

## Floating Reed Islands

### Gendered Stories of Resilience during Ecological Disaster in the Mara Region, Tanzania

Jan Bender Shetler

Oral histories by Jan Bender Shetler with elderly women of the Mara Region of Tanzania, August–November 2010

*The interviews transcribed here were gathered from elderly women about the time of famine in the late nineteenth century, although many of the accounts do not mention that context specifically. They provide gendered insights into how people coped with hunger and environmental collapse. The stories are related to the narrator's grandmother or great-grandmother. Most of them are from an area of the Mara Region on the southeastern shore of Lake Victoria, just south of the Kenya border. The Mara Region is made up of some fifteen (or sixty, depending on how you count) different small ethnic groups that never coalesced into larger pan-ethnic entities, including groups from three major language families (East Nyanza Bantu, Southern Nilotic Tatoga, and Western Nilotic Luo) A few of the interviews come from my earlier research in 1995 from the region's interior. Taken as a whole, these gendered oral histories demonstrate that women played a central role in responding to famine conditions by making and keeping alive regional networks of survival through their memory.*

*The first stories rarely talk about the context of famine but rather have the odd similarity of being stories about women accidentally floating out onto Lake Victoria on an island of reeds until they came to a new home in the Mara Region. Women from the Ruri ethnic group in the South Lake talk about their grandmothers who arrived there floating on reed islands that had broken off across Lake Victoria. A deeper analysis of these stories demonstrates that they took place during a time of famine in the late nineteenth century, and the women married into the communities where they landed.*

**Interview with Nyasanje Marita Masau, Nyamweko Nyashenene Maria Masau, and Kasigwa Nyafuru Sarai Majangu, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai**

KASIGWA: The Wehunjo clan on my mother's side came from Uzinza, south across the lake. Two sisters were gathering grasses to weave baskets along the lake, and when they pulled hard on the reeds an island of matted reeds broke off from the shore and floated out into the lake. They stayed on the water so long that their family had a funeral for them at home, thinking they were eaten by a crocodile. They traveled for two weeks and had no hair left on their heads because they had no other food and ate it for sustenance. They landed in Kwaya [Mara Region] and were taken in by a person who gave them something to eat and helped them to regain their strength. The younger sister, Nyasinde, stayed in Kwaya, while the older sister Umbere went to Ruri [Mara], where she married Manyama and had three daughters. One of those girls, Nyanjegere, gave birth to my grandmother who gave birth to my mother. Umbere's children married to Zanaki, Butiama, and Ukerewe [all in the Mara Region]. We go to these places to greet our relatives and they come to see us.

**Interview with Nyasega Rosalia Masaju, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai**

NYASEGA: My great-grandmother on my father's side was from the Mara River. Nyasega was at her father's house. Baba Egongoro married Nyasega's mother in Mara. Then there was a problem and Nyasega ran away. Her mother Nyakerenge was left at home with no help. Nyasega went to the river and the mat of reeds broke loose and carried her away, down the river. The reeds left with her on it and floated out into the lake and came to Suguti. The reeds floated here with the daughter, Nyasega.

**Interview with Nyasaru Nyasige Naomi Nyamara, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai**

NYASARU: The grandmother who gave birth to my father came from Bukoba, across Lake Victoria, floating on an island of reeds, to Ukerewe, or at least his clan was from Ukerewe [a large island off the south shore of the Mara Region]. The Haya people from Bukoba are a "joking clan" (*utani*) with us. My grandfather went to Ukerewe and married her there, her name was Nyanjugu.

**Interview with Mtoba Nyamiti Makuna Mang'araria, Ruri, September 11, 2010, Bwai**

MTOBA: Makuna was my grandmother, the mother of my father. Nyamiti was his father's sister. She was a girl from Kara Island [off the south coast of the Mara Region] who floated on a reed island to get here. She was bought for food. My father's relatives bought her for food, in the time of my great grandfathers.

**Interview with Mkira Kerenge Amina Hasan Sambiji, Ruri, September 11, 2010, Bwai**

MKIRA: Kerenge is the name given to me on my mother's side—my great-great-great-grandmother. She came here from Kamasi near Ukerewe, an island. Four women came together from there to Suguti. They traveled here on a floating island of reeds that broke off when they went to collect grass for making baskets. They arrived at Suguti [Mara Region] this way, and people took them into their homes, they were “found” or “picked up” people (*okotwa*) and were not married. They settled here in Bwai among the Shora clan. They came to Matoto's house from Suguti. They lived there for a time and then had news that a brother had come earlier from Ukerewe Island. The sisters came with the reeds to the peninsula. They asked for their brother who was already here. He already had a family here. They stayed with him and got married there. There were others who came here from other places. They brought Luo and Ikizu from Shirati [Mara Region]. They were bought with sorghum. They went in boats with sorghum to Luo and Ikizu. This was during the time of my grandmother on my mother's side. It was during a time of hunger when a half *debe* of food would buy a child. They wanted food and would sell their children. The Ruri wanted the children to marry and to adopt into the family. The Luo were known as “Wagaya,” a bought person.

*The next set of stories is more explicitly in the time of famine from the perspective of those communities that took in famine victims. In the Mara South Lake region, members of the Ruri ethnic group recount stories of ancestors stolen from Luo-speaking areas of the Mara North Lake. They describe men who lured the children into boats with food during a famine. Luo and Ruri languages are from completely distinct and not mutually understandable language families. Other stories about the taking of children in boats talk about this as pawning*

children for food during a famine. Few of these children ever found their way home but were married into the new community. A few accounts talk about their return.

**Interview with Nyamambara Juliana Yokobo, Ruri, September 8, 2010, Mugango**

NYAMAMBARA: I have Luo blood on both sides of my family even though I am Ruri [South Lake, Mara]. Ruri men went up to Luo areas [North Lake, Mara] with boats and had porridge (*ugali*) on the boats. They invited children to come into the boat to eat and then they would kidnap the children to take them home. In that time people married because of hunger for food. The children went to the lake to fetch water and would be kidnapped. My grandmother came this way as a little girl; the fishermen gave them food and then took them away. My grandfather on my father's side took her as a kidnapped child and raised her until she was big enough to marry.

