy husbands went through an elaborate process of gift-giving in order to contract *kubanya* marriages. They paid dowry of up to twenty head of cattle and thirty goats, and thereby earned control over the women’s labor and offspring. The solidity of wealthy Gogo husbands’ rights made it unnecessary for them to monopolize their wives’ sexual services. With her husband’s encouragement, the wife of a wealthy polygamist could contract an *mbuya* relationship with a young male lover, inviting him into her room for sexual congress.⁴⁹ Even the nostalgic historian Mnyampala had to note that Gogo husbands “often exchanged wives with each other, because they were not very jealous.”⁵⁰ British missionaries were appalled at the immorality they saw in Gogo married life, lamenting in 1909 that “there is much in [laws relating to matrimony and divorce] with which the teaching of the New Testament comes into desperate conflict.”⁵¹ But Gogo husbands were not merely amoral gallants. A Gogo

⁴³ The proverbs and folktales come from missionary Henry Cole’s ethnographic work, in CMS, Acc. 402 F5, Cole, “Chigogo Proverbs and Sayings,” n.d.; and CMS, Acc. 402 F2, Cole, “Notes on Muye,” n.d. Cole arrived at Mpwapwa in 1879, and worked in Kisokwe until 1905.

⁴⁴ RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 23, Manyoni District Book, vol. 1, “Wagogo History and Customs,” March 17, 1930.

⁴⁵ Mnyampala, *The Gogo: History, Customs, and Traditions*, ed. and trans. Gregory Maddox (New York, 1995), 100.

⁴⁶ Henry Cole, “Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 32 (1902): 305–338; reproduced in Cole, “Children of the Dark Continent” (typescript, 1924), in CMS, Acc. 402 F3/1.

⁴⁷ RH, Micr. Af. 397, Dodoma District Book, A. Harries, “Wagogo Marriage Customs,” April 13, 1932. Harries’s typology is mirrored in Mnyampala’s *The Gogo*, 106–109. See also Isaiah Chambala, “A Study of Marriage Customs amongst the Gogo People, with Particular Reference to the Area of the Chilonwa Parliamentary Constituency” (Dip. Theo., St. Philip’s Kongwa, 1994).

⁴⁸ Mnyampala, *The Gogo*, 106.

⁴⁹ RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 23, Manyoni District Book, vol. 1, “Wagogo History and Customs,” March 17, 1930; see also Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 207.

⁵⁰ Mnyampala, *The Gogo*, 100.

⁵¹ Westgate, “The Home of the Wagogo,” *Church Missionary Gleaner* 36 (1909).

child belonged to the patrician of the bridewealth-paying husband, even if he was not the child's father. Fertile, sexually active women enriched their husbands.

There was no incontrovertible third party that regulated conjugal conduct in Ugogo and Ukaguru. Wealthy, powerful men exercised more exclusive sexual rights over dependent women. They could afford to pay bridewealth and monopolize their wives' labor, sexual services, and progeny. Poor men, in contrast, had to compete with their wives' relatives and other paramours for the women's and children's loyalty. In both Ukaguru and Ugogo, they jostled with fathers-in-law, wives' brothers, and lovers. Entrepreneurial wives sought out brothers' and fathers' support against oppressive husbands. Wives and husbands did not enter into a permanent, inviolable contract, with fixed rights and expectations. They jockeyed for position, for greater freedom of action, and for greater control over their children's future.

MISSIONARIES SOUGHT TO TRANSFORM arguable conjugal unions into marriages validated under God's authority. With marriage registers and record books, they bound men and women together in an apparently unbreakable contract. Their family planning focused converts' sexual and social energies on a spouse, limiting fathers', mothers', lovers', and patrons' hold over their lives.

In the late nineteenth century, agents of the Church Missionary Society established stations along the routes that Arab and Swahili slave caravans traveled.⁵² Situated on the western edge of the Itumba mountains, Mpwapwa was a major entrepôt on the route leading inland from Bagamoyo and Zanzibar. Some 100,000 African porters, slaves, and traders annually passed through Mpwapwa.⁵³ The Anglicans built a station there in 1876, sheltering people who had escaped from slave caravans. In 1887, agents of the German East Africa Company built a fort at Mpwapwa. The fort and the mission house were destroyed in 1889, during a raid by the rebel Bushiri and two hundred of his men.⁵⁴ By October, the German Captain Wissman had arrived at Mpwapwa with a force of six hundred soldiers. Bushiri was captured and hanged, and on April 1, 1891, the region formerly controlled by the German trading company became part of the Imperial Protectorate of German East Africa.

Worried that the Germans' propensity for violence would give Christianity a bad name, English missionaries were eager to distinguish themselves in Africans' eyes. In 1888, shortly after the German fort at Mpwapwa was built, Price found it necessary to "explain to the Wagogo that [the Germans] were not in any way connected with us."⁵⁵ But Africans did not necessarily differentiate between pacific missionaries and German colonists. An 1886 dictionary testifies that Kaguru people knew a "missionary" to be a *mwejumbe*, the same word by which autocratic headmen were known.⁵⁶ The earliest missionaries used the threat of physical force to gain advan-

⁵² The history of the CMS mission in German East Africa is told in Beidelman's *Colonial Evangelism*.

⁵³ T. O. Beidelman, "A History of Ukaguru, 1857–1916," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 58–59 (1962): 11–39.

⁵⁴ CMS, G3/A5/O, Price to Lang, July 25, 1889. The best account of the Bushiri uprising is Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1995).

⁵⁵ CMS, G3/A5/O, Price to Lang, January 2, 1888.

