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Secrets of Slaves
The Rise and Decline of *Vinyago* Masquerades in the Kenya coast (1907 to the present)

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the University of the Western Cape, South Africa a Mini-thesis entitled ***Secrets of Slaves: The Rise and Decline of Vinyago masquerades in the Kenya coast (1907 to the present*)**, in fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Arts (History, with a Specialisation in Museum and Heritage Studies) of the University of the Western Cape.

Cape Town, 10 May 2012

Dr. Paolo Israel

(Supervisor)

DECLARATION

I, Kaingu Kalume Tinga, declare that this dissertation is my original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to another University for a similar or any other degree award.

Signature…….

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You know why!

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Introduction

East Africa experienced plantation slavery from as early as the 14th century. In the Kenya coast, slaves were obtained from the hinterland communities or "from the southern coast, particularly in the hinterlands of the coast from Bagamoyo to Sofala".[1] Nevertheless, it was not until around the 1820s when modern plantation slavery was introduced.[2] During that period, the majority of slaves in the Kenya coast provided manual labour in plantations while a minority of them performed various roles and tasks like "artisans, soldiers, and domestics".[3] Subsequently, with the expansion of grain production (millet, rice and sesame) for the export trade, plantation owners resorted to large scale importation of slaves. Uprooted from their original homelands, the slaves were dispossessed and deprived of their rights and dignity. Forced labour, cruelty and seclusion became commonplace.[4] Moreover, they were denied the slightest opportunity to express their culture and were instead subjected to foreign cultural beliefs and practices. This form of alienation applied not only to slaves themselves, but to the emancipated slaves under missionary protection as well.[5]

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[1] Wilding, R.F., "The Shorefolk: Aspects of the Early Development of Swahili Communities". *Fort Jesus Occassional Papers* 2, (1987): 55.

[2] Morton, F., *Children of Ham: Freed Slaves and Fugitive Slaves on the Kenya Coast, 1873-1907* (New York: iUniverse Press, 2008): 1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Morton, *Childen of Ham*: 2-7.

[5] Ranger, T., *Dance and Society in East Africa 1890-1970. The Beni Ngoma* (London: Heinemann, 1975): 11-34.

The abolition of slavery and slave trade and the ensuing emancipation of slaves in the Kenya coast heralded a new dawn for the former slaves. At last they had the freedom of movement, belief and association. Under the abolition ordinance that was effected on 1 October 1907, the former slaves became more independent.[6] Some remained on the old plantations, others moved on to Crown Land; some went to live on neighbouring plantations while others ended up in gazzetted small reserves.[7] With the new political dispensation, they could freely enliven their collective memories and revive their cultural practices.

The Malindi region bears evidence of a culture of masquerade performances commonly known as *vinyago*, consisting in zoomorphic figures representing a diversity of animals. *Vinyago* shares very close similarities to the masquerade culture which has for centuries been practiced in the Eastern-Central Africa region, especially, in the Congo, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and South-Eastern Tanzania.[8] This tradition is believed to have been introduced to the Kenya coast by slaves who originated from "Nyasa" – the region around the present Lake Malawi – and who came to be known as "Wanyasa" (people from Nyasa).

During my childhood, *vinyago* performances were very popular in Gede; in fact, many of my relatives had been initiated to the masquerade society. Masquerade dances were performed during three major functions. Firstly, on the burial of a senior male *kinyago* member. Secondly, during the commemoration ceremony of such a member. This ceremony was conducted about a

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[6] Cooper, F., *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya*, *1890-1925* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980):176

[7] Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*: 176-179.

[8] See for instance, Gluckman, M., "Masked Dancers in Barotseland": *In Memoriam António Jorge Dias.* (Lisboa: Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar, 1974*)*:138-157; Turner, V., *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual.* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967); Wembah- Rashid, J.A.R., "Isinyago and Midimu. Masked Dancers of Tanzania and Mozambique". *African Arts,* 4, 2 (1971): 38-44; Richards, A., *Chisungu: A Girls' initiation ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia* (Glasgow: The University Press, 1957): 181-2.

year after his burial; the masquerades performed from around midnight until towards dawn when they retired to the production site, called *dangbwe.*[9] Thirdly, masquerade dances performed around August every year at a site located about half a kilometre south of the Gede shopping centre on the way to Watamu. The *vinyago* came from Mida and Ganda and danced, alongside those from within Gede.