A LISTENER AT THE INTERVIEW: They would give food for the bride wealth in marriage. At least five children were taken at a time in this way; it happened a lot. Here in Ruri they had plenty of millet and sorghum, while there was a famine in Luo areas.

**Interview with Nyasige Wagonjo, Ruri, September 8, 2010, Mugango**

NYASIGE: My grandfather, Egonjo, the son of Njeje, was Luo, and I am Ruri. Ruri put him in a boat, a *mtumbwi* canoe, and brought him here. He was still small and it was a time of hunger. His parents got food, and they took the children. They tempted them with food to get into the boat. They came here to be workers. There were not many people here at the time. They mostly went to take children from Luo country and Kuria Kine on the North Lake [Mara].

My grandmother on my mother's side was from Ngoreme [South Interior, Mara]. She was also bought for food in a time of hunger. Here they had a lot of food, while there was hunger there. Sometimes after the famine the parents would try to come and take their children back again. During German rule, porters were forced to carry loads for the Chief to the next stop. When the porters from Ngoreme were resting at the Ruri Chief's house before returning, they happened to see a woman bringing water and recognized her as their sister Nyabise, who had been taken

from them. They went home and told their family that she was with the Kara [Ruri]. So people came from her home to see and claim her, even though she was already married there. They called for her to come out until her husband welcomed them inside and made a feast, butchering a cow to welcome her relatives. But when her husband found out that they wanted to take Nyabise back he asked whether they wanted him to pay the bride wealth for her. At first they refused and said they just wanted to take her home, but later agreed to take the bride wealth and went home to Maji Moto in Ngoreme. From then on they visited back and forth with her, and she went and stayed with them for a year. But she remained in Ruri as the wife of my grandfather.

**Interview with Nyafuru Zura Marigeri, Ruri, September 9, 2010, Mugango**

NYAFURU: I was from a Ruri lineage that took slaves. The father of my grandfather was from Ngoreme. My mother was born in Ngoreme and taken in time of hunger. They went to Ngoreme and bought the children for food. They were adopted as children into families here. My grandfather ran away back to Ngoreme, after he was here a long time and had two children and a wife. They came after him and said he should not leave the children, so he came back here to be with his wife and children. Ngoreme had too much sun and the millet died. It got better for them later, during the time of the Germans.

**Interview with Chausiku Marita Kwambara, Ruri, September 9, 2010, Kuruwaki**

CHAUSIKU: My grandmother who was my mother's mother was from Simbiti, in Suba along the North Lake [Mara]. The Ruri came with food and fooled the children and took them away in boats; many children came this way. It happened a long time ago, I don't know when, maybe the time of the Germans. They were taken in *mitumbwi* canoes. The Ruri wanted to get more people here. So they bought people who would not have any kin. Because they were without kinship they were like slaves, dependents. Whoever bought them had authority to marry them to whoever they wanted. They became like children of the house and would be taken care of very well. My grandmother was married here in this way.

*The next set of stories is from the perspective of Luo-speaking North Lake people whose children were taken during times famine, most of them around 1890.*

*Their stories describe the Great Hunger of Eating Livestock Hides. These accounts relate how severe the hunger was and how people coped. The desperate nature of their circumstances is obvious in these stories.*

**Interview with Priscilla Philemon Ageke, Luo-Kenya-Kamageta in Luo-Kakseru, September 14, 2010, Shirati Kabwana**

PRISCILLA: My grandmother said there was a big hunger when all the food was finished. They burned livestock hides and boiled them in water to get some nutrition. My grandmother said it was in the time of her mother, so my great-grandmother. They did not go anywhere to get help because there was nowhere to go. If you got food, you would be killed by those who came to take your food. Those who had food came to buy children or cattle if they had any. If you are starving you do what you need to do. They took both girls and boys and they never came back. When they were sold we did not know where they went. I don't know what people came or who they were. It was just commerce, it could be anyone. I don't know if it was only Luo who had a famine then.

During the time of hunger some walked in with food to trade. People from Ukerewe came to take children. Someone said that children were taken at that time. But I only heard that they were bought with food from the boats. The person who said this knew where children were taken to in Ukerewe. One of these came back to visit later in Kamageta [North Lake, Mara]. He was up to buy fish and came home to visit his mother. He was already old before I was born, but because of this connection people kept going there to marry long after this. One young girl married there in Ukerewe, but after her husband died she moved back here. The big hunger when these children left was called the Hunger of Eating Livestock Hides; there were other smaller, more common ones, but this one was the worst.

**Interview with Tereza Aneta, Luo-Ugu in Luo-Kakseru, September 15, 2010, Shirati Nyakina**

TEREZA: Both the mother of my grandmother and my grandmother were in the bad famine. They farmed to help themselves. The Kara [South Lake, Mara] came here in boats to take children for food. They brought food with them and took the children; the parents got the food. No one stole them. There were none in our family that went that way, it was so long ago.

**Interview with Amina Pangani, Luo-Kenya, September 15, 2010, Shirati Nyakina**

AMINA: I was born during a time called the Hunger of Ngweso (Locust). The government brought food then. But an early hunger was called the Hunger of Eating Livestock Hides. They didn't go anywhere to get food, everyone just died. But some came to take children; they brought food and took them. Even the Kara came in boats; they wanted girls. From my family some were taken. My uncle, Odongo, was in a war with others at the time of hunger.

*Another set of stories that women tell in many sites in the Mara Region narrate ancestors who left to find a new home during a time of famine, upon becoming pregnant before marriage, or undergoing circumcision. They are referred to in these stories as women "picked up" or found by the roadside.*

**Interview with Kasigwa Nyafuru Sarai Majangu, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai**

KASIGWA: One of my names is from my great-grandmother Nyafuru Rugemba. She was from the Island of Kara [off the south shore of the Mara Region] and got pregnant while she was still at home as a girl. The Kara did not think a girl should give birth before she got married. As a result, the family said that the baby should be left to die in the wilderness. But she ran away and got in a boat to the mainland at Majita [South Lake, Mara]. She came to Buringa, to the clan of the Ringazi, and was taken in by two mothers when she cried that those in the boat said she had been thrown away. They took her to their husband and said, "Look, we found this girl and took her in, we did not pay anything for her but picked her up. We will call her Nyafuru after the fish." The husband called her and asked who she was and why they threw her out. She said, "I am pregnant." Her baby died after she gave birth, but she later married and stayed there. She gave birth to the grandmother who gave birth to my father.

