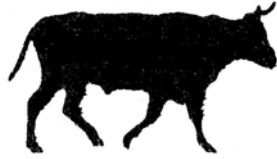


FOR ANCESTORS AND GOD: RITUALS OF SACRIFICE AMONG THE CHAGGA OF TANZANIA¹



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This article discusses the rituals of sacrifice among the patrilineal Chagga people of northern Tanzania in terms of the historical context of double burial and related sacrifices. Despite more than a hundred years of Christianity in the area, ancestor veneration and sacrifices remain important elements in the rituals of kin groups, as when the relatively well educated, migrant Chagga return home at Christmas to commemorate their ancestors. The analysis draws from the classic studies of sacrifice as a gift, a communion, and an effective representation by focusing on sacrificial substances, participants, and spatio-temporal movement. It examines ritual cuisine, sequences of substances and their processing in the course of reconstituting the social community, and transforming the dead into ancestors. Rituals of sacrifice are part of a larger set of rituals that place both the living and the dead in ancestral lands. (Chagga, sacrifice, Christianity, double burial, Tanzania)

Christmas is the time when migrant Chagga of northern Tanzania return home to Kilimanjaro for the holiday. It is a period when confirmations and baptismal jubilees as well as banana beer celebrations preceding weddings take place. Christmas is also the time when the Christian Chagga perform sacrificial rituals (*mitambiko*) for the ancestors. The Chagga of Kilimanjaro today find the ultimate home for the living and the dead at the banana orchards (*kihamba*); both the living and dead are regarded as “people of the banana garden” (*watu wa mgombani*). The notion refers to a temporal connection between the past, present, and future generations, and the locality’s importance is with the staple food, bananas. At the beginning of the twentieth century the banana grove was the place of social reproduction. A man married, acquired a piece of land from his father, built a house, and had children. Ritual practices connected newborn children and the dead to the ancestral land. Today, the Chagga are relatively well educated people, many of whom are forced to seek employment and life opportunities in urban areas. Even though daily life may be elsewhere and the economic significance of the banana orchard and coffee cultivation has diminished, a man has to be able to provide his site of burial. Even today, most people are buried at home in the banana garden; no matter how far one may travel, people expect a Chagga to return home and be buried in the banana orchard (cf. Weiss 1993:29).

This article examines the rituals of sacrifice among the patrilineal and viri-local coffee and banana cultivating Chagga. In order to become an ancestor, the deceased needs a Christian burial, which requires having led a morally upright Christian life in the eyes of the Lutheran church. Most people are buried the Christian way (*kikristo*), but in cases of excommunication the burial is “indigenous” (*kienyeji*). The Lutheran church may excommunicate those who have not been good Christians, but such people may beg forgiveness from the pastor and return to the flock. The most common reasons for excommunication are “short cut” marriages, adulterous relationships, and consulting medicine men. Other reasons include abortions, consumption of liquor, and not attending church services for a considerable period of time. The worst consequence of excommunication is not getting a Christian burial.

Two sacrifices need to be performed if the recently deceased is to become an ancestral spirit (*mzimu*). The sacrifices are historically connected to the former practice of double burial (Marealle 1947; Dundas 1968[1924]; Moore 1986; Hasu 1999, 2009), when the dead were first buried inside the hut and a goat was sacrificed. A year later, the skull and the bones were moved to the banana grove where an offering place (*mbuonyi*) was established by planting a *sale* (*dracaena*) plant and sacrificing cattle. Nowadays, the initial sacrifice is performed on the third day of the funeral and the process is completed with a second sacrifice performed at least a year after the funeral. Slaughtering, cooking, and eating the cattle involves a large segment of the lineage and neighbors. These mortuary rituals connect the people to the ancestral areas and to the ultimate home, the banana orchard.

THE PLACE OF THE ANCESTORS

When Martin Weishaupt, the Leipzig Lutheran missionary visited the mission stations in Kilimanjaro in 1909–1910, he paid a visit to the chief of Mwika, who took him to see the burial place of his ancestors under the chiefly lineage tree. Weishaupt described the visit in his diary:

When I visited Ndemasi, the chief of Mwika, on 25 November 1910, he asked me: “Do you want to see the skulls of my ancestors?” I agreed. Then the chief took me to his grove, the burial place of his ancestors. There were stones in a small banana grove under a *dracaena*. They indicated the place where the skulls of the dead were buried. A skull was buried under each stone. . . . The women’s skulls were buried in a certain other place. The dead are first buried inside the hut. After some time the corpse is dug up, the head is separated from the body and taken to a particular place where the clan brings offerings to the dead. This place is indicated by a stone. Finally we came to a place with a big dark pot. The chief said: “Here rests my father Tengio.” He took off the upper part of the pot and let me have a look. Something light was shining in the pot. It was the bare upper part of the skull. In front of the pot he had placed a stone in order to find the sacred

place again in case something should have to be put in the pot. Beside it was another pot with the skull of his grandfather Kyasimba. (Weishaupt 1920:9)

The Mwika chief felt it necessary to indicate his standing by taking the European visitor to the banana garden and showing him the ancestral burial place. Some years later, when the missionary Ernst Hohlfeld visited chief Ndemasi, the latter also took him to see the skulls of his ancestors. Again, Ndemasi named those buried there and said, "In the past I never came here with empty hands. I offered them goats, sheep, and cows so that they, the spirits, would not be hungry in the underworld, but now I don't believe any more in stories about the spirits" (Hohlfeld 1916:252). Chief Ndemasi took the German missionaries under his clan tree and showed them how the chiefly burial place was arranged. The sacred burial place of the ancestors was located in the vicinity of the chiefly house under a large tree closely connected with the history of the chiefly family (Weishaupt 1912:37). Ndemasi also named two ascending generations of ancestors, his father Tengio and grandfather Kyasimba, and described how he used to sacrifice for the dead.