Initially there were several production sites within Gede but around the mid 1970s these sites were no longer in existence, except for only one situated on the southern part of the forested Gede National Monument before the ancient site was fenced off in the early 1990s.[10] The site of performance was situated about two hundred metres westwards of the *dangbwe.* As in the Central-Eastern Africa region, after performance, the *vinyago* (also referred to as *nyama*, animals) retired to the production site where – as I learned later – they would be burned.

There is no literature available on masquerade performance in the Kenya coast; hence, the history and significance of this ritual practice is not known beyond the Malindi district. The present research endeavours to fill this lacuna in the literature. This work is a product of both historical records and anthropological investigations consisting mainly in oral interviews among descendants of former slaves, Mijikenda and Swahili informants.[11] The information thus gathered will contribute in enriching the knowledge on the cultural heritage of the slave descendants, thus augment this under-represented historical record.

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[9] *Dangbwe* is the production site of the *vinyago* figurines. Among the Chewa of Malawi for instance, *dangwe* is the secret place where men produce the zoomorphic figures called *nyau yolemba*. See Yoshida, K., "Masks and Secrecy among the Chewa": *African Arts*, 26, no.2 (UCLA James S. Coleman African Studies Center, 1993): 36-37.

[10] The Gede National Monument is an ancient 14th Century Swahili settlement covering some 45 acres of land under the custody of the National Museums of Kenya. See James S. Kirkman, 1964. *Men and Monuments of the East African coast* (New York: Praeger, 1964).

[11] The Mijikenda is an ethnic conglomeration comprising the A'Digo, A'Duruma, A'Rabai, A'Kambe, A'Ribe, A'Jibana, A'Chonyi, A'Kauma and A'Giryama sub groups.

This thesis has two objectives. On the one hand, it demonstrates that *kinyago* was an arena for identity construction and negotiation between the ex-slave communities and the coastal Mijikenda; on the other it describes the dynamics of change and invention within *kinyago*, thus laying to rest pre-conceptions of African tradition as unchanging and static.

In the rest of this introduction we will have a broad look at *ngoma* performance and masquerades in a regional context; then go on to discuss the thesis' main argument; and finally present the organisation of the work.

Ngoma on the Swahili coast

Askew defines *ngoma* as "a Bantu term found throughout equatorial and southern Africa glossed as 'traditional dance'. It frequently refers to a musical event that encompasses music, dance, song, characteristic instrumentation, and a characteristic rhythm, but also translates as 'drum' or 'music in general'... *Ngoma za kienyeji,* ('indigenous dances'), [ngoma] can be differentiated on the basis of ethnicity (e.g., Swahili *ngoma*, Sukuma *ngoma*, Ndedeule *ngoma*), or by context (wedding *ngoma*, initiation *ngoma*, harvest *ngoma*) or gender, (women's *ngoma*, men's *ngoma*)".[12]

[12] Askew, K. M., *Dancing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2002): 69; and Askew, "As Plato Duly Warned: Music, Politics, and Social Change in Coastal East Africa" *Anthropological Quarterly*, 76, 4 (2003): 612. *Ngoma* is also used colloquially to mean a favourite or spectacular thing (a brilliant football move or goal, an excellent academic achievement, a beautiful car, etc. (personal observation).

The historiography of *ngoma* in the Swahili coast may be traced to the eighteenth century during which the genre evolved and developed into competitive performances called *mashindano*.[13] Competing *ngoma* groups from different residential moieities called *mitaa* (sing. *mtaa*) characterised coastal city life.[14] Towards the end of the nineteenth century onwards, *ngoma* dances such as *beni, kalela* and *muganda* which resulted from the abolition of slavery and slave trade evolved and spread throughout the Coast of East Africa and Central Africa.[15]Around the mid twentieth century, these flambouyant and fascinating military style competitive dance societies had been effectively entrenched in the region. The colonial authorities regarded them with pride as proof of the successful civilising efforts among local populations.[16]