**Wakuru Nyakire, Sizaki in Ikizu, September 21, 2010, Nyamuswa**

WAKURU: My grandmother who gave birth to my mother was "picked up" (*okotwa*) in a time of hunger. She and her sister left home to escape hunger and her sister died. They were Maasai [South Interior Serengeti, Mara and east] girls and taken in by my grandfather and incorporated

into this home. He married her. So they have inherited Maasai culture. She had one child, no more. She said that if she did, they would go back to Maasai country. She was picked up near Guta, still Sizaki [South Lake, Mara] but in the wilderness. They came in a time of famine to find food; otherwise the Maasai came to steal cattle.

**Interview with Nyabanane Kirochi, Nata, September 23, 2010, Mbisio**

NYABANANE: My father was Kirochi, son of Shoka. I don't know any more about him because he came from Ngoreme [South Interior Mara] with his mother, Nyabitara, when he was a child. She had a child but was not yet married, and left home because of that. It was not good to give birth at home if you were not circumcised, but she was already. My father died when I was just small.

**Interview with Esta Mukami Nyangi, Kuria-Kiroba, September 26, 2010, Nyabange**

ESTA: My grandfather Buhoro married another wife who was Luo. She ran away herself from home because of hunger and after walking a long way knocked on a man's door one night. When he saw it was a woman he asked who it was. She answered, "It is me, the one you will pick up." So the young man took her into his home. He was not married yet, so the next day he introduced her to his parents. They asked where she had come from. Mugaya [meaning Luo or "slave"], who was already a mature woman, avoided the question by her reply that they were lucky because she knew how to make rain. His parents, seeing that her clothes were worn from her long journey, skinned a goat and made her something new to wear. Then they asked her to make rain and an enormous rain started, making the parents very happy. Her name was Mugaya and the name is now used a lot in the family because she could make rain. Because of the Maasai raids it was too dangerous to return home, and so she stayed and married the man. She came on her own and said, don't ask me where I came from, you have picked me up.

### Commentary

On the face of it, these stories told by women about the displacement of their ancestors may be hard to understand as environmental history. The stories



are not obviously about famine, but when paired with other oral narratives and historically contextualized during the time of ecological collapse and disaster in the late nineteenth century, they begin to take on new meaning. Their stories are very different from those told by men about this time period that describe how famine and environmental collapse led to the disruption and reformulation of ethnic group identities, rooted in a particular landscape.<sup>1</sup> Men's stories allow us to see how ethnic traditions imagined the landscape as a discrete ethnic homeland. Women, however, who do not even acknowledge that they know "history," are much more concerned about keeping alive the stories of their ancestors that endured hardship coming from distant places so that their communities could prosper through the regional networks they created. Environmental historians seeking to understand community response to drought and ecological change must take a gendered approach to oral tradition. Women's memories of widespread networks provide critical insight into the historical dynamics beyond isolated "tribal"<sup>2</sup> narratives that enabled people to survive and recover from ecological disaster. These narratives evoke images of shifting regional connections, and women's roles as cross-cultural mediators are at the center of strategies for community resilience and security.

These interviews with women took place in 2010, when I returned to the Mara Region where I had been doing interviews on the oral traditions of ethnic groups, mostly with elderly men beginning in 1995. That earlier research resulted in an environmental history of the region based on the core spatial images of men's historical narratives.<sup>3</sup> I went back to investigate women's historical memory because I had been told before that "women did not know history" and only told folk tales and gossip. What I did find from interviewing ninety-five women in five different ethnic groups was that women do preserve and pass on a very different kind of history than men. Male representations of the history as a people rooted in a very particular ethnic place are the bread and butter of the common "tribal histories" of Africa. Because women in this region leave their homes at marriage and go to live with their husbands' family (patrilocal), often in a different language and ethnic group, they have become the memory-keepers of far-flung regional networks critical to the survival of the community during times of famine or conflict. Women thus control a very different set of memories than men, making historical research a gendered activity.

The methodology I used to understand gendered histories had to work around women's denial of knowing any history at all. The category of

historical narrative was gendered male, and all agreed that women did not to know history as such. I thus tried different approaches to finding out what other kinds of knowledge about the past women maintained and passed on. I eventually learned that women were most comfortable relating the stories or talking about names and objects passed on to them by their own grandmothers. With much more prompting, I also got them to tell their own life stories. In each community I went with a trusted friend who guided me to women who were respected for their cultural knowledge. I became part of the social networks of my guides, and the women extended their own stories to me from this perspective. I spoke in Swahili, but my guide often translated women's responses from the myriad of Mara languages. Only one category of women stepped outside of the accepted gendered genres of oral tradition to tell public history; that is, women who had taken on an independent male role in the community. This role was accepted throughout the region as an option for women to act as men when their fathers had no son to inherit (*omosome*).<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the nature of oral transmission in this region allows the historian to untangle the meaning of these interview excerpts that depict the pervasive stories of displaced ancestors during famine times. According to the scholarship on oral tradition in Africa and elsewhere, oral traditions are built around a set of core images that are elaborated anew as the speaker constructs the story each time it is told. These are different from the memorized stories that are told by professional ballad singers or *griot* in West Africa.<sup>5</sup> In the Mara Region, some elders are better and more respected at telling oral tradition, but everyone participates in hearing and exchanging historical memory. In my earlier work on men's more public oral traditions of ethnic origins, migration, and settlement, I theorized that the core images used in those narratives are spatial in nature, representing particular places and landscapes with social and political meaning for ethnic identity. The core spatial images of the women's stories that appear here, however, are those of forging extensive interethnic networks across the lake and throughout the region by the connections made as a result of the exchange of displaced people in times of famine. Although men also tell famine stories of moving to other places to seek aid, they tell them as a "tribal" narrative of how the ethnic group came to its current home settled by people from other places.

