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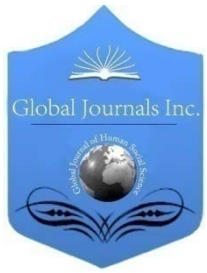

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# Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on Ethno-Anthropological Distortions and Misconceptions

By Godson S. Maanga

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# Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on Ethno-Anthropological Distortions and Misconceptions

Godson S. Maanga

*Studying and rewriting history is stimulating and a never-ending task*
– Basil Davidson[1]

*Abstract-* The paper aimed at displaying the necessity of rewriting Chagga history (one of the numerous African microhistories) with reference to ethno-anthropological distortions and misconceptions made over the centuries. Amid this objective history recorders are called upon to rewrite African history, a bigger entity formed by local and regional African histories. After the definition of keywords (Chagga, Chaggaland, history, microhistory, historicism, historiography, anthropology, and ethnology), the paper's relevance was embedded in the realization that rewriting history is a never-ending exercise and due to that fact, history (microhistories in particular) should be rewritten continuously. The towering finding of the paper was that it is imperative to rewrite Chagga history because, as it is the case with African history, for quite a long time Chagga culture has been misunderstood and as a result distorted by least informed foreign historians, anthropologists and ethnologists. Using an historical-linguistic and ethno-anthropological methodology, the paper came up with the conclusion that there can only be correct African history if there are correct African microhistories, Chagga history being one of them. Reconstructing the history of an area, ethnic group, community, or a politico-economic organization should be the essential task of any relevant or visionary historian.

## I. Introduction

The few historical documents (published and unpublished) highlight the Chagga-European relationship but there is more or less non-existent record of Chagga relationship with the neighboring communities like the Pare, the Sambaa, the Maasai, the Kamba, the Taita and others.[2] Some authors argue that Chagga roots can also be traced among the Kahe, the Meru, the Dorobo, the Pokomo, and the Dabida (Mojola 1998:60). Explaining why some Chagga are light-skinned, Johannes Raum gives the Chagga a Semitic origin like the Wakilindi or Wambugu of Lushoto Tanga who are believed to have an Arab ancestry (Raum 1909/1964: 2-3). In the 1950s and the 1960s there was a free movement of the Kisii in Chaggaland but nowhere is the Kisii-Chagga encounter thoroughly documented. There is a need of investigating on issues like the influence of the Kisii in Chaggaland, intermarriage between the Kisii and the Chagga (if any), and why nowadays the Kisii are no longer on the Chagga scene.

It is culturally and academically frustrating to see that some heroes and heroines in the African history are purposely left out in some historical accounts. Worse still, foreign writers and some brainwashed local historians blow trumpets of alien masters, sometimes at the expense of local champions. Pouring too much praise on foreigners and despise the local people is the result of historians who have forgotten their responsibility. A serious observation drives home the fact that "the historian who seeks to gain a balanced view of the entire continent must always be on his guard against exaggerating the importance of aliens in an African context" (Hallett 2005:12).

The late Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya, in a foreword to his popular treatise called *Facing Mount Kenya*, says articulately that one of the factors that stimulated his interests to do the laborious task "was to produce on some aspects of African tradition and culture, which would make impact on those who had no knowledge of how Africans lived and thought and organized their own societies" (Kenyatta 1991: i). The word 'some' in this excerpt is determinative in the sense that it stresses the point that what is contained in such a nice book like that of Kenyatta is only a fraction of the enormous corpus of Kikuyu cultural identity.[3]

Recorders of Chagga history should bring to the public attention the fact that the Chagga society, just like other societies all over Africa, has civilization and cultural tenets so unique and useful that it rubs shoulders with any other human society in the world – cultural tenets that are philosophically sound and spiritually enriching. Long before the coming of European intruders who destroyed Africa's image, many areas of the continent had marvelous socio-religious and politico-economic wellbeing. As it is narrated in one of the historical documents, between 1000 and 1600 AD many communities in West Africa.

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[1] See Davidson 1970:2.

[2] There is both historical and cultural evidence that the Chagga originated in these communities, as it is narrated by the pioneer researchers on the Chagga community (Stahl 1964: 51-56, Dundas 1932:127-129; 1968:40-50, Lema 1982:36-38).

[3] Other writers noted for their commendable determination in highlighting the glorious and rich cultural heritage in Africa are Rems Nna Umeasiegbu who wrote *The Way We Lived* and Chinua Achebe in his traditionally acclaimed novels: *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease*, *Arrow of God* and *Anthills of the Savannah*.



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> developed more useful methods of government. . . . They worked out new ways of organizing their community life, and of enforcing law and order. Some of them . . . founded large states and empires. Cities grew in number, size, and wealth, and became the home of new kinds of craftsmen and traders, politicians, priests, soldiers, writers and men of learning. With their export of gold and ivory, these trading cities and states became a valuable part of the whole wide network of international trade that was composed of West and North Africa, southern Europe and western Asia. . . . There were plenty of war and ruin in this period, as well as peace and prosperity. Yet we can often think of this period as one in which splendid things were done (Davidson 1970:27).

In Chaggaland there were very strong chiefdoms, just like the ones found in other areas of Africa before the continent was ruled by colonialists, with the support of local stooges. Before the 1870s, there existed in Africa very strong and well-articulated kingdoms like the Bunyoro Kitara, Buganda, and the Mwenemutapa, as well as strong empires such as Songhay, Kanem-Bornu, Mali, and the Sokoto Caliphate. There were leaders with enormous leadership qualities such as Shaka the Zulu, Askia the Great, Sundiata (Mari Diata), and Mamari Kulibali, to mention only a few. In the pre-colonial era Africa was proud of successful cultures with centers led by knowledgeable people, trading towns and heroes who had dominion on big wealthy kingdoms (Muragijimana 2011:1).

## II. Background

Reading through different volumes of African history, one quickly realizes that to date a larger part of this second largest continent is not sufficiently known. The known part of African history is like a tip of an iceberg in the sense that the history below the surface "seems to lie in unilluminable depths" (Hallett 2005:6). For many centuries, Africa (including Chaggaland) has sort of remained like a locked hut, as it is reflected in the rather irksome accounts by foreign historians, geographers, and narrators of various adventures around Africa.

The African continent is renowned for her richness embedded in her splendid culture, languages, traditions and a very attractive history that is more advanced than most people would like to admit. This kind of wealth gives Africa a permanent place in the world history.

Decades in and decades out, Africa has been dismissed as a continent that is uncouth, dark, ignored, backward, directionless, primitive, underdeveloped, poor, and chaotic. Africa has been looked at as a continent rife with bad governance, corruption, disunity, and coups. For most people, particularly outsiders, Africa is home to hunger and famine, cholera, HIV and AIDS, Ebola, Marburg, and Dengue. Africa teems with rape, polygamy, over-breeding, nepotism, female circumcision, witchcraft, loitering, embezzlement, luxury, and lawlessness.

Many people look at Africa as a continent with people to be subjugated, exploited, discriminated upon, and marginalized. Such negative attitude on Africa has made historians write African history in a very negative way – so negative that it has affected even the Africans themselves. This kind of negative attitude on Africa has made Africans to walk around with the mentality of defeatism, self-hate, and deep inferiority complex. What must be said aloud is that it is quite untrue to say that Africa is a continent inhabited by people who are destitute, piteous, primitive, and backward (Muragijimana 2011:1).

