

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

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Received: 7 December 2014 Accepted: 31 December 2014 Published: 15 January 2015

## 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.

**Index terms**— ethno-anthropological, historical-linguistic, African microhistories.

## 1 Introduction

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 neverending 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. 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. <sup>1</sup> See Davidson 1970:2. <sup>2</sup> 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

## 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 lightskinned, Johannes Raum gives the Chagga a Semitic origin like

### 3 II. BACKGROUND

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44 the Wakilindi or Wambugu of Lushoto Tanga who are believed to have an Arab ancestry (Raum 1909/1964: 2-3).  
45 In the 1950s and the 1960s there was a free movement of the Kisii in Chaggaland but nowhere is the Kisii-Chagga  
46 encounter thoroughly documented.

47 Author: e-mail: godsonmaanga@yahoo.com There is a need of investigating on issues like the influence of the  
48 Kisii in Chaggaland, intermarriage between the Kisii and the Chagga (if any), and why nowadays the Kisii are  
49 no longer on the Chagga scene.

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

57 The late Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya, in a foreword to his popular treatise called  
58 Facing Mount Kenya, says articulately that one of the factors that stimulated his interests to do the laborious  
59 task "was to produce on some aspects of African tradition and culture, which would make impact on those who  
60 had no knowledge of how Africans lived and thought and organized their own societies" ??Kenyatta 1991: i).  
61 The word 'some' in this excerpt is determinative in the sense that it stresses the point that what is contained in  
62 such a nice book like that of Kenyatta is only a fraction of the enormous corpus of Kikuyu cultural identity. 3 3  
63 Other writers noted for their commendable determination in highlighting the glorious and rich cultural heritage  
64 in Africa are Rems Nna Umeasiegbu who wrote The Way We Lived and Chinua Achebe in his traditionally  
65 acclaimed novels: Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease, Arrow of God and Anthills of the Savannah.

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

72 In Chaggaland there were very strong chiefdoms, just like the ones found in other areas of Africa before the  
73 continent was ruled by colonialists, with the support of local stooges. Before the 1870s, there existed in Africa  
74 very strong and well-articulated kingdoms like the Bunyoro Kitara, Buganda, and the Mwenemutapa, as well  
75 as strong empires such as Songhay, Kanem-Bornu, Mali, and the Sokoto Caliphate. There were leaders with  
76 enormous leadership qualities such as Shaka the Zulu, Askia the Great, Sundiata (Mari Diata), and Mamari  
77 Kulibali, to mention only a few. In the pre-colonial era Africa was proud of successful cultures with centers led  
78 by knowledgeable people, trading towns and heroes who had dominion on big wealthy kingdoms (Muragijimana  
79 2011:1).

### 80 3 II. Background

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

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

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

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

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

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106 Stating that Africans are so backward that they cannot excel in anything is to utter lies of the highest order,  
107 just as Albert Schweitzer -a missionary-cummedical doctor -concluded hastily and racially that an African is  
108 always a baby in thoughts and deeds. In his Philosophy of History, Georg Hegel (1770-1831) considered one of  
109 the greatest philosophers of his time, dared to insult all black people by declaring that Africans cannot change or  
110 develop because they cannot be educated and that their continent has no history; and Richard Burton, another  
111 racist, asserted that the black person cannot improve because mentally he/she always remains a child (Ki-Zerbo  
112 1990:12).

113 It is very unfortunate that for quite a long time Africa has been judged or evaluated using a western yardstick  
114 -even the name Africa began as a European idea in the sense that it was coined by Greek geographers ??Hallett  
115 2005:4). When Bruno Gutmann insisted that Chaggaland had valuable and sensible culture he was ridiculed and  
116 harshly accused of being a confused ethnologist embracing or entertaining "antimodern ethnical romanticism"  
117 ??Burke 1985:i). His countrymen utterly opposed him, claiming pointblank that nothing good could ever come  
118 out of Africa. His malicious critics wanted to tell him that Chaggaland had no history just as some shortsighted  
119 racists asserted that Africa had no history. This racially-motivated tendency of looking at Africa as a place where  
120 nothing good can come from still resonates as late as the 21 st century, something proven by the malicious and  
121 unbalanced attack leveled at Martin Bernal, a distinguished and bold scholar, who put forward a wellresearched  
122 thesis that Egypt (a part of Africa) stands as one of the origins of Ancient Greece (Bernal 2001).

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

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

## 132 **4 III. Aim of the Paper**

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

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

147 The African people, including the Chagga, are supposed to find meaning and pride in their history "if there is  
148 to be any hope in rebuilding their societies after the depredation of colonialism" (Muragijimana 2011:1).