⁵⁶ J. T. Last, *Grammar of the Kaguru Language, Eastern Equatorial Africa* (London, 1886).

tages. While traveling through Gogo country in 1878, Dr. Baxter was asked by a local ruler for a length of cloth as tribute. Baxter took out his revolver, loaded it, and “told him I wanted to be friends.” He was allowed to pass unhindered through the ruler’s territory. By the 1900s, the German administration was actively backing missionaries’ work. During an itinerating tour through the Itumba mountains in 1900, missionary Wood asked a chief for land on which to build a school. “How can I refuse?” the chief asked.⁵⁷ When in 1907 the Germans appointed five new para-chiefs to administer Mpwapwa District, three of the five appointments went to Anglican church members. By 1911, some government chiefs in Gogo country were imprisoning village headmen who refused to send their people to Sunday services.⁵⁸

Support from local government was of critical importance, because missionaries always found it hard to get a hearing. In 1881, Dr. Baxter at the Mpwapwa mission lamented that Gogo people’s “houses are far apart, so that you can seldom get more [to preaching sessions] than six to a dozen at a one time.”⁵⁹ Missionaries’ first audience, therefore, was escaped slaves. “Cities of refuge” grew up on the boundaries of mission stations, where escaped slaves and others who sought the missionaries’ patronage settled. At Kisokwe mission there lived a man, known to be a witch, whom missionaries had released on the way to his execution. Some forty former slaves populated the Mpwapwa mission in 1881.⁶⁰ Marginal, endangered people such as these became missionaries’ default congregation. Only after the establishment of German colonial rule were preachers able to attract Gogo and Kaguru hearers en masse. Missionaries opened several new centers in the early 1900s.⁶¹ By 1903, there were 409 communicants at Anglican churches, while 3,060 people attended school. School attendance expanded dramatically when in 1910 the German government opened a railway line from Dar es Salaam through the central plains. By 1913 there were 1,295 Christians and 2,976 catechumens in Anglican mission stations, with 17,202 people attending school.⁶²

These statistics mask the controversies spurred by the expansion of mission churches. The earliest arguments were about where dependent women and men should properly live, because prosperous African men did not willingly relinquish their claims over the women and children who inhabited missionaries’ “cities of ref-

⁵⁷ For Baxter’s revolver, see CMS, C A6/O/5, Baxter to Wright, May 19, 1878; for the chief’s question, see DCT, Itumba Log Book, North Wood, “Copy of Annual Letter Sent from Itumba CM Station to Salisbury Square,” November 1900.

⁵⁸ For local administration, see Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891–1941* (Oxford, 1971), 123, and Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism*, 97; for headmen imprisoning non-churchgoers, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Westgate to Baylis, March 14, 1911.

⁵⁹ CMS, G3/A5/O, Baxter to Hutchinson, February 19, 1881.

⁶⁰ On Kisokwe’s inhabitants, see CMS, G3/A5/O, Cole to Lang, July 18, 1888; on Mpwapwa’s, see CMS, G3/A5/O, Price to Wigram, June 11, 1881. Uprooted people similarly populated stations run by German missionaries in nearby Iringa (Wright, *German Missions*, 86–88). British missionaries in the 1870s and 1880s had no legal authority with which to liberate slaves on the African mainland. They could only take down the slave dealers’ names and forward the list to the British consul at Zanzibar.

⁶¹ The new stations were Berega, Nyangala, and Itumba in Ukaguru, and Kongwa and Mvumi in Ugogo. CMS, G3/A8/O, Rees, “History of the Church Missionary Society in German East Africa,” March 25, 1902.

⁶² On the railway, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Rees and Baxter, General Report for Ussagara-Ugogo Mission, 1910; on school statistics, see CMS, G3/A8/O, “A Few Facts about the Work of the CMS in German East Africa,” 1914.

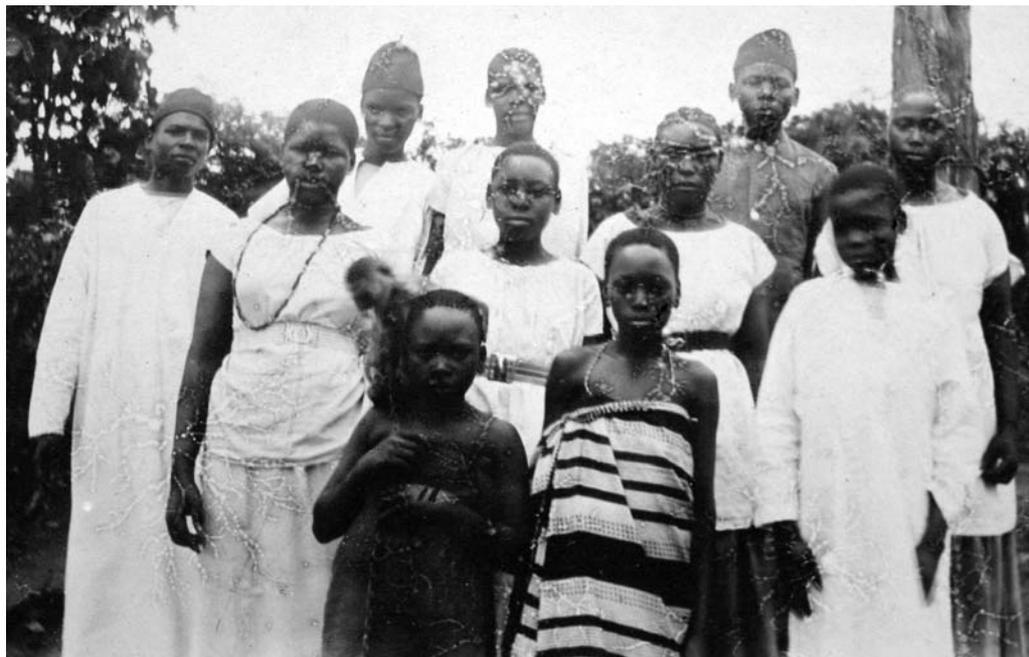


FIGURE 3: “Boys and girls of our village: 1. Mazangu—donkey boy. 2. Loi—freed slave girl. 3. Terekani—water boy. 4. Ndodola—cast-off wife. 5. Kanye—runaway slave. 6. Vigoha—servant. 7. Mygoha—cook, an enquirer. 8. N’gonda—servant, an enquirer. 9. Nasibu—rescued slave boy. 10. Chigaye—working for her keep. 11. Munjala—ditto as no. 10—Miss Colsey’s monkey on shoulder, 1898.” From CMS, Acc. 172 F1/1. Reproduced courtesy of the Church Mission Society.

uge.” In 1900, for example, a girl named Chausiku watched her mother die.⁶³ She was taken into the home of Chogamawano, a senior man. Chausiku found Chogamawano a harsh taskmaster: when he discovered that she had been attending church at Mamboya, he “held my hand and heavily slapped my face and held my throat while threatening to strangle me.” He had plans, she learned, to marry her to his own son. When in May 1902 Maria Ackerman asked her if she wished to live at the mission, Chausiku unhesitatingly replied, “Yes, mom.” Ackerman overrode Chogamawano’s protests: “I’m taking her because you’re mistreating her,” she said. After a year spent as a servant in Ackerman’s home, Chausiku married a mission teacher in a church wedding.