Uncritical media, mainly in the west, portray Africa as the continent "wracked by civil war and senseless killings, and overrun by grinding poverty and AIDS" (Marquardt 2013:54). What is always forgotten is that most of these civil conflicts and killings as well as poverty and diseases are fuelled in the western hemisphere. Western supply of weapons, perpetual exploitation by western powers and using Africa as a filthy dustbin for western consumerism has largely contributed to the continent's present-day socio-cultural, politico-economic, and psycho-physical disorders.

Stating that Africans are so backward that they cannot excel in anything is to utter lies of the highest order, just as Albert Schweitzer – a missionary-cum-medical doctor – concluded hastily and racially that an African is always a baby in thoughts and deeds. In his *Philosophy of History*, Georg Hegel (1770-1831) considered one of the greatest philosophers of his time, dared to insult all black people by declaring that Africans cannot change or develop because they cannot be educated and that their continent has no history; and Richard Burton, another racist, asserted that the black person cannot improve because mentally he/she always remains a child (Ki-Zerbo 1990:12).

It is very unfortunate that for quite a long time Africa has been judged or evaluated using a western yardstick – even the name Africa began as a European idea in the sense that it was coined by Greek geographers (Hallett 2005:4). When Bruno Gutmann insisted that Chaggaland had valuable and sensible culture he was ridiculed and harshly accused of being a confused ethnologist embracing or entertaining "antimodern ethnical romanticism" (Burkle 1985:i). His countrymen utterly opposed him, claiming pointblank that nothing good could ever come out of Africa. His malicious critics wanted to tell him that Chaggaland had no history just as some shortsighted racists asserted that Africa had no history. This racially-motivated tendency of looking at Africa as a place where nothing good can come from still resonates as late as the 21st century, something proven by the malicious and

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unbalanced attack leveled at Martin Bernal, a distinguished and bold scholar, who put forward a well-researched thesis that Egypt (a part of Africa) stands as one of the origins of Ancient Greece (Bernal 2001).

Any sensible and honest social analyst would admit that every human society has history because every human society stands for the result of the last "product of a long process of historical evolution, even if the sources needed to describe this process are lacking" (Hallett 2005:6). Furthermore, failure to record history due to factors like illiteracy or financial constraints does not rob members of the society of their history which permanently stands as a part and parcel of their socio-cultural existence.

It is necessary to stress that man, as Jurgen Moltmann asserts, learns to know himself via historical interaction and historical comprehension of other human beings as well as cultures of other people. This is due to the fact that in every culture man makes a shape for himself and the images he attributes to himself are always temporary and subject to change (Moltmann 1974:11).

## III. Aim of the Paper

This paper is written to root out negativism and pessimism aspects from Chagga cultural and historical identity. However, the researcher's aim is not to despise what has so far been written by other writers concerning Chagga history. A good builder makes use of his predecessors' work regardless of the fact that this particular work is not impeccable. Moreover, something is better than nothing due to the fact that something written is better than nothing written at all. It is the history that has been written so far, regardless of the distortion or misconception it has suffered in the hands of the previous historical chroniclers, that has produced various historians in Africa – dead or living.

It is inevitable to rewrite Chagga history because history is a product of an endless discovery. Despite the fact that there are many facts that are already known about the past, more historical facts will continue being discovered (Davidson 1970:2). History, like a building, is something which constantly needs "repair, enlargement, or even total demolition" (Hallett 2005:4). Nevertheless, the researcher does not support the idea of demolishing history for the sake of demolishing it, no matter how bad or awkward the history is. His main concern is therefore to correct, sharpen, polish, and clarify Chagga history. He is focused on defending, explaining, propagating, sharing, and teaching Chagga history for the benefit of the present-day generations and the coming progenies.

The African people, including the Chagga, are supposed to find meaning and pride in their history "if there is to be any hope in rebuilding their societies after the depredation of colonialism" (Muragijimana 2011:1). A foreigner traveling around Africa, always comes across numerous resources and is greatly appealed to the cultural ones – "music and dance, remote communities, old kingdoms, traditional architecture and dress, and the sheer ebullience and good grace of people in the face of hardships that would crush most visitors" (Gregg and Trillo 2011:6).

In a wider scope, this paper seeks to prepare ground for future work – rewriting Chagga history. Even in African literature studies, African scholars aim at "rewriting the history of the roughly 80-year colonial encounter in order to reveal a more nuanced understanding of the contributions of Africans themselves to an earlier nationalist enterprise" (Kroll 2013:115). The history of Africa is supposed to be rewritten because for quite a long time, as it is noted in a historical volume edited by J. Ki-Zerbo, selfishness and lack of knowledge has largely distorted it. Without Africa's life it is very difficult to comprehend the world and human life in general. Rewriting African history is a right and responsibility of Africans because African history is formed by the Africans themselves and they are the most appropriate people to persist constructing it. From the historical viewpoint, "living without a history is like being a piece of flotsam or like a tree that has been felled and seeks to form a link with alien roots" (Ki-Zerbo 1990:9). Chinua Achebe, Africa's literary guru, was inspired to write by "the urgency of telling an Igbo story from an Igbo point of view" (Kroll 2013:127). Likewise, African historians should record African history, including Chagga history, from the African viewpoint.

Rewriting Chagga history, using sources of historical information like archaeology, Chagga language and oral traditions, might end up making new discoveries like the one made by Louis Leakey at Olduvai Gorge. Historical scholarship like that of Dr Leakey has proven that Africa is the "cradle of mankind and the scene of . . . one of the first technological revolutions in history" (M'bow 1990:ix).

Materials like the speeches of Chagga personalities such as Thomas Marealle, Joseph Kimalando, Solomon Eliufoo, Chief John Maruma as well as Chagga newspapers like *Kusare* and *Komkya* are of utmost importance while rewriting Chagga history. Chagga grammar books, archival sources and interviews with intellectuals would also contribute extensively to the task of recording Chagga history. As it is well explained by a prominent historian, the historian searching for things like oral materials in Africa finds himself/herself in the homes of local rulers where he/she would not otherwise get an opportunity to visit. The historian gains new experiences that "stimulate and refine a historical imagination . . . [and] it should be noted that oral information may also serve to supplement or correct the written record" (Hallett 2005:22). To crown it all, it is through "the study of



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history and the use of historical imagination, scholars, teachers, and students can appreciate the awesome legacy that has made our current lives possible" (Smythe 2013:41).

Rewriting history with a sense of imagination is of great advantage because imagination helps a lot in interpreting various facets of people's history. When a historian is told that there was a strong chief in a certain place, the statement implies that the chief was great in terms of cattle, crops, many wives and a large family. A great chief, even if not mentioned, had a military power, able advisors, as well as rewarding relationships with different people, inside and outside his chiefdom. When the historian hears that a certain kingdom collapsed, the historian would arrive at the conjecture that the kingdom had traitors, weak heirs, weakness in collecting revenues, adversaries, as well as a selfish monarch who had poor diplomatic dealings with other people. From this perspective it can be asserted that to understand African history, one needs historical imagination.

Among other things, imagination enables pre-history scholars – paleontologists, physical anthropologists, archaeologists, and chemists – to interpret or explain the message underlying things like fossils, skulls and bones and teeth, as well as artifacts and radiocarbon materials. Outlining things like the ability or inability, strength or weakness, as well as success or failure of a certain society needs fecund imagination on the side of the historian because a sound "interpretation of history depends on the point of view of the historian" (Roselle 1973:1) and genuine historical point of view goes hand in hand with historical imagination.

The events considered trivial or minor are, to the surprise of the majority, very important. The Chagga had an ethnic government, a constitution, an anthem, and a flag (Mallya 2002:85-90). The factors that led to this political and administrative structure are to date not fully studied and recorded. If the Chagga had a comprehensive governance way back in the colonial period is something that imparts a special message – Africa "is diverse and offers alternatives to Western philosophy in political, economic, religious, and social thinking" (Lundy and Negash 2013:7).