The missionary accounts distinguish between kinds of ancestral spirits according to their proximity to the living. The longer the time since death, the more distant the spirits and the less influence they had in the lives of the living (Gutmann 1907:584–85). The structure of the spirit world was related to the practice of double burial and sacrifices. There were three categories of ancestral spirits and they differed according to their capacity to communicate with living people. The spirits that had the most contacts with the living were called *warimu wa uwe* (the upper spirits) or *warimu waischiwo* (the known spirits). These spirits were still known by their names and were given offerings. Other spirits, *warimu wa ngiinduka*, were not seen in the world of the living anymore, although they were capable of receiving offerings (Gutmann 1907:584). These spirits were called *warimu wa ko mafuo* (the spirits from the bones). A third group of spirits, called *walenge* (the broken ones), had no relationship with the living anymore and were not able to reach offerings. These spirits were so ancient that, in a sense, they had "disintegrated" (Dundas 1968[1924]:126); they were called *varimu varekye* (the lost spirits) (Gutmann 1909:85).

The German missionaries working in the area regarded ancestral beliefs and sacrifices as clear indicators of heathenism. They expected that with the conversion of the Chagga to Christianity such beliefs and practices would cease to exist. But after more than a hundred years of Christianity and Western education, and even though the church condemns these customs as being un-Christian, they remain important to the Chagga. As a senior Chagga man put it in 1994, "The Chagga will go on sacrificing even after tomorrow." Ancestors and Christianity are elements in present-day Chagga worldview that in many ways are not

mutually exclusive (cf. Green 1995:26; Lan 1985:40). Ancestors are believed to influence the success of business enterprises, and omens are explained in terms of the actions and will of the ancestors (Matemba 1991:9). Deaths related to the AIDS epidemic may be explained in terms of abandoned traditions and neglected sacrifices. Sacrifices are also sometimes needed to secure the successful performance of Christian life-cycle rituals. Similarly, Christian prayers are also necessary for the successful performance of sacrifices. It is not uncommon to hear people commenting during a sacrifice that the deceased enters heaven and is accepted by God as the result of a correct performance of the ritual. Sacrificial rituals are even performed at the homes of church elders, and people speculate whether pastors practice them as well.²

THE SACRIFICE RITUAL

Studies of the rituals of sacrifice during the 1990s raised some new issues and themes, such as memory (Cole 1997), violence (Hoskins 1993), and cultural translation (Rasmussen 2002). However, I argue here that many aspects of classic theories of sacrifice rites take on new meaning and significance in new contexts and changing historical circumstances, and aid understanding and interpreting the data presented in this article. One of my central arguments is that sacrificial rituals are part of a larger ritual complex and need to be understood in a historical perspective. Chagga sacrificial rituals relate to three theoretical traditions. First, there is the tradition that examines sacrifice as a gift to gods and as part of an exchange between gods and humans. Second is the tradition that views sacrifice as a communion between man and divinity through a meal. Third is the tradition that sees sacrifice as an efficacious representation (Valeri 1985:62).

There are four stages of the sacrifice ritual: first, entry and the invocation of the ancestors; second, destruction of the sacrificial victim and construction of the offering; third, communication and communion with the ancestors; and fourth, exit and separation from the ancestors and communion with living humans. Three core transformations constitute the ritual sequence. First, the ritual cuisine—the victim's substance and its processing; second, the participants of the ritual; and third, the spatio-temporal process.

Robertson-Smith, Durkheim, and Mauss regarded beliefs and ritual practices as social phenomena—the community, not the individual experience, being the focus of analysis. Robertson-Smith saw sacrifice as a communion between gods and the living, and stressed the importance of commensality in the treatment and cooking of the sacrifice. He restricted communion to the material expression of substance brought about by sharing the same food. Mauss moved the theory of gift to a more abstract level as a phenomenon that contained all the social

relationships of which it was a part. Durkheim argued for the synthesis of communion and gift in a wider formula as the reciprocal but hierarchical relation of sacred and profane. He also gave a more systematic form to Robertson-Smith's and Hubert and Mauss's idea that sacrifice was an objectified metaphor of moral reality expressing the mutual dependence of individual and society (Valeri 1985:65).