149 A foreigner traveling around Africa, always comes across numerous resources and is greatly appealed to the  
150 cultural ones -"music and dance, remote communities, old kingdoms, traditional architecture and dress, and the  
151 sheer ebullience and good grace of people in the face of hardships that would crush most visitors" ??Gregg and  
152 Trillo 2011:6).

153 In a wider scope, this paper seeks to prepare ground for future work -rewriting Chagga history. Even in African  
154 literature studies, African scholars aim at "rewriting the history of the roughly 80-year colonial encounter in order  
155 to reveal a more nuanced understanding of the contributions of Africans themselves to an earlier nationalist  
156 enterprise" ??Kroll 2013:115). The history of Africa is supposed to be rewritten because for quite a long time, as  
157 it is noted in a historical volume edited by J. Ki-Zerbo, selfishness and lack of knowledge has largely distorted it.  
158 Without Africa's life it is very difficult to comprehend the world and human life in general. Rewriting African  
159 history is a right and responsibility of Africans because African history is formed by the Africans themselves and  
160 they are the most appropriate people to persist constructing it. From the historical viewpoint, "living without  
161 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  
162 roots" (Ki-Zerbo 1990:9). Chinua Achebe, Africa's literary guru, was inspired to write by "the urgency of telling  
163 an Igbo story from an Igbo point of view" ??Kroll 2013:127). Likewise, African historians should record African  
164 history, including Chagga history, from the African viewpoint.

165 Rewriting Chagga history, using sources of historical information like archaeology, Chagga language and oral  
166 traditions, might end up making new discoveries like the one made by Louis Leakey at Olduvai Gorge. Historical

## 5 IV. DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS

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167 scholarship like that of Dr Leakey has proven that Africa is the "cradle of mankind and the scene of . . . one of  
168 the first technological revolutions in history" (M'bow 1990:ix).

169 Materials like the speeches of Chagga personalities such as Thomas Marealle, Joseph Kimalando, Solomon  
170 Eliufoo, Chief John Maruma as well as Chagga newspapers like Kusare and Komkya are of utmost importance  
171 while rewriting Chagga history. Chagga grammar books, archival sources and interviews with intellectuals would  
172 also contribute extensively to the task of recording Chagga history. As it is well explained by a prominent  
173 historian, the historian searching for things like oral materials in Africa finds himself/herself in the homes of local  
174 rulers where he/she would not otherwise get an opportunity to visit. The historian gains new experiences that  
175 "stimulate and refine a historical imagination . . . ??and] it should be noted that oral information may also  
176 serve to supplement or correct the written record" ??Hallett 2005:22). To crown it all, it is through "the study of  
177 history and the use of historical imagination, scholars, teachers, and students can appreciate the awesome legacy  
178 that has made our current lives possible" (Smythe 2013:41).

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

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

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

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

## 204 5 IV. Definition of Keywords

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

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

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

228 Microhistory is a smaller component of history that when added to other components form a bigger history.

229 For instance, Chagga history is a microhistory that forms Tanzanian history when it is combined with other  
230 microhistories such as Nyakyusa history, Sambaa history, Bena history, Gogo history, Pare history, Nyamwezi  
231 history, Nyaturu history, Haya history, According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the term historicism  
232 means "the theory that cultural and social events and situations can be explained by history. In the light  
233 of this particular definition, historians become of utmost value in any society because, through research and  
234 writing, they constantly explain various events in the society. Historicism sheds much light on the crucial task  
235 of comprehending the human society.

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

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

257 Ethnology, according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, means "the scientific study of and comparison  
258 of human races." Talking from an

## 259 **6 V. Methodology**

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

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

## 275 **7 VI. Literature Review**

276 In any historical study, making use of the existing literature on the topic becomes of utmost importance. It  
277 is by examining the work done by other researchers historiography is tackled in a meaningful and profitable  
278 way. On these grounds historiography is viewed as a way of writing history. However, when a person studies  
279 'historiography' he/she does not study the past events directly, but rather the "changing interpretations of those  
280 events in the works of individual historians" ??Furay and Salevouris 1988:223). Africa has had recorders of history  
281 who from the historical viewpoint can be considered as "the precursors of modern African historiography, suffering  
282 the hardshipsisolation, lack of interest, absence of encouragementof the pioneer in any field of scholarship"  
283 ??Hallett 2005:22 A few papers on the Chagga, written mostly by westerners to meet colonial interests and  
284 packed in several volumes of the journal entitled Tanganyika Notes and Records (now out of print), have also  
285 been examined by the researcher. Unfortunately, a big corpus of these papers was prepared by hasty travelers,  
286 tourists, and colonial administrators who did not employ rigorous methods of doing an academic study.