In Kenya, the British colonial government sponsored *beni ngoma* performances at the Coast.[17] But later fearing the spread of nationalism, it restricted and prohibited *ngoma* performance in East Africa.[18] During the early post-independence period, many African states constructed national cultures as a strategy for re-unification, recovering and recuperating the past through the establishment of the Ministries of Culture.[19] This development led to the rise and aggressive promotion of *ngoma* and *dansi* in Tanzania. The Tanzania government

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[13] Gearhart, R., "Rama Maulidi: A Competitive Ritual Ngoma in Lamu". In Gunderson, F., and Barz G., (eds), *Mashindano! Competitive Music Performance in East Africa* (Dar Es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2005): 347-365; Israel, P., *In Step With The Times. Mapiko Masquerades of Mozambique*, Unpublished book manuscript, Ch III.

[14] Donley-Reid, L.W., "The Social Use of Swahili Space and Objects". Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, Cambridge University, (1984):161-162; Brown, H.W., "History of Siyu: The Development and Decline of a Swahili town on the northern Kenya Coast". Unpublished PhD. Thesis. Indiana University (1985): 110. See also Middleton, J., *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1992) :56.

[15] Hartwig, G. W., "The Historical and Social Role of Kerebe Music", *Tanzania Notes and Records,* 70 (1969): 43; Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 111-115.

[16] Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 31; Askew, *Dancing the Nation*: 72-76.

[17] Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 145-6.

[18] Askew, "As Plato Duly Warned": 633.

[19] Askew, *Dancing the Nation*: 13-14.

institutionalised the competitive *ngoma*; the ruling party is in fact itself linked to the *ngoma* societies. Subsequently, Tanzania adopted a system of "hiring the best singers into its service".[20]

Chart. 1: Map of Kenya showing Kilifi district which was later sub-divided into several districts, Malindi included.

[20] Askew, "As Plato Duly Warned": 633.