Early concepts that remain important include notions of the subject, either individual or collective, for whom the ritual is performed, the ritual functionary, the victim, and the divinity (in this case ancestors) (Hubert and Mauss 1964[1898]:10). A further contribution of Hubert and Mauss is sacrifice seen as a means of connecting the sacred and the profane through the mediating victim. Their universalizing view of the distinction between the sacred and the profane has, however, been called into question particularly in Africa. Unlike in Hubert and Mauss's model, where the victim moves between the sphere of the divinity and the sphere of the living, in the Chagga sacrifice it is both the divinities (i.e., ancestral spirits) and living people that move during the ritual process (Werbner 1989:112). The dual intent in this ritual is to have the ancestors move further away from the living and have the living reunited and moved closer together. Therefore, the examination of this movement constitutes one of the key issues of this analysis. de Heusch (1985) substitutes notions of the sacred and the profane with conjunction and disjunction of human and non-human spaces. One means for this is his culinary typology—sacrifice is a complete ritual cuisine, the expression of social order (de Heusch 1985:17). This point is important in the following analysis of the Chagga material.

Werbner (1989) disagrees with Lévi-Strauss's (1966[1962]:223-228) view of the metonymical orientation of sacrifice. Quite rightly, Werbner argues that sacrifice has both metonymical and metaphorical aspects. The sequence of rites are closely tied to the victim's body as a metaphor of kinship and sociality. The body has to be dismembered for the sake of a new synthesis, a new inner and moral state of being (Werbner 1989:115). Underlying the break in contact and recombination of the victim's body parts is a process of deconstruction and construction which calls for a close discussion of the sequencing of contact, part-to-whole relations, and the relations of metonymy in the ritual (see also de Heusch 1985). Sequencing of substances, methods of cooking, and movement in space and time are some of the key elements required for understanding the transformative process, and the metaphoric as well as metonymic dimensions of Chagga sacrifice.

The binary processual model of sacrifice presented by (Werbner 1989:124) includes the distinctions between deconstruction and reconstruction, communication with divinities and communion with people, and stages of entry, separation,

aggregation, and exit. To capture the specifics of Chagga ancestral sacrifice, a modified interpretation of the ritual process follows:

1. Entry; invocation of the ancestors and dedication of the victim.
2. Deconstruction of the victim and construction of the offering.
3. Communication and communion with the ancestors.
4. Exit; separation from the ancestors and communion with humans.

To better understand this sequence, the focus is on three aspects in which gender is a crucial dimension:

1. Ritual cuisine: the victim's substance and its processing.
2. The participants of the ritual.
3. Spatio-temporal process.

The First Sacrifice

In 1994–1995, I observed the first sacrifice for Grace, a young woman who died after suffering with AIDS for a long time, and after she had lost her husband and her baby to the illness. She had moved from her former husband's homestead to live at her paternal home and she was buried there. As part of the funeral ceremonies, a sacrifice was performed for her, and since Grace was a woman who had had a child, by tradition a female goat that had borne offspring was to be sacrificed. The offering and its consumption form a sequence organized by method of cooking, space, and participants distinguished by gender.

On the morning of the sacrifice, Grace's paternal kin took a white-brown nanny goat (*ngolo*) from the house and led it with a rope behind the house to a place with three cooking stones. The goat was placed on banana leaves on the ground; two men held its legs and one covered the muzzle so it would die of suffocation. According to the sacrificer, "the person entered heaven in a proper manner." For those men, it wasn't about Grace entering the spirit world but about her being accepted and received by God in a proper manner. Although there was no explicit reference to the animal as her substitute, it was clear that the ritual was about the movement of the deceased away from the world of the living to that of the dead and heaven.

The butchering knife was thrust into the breast of the goat, which was then skinned, dismembered, and cut open, and the intestines were removed. One man collected firewood and lit a fire. The carcass was divided into sections according to specific categories of kin, thereby creating the animal as a metaphor of the patrilineal kin group and the women married into it. *Kidari* (the breast bone) is traditionally given to the eldest man of the family. *Muongo* (the back) is traditionally given to a senior woman married into the lineage. *Ngari* (four pairs of ribs) belong to the male lineage mates of the sacrificer. *Long* (ribs, part of the heart, and the lungs) usually go to the married sister of the sacrificer. *Kitsi* (the

loin or flank) is boiled for the men at the slaughtering place. *Mria* (a boneless part of the neck) is given to the women married into the house, who use it to make their own offering inside the kitchen.

Part of the meat was given to Grace's father's second wife to be cooked in the kitchen and shared with those present. The head, intestines, and a few other parts were wrapped in the skin to be used the following day. But the offering needed to be done before that, and some roasted and boiled meat was consumed by the men.

When the goat was being divided, one of the men cut small pieces from each part of the animal and placed them on four banana leaves, symbolically creating a new entity of the social whole that was to be given as the offering at the grave. The four small bundles were for the deceased to take to the ancestors. At the offering, the man said, "Go and eat with your mates and your grandfathers." This statement suggests that the animal not only represents the deceased or the kin group, but is also meant to be a gift for the deceased to share with the ancestors. It is this multivalent representation that makes the symbol so effective. The men took the four parcels and a calabash of banana beer to the grave as offerings to the ancestors, who would eat together. The calabash was tipped over and placed in front of the cross at the head of the grave. The meat pieces were placed in a row under the flowers covering the grave.