287 **8 VII.**

288 **9 Significance of the Study**

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

297 The researcher does not support the claim that studying African ethnic groups separately is 'pointless and  
298 unhistorical' ??Sutton 1997:1). This is because he is fully convinced that comprehensive studies of individual  
299 ethnic groups in Tanzania and Africa at large is not being parochial but rather tackling history from the grassroots.  
300 Any big thing is formed by smaller components -a river is formed by streams and an ocean is fed by rivers. What  
301 should be pointed out honestly is that appealing for rewriting the Chagga history does not imply that the  
302 researcher is not aware of the fact that history "cannot be restricted by the limits of ethnic group, nation, or  
303 culture" ??Clarke 1991:xviii). into existence. In the post-independence era some countries in Africa have adopted  
304 new names, different from the names used in the pre-independence era. Vivid examples are Ivory Coast, Upper  
305 Volta and Congo Kinshasa that all adopted new names in the postcolonial era. 4 Rewritten Chagga history would  
306 prove that even in the Chagga cultural milieu there are philosophers, sages, and accomplished story-tellers. It  
307 would unearth the enormous knowledge, both obvious and secret, that can be deciphered from the collection of  
308 Chagga rites of The task of rewriting Chagga history is significant because ethnic groups are always in the social  
309 characteristic of constant change and interaction; and the history of individual peoples is the initial step in the  
310 study of world history. National history (e.g. the history of Tanzania), regional history (e.g. the history of East  
311 Africa), and continental history (e.g. the history of Africa) is baseless, if not irrelevant, without the history of  
312 particular history of single ethnic groups such as Chagga history. It is on these grounds the paper is expected to  
313 stimulate more research on the gorgeous and sumptuous Chagga culture, as passed on from bygone generations  
314 -from prehistory to the present day.

315 Chagga history needs to be rewritten to prove that, contrary to the reports of former historians, not all people  
316 in Chaggaland responded negatively towards the western rule. Quite a big number of the Chagga responded  
317 positively. Histories of various ethnic groups in Africa need to be rewritten with a positive and balanced attitude.  
318 Thus, historians need to show that in modern Africa there is no need of continuing responding negatively to  
319 western intrusion that was facilitated by the agents of colonialism: explorers, missionaries and traders. As Iliffe  
320 sums it up, "African response to change can no longer be described in the negative terms of resistance . . .  
321 [because attempts] to initiate, accelerate, and control change become . . . equally important" ??Iliffe 2008:6). 4  
322 In the post-colonial era the name Ivory Coast was changed into Cote D'Ivoire, Upper Volta was named Burkina  
323 Faso, and Belgian Congo was called Zaire and later on Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the name it has  
324 borne to date. In the same era Tanganyika was renamed Tanzania, Southern Rhodesia was called Zimbabwe,  
325 Northern Rhodesia was named Zambia, and Nyasaland became Malawi. Even elsewhere in the world, Burma was  
326 named Myanmar, and the former USSR -as an aftermath of the end of the cold wardisintegrated and produced  
327 new autonomous countries like Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovenia, Slovakia, Uzbekistan,  
328 Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan (See Pearson Secondary Atlas).

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

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

336 **10 VIII. Distorted and Misconceived Aspects of Chagga History**

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

340 **11 a) Culture**

341 There are many customs and traditions which baffle people from the western hemisphere, especially people coming  
342 to Africa for the first time. This situation is also true with Chagga culture which sometimes poses a strong baffle  
343 and shock to foreigners. To the amazement of many people, the Chagga had had irksome customs like human  
344 sacrifice and female circumcision. For example, in Old Moshi when there was acute famine, an 18-year old  
345 maiden was thrown alive into a well, as a way of soliciting rain from the ancestral spirits ??Mojola 1998:70-71).

346 Furthermore, as a means of declaring permanent peace between Mwika and Rombo, a virgin and a boy who had  
347 not known a woman carnally were buried alive at the Kishingonyi Hills (Dundas 1968 ??69-70, Maanga 2013:12).  
348 Even the Chagga customs denounced by the first missionaries (e.g. circumcising or marrying a dead person,  
349 and cleansing a field cursed by a dead person) occupy an important place in the Chagga ethnological history.  
350 Why the Chagga do not bury their kin outside Chaggaland even a Christian -needs research. It is said that most  
351 Africans are Christians in the daytime and not in the night. Whether this observation is true among the Chagga  
352 is something that is subject to research.