There was more at stake here than slavery and freedom. Missionaries’ debates with wealthy men such as Chogamawano were structured by their contending theories of kinship. By manufacturing kin connections with female dependents, wealthy men could multiply their clients and found a patriline. In 1887, Dr. Pruen at Mpwapwa interviewed two children who had run away from a small caravan.⁶⁴ They had been enslaved in Gogo country, they said, sold for a piece of cloth. An older man came to claim them, arguing that they were his brother and sister. In conversation, Pruen discovered that the children spoke the Gogo language, while the man spoke

⁶³ The sources on Chausiku’s childhood are DCT, Mariamu Chausiku, “Habari za Maisha Yangu,” September 29, 1948; and DCT, Mamboya Log Book, entry for May 16, 1902.

⁶⁴ CMS, G3/A5/O, Dr. Pruen to Lang, July 4, 1887.

Kisagara. On the basis of this evidence, he concluded that the children were the older man's slaves, not his kin. But Gogo and Kaguru rights holders did not make such distinctions. They integrated pawns or dependents into their homesteads, building a family with fictive kin ties. For their part, socially marginal girls such as Chausiku sought to create bonds of kinship with powerful patrons. Some of them found missionaries to be willing parents. In the early 1890s, Miss Spriggs and Maria Ackerman adopted the girl Nyamiti, a former slave who had escaped to the mission at Mpwapwa. When Nyamiti married a teacher in 1898, Spriggs acted as her mother, oiling her body and conveying her to the church for the ceremony. By turning African girls into kin, missionaries claimed from senior men the right to negotiate marriages and profit from the girls' labor. At Mamboya, Miss Colsey adopted a baby girl named Hefsi in 1898. Hefsi had been given to the missionaries by her uncle after she cut her top teeth first, which made her inauspicious in Kaguru people's eyes. When Hefsi married a church student in 1912, the groom paid bridewealth to Miss Colsey. In 1898, Miss Pickthall adopted an infant she named Hephzibah. When the girl married a teacher in 1912, Pickthall organized a church wedding and taught local villagers to sing "a very pretty Welsh tune . . . [which is] to take the place of every objectionable song that they have hitherto sung in their own villages on such occasions."⁶⁵

The marriages that missionaries sponsored were generally virilocal. They could not be otherwise, for the majority of Christian men worked part-time as church teachers or evangelists. Teachers' wives had to live with their husbands at a location that suited the missionaries' needs. Wives' relatives had the most to lose in this arrangement. Particularly in matrilineal Ukaguru, they competed with missionaries and husbands for young women's loyalty. In 1897, the Anglican church court at Mvumi spent an entire day interviewing the Kaguru teacher Danyeli, whose sick son had been taken to a "heathen" witchdoctor. His wife, when called before the court, admitted to doctoring the child on her own initiative.⁶⁶ Kaguru mothers and their relatives worked to keep control over their own children, even against missionaries' intervention. In 1907, Miss Pickthall "rescued" the young girl Mashaka from her mother, Paulina. Paulina, though, refused to relinquish her daughter: even four years later, missionaries reported that she was "making a fuss" about Mashaka. When a church teacher married Mashaka, the missionaries collected five goats in bride-wealth. By 1914, Paulina had been excommunicated for living an "immoral life" with a Muslim in Dodoma town.⁶⁷

Missionaries invited the men and women settled at mission stations to form monogamous marriages. They defended Christian husbands' rights over their wives, limiting the role that wives' relatives and other rights holders could play. In 1905, the chief at Mamboya laid claim to the wife and children of church teacher Johana Maganga. They were, he said, his slaves. Missionaries wrote a letter to the German

⁶⁵ Nyamiti's and Hefsi's stories are in CMS, Acc. 172 F1, Extracts from Miss Spriggs's Letters, December 1898; the quotation is from CMS, G3/A8/O, Pickthall, Annual Letter, November 12, 1912. See also DCT, Mamboya Log Book, entry for September 12, 1912.

⁶⁶ DCT, Chama cha CMS Mvumi, entry for October 18, 1897. A few months later, the Mvumi court heard another teacher, Yeremiya, complain that his wife and her kin had given his daughter heathen medicine without his knowledge; *ibid.*, entry for February 27, 1898.

⁶⁷ Mashaka's story is in DCT, Mamboya Log Book, entries for October 8, 1907, September 18, 1911, and April 4, 1914; and DCT, Berega Log Book, entry for December 2, 1911.



FIGURE 4: "Miss Colsey and self with little Theo, 1898." This photo, from Miss Spriggs's photo album, pictures the bush where missionaries had found Theo abandoned a few months before. From CMS, Acc. 172 F1/1. Reproduced courtesy of the Church Mission Society.



FIGURE 5: “Native Agent, Berega (Yusufu Msagala) with wife, mother in law, four children and niece, 1904.” Missionary photographs very often featured monogamous couples, carefully posed with their children. But mothers-in-law would not stay out of the frame. In 1910, Miss Spriggs found that Yusufu’s children were sleeping in their grandmother’s home. When she remonstrated with Yusufu, he complained that he could not get the children back unless the missionaries came personally to extract them from his in-laws’ home. For Yusufu’s frustration, see DCT, Berega Log Book, entry for July 14, 1910. The photograph is from CMS, Acc. 172 F3/46. Reproduced courtesy of the Church Mission Society.

government arguing Maganga’s case, and within a month, the German administrator had declared Maganga’s children and wife to be legally free.⁶⁸ Missionaries believed that the bond between husband and wife took precedence over all other relationships. They ruled that no polygamist could be admitted to the catechumenate unless he separated from all of his wives except the one he had married first.⁶⁹ Many people found this paring down of their human relationships to be dangerously antisocial. When in 1902 the polygamist Kayanka sought to be baptized in the Anglican church at Mamboya, he had to renounce several women with whom he had conjugal relationships. As a village headman, Kayanka had used his wealth to recruit women and dependents: he possessed as many as thirty slaves. It is not surprising that he hesitated before pledging for baptism, complaining that “all manner of unkind things will be said if he drives [his wives] away now.” Even his Christian wife thought it discreditable when, after he had resolved his doubts, Kayanka renounced his claims

⁶⁸ DCT, Kongwa Log Book, entries for May 31 and June 27, 1905. German officials could emancipate slaves where they found slave trading to be taking place or where slaves had been abused. For the law, see Thaddeus Sunseri, “Slave Ransoming in German East Africa, 1885–1922,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 3 (1993): 481–511.