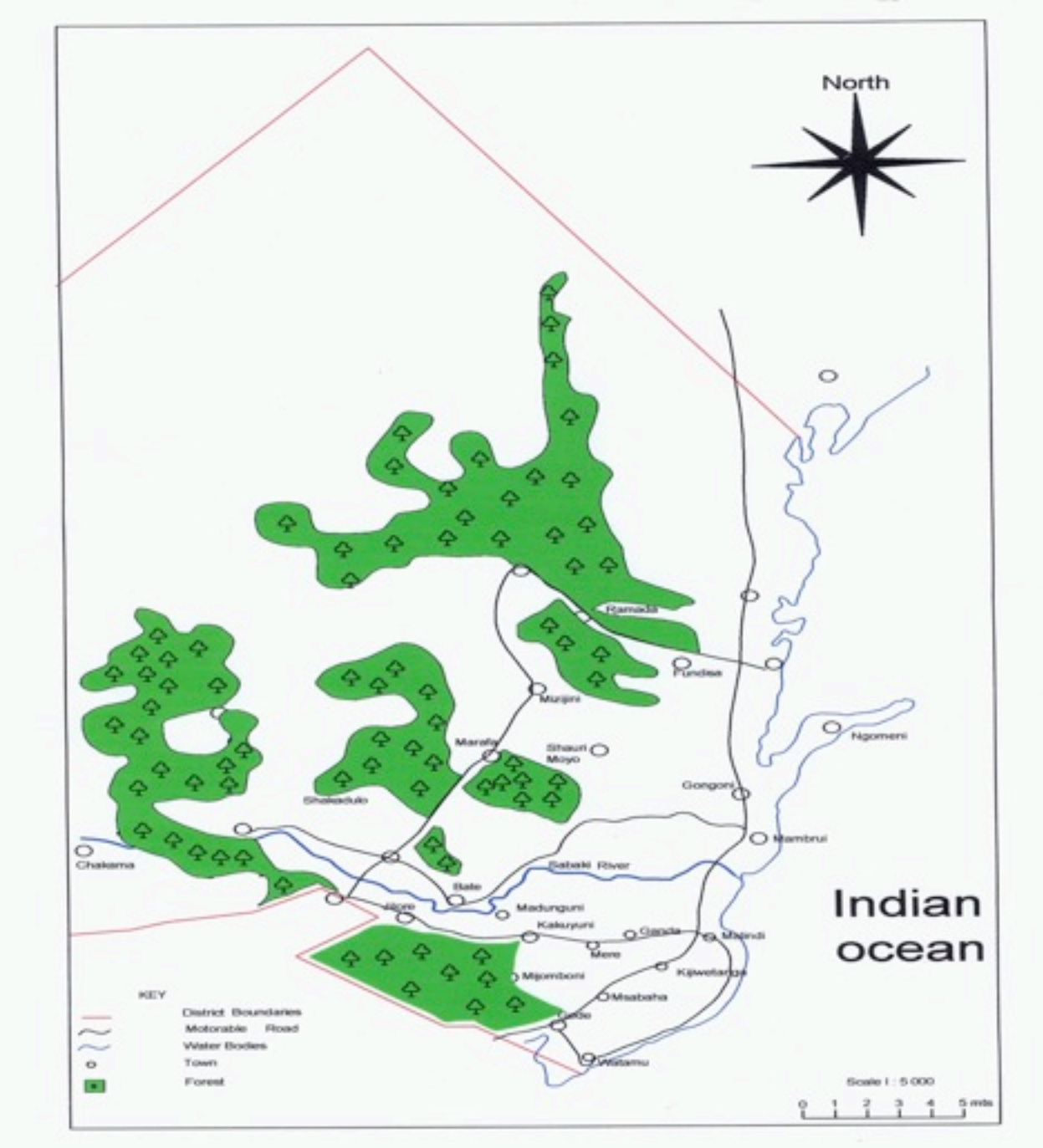

Chart 2: Map of Malindi district showing extent of masquerading.

In spite of Kenya's initial disinterest in promoting culture at independence, various coastal communities performed *ngoma* for both rituals and entertainment.[21] In Lamu, for example, *ngoma* competitions as well as "Kiswahili poetry, and word-smith competitions, donkey races, sailing regattas as well as sword duels" were common avenues through which inhabitants expressed neighbourhood rivalries.[22] Northwards, along the Juba River dance competitions were a prominent characteristic feature among the Wagosha ex-slave community.[23] Askew perceives *mashindano* or *upinzani* (opposition) as a major aesthetic characteristic of Swahili society which "generates the need to acquire competitive advantage through continual innovation, inventive appropriation" and "skilled application of figurative language" as well as politicking: '"to sing about" (*kumwimbia*) someone, something, some event, some process and by so doing effect social change…".[24]

Competitive *ngoma* was not, nevertheless, exclusive to the Swahili society nor essentially a coastal performative feature. Until about three decades ago *ngoma* competitions were prominent performances among other Bantu-speaking communities like the Mijikenda, Pokomo and Taita.[25] The Mijikenda refer to traditional dance competitions as *pingano* or *mtsomano*, the Pokomo (*ngaji* or *showa*) and the Taita (*kutimana ndighi*).[26]

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[21] Gearhart, R., "Ngoma Memories: How Ritual Music and Dance Shaped the Northern Kenya Coast", *African Studies Review*, 48, 3 (2005): 21-47.

[22] Gearhart, R., *"Rama Maulidi"*: 356

[23] Declich, F., "Identity, Dance and Islam among the People with Bantu Origins in Riverine Areas in Somalia", in *The Invention of Somalia* (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 1995): 204.

[24] See Askew, "As Plato Duly Warned": 618-619, 631.

[25] These groups belong to the north Sabaki Bantu communities. For more detail see Nurse, D., and Hinnebusch, T.J., *Swahili and the Sabaki: A Lingusitic History* Hinnebusch T.J., (eds.) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 83-87.

[26] Information provided by Ngandu Mdune (Mijikenda), Salim Omar (Pokomo) and Norman Mwazighe (Taita) in Mombasa, February-March 2012.