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

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

## 369 **12 b) Mispronounced and Wrongly-spelt Terms**

370 Gripped with haste and suffering least command in African tongues, some foreign historians and linguists have  
371 committed mistakes of wrong spelling and mispronouncing things like names of people, areas, mountains, rivers,  
372 food and traditional dances. Spelling and pronunciation mistakes have Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on  
373 Ethno-Anthropological Distortions and Misconceptions made many areas in Africa to be given wrong names hence  
374 distorting Africa's history and ultimately give a false image of the continent. Some of the mispronounced words  
375 as far as the Chagga geographical history is concerned are Morang'u (mispronounced as Marangu), Mashami  
376 (mispronounced as Machame), Shira (mispronounced© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)

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

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

390 Wrongly pronounced terms have really distorted linguistic equilibrium and palatability in Chaggaland, just  
391 as it has done elsewhere. Bruno Gutmann (1926) writes menja ja mringa instead of menya ya mringa (iron  
392 of water) and menja ya modo instead of menya ya modo (iron of fire). Kathleen Stahl (1964) writes Munoo  
393 instead of Munuo, Sumu instead of Suum, Wakoningo instead of Wakonyingo, Samake Maene instead of Samaki  
394 Maini, Masake instead of Masaki, and Maringa instead of Maring'a. Charles Dundas (1968) writes Wako Teri  
395 instead of Wakoteri, Wako Kime instead of Wakokimei, Wako Makundi instead of Wakomakundi, Wako Ngowi  
396 instead of Wakongowi, Kirita instead of Kyirita, and Narumo instead of Narumu. He writes Marawite instead of  
397 Marawiti, mafiga instead of mashiga (in Kyiunjo pronounced as mashigha), ndaswe instead of ndasu, arera instead  
398 of arera, and longu instead of long'u. Sally Moore (1986) writes Makayuni instead of Makuyuni, Kinyamuvo  
399 instead of Kinyamvuo, Nganyeni instead of Nganyeny, Kondeni instead of Konden, Mwika instead of Miika,  
400 Ngasseni instead of Ngaseny, Mrau instead of Nrao, Wikiwawoko instead of Wukiyawawoko, kihamba instead of  
401 kyigamba (in Kyiunjo pronounced as kyighamba), and magaddi instead of mmbala. Even outside Chaggaland,  
402 for instance among the Maasai where the Chagga have ancestral connections, foreigners have left quite a distorted  
403 pronunciation legacy. 5 It is no exaggeration to assert that most documents with Chagga history suffer spelling  
404 mistakes, a situation which gives wrong information to people who are novices in Chagga orthography. Ironically,  
405 even some history books written by local researchers have spelling flaws. For instance, in Malya's Wamarangu: 5  
406 Kenya is the result of mispronouncing the Maasai term Kipwokenya waanu (walking until when). Ngong'u (spring  
407 or water source) is mispronounced as Ngong, Naikurukur (where water roars) is mispronounced as Nyahururu,

408 Embusel (soda ash place) is mispronounced as Amboseli, Kejuoodo/Elkajuado (a long river) is mispronounced as  
409 Kajjado, and Engareoormotonyik (birds' water) is mispronounced as Ngaramtoni. Other mispronounced Maasai  
410 words are Kiborilong'oi (shield-making place) mispronounced as Kiboriloni, NasaiEngai (place for praying to  
411 God) wrongly shortened as Nasai, Endonyoomodiok (cow-dung hill) mispronounced as Mudio, Endonyoormorwak  
412 (elders' hill) mispronounced as Donyomuro, and Longito (stones hill) mispronounced as Longido. (Interview with  
413 Rev. Joshua Laiser -a very knowledgeable Maasai -Uhuru Hotel Moshi, Tanzania, 11 November 2014).

414 Historia na Maendeleo, one comes across words like fuphu instead of fumvu, aleuta instead of alewuta, iwe  
415 instead of igoe (in Kyiunjo pronounced as ighoe), ma instead of maa, and Ndegoruo instead of Ndegoruo, to cite  
416 only a few orthographic mistakes. While reading Machangu's Kindo kya Kando, the reader encounters wrongly  
417 spelt words like kindo instead of kyindo, kitapu instead of kyitapu, ku-i instead of kui, Kichagga instead of  
418 Kyichaka, ngyurukenyi instead of ngyuurukyeny, mawokyionyi instead of mawookyiony, tsose instead of tsoose,  
419 and shiwanu instead of shiganu (in Kyiunjo pronounced as shighanu).