⁶⁹ CMS, G3/A8/O, Executive Committee Meeting at Mamboya, April 6, 1900.

over wives and slaves alike. A scant few months after his baptism, she committed adultery with a church teacher.⁷⁰

Missionaries worked to refabricate Africans' social relationships, stitching monogamous marriages out of the variegated economic, social, and sexual fabric that connected Kaguru and Gogo people. Kaguru and Gogo people had acknowledged a variety of different conjugal or sexual relationships. A Kaguru man, for example, could pay *mafu*, a fee for sexual rights, to a woman who lived with her natal kin.⁷¹ A Gogo woman could likewise create an *mbuya* relationship with an unmarried man. Missionaries regarded *mbuya* and other relationships like it as illicit, adulterous affairs. When in 1917 the wife of the government administrator Petro was found to have repeatedly had sexual congress with two men, she was excommunicated. Husbands were expected to have exclusive sexual access to their wives. Wives, conversely, were expected to hold their husbands to account. Missionaries at Berega were appalled when, in 1903, the communicant Zakariya was found to have repeatedly committed adultery. His wife was found to have been complicit in his liaisons. Missionaries suspended all three offenders from communion, and sent them away from the mission station.⁷²

The practice of bookkeeping was one means by which Anglican missionaries obligated African converts to practice sexually exclusive monogamy. In medieval England, couples could, through a ritual called "handfasting," form a binding union simply by exchanging a verbal pledge. Oliver Cromwell's radical Protestants sought to regularize popular marital practices by requiring couples to submit their names to their parish registrar twenty-one days in advance of their wedding. One hundred years later, the Marriage Act of 1753 ruled that a marriage was null unless a record was made in the parish register, signed by the bride and groom, two witnesses, and the officiating clergy.⁷³ In German East Africa, missionaries were from 1901 empowered to administer both civil and Christian marriages. They kept careful records on who married whom, and presented the books yearly for review by German government officers.⁷⁴ These records transformed personal choices into a publicly verifiable pledge. In 1901, the catechumen Mulosa married Aksa at the church in Berega. Theirs was the first Christian marriage celebrated at Berega; the couple's names, and the names of two witnesses, headed the list of marriages in the mission's log book. But in 1903, Mulosa was found to have committed adultery. He wrote a letter of confession to the missionaries at Berega, vowing that "from this time forward my name is being removed from the book of the pleasures of this world." The missionaries carefully pasted Mulosa's note in the church log book, and made notes

⁷⁰ For Kayanka's quandary, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Peel, "Usagara and Ugogo Revisited," 1902–1903; Rees to Baylis, August 2, 1905; and DCT, Chama cha CMS Mvumi Log Book, entry for November 5, 1898. For Kayanka's wife, see CMS, G3/A5/O, *Usagara-Ugogo Notes*, vol. 2 (December 1903).

⁷¹ Beidelman, *The Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Tanzania*, 45.

⁷² For Petro's wife, see DCT, Kongwa Log Book, entry for February 27, 1917; for Zakariya, see DCT, Berega Log Book, entry for July 25, 1903.

⁷³ For handfasting, see Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1987), 190; for Cromwell, see Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage*, 12. See also Stone, *Road to Divorce*, 124.

⁷⁴ CMS, G3/A8/O, Executive Committee Meeting at Mpwapwa, June 6–7, 1901.

on its import.⁷⁵ By keeping records, missionaries crafted measures with which to evaluate converts' conduct.⁷⁶

Husbands and wives were liable to be punished when they did not abide by the letter of the law. In 1911, a conference of missionaries and African Christians ruled that a Christian man who committed adultery was to pay his lover's aggrieved spouse or father two head of cattle: one heifer and one steer. A Christian woman who committed adultery was obliged to pay the church the sum of ten rupees.⁷⁷ Adultery fines were not a novelty in patrilineal Ugogo, where cuckolded husbands customarily demanded compensation from their wives' lovers. What was new about the church's adultery fines was the breadth of their reach and the precision of their application. Adulterous Gogo wives had never before been fined for their transgressions, and in matrilineal Kaguru territory, adultery fines were uncommon. Missionaries insisted that adultery fines should be collected even when the aggrieved parties declined to demand compensation. In 1925, Banks found that Nyendera, an unmarried catechumen at Kilimatinde, had given birth to a child. Nyendera's father refused to demand an adultery fine from his daughter's lover, and Banks was disconcerted to find that "both parties profess to be penitent, but do not see their way to marry."⁷⁸ Banks required both offenders to pay a fine to the church, and lobbied Nyendera's father to demand compensation from his daughter's lover.

Missionaries granted divorces when husbands and wives could show their partners to be habitual adulterers. Under the civil code in England, adultery was from 1857 until 1937 the sole grounds on which the courts would allow couples to divorce.⁷⁹ The executive committee of the German East Africa Mission ruled in 1900 that the innocent party in an adultery case could be allowed to divorce. Divorce was also allowed in the case of desertion, if the husband or wife had not been heard from for four years. In 1919, the Kongwa church court found that the married communicant Elisha had a longstanding conjugal relationship with another woman. Moreover, Jemima, Elisha's proper wife, complained that he and his father treated her badly, punishing her "for not following certain Gogo customs." Missionaries excommunicated Elisha. Jemima was granted a divorce and given custody of their son.⁸⁰

Anglican church courts were not the only legal venue open to Kaguru and Gogo litigants, but their options were limited. The German military administered central Tanganyika virtually until the onset of World War I.⁸¹ With German civil officers thin

⁷⁵ The sources on Mulosa's marriage with Aksa are DCT, Berega Log Book, entries for February 4, 1901, and August 13, 1903; Mulosa to Bibi Akaman, n.d.; and Mulosa to Deekes at Nyangala, n.d.

⁷⁶ Political entrepreneurs in central Kenya likewise sought to discipline their constituents through recordkeeping. See Derek R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2004).