Women, however, tell the particular stories of their grandmothers or grandfathers and remember their birthplaces as critical social knowledge that links them to distant places and people necessary for them to survive

and thrive in a new place. In a system of patrilineal marriage patterns, women left their natal homes and joined their husband's community at marriage. They were specifically charged with remembering the networks that those ancestors brought with them because they continued to be important as links to places for help during times of famine. Although they tell very particular stories of individual ancestors, they evoke a larger pattern of regional connections across ethnic groups that were created or activated during the time of disasters. The core spatial images of networks linked by displaced women reaching out beyond the region to adjacent areas provide evidence for the dynamics of change in this era.

Women first acquired this knowledge from their grandmothers in the private and intimate space of the home where they slept from approximately age six to the time they were married. At night, the girls were entertained by their grandmothers' animal fables, teaching them about sex and marriage, or relating the tales of their ancestors. Thus, the oral histories recounted here must be understood as knowledge passed on to girls from their grandmothers in a form that they were ready to hear and accept. Many of the grandmothers' stories instructed the girls on how to survive when they moved to join their future husband in a strange community, perhaps speaking another language. They had to learn the relationships within that new family in order to get help for their daily tasks and negotiate their position in the family, as well as to maintain their relationships back home in case things turned out badly for them. Their very survival depended on learning grandmother's lessons, but the community also valued this knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Communities throughout East Africa during the late nineteenth century experienced drought, the spread of epidemic disease among humans and livestock, and environmental collapse. This period of ecological disasters resulted from a combination of El Niño climate patterns and the indirect effects of caravan trade (beginning as early as the late eighteenth century and reaching its height in the late nineteenth century) which brought cloth, beads, guns, and wire from the Indian Ocean coast in return for ivory and slaves.<sup>7</sup> The trade also brought smallpox and rinderpest, along with increased competition for land and resources. When communities moved away to survive, tsetse fly bush encroached into areas that had been kept open and resulted in the spread of trypanosomiasis and sleeping sickness.<sup>8</sup> Communities responded to these challenges with a variety of strategies, ranging from gathering wild food to, as a last resort, pawning their children for food or migrating in search of new land. Women were often at the center of

these strategies as the ones who went looking for food, the ones who were traded for food, or the ones who were married out as the critical link between communities.<sup>9</sup>

What is most striking about the memories of today's elderly women is the mobility of their pre-colonial grandmothers across long distances, in contrast to their own more limited movement within colonial "tribal" boundaries. The stories of the earlier generation portray a particularly itinerant population of women, with significant effects on the nature of memory that was passed on to their granddaughters. Intermarriage across long distances to other language groups seemed to be almost the norm, or at least preferred, in this context, as families sought to spread out their risks by making connections to distant communities where food was more plentiful. In order to survive, households put a premium on extending their networks into other ecological zones through marriage alliances or as individuals seeking a new home.

Those distant connections often continued after the disasters, with visits for funerals, weddings, and other events. Many of the women I interviewed had memories of visiting the families of their grandmothers in distant



These three related women were interviewed in September 2010 about the trials of their grandmother floating on a reed island into Lake Victoria. *Photograph by author*

places, with decreasing frequency as time went on. Through the women's stories about their grandmothers, it becomes clear that the exchange of women across boundaries was the main strategy for dealing with ecological disasters in the late nineteenth century. As a result of these connections through women, social networks expanded dramatically within the region and beyond, allowing for communities not only to survive but also recover from famine and prosper. Women were the medium of this exchange, but also the ones who remembered this in their stories of ancestors who came in times of hunger.

In their oral histories, women explained how their grandmothers (or grandfathers) came to the Mara Region from a distant place, across the lake or inland in the late nineteenth century. Putting these excerpts together, it becomes clear that all of this movement occurred in a context of famine and that children were exchanged or pawned for food by desperate parents as a last resort. There is a clear message that "They wanted food and would sell their children."<sup>10</sup> Another text says it more bluntly: "the parents got the food; no one stole them [the children]."<sup>11</sup> Yet another woman said, "If you are starving you do what you need to do; they took both girls and boys and they never came back . . . they were sold."<sup>12</sup> In fact, we know from many other sources throughout East Africa that during the late-nineteenth-century droughts, people traded whatever they could for food, including their children, who they assumed would be adopted into new families and find security.<sup>13</sup>

It is significant that it is the North Lake Luo women who mince no words about the need to trade children for food and who bring up the language of "slavery" in relation to children that were taken rather than received. They did not always even know where the people were coming from to get children, identifying them as from Ukerewe, Kara, and Ruri, or generally as South Lake people. They identified the famine when children disappeared as "the Hunger of Eating Livestock Hides" because there was nothing else left.<sup>14</sup> Another Luo woman said that during this hunger, "They didn't go anywhere to get food, everyone just died. But some came to take children . . . they wanted girls."<sup>15</sup> This was also the time of a thriving slave trade around Lake Victoria, which connected in Mwanza, south of the Mara Region, with the caravan routes to the Indian Ocean coast.<sup>16</sup> Drawing on the new concept of slavery from the coast, one woman said that Luo people, the most common victims of trade, "were known as 'Wagaya,' a bought person." A Ruri woman says outright, "I was from a Ruri lineage that took slaves."<sup>17</sup> They use the

language of commercial slavery—buying and selling—despite the reality that they were incorporated into new Mara families as children or wives.<sup>18</sup>

Why then do the women who tell these stories about their grandmothers insist on their coming, for example, on floating reed islands rather than being bought for food as we assume they must have been? In fact, embedded within the same stories are often both the tragic narrative of selling children for food as well as that of girls appearing on floating reed islands or running away from home. One of the narrators asserts that her grandmother “floated on an island of reeds to get here,” but then goes on to say that “she was bought for food.”<sup>19</sup> Another story is about a girl floating down the Mara River on a reed of mats, but the narrator also adds that the girl had a problem at home and ran away.<sup>20</sup> It seems important to the women who tell these stories not to tell them as a simple story of a grandmother traded by her family for food. It is only by pulling apart the stories common to each of the different areas and putting them within the larger regional context of famine that we begin to understand why women told these stories about their grandmothers as a way to maintain the valuable networks produced by these exchanges.

One answer to the question of why women covered up the exchange of food for children might be to shift the cause or blame for displacement to an accident of nature, that is, reeds breaking off from the shore, or to the victim herself, that is, girls who went into the boats to get food or who got pregnant before marriage. Thus, the home community and the parents were not responsible for the loss of girls who disappeared on floating reeds, were kidnapped by men, or ran away from home after getting pregnant. But, oddly enough then, these stories are told by the receiving community, specifically by a grandmother, who would have little motive to absolve the sending community, to her grandchild.