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

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

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

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### 443 14 Misleading Facts

444 When in 1848 Johann Rebmann reported to his fellow Europeans that there was a snow-capped the Equator, his  
445 report was dismissed as information mountain -Kilimanjaro -found only a few degrees from from a day-dreamer  
446 and a person arguing c) unscientifically ??Stahl 1964 ??40-41, Dundas 1968 ??11, Reader 1982:9). He was  
447 ignored and ridiculed like the first man to report that the world was round and square like a table as it had been  
448 hitherto believed. Existence of the snow-capped Kilimanjaro right in the equatorial zone where the sun shines  
449 relentlessly was a shocking reality. Rewriting Chagga history would disclose or uncover more other unbelievable  
450 realities. For example, most people would not believe that the Chagga had female rulers. 6 Sally Moore (in her  
451 book entitled Social Facts & Fabrications: Customary Law on ??ilimanjaro, 1880 ??ilimanjaro, -1980) ) calls  
452 Chagga administrative units mitaa instead of using the correct term shikaro. Despite the fact Moore largely  
453 relies on information from the local people, she still uses a lot of non-Chagga terminology (largely Swahili) such  
454 as kihenge, shamba, ugoni, mila, fidia, mchawi, wazee, baraza, pombe, balozi, mjumbe, wasimamizi, mrithi, and  
455 boma. Had she put priority on local coloration while extracting information from her Chagga informants, she  
456 would have minimized or avoided altogether these Chaggaland had able monarchs like Sina, Mankinga, Marealle,  
457 and others but their political and military prowess get least coverage in the historical accounts by alien historians.  
458 Mention needs to be made of the fact that the strategic wars and the resistance of Chagga chiefs against being  
459 subjugated by foreign masters are not sufficiently written by the historians who wrote in the preceding decades.  
460 Maybe, intentionally or obliviously, the incidents of white people being outwitted by Chagga chiefs feature very  
461 briefly in the Chagga history books. Overlooking certain facts in Chagga history is pathetic because it reflects the  
462 tendency witnessed among the historians who merely make coverage of Africa-western relationship, leaving aside  
463 things like the Africa-Asia relationship which existed for a very long time. One of the most common shortcomings  
464 of Chagga history is the distortion brought about as a result of factual negligence and oversight.

465 Factual errors in Chaggaland arise when researchers approach Chagga history wearing a foreign mantle.  
466 The first written history on Africa was done by detached historians, "largely by white people viewing very  
467 strange and different cultures, and could never have been an accurate or balanced portrayal of African culture"  
468 (moronwatch.net/2012/02/rewriting-africanhistory-html). 6 Somewhere in the past, in their prestigious history,

469 the Chagga had some female chiefs such as Mashina of Mamba and Msanya of Marangu (Dundas 1968 Swahili  
470 terms because Chagga terms for all these non-Chagga words are available. However, on the other side of the  
471 coin, Sally is commended for using correctly Chagga terms like mlaso, kyidari, masiro, and ndafu.

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

481 Another depiction of factual misinformation is seen in the wrong interpretation of some Chagga sociocultural  
482 and ethno-historical aspects. For instance, Stahl says that Ndegoruo means punishment while it should be 'I  
483 punished' or 'the punisher'; Melyiari 7 That the Chagga did not sanction killing a killer, is proven by Bruno  
484 Gutmann (Wasawu o Wachaka -Grandfather of the Chagga) who says that the Chagga did not allow a person  
485 who has killed a person to be killed but rather to pay something to compensate for the means 'the indefatigable'  
486 while it should be 'the hero'; and Kyilamia means 'the conqueror' while it should be 'the oppressor' ??Stahl  
487 1964:308).

488 Sally Moore says that in the 19 th century it was legitimate for the Chagga to kill a murderer. "Where a  
489 homicide occurred between lineages, the victim's kin were under pressure to avenge the death with a reciprocal  
490 killing. The decedent's spirit could trouble living kin if they did not take action" (Sally 1986:57). This observation  
491 is not quite true because the normal custom for murder among the Chagga was appeasement implemented by  
492 the killer or the killer's kin paying something as compensation for the blood of the murdered individual. The  
493 compensation for a slain person depended on gender and social status. Maybe she was misled by a least informed  
494 informant and it might also be true that researchers like Sally Moore were influenced by the Jewish law of killing  
495 a person who has killed another one, as it is written in the Old Testament -"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by  
496 man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9:6). 7 Melyari was 'anglicized' or  
497 wrongly pronounced as ??arealle (Stahl 1964: 308). Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on Ethno-Anthropological  
498 Distortions and Misconceptions spilt blood ??Gutmann 1926:240). Gutmann goes on to talk about the Chagga  
499 custom of according the killer a chance of seeking asylum in the chief's house, to allow the killer's relatives to  
500 pay what was needed as blood compensation. In case the killer was a pauper and without able kin, the chief  
501 could pay for him, with the condition that the killer would work at the chief's homestead as a servant (Gutmann  
502 1926 ??243, Moore 1986:57). Homicide was detested among the Chagga but there was no justification for killing  
503 a person who had killed another person.