After taking this first part of the offering to the grave, the men ate the roasted meat. After that, they had the boiled meat together with *kisusio* (soup of mixed blood and broth). What the men left was taken to the women in the kitchen, which included Grace's step-mother and other women married to the house. The women consumed their sacrificial meal in silence, but the unmarried daughters are not allowed to consume this portion of the offering. After finishing this sacramental meal the women started cooking the *morotsa* (banana meat stew) that was to be consumed by both men and women.

The first sacrifice is smaller in scale than the second and is historically connected to the former practice of double burial. It can be understood as being a gift, a communion, and an effective representation. There seem to be some references to the animal as a symbol and a substitute for the deceased, such as the sex and the age being consistent. The goat is also perceived as a gift to be shared with the newly deceased and the ancestors. The sacrifice constitutes a meal that is both communication and communion between the living and the dead, a communion consisting of the totality of foods and not only the part given to ancestors.

The Second Sacrifice

During Christmas, several ancestral sacrifices took place in the neighborhood. Planning in advance let kinsmen know about the important occasion they are expected to attend and to donate a suitable animal for sacrifice. However, unexpected incidents can result in delaying the ritual. A second sacrifice that had been planned by the family of an adult man, Frank, who had died a few years earlier, had not yet been performed. The sudden death of Frank's brother's wife on Christmas day had forced the family to postpone the sacrifice. There was no way the lineage could have the funeral and the sacrifice at the same time, so the sacrifice was postponed. There was some speculation about the consequences of this, since the preparations had already been started and the "doors had been opened to the spirit world." Frank's aged mother, Makombe, a born-again Christian and a member of the Lutheran revival, was alleged to have caused the deaths in the family because, as a member of the church revival group, she refused to participate in the ancestral sacrifices. However, she had been forced to swallow bits of the sacrificial meat by the senior men in the banana grove before she was allowed to leave.

Frank's wife, Agnes, had planned slaughtering on the second Christmas day, and had placed a bull calf as a loan in another house according to the Chagga cattle lending system. She went to look at the calf she intended to sacrifice and invited the men of the lineage, and particularly her husband's heir (*mrithi wa nyumbani*), to inspect the animal. The men, however, were of the opinion that the calf was too small for the purpose—a full-grown bull should be slaughtered for an adult man. This occurred only days before the scheduled sacrifice, and no other bull was available. The family had already started preparing banana beer and had invited the lineage men to come. To acquire a bull at Christmas, when many people slaughtered, was prohibitively expensive; even so, a bull was purchased for 450,000 Tanzanian shillings (about US\$296).

After persistent requests and serious "negotiations," I was allowed to attend a second sacrifice.³ Yohane, the old grandfather at this house, had lost his wife Matemu in the early 1990s, but a cow had not yet been slaughtered for her, so she had not yet met the ancestors. Yohane had several married daughters, but only one son, Luka, who lived in a coastal town and was a state employee. Luka's wife Matowo took care of the family farming and was a church elder in the parish. Luka had come home for Christmas, which was the time to perform the sacrifice.

First day. Matemu had been buried in front of the house where there were other family graves with crosses. In front of the new rectangular house was the old round Chagga-style kitchen that would feature in the ritual. The slaughtering

and sacrifice places were hidden deeper in the banana grove behind the house, away from the eyes of any passers-by.

On the morning of the sacrifice for Matem, Luka's wife Matowo cut plantains for the day's cooking. A clearing was prepared behind the house, benches were arranged for sitting, and the hearth stones were already in place. One of the men cut banana leaves to cover the ground at the slaughtering place. Usually they would use only *mrarao* beer banana, but this was scarce and other beer bananas, such as *ndishi*, had to be used.⁴ Two lineage brothers were to act as sacrificers, since no man can be a sacrificer on his own behalf. Yohane, Luka, the two sacrificers, and a few other men examined the slaughtering place (*kishanjionyi*) to see whether it was properly arranged. The correct placement of the banana leaves is thought to influence the efficacy of the ritual. At the site, the men found that the placement of the banana leaves was not correctly done; the ribs of the leaves were pointing toward Kibo, the mountain peak. The younger men were told to rearrange them so that the ribs would point towards the plains.

Entry: Invocation of the ancestors and dedication of the animal. At this stage the animal is dedicated for the sacrifice and the ancestors are called to be present and favorable to the offering. This rite is performed by the sacrificer and his close kinsmen and kinswomen by seniority.

Led by Yohane, his brother, and the other sacrificer, the men went to the pen and were followed by the junior men and boys. The family decided to slaughter one particular cow because it did not give milk, although in principle the animal should be faultless. In this case the deficiency did not seem to count. Matowo handed the men some fermented milk and some banana beer—milk for the female and banana beer for the male ancestors. A rope was tied around the cow's neck with four *sale* leaves to signify supplication. Three leaves would be used for a man. The sacrificers instructed Yohane how to proceed. He poured some milk four times on the cow's neck and in a soft voice said, "This is your portion, which we give you to be used where you are." He poured banana beer three times on the head saying, "We give you this cow to milk." This address indicates that the animal was a gift to the deceased and the other ancestors. After the invocation the male grandchildren were invited to drink the rest of the milk and banana beer, which they did. Then the cow was taken to the banana garden and tied to a banana tree.