⁷⁷ CMS, G3/A8/O, Ussagara-Ugogo Mission Executive Committee, August 26, 1911.

⁷⁸ DCT, Kilimatinde Log Book, entry for January 11, 1924.

⁷⁹ Bruce Bennett, "The Church of England and the Law of Divorce since 1857: Marriage Discipline, Ecclesiastical Law and the Establishment," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45, no. 4 (1994): 625–641; and Gail Savage, "Divorce and the Law in England and France Prior to the First World War," *Journal of Social History* 21 (1988): 499–513.

⁸⁰ For the law, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Executive Committee Meeting at Mamboya, April 6, 1900; for Elisha and Jemima, see DCT, Kongwa Log Book, entries for October 17, 1919, and February 27, 1920.

⁸¹ Military officers administered the German station at Mpwapwa until 1906. Kondoia, in Gogo country, was not handed over to civilian administration until 1912. See RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 5, Kondoia District Book, vol. 1, "Historical Note," n.d.; and Juhani Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884–1914* (Helsinki, 1994), 115–116.

on the ground, Swahili-speaking agents from the Indian Ocean coast performed the daily work of government. Neither German officers nor their subordinates were willing to intervene in Kaguru and Gogo people's intimate disputes. When in 1903 the teacher Andreyka Kayanka petitioned the German Captain Fonck to punish the man who had cuckolded him, Fonck refused.⁸² It was not until 1928, under the new British mandate, that a system of local courts run by Kaguru and Gogo judges was established.⁸³ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, therefore, litigants seeking alternatives to missionary justice had to turn to Islam. Islam had long been practiced in East Africa's trading centers. In the 1910s it enjoyed a surge in popularity, as the railway brought Muslim traders and evangelists to central Tanganyika. Some Africans shuttled between religions, capitalizing on Islam's tolerance for polygamy. Samson Tofiki, an ex-houseboy for the missionary Cole, became a Muslim in the 1890s when he married a second wife. On becoming mortally ill in 1909, he sent word to Dr. Baxter, promising to renounce Islam and re-convert to Christianity. Men such as Tofiki were "venue-shopping," mining the resources of Christianity and Islam.⁸⁴

But there were good reasons to abide by missionaries' rules. In 1906, teachers in mission employ were paid ten rupees a month, considerably more than manual workers earned. Teachers and other church workers were also given land to cultivate, and building materials for their homes. Excommunicated church people were obliged to move at least a quarter-mile away from the mission station, abandoning the homes they had built. They were also obliged to drop their Christian names, and were cut off from any social interaction with the church community. Africans who enjoyed missionaries' favor were protected from the labor recruiters who impressed people for work on German-run plantations or on the railway. Old men who regularly attended church were likewise exempt from forced labor. For people invested in the Anglican mission, excommunication was a financial and social disaster.⁸⁵

Anglican missionaries used social, material, and legal sanctions to restructure Africans' social relationships. They protected runaway slave girls against senior male "owners," and married their charges to church teachers. They disciplined polygamous men, insisting that they disassociate themselves from all their wives save one. And they kept records, creating textual proof with which to hold husbands and wives accountable. Through their social and bureaucratic work, missionaries limited the role that mothers, uncles, fathers, brothers, patrons, or lovers could play in husbands'

⁸² CMS, G3/A8/O, *Usagara-Ugogo Notes*, vol. 2 (December 1903).

⁸³ RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 6, Mpwapwa District Book, vol. 2, "Resume of Native Authorities in the Mpwapwa District," 1931.

⁸⁴ For Islam's railway-born popularity, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Forsythe, Annual Letter, November 28, 1910; for Tofiki, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Dr. Baxter, Annual Letter, December 13, 1909. The term "venue-shopping" comes from Richard Roberts, *Litigants and Households: African Disputes and Colonial Courts in the French Soudan, 1895-1912* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2005).

⁸⁵ On wage levels, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Executive Committee Meeting, February 9, 1906; on the rule that excommunicated church members had to move their homes, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Executive Committee minutes, February 28, 1912, and Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism*, 148. On names and excommunication, see DCT, Central Church Council of the Tanganyika Mission, meeting on February 27 and March 1, 1926. On converts and forced labor, see DCT, Nyangala Log Book, entry for July 12, 1911. The labor history of late-nineteenth-century central Tanganyika is recounted in Thaddeus Sunseri, *Viliani: Labor Migration and Rural Change in Early Colonial Tanzania* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2002), chap. 6. On the consequences of excommunication in medieval England, see Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, chap. 1.

and wives' lives. They worked for the reorientation of African social life, for the preeminence of wedlock over other human relationships.

AFRICANS WERE ALSO LIVING UP to the letter of the law. Missionaries' archives, stuffed with record books and lists, were by no means a foreign world to African litigants. Kaguru and Gogo people had long concretized contestable decisions by keeping records. In 1899, the missionary Wood found that Kaguru elders recorded dates and facts by tying knots in a piece of string. One elder possessed a stick on which were recorded the results of three lawsuits: big notches stood for cows he had been awarded, little notches for goats. The elder told Wood, "this is our *kitab* [book]."⁸⁶ Sticks were like books because they permanently recorded human decisions. Litigants such as the unnamed Kaguru elder created records in order to render controversial judgments above dispute. Many people found missionaries' records to be helpful in resolving divisive social problems. During a tour through Ugogo in 1888, the missionary Pruen reported that petitioners "often ask me to look in my book and see if they have not been bewitched." Everyone knew it to be difficult to properly identify malevolent witches. Kaguru and Gogo people tested suspects by compelling them to undergo dangerous ordeals.⁸⁷ Pruen's petitioners sought a surer solution. They looked in missionaries' books for concrete, uncontestable evidence of wrongdoing.