The concern for the receiving community who took in the girls, however, seems to be that they themselves are not depicted as predatory but rather compassionate for welcoming the girls into their homes.<sup>21</sup> The stories often describe how the girls were taken into their new homes using the verb (*ku*) *okotwa*—to be “found” or to be “picked up,” used in the passive form that does not assign responsibility for the action. Many of the stories of girls who were “picked up” say that she came after running away from home when she got pregnant “while she was still at home.” In one story the co-wives took her home to their husband, saying, “Look, we found this girl and took her in, we did not pay anything for her but picked her up. We will call her Nyafuru after the fish.”<sup>22</sup> It may well be that these girls ran away on their own, or perhaps

they went out looking for food, but more likely they were sent by their parents to find food to send home or to relieve the burden of feeding everyone at home. A pregnant girl was more vulnerable to exile when she was not married or circumcised. A similar story states that two Maasai girls left home “to escape hunger” and were “picked up in the wilderness” looking for food.<sup>23</sup> One of these girls running from hunger came to a home and bargained to be taken in because she was a rainmaker and could help them.<sup>24</sup> Women claimed the agency of their grandmothers leaving home on their own rather than being traded away by their parents, and the compassion of the community that “picked them up.”

A second reason for these alternate narratives might be that floating reed islands are a device to cut off these children from their natal homes and make them fully part of their new homes. Girls, and sometimes boys, could be adopted or more often married into a family as valuable members because they “had no kin.” The first story talks about the girls’ family having “a funeral for them at home, thinking they were eaten by a crocodile.”<sup>25</sup> Since the girls would not have known about a funeral, one must assume that the story functions to break ties at home with finality. Ruri South Lake communities, who captured children, practiced matrilineal marriage patterns, meaning that a man who began to accumulate wealth could consolidate that wealth only by marrying a woman whose children would directly inherit his wealth, rather than having it claimed by their matrilineal kin.

One Ruri woman said that they needed more people, “So they bought people who would not have any kin . . . because they were without kinship, they were like slaves,” or absolutely dependent without kin to defend them. She claimed that the person who bought them had full control over who they married and what they did, although she also stated that they were well taken care of like one of the family.<sup>26</sup> Ruri at this time were becoming wealthy from the caravan trade and connections with Ukerewe Island off the coast of Mara. As one narrator says, “The Ruri wanted the children to marry and to adopt into the family.”<sup>27</sup> In a matrilineal society, children follow the lineage of their mother, leaving men without kin also at a disadvantage. One woman narrated the story of her grandfather who was bought as a child and “ran away back to Ngoreme, after he was here a long time and had two children and a wife.” He was convinced, however, to come back to his children in Ruri. In this case the “bought” man was treated as a “wife” in a patrilineal society, who could not take her children home if she left the marriage.<sup>28</sup>

This explanation of the floating island stories may help to make sense of the seemingly contradictory fact that the stories of “stealing children” from boats by luring them with food were similarly told by the receiving community. Why would they want to portray their ancestors as kidnappers of children? The stories from the Ruri side do not mention but specifically cover up the seemingly obvious negotiations their ancestors had with Luo parents to exchange children for food. However, the logic of this narrative is that stealing children avoids acknowledging the uncomfortable relationship with the children’s parents, which would have included obligations between in-laws who paid bride wealth, or parents who pawned a child, and the recognition of the ongoing rights and responsibilities to their daughter. It is much easier to incorporate a woman without strings attached to her kin if she was “stolen” rather than “married” by a bride wealth of food. A Ruri woman said, “My grandfather on my father’s side took her as a kidnapped child and raised her until she was big enough to marry.” While someone else added, “They would give food for the bride wealth in marriage. . . . Here in Ruri they had plenty of millet and sorghum, while there was a famine in Luo areas.”<sup>29</sup> This supposition is supported by the comment of one woman that, “Sometimes after the famine the parents would try to come and take their children back again.”<sup>30</sup>

Although these stories of stealing children, like the floating reed islands, served to dislodge ancestors from their original families, women also subverted this male agenda of wealth consolidation by remembering and keeping connections to those ancestral communities. They may have done this both to preserve the dignity of their grandmothers as honorable women with kin, and also for their own protection. Women who could not return to or keep connection with their natal homes were more vulnerable to domestic abuse without natal kin to support their rights.<sup>31</sup> Mixed into the stories of displaced ancestors there are also a number of stories about disappeared children coming back to visit, or the connections that were forged by relations back to their place of origin. A Luo woman said one disappeared man came to visit when he was there to buy fish and saw his mother. She said that “because of this connection people kept going there [Ukerewe] to marry long after this.”<sup>32</sup> One woman said that the other daughters of her great-grandmother “married to Zanaki, Butiama and Ukerewe. . . . We go to these places to greet our relatives and they come to see us.”<sup>33</sup> Another story mentions the “joking clan” relationship with Bukoba across the lake as a result of this exchange.<sup>34</sup> One story has the interesting twist that girls who arrive on the floating reeds



find “news that a brother had come earlier from Ukerewe” and go to live with him until they marry.<sup>35</sup> The longest story about a reunion with a woman’s family describes the negotiations that ensue when her family discovers where she is and wants her to come home. Her husband ends up paying bride wealth to keep her there, and brings her family into a legitimate in-law relationship. After that, the families visited back and forth and she spent a year at home with her natal family.<sup>36</sup> In contrast to men’s accounts, women’s stories most significantly include these ongoing connections to the origin places of their grandparents.

Men’s ethnic stories also talk about ancestors coming from distant places around the lake, but more often tell them as a way to talk about how different clans are related to one another and how they split apart as part of a “tribal narrative.” These accounts are most concerned with telling how the ethnic group came to be, and so the famine stories are often submerged in the meta-narrative of the emergence of the ethnic group from diverse origins. The first story in this series has clear echoes of male ethnic stories in its reference to the Wehunjo clan coming from Uzinza across the lake in the person of the two girls on floating reeds, who became the founders of the Ruri and Kwaya ethnic groups.<sup>37</sup> The story about joking clan relations also deals with men’s concerns about clan connections.<sup>38</sup> More consistently, women’s stories provide an alternate version of famine narratives that emphasize resilience and cross-ethnic connections.