Sacrificing the cow and construction of the offering. The movement in opposite directions—ancestors moving further away from the living and the living becoming closer—is best captured in the second stage, the butchering of the victim and the construction of the offering, and in the third stage that describes the separation from the ancestors and communion with humans. The

division of the meat, its processing, and the categories of kin involved are central, as Lienhardt (1961:23) noted:

[T]he way in which cattle represent not only human beings but human relationships may be seen in the division of the sacrificial meat when a beast is killed. "The people are put together as a bull is put together," said a Dinka chief . . . [W]hen the beast has been sacrificed, most of it is divided according to the division of groups within a kinship system, leaving some over for the community in general, distinguished according to sex and age.

It is this social whole, where the deceased is no longer present, that is taken apart and reconstituted in the ritual process. The division and subsequent combining of the animal is a process of deconstruction and reconstruction leading to a complex set of metaphoric and metonymic relations. During the course of the sacrifice new entities are formed that create metonymic relations between the totality and the parts of which it is composed. It is therefore crucial to discuss the sequencing of contact and part-to-whole relations and the relations of metonymy in the ritual (Werbner 1989:115). What follows describes the dividing of the animal, the ritual cuisine, the cooking, and consuming the meat. Part of the animal is cooked and consumed at the site, part of it is given to the women to be cooked, and the remaining raw parts are given to kin and other people to be taken home.

One of the men hit the cow on the head with an axe to make it collapse and the men quickly tied the legs, put sticks in the nose, and tied the muzzle with banana fiber so that the animal could not breathe and would suffocate. It is important that the animal does not make noise, and it is considered a bad sign if it dies quickly. The sacrificers came with their own double-edged knife (*moskira*) used for butchering. The throat was cut and the blood was collected in an aluminum pot. Salt was added to it and the blood was poured into a clay pot and whipped in order to prevent coagulation.

The sex organs were removed first. From a cow, the udder is removed with the surrounding meat. With a bull, the testicles are roasted briefly to remove the hair, then added to other boiling meat. The testicles are consumed by older men. The penis is given to the younger men, and is cut in such a way that they will not recognize what they are eating. The rest of the animal was divided as follows:

1. The front and the hind hoofs were cut first and set aside. One remained at home, one was given to the one who brought the animal to be slaughtered, one went to the old man's lineage brothers, and one went to his in-laws.

2. The breastbone (*kidari*), one of the most important sections of the animal, belongs to the eldest man of the lineage. It is the part that connects other bony parts of the carcass.⁵

3. The intestines were removed next. They consist of *ngatsuma* (large intestines), *mheu* (small intestines), and three other sections called *haya*, *kitasura*, and *maula*. *Haya* and *maula* were divided on the spot between the men,

to take home. Kitasura and ngatsuma were taken to the woman who married into the house. Mheu was to be cooked the following day. Kitasura goes to the female grandchildren, and ngatsuma to the father and the male children.

4. Pieces of liver were divided. One piece goes with mria to the women, one piece goes with the breastbone, one is boiled, one is roasted, and a small piece is attached to the back (muongo).

5. Pieces of lungs were divided. One goes with mria, one with kidari, one is boiled at the slaughtering place, and one goes with *long* (see below).

6. The back includes three pairs of ribs and the kidneys. This is the portion that goes either to the man's mother and it remains at home or to his wife's mother.

7. Ngari (two pairs of ribs) goes to the brothers of the man who have the same mother. Parts of the ngari can be given to good neighbors, and some were eaten at the slaughtering place.

8. *Long*, the upper side of the breastbone behind the neck, goes to the man's married sister. This includes three pairs of ribs, part of the lungs, and the heart. When it is correctly cut from the animal, it forms a bowl-like piece of meat and bones. It is located next to the brother's share, kidari, but it is separated from the brother's share.

9. Of the two front legs, one remains at home and the other was divided at the slaughtering place.

10. Kitsi (loin or flank). This would have gone to Matemu's mother, but because she was dead it was divided between her mother's brothers and their descendants, who were all classified as mother's brothers. Opinions varied concerning kitsi. Some said that it is given to the mother-in-law and some said that it is eaten by the men at the slaughtering place, and that it was part of *kirombo*, the meat cooked in the banana garden.

11. The neck was divided into three parts. One part was cooked in the banana grove and eaten by the men. Part of it, mria, was given to Matowo, Luka's wife, who had taken care of the cow and cleaned the manure in the cattle pen. The women would cook mria to perform their own offering and eat it inside the kitchen. The rest of the neck belonged to the owner of the bush knife used in butchering the animal.

12. *Kirumo*, the rump, was divided into two. Half of it was cooked on the spot and the other half was divided among the sacrificers.

13. The hind legs were divided among the people at the slaughtering place.

14. The head remains at home and young, unmarried women prepare it the following day. It is skinned and cooked with parts of the intestines. The tongue and cheeks belong to the household head. According to some, the head's lower part belongs to the household head and the brains go to the daughters of the house.

The meat prepared at the slaughtering place consists of pieces of all parts. Some of it was roasted on sticks over the fire and some of it was boiled. The distinction between roasted and boiled is a crucial opposition that operates in the creation of difference and contact between men and ancestors on the one hand, and between men and women on the other. Both forms represent the cooked in contrast to the raw, the uncooked blood eventually going only to the ancestors. This difference is vital in the creation of a distinction between the men and the ancestors on the one hand, and the lineage members and outsiders on the other.