Chagga history needs to be rewritten to enable people know, for example, why in the 1920s and 1930s politics became so popular among the Chagga. Why were the Chagga taken by the multiparty euphoria? Who were behind the politics of that time and why did the pluralistic politics reintroduced in the early 1990s become so popular among the Chagga? These are questions that would get concrete answers by doing research and rewrite Chagga history.

## IV. Definition of Keywords

The word *Chagga* is both a noun and an adjective. As a noun it means a person born of Chagga parents and as an adjective it means anything with the history, characteristics, nature, or qualities of the ethnic group called Chagga. As an ethnic group, the Chagga are believed to have different origins and because of that they do not speak one language. The earliest recorders of Chagga history claimed to have identified more than twenty-two groups (Dundas 1968:40f), each with its own dialect, but as it was confirmed by a study done by Summer Institute of Linguistics in the second half of the 1980s, there are about six dialects spoken in Chaggaland. These dialects are *Kyiurombo*, *Kyiunjo*, *Kyimochi*, *Kyikyiwoso*, *Kyimashami*, and *Kyishira* (Maanga 2008:16).

*Chaggaland* is an area on the eastern, central, and western slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa and the second highest in the world – after the Himalaya in Central Asia. In the pre-colonial period this area was occupied mainly by the Chagga but nowadays the population consists of non-Chagga as well, due to socio-political factors. As it is the case in almost all areas in the country, quite a big number of non-Chagga come to Chaggaland through intermarriages, civil service, business, and tourism.

Simply defined, *history* means the study of the past. The problem with this brief definition is that it is difficult to know exactly where the line of demarcation between the past and the present lies. Basil Davidson gives a more elaborate definition of history when he says that history means the picture that emanates from the kind of life lived by our ancestors – what happened to them and how they lived. History tries to explain the factors underlying the ancestors' life as well as their failure and success. It aims at explaining the factors that pushed our ancestors into war as well as the environment that made them peaceful and happy. Without understanding the past it is not possible to understand the present (Davidson 1970:1). Robert Odero airs a very fine commentary on history. According to him "whichever entity comes into being belongs to history. Whichever grows, develops, moves or changes over time belongs to history. History is a function of time and whereas there are some entities we might not find worthy of our attention, we must at least concede that they exist and that they therefore deserve a section, a chapter or even a footnote in the pages of history" (Odero 2013:1).

*Microhistory* is a smaller component of history that when added to other components form a bigger history. For instance, Chagga history is a microhistory that forms Tanzanian history when it is combined with other microhistories such as Nyakyusa history, Sambaa history, Bena history, Gogo history, Pare history, Nyamwezi history, Nyaturu history, Haya history, Sukuma history, Hehe history, and Zaramo history respectively.

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the term *historicism* means "the theory that



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cultural and social events and situations can be explained by history. In the light of this particular definition, historians become of utmost value in any society because, through research and writing, they constantly explain various events in the society. Historicism sheds much light on the crucial task of comprehending the human society.

*Historiography*, in the *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, is briefly defined as "the art or employment of writing history". Elsewhere, the term is explained as a task which "refers to both the study of the methodology of historians and the development of history as a discipline, and also to a body of historical sources, techniques, and theoretical approaches" (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography). All continents have a particular historiography, with an origin and characteristics of its own. For instance, as it is asserted by Robin Hallett, African historiography stands for a learned tradition the origin of which goes "back to scholars of classical antiquity and the historians and geographers of medieval Islam. . . . During the colonial interlude a number of scholars, European administrators and missionaries or Western-educated Africans made many valuable contributions to the corpus of historical knowledge" (Hallett 2005:22). Towering above other aspects in Chagga historiography should be the social set-up in its myriad facets because today historiographers or writers of history tend to focus more on social history than on political history which took a larger time and energy of historical scholars in the past (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography).

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *anthropology* means "the study of the human race, especially of its origins, development, customs and beliefs." Bearing this definition in mind, it is anthropology that would put Chagga ethos into proper perspective because it is the proper medium for presenting a proper account for Chagga cultural tenets as well as the Chagga moral ideas and attitudes. Anthropology and ethnology are closely related and some historians use these two terms interchangeably despite the fact that they are not exactly the same. Anthropology deals with history and content whereas ethnology deals with approach and comparison. Jurgen Moltmann notes correctly that cultural anthropology originates in the comparison between a human being with another human being. He further argues that, with a view to comprehend repeatedly, ethnology "passes over into anthropology treated pragmatically" (Moltmann 1974:11).

*Ethnology*, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, means "the scientific study of and comparison of human races." Talking from an ethnological point of view, African societies need ethnographers, i.e. people who are responsible for studying scientifically Africa's different races and cultures.

## V. Methodology

In rewriting people's history, historical-linguistic as well as ethno-anthropological methodology is mostly used because all available documentary materials in these fields are perused. This kind of methodological approach is put into play with the understanding that all recorders of history are teachers – they teach people with what they write. Generally speaking, teachers or educators "have a very important role in changing misconceptions and misinformation about Africa" (Wheeler and Ntihirageza 2013:105). To a large degree, a paper focusing on writing anew people's history becomes interdisciplinary in the sense that various sources are combined to arrive at the researcher's goal. The historical development of the Chagga, coupled with Chagga cultural anthropology, has been the main avenue of bringing this paper into being.

Bearing in mind that a big corpus of Chagga history is yet to be written, the researcher has been wary when it comes to mentioning exact dates, i.e. days, months, and years. Writers purporting to be exact in their record of Chagga history, as it has happened in quite a big number of places in Africa, commit more historical errors than they are aware of. Moreover, in a paper of this kind a chronological or linear approach inevitably remains minimal owing to its nature or theme. When ethnic history is recorded for the first time, the recorder cannot avoid assumptions and generalizations due to the fact that the task of writing and rewriting people's history incorporates a number of tentative assertions which are straightened or polished over the course of time.

## VI. Literature Review

In any historical study, making use of the existing literature on the topic becomes of utmost importance. It is by examining the work done by other researchers historiography is tackled in a meaningful and profitable way. On these grounds historiography is viewed as a way of writing history. However, when a person studies 'historiography' he/she does not study the past events directly, but rather the "changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians" (Furay and Salevouris 1988:223). Africa has had recorders of history who from the historical viewpoint can be considered as "the precursors of modern African historiography, suffering the hardships – isolation, lack of interest, absence of encouragement – of the pioneer in any field of scholarship" (Hallett 2005:22).

Thanks and credit to the pioneers of recording Chagga history – the documents from the pens of these pioneers (unfortunately most of them are from the west) should be consulted by any person venturing to write Chagga history. The documents used by the researcher



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to prepare this paper include Kathleen Stahl's *History of the Chagga People of Kilimanjaro*, Charles Dundas' *Kilimanjaro and Its People*, Sally Falk Moore's *Social Facts & Fabrications: Customary Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880–1980*, Godson S. Maanga's *Evening Realization*, Petro Itosi Marealle's *Maisha ya Mchagga Hapa Duniani na Ahera*, Otto Raum's *Chagga Childhood*, Bruno Gutmann's *Dichten und Denken der Dschagga-Neger*, Anza Amen Lema's *The Foundation of the Lutheran Church in Kilimanjaro* and Ludiger Wimmelbucker's *Kilimanjaro – A Regional History: Production and Living Conditions, C. 1800–1920.*

A few papers on the Chagga, written mostly by westerners to meet colonial interests and packed in several volumes of the journal entitled *Tanganyika Notes and Records* (now out of print), have also been examined by the researcher. Unfortunately, a big corpus of these papers was prepared by hasty travelers, tourists, and colonial administrators who did not employ rigorous methods of doing an academic study.