As in the case of *beni, kalela* and *muganda, kinyago* emerged immediately after 1907. Apart from its ritualistic nature, from a performative point of view *kinyago* bears the hallmark of *ngoma*. *Kinyago* is performed mainly to memorialise male ancestral spirits and also as an entertainment. *Kinyago* members are a group of dancers disguised as spirits and animals collectively referred to as *nyama*.[27] The spirit-animals danced (*kutambisha*) under the accompaniment of unique high pitched drumming (*kupiga ngoma*) and singing (*kuimba*) punctuated by ululations (*vigelegele/njerejere*).[28] The *nyama* appeared in diverse typologies such as wild game, reptiles, fish, birds, mysterious beings and automobiles which highly enriched and captivated the performances. "Animals" with different decorative motifs and dancing styles created thrilling competitiveness similar to the *Marini, Arinoti*, *Kingi* and *Scotchi beni ngoma* rivalry which occurred in the 1930s and 1950s.[29] Besides the mysticism and secrecy surrounding the ritual, the artistry involved in the production of the animals coupled with the dancing which emulated the wild game in their natural setting rendered the *kinyago* performative expressions hilarious and fascinating.

Kinyago practitioners always strove to introduce novelties much as their *ngoma* counterparts. Thus the introduction of stylish masquerades called *juba* or *kupuo* and automobile masquerades like ships and planes demonstrated the high spectrum of artistic creativity that enhanced the competitive spirit among practitioners. As in *ngoma*, dancers competed according to their local moieities. There were *vinyago* from moieities: villages or wards (*vijiji* or *mitaa*)

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[27] This translates as *zilombo* among the Chewa Nyau dance of Malawi, Kaspin, D., "Chewa Visions and Revisions of Power: Transformation of the Nyau Dance in Central Malawi", in *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa:* (ed). Jean and John Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993): 35.

[28] This is similar to the *mapiko* masquerades described by Israel in *In Step with the Times,* Ch III.

[29] Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 45-140; Askew, *Dancing the Nation* :72. Askew, "As Plato Duly Warned": 616.

such as Ganda, Mguruleni, Mere, Madunguni, Bate, Gede, and so on. During the performance, practitioners either danced individually in the case of small animals or for larger animals they collaborated and "danced" (*kutambisha*) the animal in exaltation of the respective patron who sponsored it. In the process of performance therefore, dancers represented their moieties in a similar way to *beni ngoma, ngoma* and *dansi*, *Rama maulidi* and *mviko* of southern Somalia.[30] This competitive aspect was heightened through social commentary: an announcer introduced the animal, its sponsor (*mwanafundi*) and his patron (*fundi*) as well as their residence to the ecstatic crowd.[31] Thus rivalry in *kinyago* was as common as it was in *ngoma*.

Masquerading in East-Central Africa

In the Central-Eastern Africa region, masked dancers are perceived as ancestral spirits reincarnated and who return to earth during sacred rituals in order to sustain the living souls' links with the dead, and to cleanse the respective communities of their spiritual and physical impurities.[32] According to Kerr, animal masks represent a re-enactment of a prelapsarian innocent past when men and god lived in harmony, a time before humans invented fire and caused a forest to burn causing animosity between them.[33] These masked performances functioned as the economic and political and socio-religious nerve centres through which the

[30] See Declich, "Identity" : 204-205.

[31] Wembah- Rashid,, "Isinyago and Midimu". See also Wembah-Rashid, *The Ethno-History of the Matrilineal People of Southeastern Tanzania*. 32 (ACTA ETHNOLOGICA ET LINGUISTICA, 1975); Israel, P., *In Step With the Times*, Ch III.

[32] Kerr, D., "Unmasking the Spirits: Theatre in Malawi", *The Drama Review*, 31, 2 (1987): 115.

[33]Kerr, "Unmasking the Spirits", 115-125.

Chewa people, who live in the region where Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique meet, mediated their ideology of agricultural and communal being.[34]

Wembah-Rashid defines a mask as "any covering or disguise worn with the intention of transforming the wearer, making him a spirit of whatever being he is representing or a disguise used in ordinary dances or drama, or a curio".[35] Masks found in North-eastern Mozambique and South-eastern Tanzania are of two categories: (1) facial masks (2) body covers. The Makua refer to facial masks as *midimu* (pl.) and *n'dimu (sing.)*; while body masks are called *isinyago*. *Inyago* is the Yao term whereas the Makonde refer to these masks as *likomba*. Among the Makonde of Mozambique *mapiko* masquerades are divided in two types: day masks and night/animal masks.[36]

Different terminologies exist for the body-cover masquerade. It is known as *mapiko ashilo* (nocturnal masks) in Mozambique, *makishi* and *nyau* in Zambia and Malawi respectively and *kinyago* (pl. *vinyago*) among the Mijikenda and Swahili in Coastal Kenya.[37] Furthermore, members of the *nyau* association practice the famous *Gule wa Mkulu* – the Great Dance, a secret association, involving an ancient ritual dance practiced among the Chewa in Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique.[38]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Wembah-Rashid, "Isinyago and Midimu": 124.