For Gogo and Kaguru litigants, missionaries' practice of bookkeeping was useful in resolving their own arguments. Records were helpful because they interposed a third element—the archive—between human co-participants in an argument. In 1913 Nellie, a student at Mamboya, agreed to marry the teacher Andrea Uhimbo. Uhimbo had lived on the Indian Ocean coast for more than thirteen years. Before Nellie would marry him, she first insisted that he sign a letter "testifying to his intention to live in their own country of Ukaguru."⁸⁸ Her fiancé's promissory note gave her the prospect of living in close proximity to her natal kin. Records such as Uhimbo's note clarified changeable decisions. Aggrieved lovers, husbands, and wives used records as evidence in church courts. In 1905, the church teacher Maryamu accused a male teacher of asking her for sex. He wrote five letters to persuade her.⁸⁹ She kept the letters, and presented them to missionaries at Mamboya as evidence of his wrongdoing. Love letters were concrete proof of evil intentions. In 1904, the teacher Gideon Terekani was accused of wrongdoing with the inquirer Visimba. When Mamboya missionaries investigated, they found that Gideon had written love notes both to Visimba and to another teacher's wife. Presented with the evidence, Gideon confessed to his wrongdoing. "I have been deceitful before you and before God," he wrote in a letter to the missionaries.⁹⁰ By keeping notes and making records, aggrieved men and women made wrongdoers answerable to a higher power.

Recordkeeping was useful for litigants because it brought missionaries' authority

⁸⁶ A. North Wood, "Mamboya," *Church Missionary Gleaner* 26 (1899).

⁸⁷ For Pruen's petitioners, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Pruen to Lang, June 18, 1888; for witchcraft ordeals, see CMS, G3/A5/O, Price to Hutchinson, July 16, 1881, and Beidelman, *Moral Imagination*, 144–145.

⁸⁸ DCT, Mamboya Log Book, entry for August 12, 1913.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, entry for June 5, 1905.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, entries for March 27 and 28, 1904; and Gideon Terekani to David Rees, August 31, 1904.

to bear. Missionaries were obligated to punish adulterers and others who broke church laws. For African litigants, the church's regulations on marriage opened up grooves of representation that they could follow. Husbands and wives reinterpreted earlier sexual liaisons, recasting what were originally consensual relationships into violations of marital trust. In July 1894, the inquirer Sara quarreled with her husband, the Mamboya mission cook Yohana. The next day, Sara told missionaries that Yohana had committed adultery with the woman Magauge.⁹¹ When confronted with his wife's accusation, Yohana in turn accused his wife of committing adultery with a communicant at Mamboya. Sara's sin had occurred in 1891 or 1892, several years before Yohana reported it to the missionaries. Yohana and Magauge had likewise had congress, said Sara, "a long time back." Husband and wife had found it possible to live in harmony for several years after both had liaised with other people. Only when they sought to involve missionaries in their private quarrel did their earlier liaisons become "adultery," an infraction deserving punishment. By reinterpreting nonmarital sexual relationships as adultery, Sara and Yohana both sought to leverage the missionaries onto their own side in a private marital debate.

Making the accusation of adultery was a legal strategy for warring husbands and wives. It gripped missionaries' attention, and set a disciplinary process into motion. In 1922, Ainea Sembuli appeared before Mamboya missionaries to complain about the behavior of his wife, Loi. He reported that she "had a sharp temper, used insulting language, was often the worse for drink, and on one occasion boxed his ears several times." Loi was one of Miss Spriggs's earliest adoptees. Formerly a slave, she had married Ainea in 1898 at a ceremony that Spriggs had organized. Ainea found her to be a formidable spouse. Testifying before the church court, he refused to live with her. Loi, when called to testify, admitted to some of Ainea's charges, and agreed to pay the fine of a chicken as compensation for her wrongdoing. But, she added, "she had grave suspicions about her husband regarding his conduct with another woman." She had no proof, but her accusation against Ainea transformed what had been a disciplinary action directed against her into an inquiry about his conduct. After a long conversation that the missionaries refereed, Loi and Ainea agreed to live together once again.⁹²

By accusing their spouses of adultery or other moral infractions, husbands and wives invited missionaries to sit in judgment on their private disputes. Litigants cast about for means to shock or appall church courts, hoping to spur them into action. In October 1925, the Kilimatinde church council convened to hear teacher Meshak Mang'wela's complaint against the relatives of his wife, Damarsis. Meshak accused his in-laws of undermining his marriage: his wife's mother, he reported, wanted to see the couple separated. When called before the council, Damarsis widened the court's scope of inquiry, accusing Meshak of "being drunk, and neglecting his work as a teacher and ill treating her." Further questioning proved fruitless, the court's secretary reported, because "each time the parties were brought before [the council] they made different statements contradicting what had been said previously." Two

⁹¹ CMS, G3/A5/O, Wood to Baylis, August 21, 1894.

⁹² For Loi's biography, see CMS, Acc. 172 F1, Extracts from Miss Spriggs's Letters, 1898; for Ainea and Loi's arguments, see DCT, Mamboya Log Book, entry for December 15, 1922; for Kaguru wives' decorum, see Beidelman, *The Cool Knife*, 79–81. By 1938, Ainea had been excommunicated from the Anglican church. DCT, Berega Log Book, "Tangazo," September 11, 1938.

weeks after the hearing was adjourned, Meshak complained that his mother-in-law was still refusing to allow his wife to live with him.⁹³ The records do not tell us whether Meshak and Damarsis were Gogo or Kaguru, whether they really belonged to patrilocal or matrilineal families. Their argument was in any case about precisely this question. Damarsis's blood relatives kept her at her natal home, asserting their control over her fertility and labor. Meshak, in contrast, insisted that his wife should properly live at his residence. In this argument over Damarsis's future, husband and wife each got traction in the church court by impugning the other's conduct. They made moral accusations strategically, in order to convince the missionaries to act in their favor.

African husbands and wives transposed arguments over bridewealth, residence, and marital obligations into a framework that attracted missionaries' attention. In June 1925, the Kilimatinde teacher Yohana Ndahani complained that his wife, Akxa, had been taken from him by her brother. One of the animals that Yohana had paid as bridewealth had been taken back by its original owner. His brother-in-law had therefore reclaimed Akxa until Yohana could replace the cow with another. Three months after Yohana made his complaint, missionaries convened the church council to discuss the case. When called to testify, Akxa did not complain about the bride-wealth that Yohana had failed to pay. She accused him of "ill-treatment, drunkenness, and unfaithfulness with a woman." She called no witnesses to prove her accusation. When questioned, Yohana strenuously denied committing adultery. In the absence of evidence, the missionaries determined to keep a close watch on Yohana's behavior. Almost a year later, Akxa was still living at her natal home.⁹⁴

It is impossible to know whether Yohana Ndahani really committed adultery, or whether he was a drunkard or an abusive lout. Such questions were the church court's to answer. For historians, this and other cases illuminate how the accusation of adultery performed social and legal work for disputatious husbands and wives. Yohana and Akxa's argument was about the allocation of bridewealth. Damarsis and Meshak Mang'wela disagreed about the proper location for their marital home. Ainea and Loi argued over her lack of deference. But in court, husbands and wives recast their arguments to suit missionaries' framework. They strategically adopted a contractual definition of marriage, and reinterpreted their spouses' extramarital relationships as adulterous. By this representation, arguing husbands and wives laid out a path of legal and social action for missionary judges to follow.