## VII. Significance of the Study

What is the relevance of rewriting Chagga history and what factors justify the task of rebuilding Chagga history? It is expected that future research on the Chagga would uncover the aspects of Chagga history which are not yet researched upon but this argument should not impart the impression that there will ever come a time when Chagga history would be perfect. Future papers on Chagga history will put in record the unrecorded tenets of Chagga history as well as trimming bias and boastfulness embedded in the previous historical records, written to suit foreign taste and interests. With such papers, book lovers and ethno-anthropological fans would get a chance of enjoying the beauty and grandeur of Chagga cultural identity which is so far locked up in partially or erroneously recorded customs and traditions.

The researcher does not support the claim that studying African ethnic groups separately is 'pointless and unhistorical' (Sutton 1997:1). This is because he is fully convinced that comprehensive studies of individual ethnic groups in Tanzania and Africa at large is not being parochial but rather tackling history from the grassroots. Any big thing is formed by smaller components – a river is formed by streams and an ocean is fed by rivers. What should be pointed out honestly is that appealing for rewriting the Chagga history does not imply that the researcher is not aware of the fact that history "cannot be restricted by the limits of ethnic group, nation, or culture" (Clarke 1991:xviii).

People's socio-cultural and politico-economic history keeps on changing and African societies, as it is true with other societies in the world, are characterized by constant divisions. From the geographical and administrative viewpoint there are new regions, as well as new villages and sub-villages that keep on coming into existence. In the post-independence era some countries in Africa have adopted new names, different from the names used in the pre-independence era. Vivid examples are Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Congo Kinshasa that all adopted new names in the post-colonial era.[4]

The task of rewriting Chagga history is significant because ethnic groups are always in the social characteristic of constant change and interaction; and the history of individual peoples is the initial step in the study of world history. National history (e.g. the history of Tanzania), regional history (e.g. the history of East Africa), and continental history (e.g. the history of Africa) is baseless, if not irrelevant, without the history of particular history of single ethnic groups such as Chagga history. It is on these grounds the paper is expected to stimulate more research on the gorgeous and sumptuous Chagga culture, as passed on from bygone generations – from prehistory to the present day.

Chagga history needs to be rewritten to prove that, contrary to the reports of former historians, not all people in Chaggaland responded negatively towards the western rule. Quite a big number of the Chagga responded positively. Histories of various ethnic groups in Africa need to be rewritten with a positive and balanced attitude. Thus, historians need to show that in modern Africa there is no need of continuing responding negatively to western intrusion that was facilitated by the agents of colonialism: explorers, missionaries and traders. As Iliffe sums it up, "African response to change can no longer be described in the negative terms of resistance . . . [because attempts] to initiate, accelerate, and control change become . . . equally important" (Iliffe 2008:6).

Rewritten Chagga history would prove that even in the Chagga cultural milieu there are philosophers, sages, and accomplished story-tellers. It would unearth the enormous knowledge, both obvious and secret, that can be deciphered from the collection of Chagga rites of passage and mythology in their historical perspective. Rewritten Chagga history would open up the soul of Chaggaland which is the seat of Chagga etiquette, generosity, kindness, and hospitality. For instance, despite their limited financial resources, the Chagga offered to beautify the tomb of Charles Dundas in

[4] In the post-colonial era the name Ivory Coast was changed into Cote D'Ivoire, Upper Volta was named Burkina Faso, and Belgian Congo was called Zaire and later on Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the name it has borne to date. In the same era Tanganyika was renamed Tanzania, Southern Rhodesia was called Zimbabwe, Northern Rhodesia was named Zambia, and Nyasaland became Malawi. Even elsewhere in the world, Burma was named Myanmar, and the former USSR – as an aftermath of the end of the cold war – disintegrated and produced new autonomous countries like Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovenia, Slovakia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan (See *Pearson Secondary Atlas*).

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London. Doubtlessly, people would like to know why the Chagga bothered to decorate a tomb in Europe! Furthermore, the Chagga affection for land and education surpasses all other kinds of love but very few people know exactly why. Answers for these questions and many others would be acquired in the course of rewriting Chagga history.

Rewriting Chagga history is a significant exercise in the sense that it would make foreigners develop interest to stay and live in Chaggaland (to get a deeper knowledge on the Chagga), contrary to the current situation where we see non-Chaggas, tourists in particular, hurriedly passing through Chaggaland on their way to climb Mount Kilimanjaro or to catch a plane at Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) or to spend a few days in luxurious hotels and lodges in the northern zone of the country. As it has been noted while talking about the tourists who come to Africa, instead of staying in expensive hotels and go back home without gaining any substantial knowledge about the continent, their experience would be richer if they are ready to take "time to get to know [African] people and make a few personal discoveries about life in this much-misunderstood continent" (Gregg and Trillo 2013:186). Getting a richer or first-hand experience about Chaggaland, a non-Chagga needs to spend sufficient time in it as well as read books about its history, books written by people with cultural poise and sincerity.

Correct Chagga history, as it is for other African ethnic groups, is needed because, as Isaria Kimambo disclosed some decades ago, information based on archaeological, linguistic and ethnological research is still lacking (Kimambo 1997:14).

## VIII. Distorted and Misconceived Aspects of Chagga History

A brief survey on the culture, orthography, and fact-finding incompetence suffices to illustrate how in the past superficial research among the Chagga has brought about alarming distortions and misconceptions in connection with Chagga history.

*a) Culture*

There are many customs and traditions which baffle people from the western hemisphere, especially people coming to Africa for the first time. This situation is also true with Chagga culture which sometimes poses a strong baffle and shock to foreigners. To the amazement of many people, the Chagga had had irksome customs like human sacrifice and female circumcision. For example, in Old Moshi when there was acute famine, an 18-year old maiden was thrown alive into a well, as a way of soliciting rain from the ancestral spirits (Mojola 1998:70-71). Furthermore, as a means of declaring permanent peace between Mwika and Rombo, a virgin and a boy who had not known a woman carnally were buried alive at the Kishingonyi Hills (Dundas 1968:69-70, Maanga 2013:12). Even the Chagga customs denounced by the first missionaries (e.g. circumcising or marrying a dead person, and cleansing a field cursed by a dead person) occupy an important place in the Chagga ethnological history. Why the Chagga do not bury their kin outside Chaggaland – even a Christian – needs research. It is said that most Africans are Christians in the daytime and not in the night. Whether this observation is true among the Chagga is something that is subject to research.

A big number of these shocking customs and traditions are found in books written mainly by non-Africans, something which makes most westerners come to Africa completely or partially ignorant of Africa's socio-cultural fabric. As a result there is an enormous amount of 'culture shock' in Africa. Most westerners, particularly tourists, come to Africa with the misconception that they know Africa but once they are right inside the continent they realize that the reality is quite the contrary. As writers of a popular tour guidebook put it correctly, the naked contrasts between life realities in Africa and the living conditions westerners are familiar with "can seem overwhelming, and unfamiliar social norms may leave [a Westerner] embarrassed and confused" (Gregg and Trillo 2013: 187). Failure to comprehend African culture has made foreigners reach the extent of condemning this culture, describing it as something archaic and uncivilized. Suffice it to say that blotting out all local customs claiming that they are barbaric and outmoded is like throwing away a baby with the bath water.