When the slaughtering took place, one of the two doing the butchering put some meat on sticks (*ukuro*) to roast. One stick is called the “inside” stick (*ndani*) and is given to women. The “outside” (*nje*) stick is for the ancestors and the men. Pieces from all parts of the animal were put on four other sticks and all six sticks held meat from all parts of the animal. The rest of the meat was either boiled by the men or given to the women for preparation. What was boiled consisted of all parts of the animal. The social whole is thereby represented by this system of metaphoric and metonymic relations.

Hierarchy occurs in the course of the ritual by producing connections and distinctions between ancestors and certain categories of men through division and reconnection and through the use of different and differently prepared substances. Through dividing, re-combining, and cooking, the ritual represents social order by producing contrasts and differences in the continuum of experience (Valeri 1985:xi). A central aspect is the sacrificial cuisine (cf. de Heusch 1985; Detienne 1989). The entire amount, not only the ancestors’ share, of food consumed during the ritual is to be understood as an offering (Valeri 1985:57). Cooking both the ancestors’ and humans’ portions with the same fire, but one distinct from the domestic hearth, suggests that they are connected. The movement in space and the consumption of different parts of the animal is a movement between the human and nonhuman spheres.

Communication and communion with the ancestors. This is the ritual climax, the offering itself that is both communication and communion with the ancestors (cf. Werbner 1989:121). After the meat on the *ukuro* sticks was roasted, the offering was performed. Behind the house, a short distance from the slaughtering place where the offering was to be performed, there was a *sale*, although the actual grave of Matemú was placed between the house and the road. The sacrificial place can be established by taking earth or a stone from the grave and transferring it to another place, called *mbuonyi*, where a *sale* is planted.

The men who would communicate with the ancestors were the agnates of the old man’s lineage sub-segment, his only son, and the son’s sons (cf. Middleton 1971[1960]:120). The young men who attended the core ritual were members of the lineage and some were Yohane’s daughters’ sons. Several of them had the

name of their maternal grandfather Yohane, being second-born sons in their families, and were therefore entitled to be present.

Yohane's brother, the sacrificer, gave instructions. Four banana leaves of the *mrarao* kind that had been steamed and softened over the boiling meat pot were placed on the ground. The sacrificer had folded the leaves with the upper surface outward, but some said this was not correct and the leaves were then properly folded. This was one point where the correct performance of the rite was debated.

The share that goes to the ancestors can be either the essence of the offering or its first portion. With the former, the sacrificer and his associates eat the material counterpart in its entirety. With the latter, they eat only what is left of the offering after certain parts are given to the ancestors (cf. Valeri 1985:56). In Chagga sacrifice, the participants eat what is left after the ancestors have had the first share. One of the six *ukuro* sticks had been separated from the others and transferred to the place of the offering, to be given to the ancestors as the first share. One of the men cut the meat on the stick and placed four small pieces on the banana leaves, as is proper for a female ancestor. The spatial transfer of the offering created a difference between the small group of men, consisting mainly of men of a lower-level sub-segment of the lineage, and the men of the lineage who stayed at the slaughtering place. The meat on the stick represented the social totality, as there were pieces from all parts of the animal. Four pieces were cut from each piece and placed on the banana leaf, thus creating four new entities. Ancestors were to get the first portion and humans would consume the remainder.

Yohane took one of the leaves and placed it under the *sale*, apart from the other three leaves, and said, "Remember this with the elders, remember this with the old women, remember and eat with women and the people of the lineage. Be together as one thing." Then Yohane took the blood bowl and poured fresh blood on the leaf under the *sale* and then on the other three leaves, at the same time saying, "We who are at home give you this to drink with your neighbors. We who are the children and grandchildren give this to you." Whereas the consumption of the meat creates a communion between the small group of men and the ancestors, the blood creates a distance between the ancestors and the undifferentiated group of all humans, since the uncooked blood is not consumed by the men (cf. Middleton 1971:96; Werbner 1989:121). Then Yohane poured banana beer on the leaves following the same order and saying, "And drink this banana beer and meat and fat and this water which we prepared." It seems evident that the offering was meant as a gift for the ancestors.

Separation from the ancestors and communion with humans. Up to this point, the movement has been away from the humans towards the ancestors. Now the

movement is reversed. The close male relatives who were set apart are increasingly distanced from the deceased ancestor and united with the inner circle of elders, closest kin, and neighbors according to seniority, and eventually even the women.

The ancestors had the first portion of the offering that was divided in two; half remaining with the ancestors and half consumed by humans (Valeri 1985:56). The part that was left, therefore, placed the small group of men in a hierarchical relationship to the ancestors. The men were allowed to eat the meat and sip the banana beer after the ancestors had their share, but the men would not consume the blood. The men and the boys stood around the *sale* with Yohane. Before starting, they prayed to God in Chagga, and Yohane explained that they prayed to God because without God they would not be successful. The sacrificer cut pieces for everyone to eat until the meat was finished. The lineage brother instructed Yohane and the other men to drink the banana beer and almost finish it, but to leave some dregs, which was poured on the leaves, and the calabash was turned over. The ukuro was placed under the *sale*. The men left the place of offering to join the others at the slaughtering place and eat what remained of the meat. Luka explained that one should not look back any more. Similarly, after this ceremony the deceased should not look back any more and not appear in the lives of the living. Should the meat disappear, even if eaten by wandering dogs, the rite would be considered successful.