Some couples did indisputably have sex outside marriage. For young men and women eager to be married, having sex was a means of forcing churchmen to endorse their plans. This strategy was by no means new. When a young Kaguru man could not persuade his maternal relatives to pay bridewealth to his lover's relations, he might elope with his intended, in an act called *kugalula*. Frustrated Gogo men could similarly elope with their paramours, following a ritualized process called *kupula*.⁹⁵ Young lovers could thereby force their elders' hand, speeding bridewealth negotiations along. Missionaries frowned on men and women who eloped, but they were

⁹³ DCT, Kilimatinde Log Book, entries for October 17 and October 28, 1925.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, entries for June 11 and August 26, 1925, and April 19, 1926.

⁹⁵ For *kugalula*, see Beidelman, *Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Africa*, 45; for *kupula*, see Mnaympala, *The Gogo*, 108–109, and Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 212.

inclined to marry young lovers who presented them with a *fait accompli*. In 1898, a woman named Kanyi, an ex-slave who had been adopted by missionaries, was found to have repeatedly spent the night at the house of Maganga, an inquirer at the church at Mvumi.⁹⁶ The missionaries at Mvumi ordered the couple to be married as soon as possible. By committing fornication, young lovers could obligate missionaries to broker marriages on their behalf.

This strategy of marriage formation was especially widely practiced in the years immediately following World War I. The war years were a time of tremendous social upheaval in central Tanganyika. Some 35,000 Gogo men were conscripted into German military service. British missionaries were interned, while African church teachers were arrested en masse. In the wake of the war, famine and disease unsettled human communities. Some 30,000 people perished in Ugogo.⁹⁷ But even in these desperate circumstances, Gogo and Kaguru converts were burnishing their Anglicanism. The church teacher Mikaeli conducted weekly services at Berega throughout the war years, save for the two Sundays when Germans occupied the church building. When the missionary Daulton returned to Kisokwe in 1918, converts lined the road, singing hymns of praise to God.⁹⁸ African Christians were actively drawing Anglican missionaries into their postwar building projects. The population in Ugogo expanded at an annual rate of 4.3 percent during the early 1920s, mostly through immigration.⁹⁹ Some of the newcomers allied with Gogo patrons. During the postwar famine, the unmarried woman Isanza binti Kinda in Muhalala grew cassava and distributed it to her dependents. She declared herself sultan, and by 1923 was governing some two hundred people.¹⁰⁰ Other people identified with Anglican missionaries. In 1920 there were 6,354 students attending school in and around Mvumi, compared with 4,096 in 1913.¹⁰¹ In 1922, Ralph Banks was collared by an elderly rainmaker, who asked that the missionaries educate his young son. "He said he wished him to learn everything we English knew," reported Banks.¹⁰² Entrepreneurs such as the rainmaker were tapping into the moral and material resources that missionary patrons offered.

In married life, too, Kaguru and Gogo people made claims on missionaries, seeking to transform dalliances formed during the war into socially recognizable marriages. At Kongwa, David Rees reported in 1920 that "a number of the Christians had fallen into a state of pitiable moral laxity, due in part to the absence of the administration of the marriage rite."¹⁰³ He noted, however, that his interviews with sinful fornicators were often rewarded with expressions of repentance. "When I rec-

⁹⁶ DCT, Chama cha CMS Mvumi, entry for September 13, 1898.

⁹⁷ The economic and demographic history is told in Gregory Maddox, "Mtunya: Famine in Central Tanzania, 1917–20," *Journal of African History* 31 (1990): 181–197, and Rigby, *Cattle and Kinship*, 21–22. The church history is in CMS, G3/A8/O, Simeoni Mtipula to Miss Jackson, June 29, 1916; Daulton to Manley, September 19, 1916.

⁹⁸ For Berega's service schedule, see DCT, Berega Service Book, entries for July 30, 1916, and August 13, 1916, and Knox, *Signal on the Mountain*, 206; for Daulton's return to Kisokwe, see CMS, G3/A8/O, Daulton to Manley, March 21, 1918.

⁹⁹ Gregory Maddox, "Environment and Population Growth in Ugogo, Central Tanzania," in Maddox, James Giblin, and Isaria Kimambo, eds., *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania* (London, 1996), 43–65.

¹⁰⁰ RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 23, Manyoni District Book, vol. 1, entry titled "Muhalala," n.d.

¹⁰¹ Attendance at Buigiri likewise grew from 2,808 pupils to 3,588. The statistics are from *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society*, 1914 and 1921.

¹⁰² CMS, Banks, Annual Letter, November 6, 1922.

¹⁰³ CMS, Rees, Annual Letter, November 20, 1920.

ollect my sin I am angry with myself,” said Rees’s prototypical penitent. By admitting guilt, penitents obligated missionaries to act in their favor. In 1918, missionaries at Kongwa discovered that during the tumult of war, the communicant Emi had taken up residence with Semango, who had fathered three children with her.¹⁰⁴ The missionaries had little choice in the matter: Rees insisted that Semango should pay a nominal bridewealth to Emi’s relatives, reasoning that doing so would “make it a proper marriage at least from the Gogo point of view.” In 1921, missionaries at Kongwa found that Timoteyo and Mwendwa, both communicants, had repeatedly had sex during the war. The church court ordered their fathers to arrange a proper marriage for the lovers. However, Timoteyo’s father steadfastly refused to pay bride-wealth. When later that year it became evident that Mwendwa was pregnant, the missionaries determinedly lectured Timoteyo’s parents that “only if Timoteyo marries Mwendwa can they in any way claim the child.” Within a week, Timoteyo’s father reported that bridewealth negotiations had been concluded. A month later, the couple were married.¹⁰⁵

Young men and women such as Timoteyo and Mwendwa used missionaries’ sanction against extramarital sex to trump stingy relatives, and to transform impermanent liaisons into valid marriages. At church court proceedings, lovers offered evidence of their conjugal relationships, then asked missionaries for support in transforming these dalliances into marriages. Through their sexual liaisons, young lovers made missionaries into wedding planners.