Understanding these stories also depends on an analysis of how men and women within different community structures experienced the effects of famine and ecological disaster in different ways. According to the economist Amartya Sen, famines are not the result of an absolute shortage of food but a failure of “entitlements” for households or particular people within the household. When hunger comes, the most vulnerable suffer more than those with privilege in the society or the household, depending, in part, on the society’s gender structures.<sup>39</sup> Historian Megan Vaughan adds to Sen’s theory about “entitlements” those that depend on marriage, age, and gender, showing that family relations and kinship patterns are critical in determining who suffers most from famine.<sup>40</sup>

It may be precisely because of the value placed on women for both their production and reproduction that they became the household members valuable enough as wives to be traded for food as a last resort. Sen studied the gendered effects of intra-household entitlement failure by looking at the overall female/male ratio (FMR) in large continental demographics.

Without gender bias, women have a biological advantage and live longer. Europe and the United States have the most favorable FMR ratios for women at 1.05, while China and South Asia have the lowest at .93–.94. Significantly, sub-Saharan Africa has an FMR close to one, demonstrating a lower anti-female bias, which Sen ascribes to African women's greater autonomy in property rights and household control, employment, and mobility. Worldwide, the most disadvantaged women have little access to employment earning, whereas African women are valued for their farm labor. Sub-Saharan Africa has a higher "female participation in 'gainful' activities" than all other developing regions.<sup>41</sup> These statistics, although on a continental scale and more recent than the Mara case, indicate that African societies overall may not have displayed a bias against women or girls in famine entitlements. But even if valued, women in the Mara still became the medium for securing family entitlements to food in distant communities.

To understand the nature of intra-household famine response, the particular gender systems of each society are critical. Many societies favor male children in situations of famine because of the perception that they will contribute more to the household economy.<sup>42</sup> In the case of the Mara Region, marriage patterns determined that a daughter was most valuable for her agricultural work (production) and the bride wealth (reproduction) she would bring the family, but she would eventually leave the family to join her husband's household. There are famine stories of boys dressed as girls to be exchanged for food. A mother likely favored keeping her son at home, since her own welfare and access to land depended on her son's rights in his father's family. Young girls who got pregnant before marriage were also vulnerable since their fathers could not now collect a bride wealth for them. Going off to fend for themselves and find someone to take them in as dependents may have been their best option.<sup>43</sup> Thus, based on kinship systems, in times of famine a daughter provided the entitlement for her father to obtain food for the larger household while at the same time giving the girl a more secure place to live with a wealthy man.

On the demand side, the mid- to late nineteenth-century context in which the caravans from the Indian Ocean coast to Lake Victoria traded in slaves and ivory introduced and even normalized the concept of buying and selling persons as slaves. The entrepôt for this trade in the southeastern lake was the fertile and rain-blessed Ukerewe Island, where Mara people had been going for famine relief in the past. However, with the arrival of the coastal trade in the nineteenth century, Ukerewe began selling slaves to the coast, as well as

using more slaves on their own farms to produce food for trade. Ukerewe traders bought slaves from Ruri fishermen, who in turn had brought them from Luo country.<sup>44</sup>

The European slave trade exacerbated and severely distorted a system of “wealth in people” already in place. It is no accident that these stories took place in the context of the introduction of a globalized trade in people and other luxury commodities. Even before the slave trade, wealthy men created a ready demand for children, women, or any strangers, as dependents without kin who sought protection from a patron. By and large, they were incorporated into households for extra labor in the fields or in royal courts as wives, clients, or simply to expand the kin group and the prestige of the patron in a situation of a shortage of labor, not land.<sup>45</sup> In the older patronage system on Ukerewe Island, they waited passively for people to come asking for food and giving up the clan connections of their daughter in return. The coastal slave trade provided an incentive for seeking out places where desperation brought people to exchange their daughters, and for finding new ways to increase production through the labor of these dependents.<sup>46</sup>

Most significantly, these people described in the Mara traditions as “picked up” (whether from floating islands of reeds, enticed into boats, or found in the wilderness) were defined as kinless people who were taken from all that was familiar and detached from their homes and social identity. The conditions of the exchange depended on their giving up their clan connections. Ukerewe patrons preferred Luo slaves whose extremely different Nilotic culture and language, as well as distance from home, made them less likely to be redeemed and more likely to stick out as different.<sup>47</sup> They were incorporated into their new families, first as strangers with marginal status, much more vulnerable to being treated as commodities—but gradually, when they had children, they were incorporated as mothers and kin. In African society the opposite of slavery is not “freedom” but “belonging.” However, a wife in Mara who joined the distant community of her husband was also a marginal stranger, although one with valuable natal kin networks, moving her to a somewhat more secure place on the slavery-to-kinship continuum.<sup>48</sup> From the perspective of women, being dislodged from their home might mean vulnerability or the chance to make a new life.

Yet, women refused to forget the kinship ties of their grandmothers and worked to preserve those connections in oral histories passed on to their granddaughters. All of these resilient strategies in times of famine involved

women as the connecting link to bring the necessary means of survival to their families and themselves. Because women's stories from the time of disasters concern particular named ancestors rather than clan or ethnic group founders that represent the community, they provide a different picture of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century regional history. What is most important in these stories is not the consolidation of ethnic identity in the context of migration and famine (as in men's stories), but the expansion of social networks connecting people throughout the region and beyond. Not only did ties between ethnic groups within the region become more robust through ties of marriage, but each of the four sub-regions made significant connections to their neighboring regions.<sup>49</sup> In these stories we can now see the dynamics of increased dependency in the form of "bought" or "found" women played out in particular local dynamics. This led to the expansion of regional connections through women's marriages and their memory of past networks. These regional networks literally saved the region during a time of incredible stress, but also allowed for a recovery and even prosperity in the early twentieth century.