Condemnation of African culture is not without foundation because following the "comings and goings of a host of travelers, slave traders, merchants, soldiers, administrators and scholars of all kinds over thousand of years, the image of Africa in many people's minds has become tainted by misconceptions about its poverty, barbarism, irresponsibility and chaos" (Ki-Zerbo 1990:1). Considering misleading ideas such as the ones spread by racially-minded scholars like Hegel and Burton, it becomes quite inherent that most teachers in the west offer vague teachings and misconceptions about Africa (Lundy and Negash 2013:2).

*b) Mispronounced and Wrongly-spelt Terms*

Gripped with haste and suffering least command in African tongues, some foreign historians and linguists have committed mistakes of wrong spelling and mispronouncing things like names of people, areas, mountains, rivers, food and traditional dances. Spelling and pronunciation mistakes have made many areas in Africa to be given wrong names – hence distorting Africa's history and ultimately give a false image of the continent.

Some of the mispronounced words as far as the Chagga geographical history is concerned are Morang'u (mispronounced as Marangu), Mashami (mispronounced as Machame), Shira (mispronounced



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as Siha), Kyiwoso (mispronounced as Kibosho), Orombo (mispronounced as Horombo), and Tuweta (mispronounced as Taveta).

Wrongly pronounced terms have really distorted linguistic equilibrium and palatability in Chaggaland, just as it has done elsewhere. Bruno Gutmann (1926) writes *menja ja mringa* instead of *menya ya mringa* (iron of water) and *menja ya modo* instead of *menya ya modo* (iron of fire). Kathleen Stahl (1964) writes Munoo instead of Munuo, Sumu instead of Suum, Wakoningo instead of Wakonyingo, Samake Maene instead of Samaki Maini, Masake instead of Masaki, and Maringa instead of Maring'a. Charles Dundas (1968) writes Wako Teri instead of Wakoteri, Wako Kimei instead of Wakokimei, Wako Makundi instead of Wakomakundi, Wako Ngowi instead of Wakongowi, Kirita instead of Kyiriita, and Narumo instead of Narumu. He writes Marawite instead of Marawiti, *mafiga* instead of *mashiga* (in Kyiunjo pronounced as *mashigha*), *ndaswe* instead of *ndasu*, *arera* instead of *arera*, and *longu* instead of *long'u*. Sally Moore (1986) writes Makayuni instead of Makuyuni, Kinyamuvo instead of Kinyamvuo, Nganyeni instead of Nganyeny, Kondeni instead of Kondeny, Mwika instead of Miika, Ngasseni instead of Ngaseny, Mrau instead of Nrao, Wikiwawoko instead of Wukyiwawoko, *kihamba* instead of *kyigamba* (in Kyiunjo pronounced as *kyighamba*), and *magaddi* instead of *mmbala*. Even outside Chaggaland, for instance among the Maasai where the Chagga have ancestral connections, foreigners have left quite a distorted pronunciation legacy.[5]

It is no exaggeration to assert that most documents with Chagga history suffer spelling mistakes, a situation which gives wrong information to people who are novices in Chagga orthography. Ironically, even some history books written by local researchers have spelling flaws. For instance, in Malya's *Wamarangu: Historia na Maendeleo*, one comes across words like *fuphu* instead of *fumvu*, *aleuta* instead of *alewuta*, *iwe* instead of *igoe* (in Kyiunjo pronounced as *ighoe*), *ma* instead of *maa*, and *Ndegoruo* instead of *Ndegoruo*, to cite only a few orthographic mistakes. While reading Machangu's *Kindo kya Kando*, the reader encounters wrongly spelt words like *kindo* instead of *kyindo*, *kitapu* instead of *kyitapu*, *ku-i* instead of *kui*, *Kichagga* instead of *Kyichaka*, *ngyurukenyi* instead of *ngyuurukyeny*, *mawokyionyi* instead of *mawookyiony*, *tsose* instead of *tsoose*, and *shiwanu* instead of *shiganu* (in Kyiunjo pronounced as *shighanu*).

In Kyiunjo, there are two special characters which, if not maintained in a piece of writing, the message is completely distorted. These characters are r with a dot on top and r with a bar underneath and they exist alongside the normal r which also has a place in the Kyiunjo vernacular. A good example about an orthographic error in these two special characters is found, among other documents, in one of Sally Moore's books. While talking about one of the banana species used for making local beer Moore writes *mrarao* (Moore 1986:237). When the word is correctly written the r that appears twice in this word should have a dot on top of it. Moore also writes the marriage trustee or marriage sponsor as *mkara* (Moore 1986:200) instead of putting a bar under the r so that the word would correctly read as *mkara*.

All Chagga proverbs cited in Dundas 1968:341-346 have words which are mostly wrongly spelt, hence giving a distorted impression as well as imparting a wrong meaning from the viewpoint of Chagga oral traditions, one of the key sources in the task of writing Chagga history. In some of the proverbs Dundas writes *ekegambo* instead of *nekyegambo*, *manawo o mka* instead of *mana o mka*, *yekesonguo pfo* instead of *yekyesonguo-pfo*, *mbie* instead of *mmbie*, *lyekapfia* instead of *lyekyepfiiya*, *paara* instead of *ipaara*, *pfuma* instead of *pfumu*, *chonyi* instead of *njonyi*, and *ura mana* instead of *iwura mana*. Moreover, the English rendering of these few proverbs mostly misses the Chagga cultural and philosophical point.

The spelling and pronunciation errors cited in the preceding paragraphs reflect failure on the side of foreigners to speak the Chagga tongue correctly or intelligibly. On their side too, the Chagga themselves commit lingual errors that need correction via rewriting Chagga history. For instance, when the non-Chagga (including the white people) mentioned places like 'Kwa Matthew' the Chagga pronounced it as 'Ko Mafio'; when they said 'Kwa Nicolaus' the Chagga pronounced it as 'Ko Niko'; when they said 'Kwa Baldwin' the Chagga pronounced it as 'Ko Balueny'; when they warned people to beware of trains by saying 'Check train' the Chagga pronounced it as 'Chekyereny'; and when they said 'Siding' (i.e. railway siding) the Chagga pronounced it as Saidingyi.

### c) *Misleading Facts*

When in 1848 Johann Rebmann reported to his fellow Europeans that there was a snow-capped mountain – Kilimanjaro – found only a few degrees from the Equator, his report was dismissed as information from a day-dreamer and a person arguing

[5] Kenya is the result of mispronouncing the Maasai term Kipwokenya waanu (walking until when). Ngong'u (spring or water source) is mispronounced as Ngong, Naikurukur (where water roars) is mispronounced as Nyahururu, Embusel (soda ash place) is mispronounced as Amboseli, Kejuoodo/Elkajuado (a long river) is mispronounced as Kajiado, and Engareoormotonyik (birds' water) is mispronounced as Ngaramtoni. Other mispronounced Maasai words are Kiborilong'oi (shield-making place) mispronounced as Kiboriloni, NasaiEngai (place for praying to God) wrongly shortened as Nasai, Endonyoomodiok (cow-dung hill) mispronounced as Mudio, Endonyoormorwak (elders' hill) mispronounced as Donyomuro, and Longiito (stones hill) mispronounced as Longido. (Interview with Rev. Joshua Laiser – a very knowledgeable Maasai – Uhuru Hotel Moshi, Tanzania, 11 November 2014).