## 504 15 IX.

## 505 16 Results of Distorting and Misconceiving Chagga History

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

## 508 17 a) Hopelessness

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

## 518 b) Imitation

519 For quite a long time African history in general has been written and rewritten to favor or meet the narrative  
520 styles and objectives stipulated by westerners (Muragijimana 2011:1). Even today, some western editors force  
521 African writers to write books in tune to western expectations. A budding writer confided to the researcher how  
522 her manuscript on African culture was frequently criticized maliciously and eventually rejected simply because  
523 she refused being pressed by the editor(s) to meet what they claimed to be international standards but in the  
524 actual fact western interests. It is also narrated that some myopic assessors refused to elevate a famous African  
525 novelist and playwright to the level of professorship on the grounds that creative writing has no elements that  
526 can qualify a person to become a professor. It needs to be remembered that in various disciplines historians and

## 21 E) STEREOTYPES

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527 writers in general perceive the world from their angle of observation and not necessarily from the mirror held by  
528 other people. 8

### 529 19 c) Oversight and negligence

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

533 The division of Chaggaland into Rombo, Vunjo, Old Moshi, Machame, and Siha has always been overstressed  
534 by the previous hasty historians who were oblivious of other important areas, just as the act of dividing Africa into  
535 two blocs (North of Sahara and South of Sahara) has made some historians to write history as if other smaller areas  
536 on the continent are non-existent. Sometimes historians leave out tribal issues that are of utmost importance.  
537 For example, chroniclers of Chagga history omit important things such as Chagga royal weddings, circumcision of  
538 people from royal families, Chagga political structure and judiciary, as well as inheritance systems and procedures.  
539 Fans of Chagga history would like to know in detail as to why some Chagga clans 9 An obvious cause of  
540 oversight while writing Chagga history is failure to use other sources apart from historical documents -things  
541 like archaeology, literature (poems, songs, novels, fables, riddles, proverbs), linguistics (primers), anthropology,  
542 sculpture, and woodcarving. Rewriting Chagga history is necessary because up to the last decades of the 19 th  
543 century, "most African societies transmitted their culture without writing -through oral tradition, music, dance,  
544 architecture, woodcarving, metalwork and weaving" ??Gregg and Trillo 2011:32). Even the languages of most  
545 specialized in the art of furrows, beekeeping and honey harvesting, blacksmithing, pottery, weaving, embroidery,  
546 and herbal treatment. Another very important issue of historical interest is the development of various clans or  
547 surnames in the Chagga community.

548 The history of some Chagga clans can be traced to the ethnic groups regarded as the origins of the Chagga,  
549 i.e. the Maasai, the Kamba, the Kikuyu, the Sambaa, and the Pare. But how synonymous clans like Chao, Shao,  
550 Shayo, and Mashayo came into existence is something which needs intensive research in the entire exercise of  
551 rewriting Chagga history. 8 Even in soccer African footballers are expected to play football according to western  
552 criterion, and on the pitches -for instance, during world cup matches -some racially-motivated referees make  
553 judgment with a lot of partiality. 9 A clan is a "social organization whose purpose is to meet economic needs and  
554 to challenge nature. It is founded on a deliberate choice of unilateral type of kinship (patrilineal or matrilineal,  
555 according to the economic context), of a private or collective type of ownership, of a mode of inheritance, etc."  
556 ??Diop 1991: 111). Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on Ethno-Anthropological Distortions and Misconceptions  
557 down, bearing in mind that language is one of the crucial components of people's history and culture.

### 558 20 African ethnic groups are not yet studied and written d) 559 Unfair judgment

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

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

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

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

### 580 21 e) Stereotypes

581 It is nauseating to see that for quite a long time Chaggaland and Africa in general has been accorded an unfair  
582 description based on generalizations. Rewriting Chagga history would minimize stereotypes about the Chagga  
583 and their society. From the 10 It is not an exaggeration to say that before the introduction of family planning  
584 methods, western couples had very large families. A living case in history is the family of Emperor Francis I of