In other interviews, I learned more about continuing relationships and intermarriage following the initial exchange of people in a famine. A South Lake woman told a story about her North Lake Luo great-grandmother. She met her South Lake husband when she was part of a Luo party who came to bring a bride to marry in Ruri.<sup>50</sup> A man from the South Interior said that his maternal grandmother came from the North Interior looking for food and got married here, returning to visit her home from time to time.<sup>51</sup> One indication of the extent of the networks formed by famine is a South Lake woman who said that in her family, they had mothers from Ukerewe Island and two other ethnic groups. She said when they visited family in those places, someone might find a bride and take her home, later paying the small bride wealth characteristic of matrilineal societies.<sup>52</sup> A South Mara Kuria woman who married in the South Interior said that she had relatives in other ethnic groups of both North and South Interior from past generations.<sup>53</sup> A North Lake woman said that if a man wanted a bride, he sent a woman to find one for him since women could travel without fear of violence and "were good with words." She even took the bride wealth cattle for him. This woman herself brought six brides from North Lake Gire to her husband's family for marriage and influenced many others.<sup>54</sup>

Women spoke nostalgically about these distant regional connections that they maintained through marriage. In other interviews, a North Lake Luo

woman said, “In the past it was good to marry far away because this brought friendship and also a place where you could go to get help.” The reason she got married in Shirati was because a woman from there was married in her home in Kadem and convinced her to come here to marry her brother. In summary she noted, “It is good to make friends far away.”<sup>55</sup> Another North Lake Luo woman said that you wanted to marry distantly, but close enough to be able to come home to visit often.<sup>56</sup> A Luo woman said that her ancestors married women from many places to make relations with people from those places. She noted:

They had love between them and would visit and marry one another and help each other. They loved each other. But not anymore, now it is only (*ubinafsi*) self-promotion. Everyone takes care of their own problems; even your own brother won't help you. Money has made it that way. People like money more than other people. No more visiting each other, we don't even know each other.<sup>57</sup>

Even though North Lake Luo were the most enthusiastic about distant marriages, they still said that one had to investigate the family of the suitor through people one knows in the area.<sup>58</sup>

Numerous incidents illustrate that new migrants moving into the area during the time of ecological disaster avoided conflict by marrying to cement alliances and to establish connections to people who were on the land first. A North Lake Kakseru man said that when they came to Kadem, they still spoke a Suba Bantu language, but they wanted to marry Luo girls so they began to take out their lower front teeth to get married and slowly became Luo. Their children born to Luo wives began to speak Luo, and so the language gradually changed.<sup>59</sup> A North Lake Gire woman said that she learned Luo from her Luo-speaking mother as the Bantu-speaking community began to assimilate.<sup>60</sup> In the South Lake, the anthropologist Hugo Huber attributed language shifts to the fact that, in the past, many wealthy South Lake Kwaya cattle owners married women from South Interior or bought “slaves” from North Mara.<sup>61</sup> A North Lake Luo-Kakseru man said that they got to be friends with Surwa people who were there first by giving their daughters to each other in marriage.<sup>62</sup> A North Lake Gire (Suba) woman said that once you made a marriage between two communities they could not fight each other anymore because they were now one family.<sup>63</sup> In all of these ways, women played a central role in the survival and prosperity of the region during this period of intense change.

The core spatial images of women's stories from their grandmothers depict widespread cross-ethnic networks both within the region and beyond. While men might abstract these as origin stories from the distant past, their connection to the context of the late-nineteenth-century famine and conflict gives them historical meaning. During the disasters there were practical reasons for women to cross ethnic boundaries in order to increase the possibilities for getting help in times of hunger or to facilitate trade. Their marriages contributed to the formation of a larger regional structure for facilitating cross-ethnic interaction. To solidify this structure, common assumptions developed over time across various language and ethnic groups about marriage, bride wealth, inheritance, and residence after marriage. Gaining access to regional resources like salt, iron, and wilderness products was also facilitated by interethnic marriage ties, much as has been the case in other small-scale societies around the world. As a result, intermarriage served as a significant constraint to regional and "tribal" conflict.<sup>64</sup> In spite of the denial of these connections in the colonial "tribal" account that sought "purity of blood," women's memory of the time of disasters remains significant.

Women's narratives preserve the creative ways that people forged networks to survive and prosper in a time of ecological collapse. For environmental historians, these are critical sources for understanding community resources for resilience, particularly in an era of concern about adaptation to climate change. While some worry that climate change will bring increasing conflict over environmental resources, these narratives suggest strategies of connection to others and mutual support. It is only by paying attention to the ways that oral narratives are gendered that we gain access to different kinds of famine stories that subvert a "tribal" narrative rooted in the agenda of men to consolidate their wealth. Women's stories, however, bring to our attention the stories of their grandmothers who crossed language and cultural boundaries to create networks of exchange and reciprocity across the region that continue today.

## Notes

1. Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 11–12, 135–8.
2. I put the term "tribal" in quotation marks to point out that this is an invention of the colonial era and not the understanding of ethnic identity that would have been in place in this pre-colonial and early colonial time period.

3. Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, 18–25.
4. Jan Bender Shetler, “The Gendered Spaces of Historical Knowledge: Women’s Knowledge and Extraordinary Women in the Serengeti District, Tanzania,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36, no. 2 (2003): 283–307.
5. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).
6. Here and elsewhere, the fuller story can be found in Jan Bender Shetler, *Claiming Civic Virtue: Gendered Network Memory in the Mara Region, Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019).
7. Stephen J. Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006); Gerald W. Hartwig, *The Art of Survival in East Africa: The Kerebe and Long-Distance Trade, 1800–1895* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1976), 66.
8. See Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika, 1850–1950* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1977); and Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*.
9. Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, 151, 163.
10. Interview by author, Mkira Kerenge Amina Hasan Sambiji, Ruri, September 11, 2010, Bwai.
11. Interview by author, Tereza Aneta, Luo-Ugu in Luo-Kakseru, September 15, 2010, Shirati Nyakina.
12. Interview by author, Priscilla Philemon Ageke, Luo-Kenya-Kamageta in Luo-Kakseru, September 14, 2010, Shirati Kabwana.
13. James Giblin, *The Politics of Environmental Control in Northwestern Tanzania, 1840–1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); Kjekshus, *Ecology Control*; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
14. Interview by author, Priscilla Philemon Ageke, Luo-Kenya-Kamageta in Luo-Kakseru, September 14, 2010, Shirati Kabwana.
15. Interview by author, Amina Pagani, Luo-Kenya, September 15, 2010, Shirati Nyakina.
16. Hartwig, *The Art of Survival*, 66–71, 80–81, 116; E. A. Chacker, “Early Arab and European Contacts with Ukerewe,” *Tanzania Notes and Records* 68 (1968): 75–86.; C. F. Holmes, “Zanzibar Influence at the Southern End of Lake Victoria: The Lake Route,” *African Historical Studies* 4, no. 3 (1971): 479–503.
17. Interview by author, Nyafuru Zura Marigeri, Ruri, September 9, 2010, Mugango.
18. Interview by author, Mukami Gugwa, Kuria, September 21, 2010, Nyamuswa.
19. Interview by author, Mtoba Nyamiti Makuna Mang’araria, Ruri, September 11, 2010, Bwai.
20. Interview by author, Nyasega Rosalia Masaju, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
21. I use the term “girl” instead of “woman” for these individuals because that is the direct translation of the term used in local languages. A female is called a girl until she is married or circumcised and often until she has her first child. These are understood to be not quite mature women even though some of them come having already given birth to a child. They were traded because they could still be more easily incorporated into a new home as a wife.