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unscientifically (Stahl 1964:40-41, Dundas 1968:11, Reader 1982:9). He was ignored and ridiculed like the first man to report that the world was round and square like a table as it had been hitherto believed. Existence of the snow-capped Kilimanjaro right in the equatorial zone where the sun shines relentlessly was a shocking reality. Rewriting Chagga history would disclose or uncover more other unbelievable realities. For example, most people would not believe that the Chagga had female rulers.[6]

Chaggaland had able monarchs like Sina, Mankinga, Marealle, and others but their political and military prowess get least coverage in the historical accounts by alien historians. Mention needs to be made of the fact that the strategic wars and the resistance of Chagga chiefs against being subjugated by foreign masters are not sufficiently written by the historians who wrote in the preceding decades. Maybe, intentionally or obliviously, the incidents of white people being outwitted by Chagga chiefs feature very briefly in the Chagga history books. Overlooking certain facts in Chagga history is pathetic because it reflects the tendency witnessed among the historians who merely make coverage of Africa-western relationship, leaving aside things like the Africa-Asia relationship which existed for a very long time. One of the most common shortcomings of Chagga history is the distortion brought about as a result of factual negligence and oversight.

Factual errors in Chaggaland arise when researchers approach Chagga history wearing a foreign mantle. The first written history on Africa was done by detached historians, "largely by white people viewing very strange and different cultures, and could never have been an accurate or balanced portrayal of African culture" (moronwatch.net/2012/02/rewriting-african-history-html).

Sally Moore (in her book entitled *Social Facts & Fabrications: Customary Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880–1980*) calls Chagga administrative units *mitaa* instead of using the correct term *shikaro*. Despite the fact Moore largely relies on information from the local people, she still uses a lot of non-Chagga terminology (largely Swahili) such as *kihenge*, *shamba*, *ugoni*, *mila*, *fidia*, *mchawi*, *wazee*, *baraza*, *pombe*, *balozi*, *mjumbe*, *wasimamizi*, *mrithi*, and *boma*. Had she put priority on local coloration while extracting information from her Chagga informants, she would have minimized or avoided altogether these Swahili terms because Chagga terms for all these non-Chagga words are available. However, on the other side of the coin, Sally is commended for using correctly Chagga terms like *mlaso*, *kyidari*, *masiro*, and *ndafu*.

Sally Moore (1989) uses the word *mtaa* in a very confusing way. For example, she refers to areas like Rombo, Mwika, Mamba, Marangu, and Kyilema as *mitaa* while a native Chagga would not do so. For the native Chagga Mwika is *uruka* which is divided into *shikaro shing'any* (big villages) which in turn are divided into smaller villages (*shikaro shitutu*); and the smaller villages are further divided into smallest villages (*mfongo*). Administratively, a big village in Chaggaland is led by *mangi*, a smaller village is led by *mchilyi* and the smallest village is led by *meeku o mfongo* or *ngamnyiny*. Nevertheless, as time goes by the number of people in the smallest villages grows and become small villages like Msae, Mrimbo, Maring'a, Shokony, Uuwo, Lole, and Kyiruweny in the case of Mwika. Unfortunately, the Chagga use the same word (*uruka*) for district, region, country, continent, world, and universe.

Another depiction of factual misinformation is seen in the wrong interpretation of some Chagga socio-cultural and ethno-historical aspects. For instance, Stahl says that Ndegoruo means punishment while it should be 'I punished' or 'the punisher'; Melyiari[7] means 'the indefatigable' while it should be 'the hero'; and Kyilamia means 'the conqueror' while it should be 'the oppressor' (Stahl 1964:308).

Sally Moore says that in the 19th century it was legitimate for the Chagga to kill a murderer. "Where a homicide occurred between *lineages*, the victim's kin were under pressure to avenge the death with a reciprocal killing. The decedent's spirit could trouble living kin if they did not take action" (Sally 1986:57). This observation is not quite true because the normal custom for murder among the Chagga was appeasement implemented by the killer or the killer's kin paying something as compensation for the blood of the murdered individual. The compensation for a slain person depended on gender and social status. Maybe she was misled by a least informed informant and it might also be true that researchers like Sally Moore were influenced by the Jewish law of killing a person who has killed another one, as it is written in the Old Testament – "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9:6).

That the Chagga did not sanction killing a killer, is proven by Bruno Gutmann (*Wasawu o Wachaka* – Grandfather of the Chagga) who says that the Chagga did not allow a person who has killed a person to be killed but rather to pay something to compensate for the spilt blood (Gutmann 1926:240). Gutmann goes on to talk about the Chagga custom of according the killer a chance of seeking asylum in the chief's house, to allow the killer's relatives to pay what was needed as blood

[6] Somewhere in the past, in their prestigious history, the Chagga had some female chiefs such as Mashina of Mamba and Msanya of Marangu (Dundas 1968:69-72, Malya 2002:33-34, Stahl 1964:285).

[7] Melyari was 'anglicized' or wrongly pronounced as Marealle (Stahl 1964: 308).



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compensation. In case the killer was a pauper and without able kin, the chief could pay for him, with the condition that the killer would work at the chief's homestead as a servant (Gutmann 1926:243, Moore 1986:57). Homicide was detested among the Chagga but there was no justification for killing a person who had killed another person.

## IX. Results of Distorting and Misconceiving Chagga History

When people's history is distorted or misconceived, the outcome is hopelessness, imitation, oversight and negligence, unfair judgment, stereotypes, and prejudice.

*a) Hopelessness*

A historian who does not see any hope for Africa would write a Chagga history that teems with hopelessness. Looking at the despondence that has befallen Africa, it is easy for a person to conclude that there is no hope for Africa. Africa's past, present, and probably the future is full of disappointments, frustration, and pessimism – so strong that it is easier to conclude that Africa is a cursed continent, now and for ever. However, regardless of their despised past, the Chagga can use the experiences they have gathered over the past decades and centuries to rewrite their history from a very positive perspective. Despite the fact that to a certain degree Africa's past has been a period of ethnic clashes, coups, economic stagnation, and cultural deterioration, historians documenting the history of Africa should do so with hope, confidence, and determination. The same thing is expected of people writing Chagga history.

*b) Imitation*

For quite a long time African history in general has been written and rewritten to favor or meet the narrative styles and objectives stipulated by westerners (Muragijimana 2011:1). Even today, some western editors force African writers to write books in tune to western expectations. A budding writer confided to the researcher how her manuscript on African culture was frequently criticized maliciously and eventually rejected simply because she refused being pressed by the editor(s) to meet what they claimed to be international standards but in the actual fact western interests. It is also narrated that some myopic assessors refused to elevate a famous African novelist and playwright to the level of professorship on the grounds that creative writing has no elements that can qualify a person to become a professor. It needs to be remembered that in various disciplines historians and writers in general perceive the world from their angle of observation and not necessarily from the mirror held by other people.[8]

Elaborate Chagga history should be written in such a way that it would depict the Chagga doing things their way. No slavery surpasses that of thinking with somebody's brain, walk with somebody's legs, and see with somebody's eyes. The Chagga should be allowed to be themselves in their prestigious history.

*c) Oversight and negligence*

The division of Chaggaland into Rombo, Vunjo, Old Moshi, Machame, and Siha has always been overstressed by the previous hasty historians who were oblivious of other important areas, just as the act of dividing Africa into two blocs (North of Sahara and South of Sahara) has made some historians to write history as if other smaller areas on the continent are non-existent. Sometimes historians leave out tribal issues that are of utmost importance. For example, chroniclers of Chagga history omit important things such as Chagga royal weddings, circumcision of people from royal families, Chagga political structure and judiciary, as well as inheritance systems and procedures. Fans of Chagga history would like to know in detail as to why some Chagga clans[9] specialized in the art of furrows, beekeeping and honey harvesting, blacksmithing, pottery, weaving, embroidery, and herbal treatment. Another very important issue of historical interest is the development of various clans or surnames in the Chagga community.