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585 Austria and his wife Maria Theresa who had a total of sixteen children ??Roselle 1973: 341-343). sociological  
586 and educational point of view, stereotypes accrue and continue in the society due to "lack of exposure, ignorance,  
587 fear, and stories about the 'Other'" (Viakinou -Brinson 2013:178). That is why some sociologists say that a  
588 stereotype is an exaggerated description that puts all people in the same category, painting them with the same  
589 brush as well as ignoring facts and distorting the reality ??Macionis 1999:23). Analysis and interpretation of  
590 colonial and raciallymotivated media drives home the fact that "constant, repeated, single negative stories about  
591 Africa in Western media and in canonized literature such as Heart of Darkness have failed to reveal the many  
592 untold positive stories of Africans" (Viakinou-Brinson 2013:178). Joseph Conrad viewed Africa as the seat of  
593 darkness and motivated by this negative and incorrect perception on Africa he wrote that novel entitled Heart of  
594 Darkness. Set in Belgian Congo, the novel has blatant racial overtones as far as derogating Africa and her people  
595 is concerned but ironically it was praised as one of the greatest novels in the English literature. This novel was  
596 first published in 1902 and reprinted in 1999, doubtless to continue spreading false information in the west that  
597 Africa is the heart of darkness. 11

## 598 **22 f) Prejudice**

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

608 Most historians have written African history using research done on biased and parochial basis, something  
609 that has brought about a negative approach to the continent. Curtis Keim is of the opinion that Africa should be  
610 approached with minimal bias because its "size, population, resources, and modernization play an increasingly  
611 important role in the world" ??Keim 2009:12). Most of the historical studies done on Chaggaland have 11  
612 In 1989, infuriated by the novel's negative depiction of Africa, Chinua Achebe reacted boldly by writing the  
613 historic essay called "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness". In Hopes and Impediments:  
614 Selected Essays. New York: Doubleday, pp. 1-20. Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on Ethno-Anthropological  
615 Distortions and Misconceptions ignored important aspects of Chagga history such as Chagga nationalism versus  
616 western imperialism, as it is reflected in the person and deeds of Joseph Merinyo who in many circles is described  
617 as a frontline Chagga nationalist and champion for human rights (Maanga 2014:1). This situation is not accidental  
618 because it has been the tendency of western historians or African historians educated in the west to deal mainly  
619 with the "theme of European Imperialism and African Nationalism" ??Hallett 2005:13) and forget other issues  
620 such as the reaction of the local people to this particular theme. The most important thing in Chaggaland, and  
621 the least portrayed by local and foreign historians, is how foreign powers (first the Germans and then the British)  
622 intruded Chaggaland and how the Chagga resisted the intrusion through the sophisticated strategies of the local  
623 chiefs.

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

627 Bad history appears when historians allow their prejudice and personal feelings to get the better of them.  
628 Many imperialist historians of Africa, during the colonial period, wrote bad history. Their prejudice and personal  
629 feelings made them write that Africans had not history of their own. It is part of the modern rebirth of Africa  
630 that we know this view to be entirely false (Davidson 1970:1). In addition to Davidson's assertion, for quite a  
631 long time prejudice has made Africans robbed of their right of being considered initiators and propagators of  
632 their own history. Africans are therefore compelled by the negative status quo to re-establish their 'historical  
633 authenticity' and place it on a stable foundation. Any person determined to rewrite genuine Chagga history  
634 needs to understand beforehand how myths and prejudices have placed genuine African history behind the  
635 curtain (M'bow 1990: vi-viii).

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

642 Africa has an indelible history on the world map because there is much consensus among archaeologists that  
643 God gave the continent the honor of being the origin of mankind. Chronological, anthropological, and prehistoric  
644 archaeological dataobtained from humanistic paleontology done by scholars like Dr Louis Leakey -shed much  
645 light on the notion that "Africa is the birthplace of humanity" ??Diop 1991:5). Being the cradle of humanity,  
646 Africa "offers an important view of history that allows students to see the tremendously difficult environments

## 23 X. IMPINGEMENT OF MODERNITY ON THE CHAGGA TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

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647 and challenges that humans overcame on their journey to the contemporary world" (Smythe 2013:39). This  
648 particular awareness is very important because a child growing up in a city like London or New York, even in  
649 Lagos or Johannesburg may be quite ignorant of the hardships experienced by the ancestors in making the cities  
650 what they are today. Some historians brag to know better than the members of the studied communities, a  
651 situation which causes a lot of bias in historical recordings. Any historian who wants to learn from the people  
652 whose culture he/she is recording must admit that he/she is ignorant of this particular culture, otherwise he/she  
653 would write history which is nothing but a human product based on misconception, bias, and generalization.  
654 Rewriting Chagga history, especially by a foreign historian requires the historian to be balanced, open-minded,  
655 bias-free, and ready to learn from the Chagga themselves -the best narrators of Chagga history are the Chagga  
656 themselves. It is therefore necessary for a foreign historian to understand that "other patterns are likely to emerge  
657 if he makes the effort to change his viewpoint, puts out of mind all he has been told by the historians of his own  
658 culture, and makes the imaginative effort of looking back on the recent past through the eyes of a particular  
659 African people" ??Hallett 2005:13) such as the Chagga.