[36] Israel, *In Step with the Times*, Ch. V.

[37] See Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*; Tonkin, E., "Masks and Powers", *Man*, New Series, 14, 2 (Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1979); Kerr, "Unmasking the Spirits"; Yoshida, "Masks and Secrecy"; Israel, *In Step With The Times*.

[38] Originally proclaimed in 2005 *Gule wa Mkulu* was inscribed in 2008 to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. See http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00142. See Freland, F., *Capturing the Intangible: Perspectives on the Living Heritage*. UNESCO (2009): 274-275.

According to Wembah-Rashid most of the *isinyago* beasts represent animals such as the elephant, pig and monkey.[39] He also identifies two types, *Kipalamoto* or *Chipalamoto* (Makua) and *Nteepana* (Yao), which do not represent any animal. There are also modern inventions of bicycles, motorcars, aeroplanes; colonial agents like the District Commissioner and a Tax Clerk- all classified as beasts.[40] The Kipalamoto found in North-eastern Mozambique and South-eastern Tanzania is also regarded as a "fire carrier".[41]

The genetical link of *kinyago* with the East-Central culture of masquerading – especially with the nigh-time "animal" masquerades – is therefore evident. *Kinyago* masquerades belong to the body masks which Wembah-Rashid has identified;[42] and *kinyago* adherents in Malindi perform only at night. As Kaspin states for the Nyau, *kinyago* is "more than a dance form, it is a men's organisation and ritual system" which is intertwined into the fabric of the ex-slave community.[43]

Kinyago **as an arena for identity negotiation**

The term identity is very complex to define. It may be interpreted as the situation in which people share certain qualities or cultural values. This constitutes various aspects and expressions

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[39] Wembah-Rashid, "Isinyago and Midimu": 124

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Wembah-Rashid, "Isinyago and Midimu": 124.

[43] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions": 34-5.

that communicate those cultural values, such as age, sex, social class; religion, beliefs and practices; music, language, song and dance, and so on.[44] Ndimande argues that identity constitutes diverse categories such as national, ethnic, cultural, social, linguistic, sexual and gender belongingness.[45] Citing Hall, Webner and Foucault, Richard Makhanu Wafula argues that identity should not be understood in essentialist or reductionist terms; "to the contrary it is in a constant process of movement, interaction and intertextuality".[46] Concurring, Ntarangwi argues that Swahili identity, for instance, may best be understood by considering culture as a continuous "process that uses symbols, ideas, and beliefs that are borne of a process of social interaction and the challenges of everyday life".[47] Identity is always unstable and in a state of flux, hence it cannot be defined exhaustively.[48]

In her work on dance and Islam in Somalia, Francesca Declich argues that ritual performances, irrespective of being Islamic or traditional, are indicative of ethnic identity and a distinctive attribute between groups, particularly for people with slave ancestry.[49] Gesturing in the same direction, Emily Achieng' Akuno perceives music as uniquely linked to identity. Akuno

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[44] Odhiambo, J.C., "Circulation of Media Texts and Identity (de)constructions in the Post-Colony". In *Culture, Performance and Identity: Paths of Communication in Kenya*. (ed). Njogu, K. Twaweza Communications Ltd, (Nairobi, 2008):134

[45] Ndimande, N., "Language and Identity: The Case of African Languages in S.A. Higher Education". *Alternation* 11, 2, (2004): 63.

[46] Wafula, M. R., "Performing Identity in Kiswhaili Literature". In *Culture, Performance and Identity: Paths of Communication in Kenya*. (ed.) Njogu, K. (Nairobi: Twaweza, 2008): 103.

[47] Ntarangwi, M., *Gender, Identity and Performce: Undertanding Swahili Cultural Relations through Song* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003): 92.