Evans-Pritchard argued that the consumption of food by the living is not a sacramental meal but an ordinary communal act of family or kin, which falls outside the sacrificial rite (1970[1956]:274). Here, as will be shown below, the sacramental meal does not just consist of the food limited to the men at the slaughtering place, but includes the food cooked by the women, and a section of the animal prepared the following day by and for the unmarried young women.

During the communion meal, the flesh is made a metaphor for kinship, seniority, and other relations between generations and gender. The uncooked blood was given to the ancestors. The remaining blood had been left at the slaughtering place to be mixed with a broth. This distinction between the uncooked blood given to the ancestors and the cooked blood-broth mixture consumed by the living again distanced the living from the ancestors. Whereas the consumption of the roasted meat at the site of the offering placed the subsegment of men hierarchically closer to the ancestors and differentiated them from the larger lineage, the common consumption of the blood-broth mixture distanced the men as an undifferentiated group in a hierarchical relationship with the ancestors. In the ritual process, social order and relations with the ancestors are represented by producing differences in the continuum of experience (Valeri 1985:xi).

The men returned to the slaughtering place and started feeding on the roasted meat and the broth. Older men sat by themselves and apart from the younger men and children. The spatial arrangement and the consumption of differently processed parts of the sacrificial animal placed the men differently in relation to the ancestors and to each other according to seniority (cf. Middleton 1971 [1960]:122). The roasted meat consumed in this space represented the social whole, but it was of lower hierarchical order than the one consumed by the small group of men at the offering place. The spatial arrangement and consumption of roasted meat distanced the small group of men away from the ancestors and closer to the other men. When the roasted meat together with the mixture of broth and raw blood were finished, the men started eating the boiled meat. This is a further transformation and signifies a growing distance and differentiation from the ancestors. Although the boiled meat consisted of different parts of the animal, the distance and transformation was achieved through the form of cooking. At this point the *kisusio* proper was prepared, soup and blood were mixed and heated quickly, but not boiled. *Kisusio* that was cooked somewhat more was sent to the women after the men had consumed their share. The mediating effect and sequence of the blood started with the ancestors who got the salted but uncooked blood; the men consumed first the uncooked mix of blood and broth without boiling it, then prepared *kisusio* by boiling it properly.

It is useful to summarize at this point the simultaneous but distinct sequences and transformations that take place as the ritual progresses. On the whole, the double movement puts the ancestors further away and unites the living in a hierarchy of relations according to seniority and gender. The communion continues by including the share of the married women and that of the unmarried young women. In sum, the animal's substance and its treatment, the kin group's participation, and the process in time and space advanced as follows: uncooked blood to the ancestors; roasted bits to the ancestors and the closest male kinsmen at the place of the offering; roasted meats, boiled meats, and boiled blood for the males congregated at the slaughtering place according to seniority. It is at this point of the sequence that a new substance, bananas, is introduced that further distinguishes between the ancestors and all humans, and unites humans (including women) since bananas are food for humans, not for ancestors.

As for the participants at different stages, it was the closest kin group including a senior woman that took part in the invocation. The large group of men deconstructed and reconstructed the offering. The offering was given by the most senior man for his own wife along with his son, grandson, and some of the closest lineage men. After finishing, they joined the large congregation of men for the communal meal that was organized and consumed in terms of seniority. Spatially, the movement has been from the domestic sphere of the cattle pen to the ritual place of slaughtering, and eventually, the hidden place of the offering

behind the house. A reverse movement takes place and a part of a ritual sequence is eventually performed at the heart of the domestic space, that of the cooking stones of the senior woman. Furthermore, the ritual sequence continues temporally to the following day when the unmarried girls and young women of the lineage get their share. This temporality signifies a further distancing of the senior males from the young females who will get married to other lineages.

The women's share. After the men finished their offering in the banana garden but before getting the morotsa, the women made their offerings inside the kitchen house. The "inside" roasting stick was given to the women along with some soft parts of the animal. The women made their offering in the kitchen with mria, the boneless part of the neck, the part that was to be consumed inside, not outside as the parts for men. The roasted meat was offered and consumed by a small group of women and the boiled meat with kiskusio was consumed by the larger group of women, creating differences between them and their proximity to the ancestor. Kiskusio was properly boiled in a clay pot, whereas the kiskusio of the men was only heated quickly. The meat of "inside" was consumed by women who had married into the house, but not by the daughters born of the house.

The next stage in the ritual movement from the intimate communication and communion with the ancestors to the large group of men, and eventually the broader community of kin, took place through the portion that had been sent to the waiting women outside the slaughtering site. Some of the meat which the women would use for their offering was used to cook morotsa, and that would finish the day's communal eating. The preparation of this food was another transformation in the sacrificial cuisine. Up to this point, the transformations had primarily operated through the oppositions of raw/cooked, roasted/boiled, and part-to-whole. The movement had been away from the ancestors toward the domestic area of life. At this point, the opposition between men and women was crossed by the food being cooked with the fire of the women in the domestic hearth. The food not only was boiled, it was boiled with bananas—food for humans—a more distancing and mediating element in the process. The contrast between men and women was crossed through the mediation of bananas.