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

## 668 23 X. Impingement of Modernity on the Chagga Traditional 669 Society

670 Forces of modernization have had such a deep and far-reaching effect on the Chagga traditional society that  
671 if urgent steps to rewrite Chagga history are not taken, quite a big amount of this particular history would be  
672 forgotten. For example, in the past a Chagga woman Rewriting Chagga History: Focus on Ethno-Anthropological  
673 Distortions and Misconceptions did not inherit or own land but these days some of them do own. The Chagga  
674 inheritance system needs more study because a lot of confusion is witnessed while settling the post-funeral affairs  
675 at the home of a deceased person.

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

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

688 The cultural and philosophical meaning of pre-Christian self-explanatory names has not been sufficiently  
689 studied -names like Ndeiiso, Mkyamise, Ndemasiauwengyi, Mkarupia, Nderaisho, and Makyitucha. 12 Moreover,  
690 there were traditional names the meaning of which seems difficult to discern, e.g. Tomonja, Kyirama, Kyilonare,  
691 Rifo, Makyiponyi, Kyiramu, Saunanga, Mafong'a, Molo, Mlasany, Teti, Kyipura, Salewi, Manaiya, Ngarumau,  
692 Motesha, Satale, Msile, Ndikyira, Mayawia, Ndawia, Mtolyi, Tukye, and Makyitauwo. 13 Modern Chaggaland  
693 is increasingly becoming full of non-Chagga names which in the Chagga The rise and disappearance of names  
694 in the first two or three decades of Christianity in Chaggaland is something that has had a least coverage.  
695 Some of these names are Ndekooyasia, Ndeletso, Aiana, Amkauane, Kristoforo, Shichanaisaria, Ambilyiasia,  
696 Siangyicha, Ndelyimikyio, Ikanyio, Uforosia, Afukyiasienyi, Ndehoorio, Ngyitetera, and Engyerasaa. 12 Other  
697 pre-Christian Chagga names are Kyisakyisa, Ndelyawukyiwa, Mturuchuoe, Tarawia, Mlatiye, Ngatara, Mwiipale,  
698 Kyinanja, Kyitefure, and Mainja, to mention only a few. 13 In Chaggaland there were also people called Mmochi,  
699 Mmamba, Mmorang'u, Mkahe, Mkahimo, Mmachame, Mkondeny, Mseri, Mkyiruwa, Mtaita -names which on  
700 literal explanation connotes a person from these areas. For instance, Mmochi means a person from Old Moshi,  
701 Mmamba means a person from Mamba, Mseri means a person from Usseri, and so forth. worldview seem to be  
702 meaningless and as far as the paper is concerned, there is a need of doing both sociocultural and ethno-historical  
703 research to know why most people nowadays tend to shun the meaningful names used in the Chagga traditional  
704 society.

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## 705 24 XI. Conclusion

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

713 As far as Chagga history is concerned, there are many areas that historians have not sufficiently studied  
714 and some important questions still remain unanswered. For example, why didn't Indian traders flourish in rural  
715 Chaggaland? Why did the few Indians who had shops at Mwika Madukani terminate their trade and left without  
716 leaving behind any legacy? What is the history of Chagga geographical divisions and political units? How did  
717 various villages in Chaggaland evolve? How did various sub-towns such as Mkuu, Mwika, Kyisambo, Marangu  
718 Mtoni, Kolila, Mula, and Kyibong'oto come into being? What was the politicoeconomic and socio-cultural effect  
719 of the Tanga-Arusha railway which reached Moshi in 1898? History has it that some Chagga chiefs were once  
720 hauled into exile. Did the Chagga influence spread through the Chagga chiefs' spells of exile? Why were tourist  
721 hotels (e.g. Marangu Hotel and Kibo Hotel) built in Marangu and not somewhere else? What factors led to  
722 the construction of the first tarmac roads (the one from Himo to Marangu and the one from the Moshi-Arusha  
723 Highway to Machame) in rural Chaggaland? Why were these roads constructed only in Marangu and Machame  
724 and not in other areas? It was only recently ??2008) ??2009) ??2010) ??2011) ??2012) ??2013) ??2014) ??2015)  
725 at least one tarmac road was built in all areas of Chaggaland except Old Moshi. Why was Old Moshi left out  
726 while the area was the first to host the first missionaries to Chaggaland as well as being the site of the first  
727 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. <sup>1 2</sup>



Figure 1:

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<sup>1</sup>© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)

<sup>2</sup>© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US) 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

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Figure 2:

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