The history of some Chagga clans can be traced to the ethnic groups regarded as the origins of the Chagga, i.e. the Maasai, the Kamba, the Kikuyu, the Sambaa, and the Pare. But how synonymous clans like Chao, Shao, Shayo, and Mashayo came into existence is something which needs intensive research in the entire exercise of rewriting Chagga history.

An obvious cause of oversight while writing Chagga history is failure to use other sources apart from historical documents – things like archaeology, literature (poems, songs, novels, fables, riddles, proverbs), linguistics (primers), anthropology, sculpture, and woodcarving. Rewriting Chagga history is necessary because up to the last decades of the 19th century, "most African societies transmitted their culture without writing – through oral tradition, music, dance, architecture, woodcarving, metalwork and weaving" (Gregg and Trillo 2011:32). Even the languages of most African ethnic groups are not yet studied and written down, bearing in mind that language is one of the crucial components of people's history and culture.

[8] Even in soccer African footballers are expected to play football according to western criterion, and on the pitches – for instance, during world cup matches – some racially-motivated referees make judgment with a lot of partiality.

[9] A clan is a "social organization whose purpose is to meet economic needs and to challenge nature. It is founded on a deliberate choice of unilateral type of kinship (patrilineal or matrilineal, according to the economic context), of a private or collective type of ownership, of a mode of inheritance, etc." (Diop 1991: 111).



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*d) Unfair judgment*

Unfortunately some historians writing African history have fallen into the temptation of making ultimatum judgments as if they are gods sent to declare doom and punishment on Africa. Instead of writing with a judgmental attitude, the historian dealing with Africa "needs to acquire an imaginative awareness of the dynamic quality, the resilience, the adaptability inherent in all African societies" (Hallett 2005:8).

A typical aspect of misjudging Chaggaland is the issue of tribal wars that prevailed in the region prior to the coming of foreign masters. Some historians have described African interethnic wars as acts of backwardness and barbarism. If these wars were acts of barbarism, then the increasing phenomenon of invading other countries in the pretext of deposing despots who have refused to bow to modern western imperialism or planting a democratic regime as it was done in Libya during the reign of Muammar Gaddafi is sheer barbarism.

Georg Hegel, writing about Africa dared to say categorically that "Africa proper has no historical interest of its own, for we find its inhabitants living in barbarism and savagery in a land which has not furnished them with any integral ingredient of culture" (Hegel 1820). And a British traveler who boasted of living in Chaggaland for a long time posed a racial question, asking as to why 'silly savages' – the Chagga – who lived in such an attractive country like Kilimanjaro could not think of any other thing except 'mutual extermination' (Johnson 1886:177). Rewriting Chagga history would get rid of derogatory platitudes about the Chagga like the one inherent in Johnson's book.

History has it that the countries which claim to be democratic and civilized were once rife with tribes described as rude and primitive like the Vikings and the Goths from Northern Europe. It is unfair to dismiss Africa as a continent of maniac dancers and chaps who breed like rats because even in Europe in the Medieval Period there were people who spent most of their time in primitive acts and breeding like mice.[10]

*e) Stereotypes*

It is nauseating to see that for quite a long time Chaggaland and Africa in general has been accorded an unfair description based on generalizations. Rewriting Chagga history would minimize stereotypes about the Chagga and their society. From the sociological and educational point of view, stereotypes accrue and continue in the society due to "lack of exposure, ignorance, fear, and stories about the 'Other'" (Viakinou -Brinson 2013:178). That is why some sociologists say that a stereotype is an exaggerated description that puts all people in the same category, painting them with the same brush as well as ignoring facts and distorting the reality (Macionis 1999:23). Analysis and interpretation of colonial and racially-motivated media drives home the fact that "constant, repeated, single negative stories about Africa in Western media and in canonized literature such as *Heart of Darkness* have failed to reveal the many untold positive stories of Africans" (Viakinou-Brinson 2013:178). Joseph Conrad viewed Africa as the seat of darkness and motivated by this negative and incorrect perception on Africa he wrote that novel entitled *Heart of Darkness*. Set in Belgian Congo, the novel has blatant racial overtones as far as derogating Africa and her people is concerned but ironically it was praised as one of the greatest novels in the English literature. This novel was first published in 1902 and reprinted in 1999, doubtless to continue spreading false information in the west that Africa is the heart of darkness.[11]

A lot of positive and balanced history about African communities is yet to be put on paper. There is also a need of giving correct information about different ethnic groups in Africa because, to the amazement of everybody, until today Africa is still a dark continent for many western students. All people who still think that Africa is a dark continent should understand that the continent has a very 'rich and diverse history' and a person who wants to be a well-informed student or scholar of African history should study and get first hand information about African societies (Lundy and Negash 2013:6-7). Unless Africans think and act standing on a correct account and interpretation of their ethnic histories, they cannot succeed in their struggle against multi-cultural or multi-faceted forms of neo-colonialism as well as the anti-materialistic and anti-imperialistic forces that persist pestering and enslaving Africa.

*f) Prejudice*

Most historians have written African history using research done on biased and parochial basis, something that has brought about a negative approach to the continent. Curtis Keim is of the opinion that Africa should be approached with minimal bias because its "size, population, resources, and modernization play an increasingly important role in the world" (Keim 2009:12). Most of the historical studies done on Chaggaland have ignored important aspects of Chagga history such as

[10] It is not an exaggeration to say that before the introduction of family planning methods, western couples had very large families. A living case in history is the family of Emperor Francis I of Austria and his wife Maria Theresa who had a total of sixteen children (Roselle 1973: 341-343).

[11] In 1989, infuriated by the novel's negative depiction of Africa, Chinua Achebe reacted boldly by writing the historic essay called "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*". In *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 1-20.



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Chagga nationalism versus western imperialism, as it is reflected in the person and deeds of Joseph Merinyo who in many circles is described as a frontline Chagga nationalist and champion for human rights (Maanga 2014:1). This situation is not accidental because it has been the tendency of western historians or African historians educated in the west to deal mainly with the "theme of European Imperialism and African Nationalism" (Hallett 2005:13) and forget other issues such as the reaction of the local people to this particular theme. The most important thing in Chaggaland, and the least portrayed by local and foreign historians, is how foreign powers (first the Germans and then the British) intruded Chaggaland and how the Chagga resisted the intrusion through the sophisticated strategies of the local chiefs.

Writing history guided by prejudice caused by things like politics, religion, gender, race and the like is another factor that necessitates rewriting Chagga history. The British historian, Basil Davidson, asserts that there is good and bad history.

> Bad history appears when historians allow their prejudice and personal feelings to get the better of them. Many imperialist historians of Africa, during the colonial period, wrote bad history. Their prejudice and personal feelings made them write that Africans had not history of their own. It is part of the modern rebirth of Africa that we know this view to be entirely false (Davidson 1970:1).

In addition to Davidson's assertion, for quite a long time prejudice has made Africans robbed of their right of being considered initiators and propagators of their own history. Africans are therefore compelled by the negative status quo to re-establish their 'historical authenticity' and place it on a stable foundation. Any person determined to rewrite genuine Chagga history needs to understand beforehand how myths and prejudices have placed genuine African history behind the curtain (M'bow 1990: vi-viii).

It is true that Africa has many "abandoned wrecks littering the historiographical roadsides" (Nugent 2004:1). With Nugent's irony-packed remark, it can be stated that it is now time to depict Chaggaland and Africa in general as an area with a logical and lasting history. This appeal is catapulted by the fact that for many years Africa suffered the problem of having its history written even by people who had not set foot on the continent, like E.P. Murdock who in 1959 published an over-praised historical treatise entitled *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture History* while in the actual fact he had never visited the continent.