IN THE 1920s, THE NEW BRITISH ADMINISTRATION curtailed church courts’ authority over married life. The 1921 Marriage Ordinance established a procedure by which Christian Africans could obtain governmental recognition for their marriages. In 1928, a formal system of native courts was established in central Tanganyika. Run by chiefs and headmen, the tribunals judged marriage and other family cases in accordance with what the British euphemistically called “customary law.”¹⁰⁶ The prerogatives of church courts were thereby curtailed: missionaries and African priests could marry church adherents and excommunicate adulterers, but by the late 1920s, legal authority over marriage and divorce was vested with the civil authorities.

Nevertheless, African husbands and wives continued to use church courts to argue about their marriages. In 1945, the missionary Mrs. Bakewell was posted to Kaguru country. By that time, her missionary colleagues had been working in the region for fully seventy years. Commenting on church business, she complained that “each year a group of church elders are elected for the church council . . . and they

¹⁰⁴ DCT, Kongwa Log Book, entry for November 2, 1918.

¹⁰⁵ DCT, Kongwa Log Book, entries for December 21, 1921, and February 8, June 3, June 4, June 17, and July 15, 1922.

¹⁰⁶ For ordinances pertaining to marriage, see Tanganyika Territory, *Ordinances under the Tanganyika Order in Council, 1920* (London, 1923), no. 12; Tanganyika Territory, *Ordinances Enacted during the Year 1923* (Dar es Salaam, 1924), no. 17; for local government courts, see RH, Micr. Af. 472, Reel 6, Mpwapwa District Book, vol. 2, “Resume of Native Authorities in the Mpwapwa District,” 1931; and Tanganyika Territory, “Supplement to the Gazette, vol. IX, 1928” (Dar es Salaam, 1928). These legal reforms were an aspect of the larger institutionalization of “indirect rule” in Tanganyika Territory. See Mahmood Mamdani’s illuminating *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J., 1996).

spend their year of office listening to extremely petty and sometimes unpleasantly gross quarrels between so-called Christian husbands and wives.”¹⁰⁷ Mrs. Bakewell thought that church elders’ attention to spouses’ quarrels manifested the triviality of Kaguru people’s Christianity. In fact, the courts’ focus on marriage illuminates husbands’ and wives’ agency. Precolonial Kaguru and Gogo conjugal practices did not invite husbands or wives to think of themselves as bound in an exclusive sexual relationship. Sexual conduct was a matter for them to negotiate over. Men with material and social resources got leverage over their wives’ sexual services; poor men, by contrast, had to compete with their wives’ brothers and other paramours for the women’s loyalty. Entrepreneurial women could marshal support from kin, lovers, and patrons in order to abridge husbands’ control. In the late nineteenth century, Anglican missionaries sought to interpose a third party between negotiating husbands and wives. In record books and on marriage certificates, they made marriage look like a contract authorized by God. Church courts could therefore condemn extramarital sexual activity as “adultery.” But it was not only missionaries who were reformulating marital relationships. In front of church courts, African husbands and wives sorted through their spouses’ social lives, looking for evidence that could usefully draw missionary judges’ attention. They used a moral grammar to reframe arguments over wives’ deference, over bridewealth improperly paid, and over the location of marital residence. Litigants thereby laid out avenues of analysis and action for church courts to follow. Kaguru and Gogo litigants interpellated missionary judges, obligating them to play a part.¹⁰⁸

This mode of agency did not work against power. Kaguru and Gogo litigants contracted with colonialism. Political power in colonial Africa was enacted in bureaucracy: in the public meetings where district commissioners castigated wrongdoers and passed down rulings, in the issuing of identity cards, and in the instructive judgments of church and government courts.¹⁰⁹ The exercise of bureaucratic discipline made it possible for colonial functionaries to typecast Africans as tribesmen, as husbands and wives, or as sinners. The textual detritus of their reformist agenda has come down to us in government and church archives. It is with this archival evidence in view that one legal historian has argued that empire was an effort to “appropriate people through the medium of writing, to colonize them through the power of writing, and to regulate their lives through the order of writing.”¹¹⁰ The *raison d’être* of Africanist legal history has been to illuminate the gulf between colonial officials’ stereotyped definitions of behavior and Africans’ more flexible understandings.

But in contrasting the textual world of governance with real African life, scholars have too often ignored Africans’ own work of representation. For colonial subjects, the stereotypes defined in government bureaucracy opened up lines of action and

¹⁰⁷ CMS, Mrs. Bakewell, Annual Letter, August 23, 1945.

¹⁰⁸ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, 2001), 116–118.

¹⁰⁹ Jan-Georg Deutsch, “Celebrating Power in Everyday Life: The Administration of Law and the Public Sphere in Colonial Tanzania, 1890–1914,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 15 (2002): 93–104; Angélique Haugerud, *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya* (Cambridge, 1997); Peterson, *Creative Writing*, chap. 6.

¹¹⁰ Hawkins, *Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana*, 3.

imagination. Africans could take the simplified characters that officials sketched and play with them. In central Tanganyika, litigants before Anglican courts represented themselves as loyal wives or wronged husbands, and named their spouses as sinners. Through this typecasting they leveraged themselves into the moral framework that missionaries authorized. Their representational work invited missionaries themselves to adopt a role, as judges bound to punish wrongdoers. Legal bureaucracy was by no means a foreign world for African litigants, because textualized archetypes would not stay in the archives.

Historians' task is to give archives a broader reading, to explore how the prototypical characters sketched in record books came to inhabit the political and social world. We should, that is, think of archives as more than source material, more than a record of past events. In writing down husbands' and wives' names, in recording their sexual and moral failings, missionaries were gaining control over Africans' conduct. And in living up to the law, in representing themselves as wronged wives or as penitent sinners, Africans were exerting pressure on missionaries. Archives inspired action, oriented behavior, and opened up channels for claim-making. Our task is to reconstruct this theater.

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