When the men had finished eating their morotsa, they divided the uncooked meat to take home following a written list of people who were entitled to get a share. Division of the uncooked meat for kinsmen and neighbors to take home reflects the kinship and lineage ties as well as the social field more broadly (cf. Middleton 1971[1960]:121). Yohane thanked everyone present and apologized if anyone had not been satisfied, then the names were announced and everyone was allowed to come and select a portion. The meat that was divided consisted of two legs, ngari, and haya. Some men skillfully prepared parcels of fresh banana leaves and dry banana bast, the traditional way of transporting meat home

from a sacrifice. It has become more common however, to wrap the meat in foreign newspapers or carry it home in a plastic bag displaying a Marlboro cigarette advertisement and pictures of consumer goods such as watches, radios, hairdryers, coffee makers, and cameras.

The following day. In the continuum of experience, the temporal distinction of the ritual practices of the first and second days creates the distinction and distance between lineage members and young women, those who would be married and live away. On this day the men prepared the hide, the head, and the remaining parts of the intestines. The hide would remain at home for such purposes as spreading finger millet to dry. The unmarried young women performed their own "slaughtering," and took the head to the banana garden where it was skinned, and where the garbage, manure, and stomach contents had been scattered and attracted thousands of flies in the heat of the day. The slaughtering place was the complete opposite of the previous day, when it had been orderly and arranged with care. One of the men helped skin the head and cut it into pieces with an axe. The men get the tongue and the cheeks. Parts of the intestines that were kept for this day had turned grey and green. The meat was cooked in the kitchen formerly used by Matemu, and not where her daughter-in-law cooked everyday. The women started cooking and would eat later with a few girls from the neighborhood.

CONCLUSIONS

The Chagga are relatively well-educated people who often live and work far from relatives left behind in the village. Ancestors and the ancestral sacrifices continue to be important, even for the educated Christian Chagga of the twenty-first century who come home for Christmas and perform sacrificial rituals during the Christian holiday. Christian beliefs and practices and the indigenous rituals have become elements of the contemporary Chagga cosmology and are not mutually exclusive. Ideas of the spirit world and the Christian heaven exist side by side, when people ponder the fate of their dead. However, with the Charismatic revival movement, tensions rise within kin groups when Chagga traditions and born-again beliefs collide. Today, death, dying, and mortuary rituals take place under entirely different circumstances than those a few decades ago. With the AIDS epidemic, deaths are an everyday matter in rural Kilimanjaro. Migrant Chagga wage-laborers are returned home and given Christian burials.

Contemporary mortuary rituals and the connected rituals of sacrifice cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the historical double burial. The two sacrifices performed after a death are related to the former first and second burials, and the transformation of the dead into ancestral spirits. Today,

the first sacrifice is performed as part of the funeral and the second sacrifice can be done at a convenient time, usually a year or more after the death.

The banana orchard is the ultimate home for the Chagga. Being called “the people of the banana garden” means that it is home for both the living and the dead. Burial in the banana grove and the associated sacrifices connect both the living and the dead to the ancestral land. The dead become ancestral spirits in the ritual process, and the living, mobile, and migrant relatives are periodically re-centered at the banana orchard to commemorate dead ancestors.

This article examined the Chagga sacrificial rituals by drawing from some of the classic theorists. The data illustrate that in new historical circumstances, the classic theories take on new meaning and remain a valuable source for understanding ritual practices in changing societies. Sacrifice can still be examined as a gift to ancestors and as a communion between the living and the ancestors through a shared meal. Furthermore, sacrifice is an efficacious representation. Gift is an important element of all sacrifices because it incorporates the idea of communication and communion, and includes all those relations that it mediates and produces. The sacrificial offering is effective because it represents both the deceased and the community and is represented as a gift to the ancestors at the same time as it transforms the deceased into an ancestor. Sacrifice, in re-establishing the relationship with the ancestors, re-establishes relationships with members of the community. And among the Chagga, burial practices and the associated sacrifices place not just the dead in the banana garden but also re-center the living and connect the living and the dead at the ultimate home, the banana garden.

NOTES

1. This article is based on fieldwork in Kilimanjaro carried out over 12 months in 1994, and intermittently from 1996 to 2004. I am grateful to The Academy of Finland, Finnish Cultural Foundation, and Alfred Kordelin Foundation for funding this research.
2. With the spread of the Charismatic revival movement in the Lutheran church, more people have become born-again Christians and reject such traditional customs as satanic (Meyer 1998).
3. The description and analysis of second sacrifices are based on three performed in two houses of one lineage. I was able to observe what is normally strictly forbidden to women, but later learned that there are exceptions concerning women’s presence at the slaughtering place.
4. For the symbolism and use of different kinds of bananas see Hasu 1999 and 2009.
5. Apart from this bone, in this area of Kilimanjaro bones have no special significance during the sacrificial meal.

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