Africa has an indelible history on the world map because there is much consensus among archaeologists that God gave the continent the honor of being the origin of mankind. Chronological, anthropological, and prehistoric archaeological data – obtained from humanistic paleontology done by scholars like Dr Louis Leakey – shed much light on the notion that "Africa is the birthplace of humanity" (Diop 1991:5). Being the cradle of humanity, Africa "offers an important view of history that allows students to see the tremendously difficult environments and challenges that humans overcame on their journey to the contemporary world" (Smythe 2013:39). This particular awareness is very important because a child growing up in a city like London or New York, even in Lagos or Johannesburg may be quite ignorant of the hardships experienced by the ancestors in making the cities what they are today.

Some historians brag to know better than the members of the studied communities, a situation which causes a lot of bias in historical recordings. Any historian who wants to learn from the people whose culture he/she is recording must admit that he/she is ignorant of this particular culture, otherwise he/she would write history which is nothing but a human product based on misconception, bias, and generalization. Rewriting Chagga history, especially by a foreign historian requires the historian to be balanced, open-minded, bias-free, and ready to learn from the Chagga themselves – the best narrators of Chagga history are the Chagga themselves. It is therefore necessary for a foreign historian to understand that "other patterns are likely to emerge if he makes the effort to change his viewpoint, puts out of mind all he has been told by the historians of his own culture, and makes the imaginative effort of looking back on the recent past through the eyes of a particular African people" (Hallett 2005:13) such as the Chagga.

There are historians who think wrongly that African communities are so simple that they do not deserve any serious study. It is important to remember that any research involves moving from simple to complex entities. So even the smallest units of the Chagga society should be studied without any traces of partiality like the ones witnessed among the previous recorders of African history. Any person purporting to rewrite African history needs to discard from his/her mind all kinds of superiority complex caused by cultural preconceptions. Although this is a difficult thing to do it must be done because for a hasty historian there is a temptation of embracing the previous sweeping sentiments made by his/her compatriots and ignore the "views expressed by peoples of other cultures" (Hallett 2005:24).

## X. Impingement of Modernity on the Chagga Traditional Society

Forces of modernization have had such a deep and far-reaching effect on the Chagga traditional society that if urgent steps to rewrite Chagga history are not taken, quite a big amount of this particular history would be forgotten. For example, in the past a Chagga woman did not inherit or own land but these days some of them

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do own. The Chagga inheritance system needs more study because a lot of confusion is witnessed while settling the post-funeral affairs at the home of a deceased person.

Intermarriages are becoming more and more common in Chaggaland, contrary to the former times when the Chagga practiced strict endogamy. The growing number of non-Chagga people gaining access into Chaggaland via intermarriages makes it rather difficult to know the value of preserving the good things packed in Chagga culture and history. The political structure is increasingly altering the Chagga traditional system of administration, i.e. there are no more traditional rulers such as *wachily*i, *wamangyi*, *ngamnyiny* or *wameeku wa mfongo* – in the post-independence era all these leaders have been replaced by District Commissioners, ward leaders, ten-cells leaders, and Members of Parliament.

In modern Chaggaland dowry is largely paid in cash instead of the traditional system of using cows, goats, sheep, and barrels of local beer. The customs of borrowing children from young couples as well as entrusting one another with domestic animals (*iarjana shima*) are becoming less and less. From the economic point of view, fallen coffee prices have adversely affected the Chagga and some people have decided to uproot this cash crop which for quite a long time has been the heart or blood of Chaggaland.

The cultural and philosophical meaning of pre-Christian self-explanatory names has not been sufficiently studied – names like Ndeiiso, Mkyamise, Ndemasiawengyi, Mkarupia, Nderaisho, and Makyitucha.[12] Moreover, there were traditional names the meaning of which seems difficult to discern, e.g. Tomonja, Kyirama, Kyilonare, Rifo, Makyiponyi, Kyiramu, Saunanga, Mafong'a, Molo, Mlasany, Teti, Kyipura, Salewi, Manaiya, Ngarumau, Motesha, Satale, Msile, Ndikyira, Mayawia, Ndawia, Mtolyi, Tukye, and Makyitauwo.[13]

The rise and disappearance of names in the first two or three decades of Christianity in Chaggaland is something that has had a least coverage. Some of these names are Ndekooyasia, Ndeletso, Aiana, Amkauane, Kristoforo, Shichanaisaria, Ambilyiasia, Siangyicha, Ndelyimikyio, Ikanyio, Uforosia, Afukyiasienyi, Ndehoorio, Ngyitetera, and Engyerasaa.

Modern Chaggaland is increasingly becoming full of non-Chagga names which in the Chagga worldview seem to be meaningless and as far as the paper is concerned, there is a need of doing both socio-cultural and ethno-historical research to know why most people nowadays tend to shun the meaningful names used in the Chagga traditional society.

## XI. Conclusion

As it has been inherent in the course of the paper, the first step in writing the African history is to ensure that all microhistories are properly written. At this juncture let us insist that it is necessary to rewrite Chagga history because history proper entails a lot of revision – what was a historical fact yesterday may be a debatable concept today and what is true today may be quite the opposite tomorrow. Rewriting Chagga history is indeed an unavoidable task because wrong or distorted Chagga history should be replaced by correct history. Historians working on Chagga history are called upon to do their work with commitment, expertise, and vision so that they can produce correct and relevant history.

As far as Chagga history is concerned, there are many areas that historians have not sufficiently studied and some important questions still remain unanswered. For example, why didn't Indian traders flourish in rural Chaggaland? Why did the few Indians who had shops at Mwika Madukani terminate their trade and left without leaving behind any legacy? What is the history of Chagga geographical divisions and political units? How did various villages in Chaggaland evolve? How did various sub-towns such as Mkuu, Mwika, Kyisambo, Marangu Mtoni, Kolila, Mula, and Kyibong'oto come into being? What was the politico-economic and socio-cultural effect of the Tanga-Arusha railway which reached Moshi in 1898? History has it that some Chagga chiefs were once hauled into exile. Did the Chagga influence spread through the Chagga chiefs' spells of exile? Why were tourist hotels (e.g. Marangu Hotel and Kibo Hotel) built in Marangu and not somewhere else? What factors led to the construction of the first tarmac roads (the one from Himo to Marangu and the one from the Moshi-Arusha Highway to Machame) in rural Chaggaland? Why were these roads constructed only in Marangu and Machame and not in other areas? It was only recently (2008-2015) at least one tarmac road was built in all areas of Chaggaland except Old Moshi. Why was Old Moshi left out while the area was the first to host the first missionaries to Chaggaland as well as being the site of the first town of Moshi? Such crucial topics and burning questions in Chagga history demand the attention of future researchers who are expected to supply history lovers with correct information about the Chagga.

[12] Other pre-Christian Chagga names are Kyisakyisa, Ndelyawukyiwa, Mturuchuoe, Tarawia, Mlatiye, Ngatara, Mwiipale, Kyinanja, Kyitefure, and Mainja, to mention only a few.

[13] In Chaggaland there were also people called Mmochi, Mmamba, Mmorang'u, Mkahe, Mkahimo, Mmachame, Mkondeny, Mseri, Mkyiruwa, Mtaita – names which on literal explanation connotes a person from these areas. For instance, Mmochi means a person from Old Moshi, Mmamba means a person from Mamba, Mseri means a person from Usseri, and so forth.

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