22. Interview by author, Nyasanje Marita Masau, Nyamweko Nyashenene Maria Masau and Kasigwa Nyafuru Sarai Majangu, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
23. Interview by author, Wakuru Nyakire, Sizaki in Ikizu, September 21, 2010, Nyamuswa.
24. Interview by author, Esta Mukami Nyangi, Kuria-Kiroba, September 26, 2010, Nyabange.
25. Interview by author, Nyasanje Marita Masau, Nyamweko Nyashenene Maria Masau and Kasigwa Nyafuru Sarai Majangu, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
26. Interview by author, Chausiku Marita Kwambara, Ruri, September 9, 2010, Kuruwaki.
27. Interview by author, Mkira Kerenge Amina Hasan Sambiji, Ruri, September 11, 2010, Bwai.
28. Interview by author, Nyafuru Zura Marigeri, Ruri, September 9, 2010, Mugango.
29. Interview by author, Nyamambara Juliana Yokobo, Ruri, September 8, 2010, Mugango.
30. Interview by author, Nyasige Wagonjo, Ruri, September 8, 2010, Mugango.
31. See Chapter 3 in Shetler, *Claiming Civic Virtue*, 160–73.
32. Interview author, Priscilla Philemon Ageke, Luo-Kenya-Kamageta in Luo-Kakseru, September 14, 2010, Shirati Kabwana.
33. Interview by author, Nyasanje Marita Masau, Nyamweko Nyashenene Maria Masau and Kasigwa Nyafuru Sarai Majangu, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
34. Interview by author, Nyasaru Nyasige Naomi Nyamara, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
35. Interview by author, Mkira Kerenge Amina Hasan Sambiji, Ruri, September 11, 2010, Bwai.
36. Interview by author, Nyasige Wagonjo, Ruri, September 8, 2010, Mugango.
37. Interview by author, Nyasanje Marita Masau, Nyamweko Nyashenene Maria Masau and Kasigwa Nyafuru Sarai Majangu, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
38. Interview by author, Nyasaru Nyasige Naomi Nyamara, Ruri, September 10, 2010, Bwai.
39. Karen Coen Flynn, *Food, Culture, and Survival in an African City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Amartya Sen, “Gender and Cooperative Conflicts,” in *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*, ed. Irene Tinker, 123–49 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
40. Megan Vaughan, “Famine Analysis and Family Relations: Nyasaland in 1949,” in *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa*, ed. Steven Feierman and John M. Janzen, 71–89 (Berkeley: University of California Press 1992), 72, 85.
41. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *Hunger and Public Action* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 50–59.
42. *Ibid.*, 55–58.
43. Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, “African ‘Slavery’ as an Institution of Marginality,” in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, 3–81 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 12.
44. Gerald Hartwig, “Changing Forms of Servitude among the Kerebe of Tanzania,” in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 261–85.



45. Kopytoff and Miers, "African 'Slavery,'" 12–22.
46. Hartwig, "Changing Forms of Servitude," 282.
47. *Ibid.*, 280.
48. Kopytoff and Miers, "African 'Slavery,'" 12–22.
49. South Lake to Ukerewe and Sukuma, South Interior to Sukuma and Maasai, North Interior to Maasai in what is now Kenya, and North Lake to Luo in what is now South Nyanza, Kenya.
50. Interview by author, Nyamambara Juliana Yokobo, Ruri, September 8, 2010, Mugango.
51. Interview by author, Jackson Manuga Muraga, Zanaki, September 30, 2010, Bumangi.
52. Interview by author, Nyegoro Ludia Magori, Jita in Kuria-Kiroba, September 7, 2010, Nyabange.
53. Interview by author, Mukami Gugwa, Kuria, September 21, 2010, Nyamuswa.
54. Interview by author, Juliana Ariya Saramba, Gire to Luo-Kowak, July 31, 2007, Kowak.
55. Interview by author, Mikal Ng'oya, Luo-Kadem in Luo-Kakseru, September 13, 2010, Shirati Kabwana.
56. Interview by author, Priscilla Philemon Ageke, Luo-Kenya-Kamageta in Luo-Kakseru, September 14, 2010, Shirati Kabwana.
57. Interview by author, Prisca Matera, Luo-Ugu in Luo-Kakseru, September 14, 2010, Shirati Oboke.
58. Interview by author, Turfena Miluo Oyaya, Luo-Kamageta in Luo-Kakseru, September 16, 2010, Shirati Kabwana.
59. Interview by author, Hezbon Nguka Mbira, Luo-Kakseru, September 17, 2010, Shirati.
60. Interview by author, Juliana Ariya Saramba, Gire to Luo-Kowak, July 31, 2007, Kowak.
61. Hugo Huber, *Marriage and the Family in Rural Bukwaya (Tanzania)* (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 1973), 14.
62. Interview by author, Jared Okombo Nyambok, Luo-Kakseru, September 17, 2010, Shirati.
63. Interview by author, Juliana Ariya Saramba, Gire to Luo-Kowak, July 31, 2007, Kowak.
64. For example see Aaron Podolsky, "Contemporary Warfare in the New Guinea Highlands," *Ethnology* 23, no. 2 (1984): 73–87.