[48] Odhiambo, "Circulation": 134.

[49] Declich, "Identity, Dance and Islam": 192-193.

stresses that music is an embodiment of the "essence of a people, portraying and constructing their identity…music displays and creates the identity of those who produce and use it".[50]

These concepts correspond well with the characteristic features of *kinyago* in Malindi. The slaves who originated from oral societies lacked the possibility and capacity to document their experiences, histories and cultural values. Hence they depended on their collective practices such as the masquerade rituals to reconstruct their identity. Kiriama rightly states, "memories are shaped by collective and individual events".[51] Soon after the abolition of slavery and slave trade, the Malindi ex-slaves reconstructed their histories, values and cultural practices which they observed before they were enslaved. They subsequently passed those elements of their cultural values onto their descendants as a way of negotiating and reshaping their identity.

But we must be cautious; *kinyago* should not be equated to or perceived as a form of music. It is first and foremost a *rite de passage* – essentially a ritual practice which, nevertheless, embodies expressive features such as artistic constructions and competitive dance performances which shape some of the basic characteristics of identity.[52] Thus *Kinyago* evolved and became the embodiment of the Wanyasa identity in Malindi district.

The ex-slaves used *kinyago* to strengthen their identity and negotiate their social status by deliberately declaring to share those values with the Mijikenda community. A fundamental declaration took place at Mkokoani, around Ganda, marking a major turning point in shaping the social and power relations between the ex-slaves and the Mijikenda. The slave descendants

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[50] Akuno, E. A., "Sing Me a Life: Music as a Peoples' Identity". In *Culture, Performance and Identity: Paths of Communication in Kenya*. (ed.) Njogu, K. Twaweza Communications Ltd, Nairobi, Kenya (2008): 183-194

[51] Kiriama, H.O., "Memory and heritage: The Shimoni Caves in Southern Kenya", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Deakin University, (2009): 6

[52] See Kratz, C., *Affecting Performance : Meaning, Movement and Experience in Okiek Women Initiation*. (New York: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1994).

formally entrusted the *kinyago* tradition to the Mijikenda, who willingly appropriated and domesticated it. These social and power relations further helped to entrench the ex-slave identity in the region. Hence, through *kinyago* we are able to glean deep into the history and identity of the former slaves; as well as their fears, hopes and aspirations.

Language plays a significant role in the formation and negotiation of identity.[53] Though the Wanyasa had lost a major part of their language during slavery, they still used the rudimentary linguistic elements they could remember to enhance their secretive rituals in *kinyago*. On the other hand they adopted Kiswahili as their *lingua franca* and Islam as their religion. This development also empowered the former slaves to culturally integrate further within the Swahili society which had hitherto been very hostile and inhospitable to them.

But the ex-slaves' pursuit for their ethnic identity to be recognised politically was futile. From the 1940s onwards, the ex-slave community's quest for Nyasa identity was frustrated by political challenges. Whereas in Zanzibar former slaves such as Manyema, Nyasa and Yao formed institutions organised around ethnicity according to the colonial policy, in Malindi, although a minute section of ex-slaves identified themselves as Nyamwezi or Yao, powerful ethnic based institutions were lacking.[54] Hence, the former slaves in Malindi lacked the political power to negotiate their identity. That notwithstanding, the ex-slaves asserted their collective sense of belonging through the *kinyago* tradition which has persisted well into the 21st century.

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[53] Herbert, R., "Talking in Johannesburg: The Negotiation of Identity in Conservation", in *Codeswitching Worldwide* 11, Jacobson, R., (ed). (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001): 23.

[54] Fair, L., *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945.* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001): 28-31.

Organisation of the Research

This dissertation consists of three chapters.

Chapter One, provides a broad general context by exploring the various roles played by slavery and slave trade in the Kenya coast and by discussing the emancipation of slaves. The chapter highlights colonial and missionary involvement in the anti-slavery campaign and how slaves, runaway and fugitive slaves fought for their survival and freedom.

Chapter Two discusses the golden years of *kinyago* masquerading; this involves the issue of cultural integration of the liberated people with coastal communities such as the Swahili and Mijikenda, and the subsequent appropriation of masquerading by the latter. It explores how masquerading functioned as a terrain for identity formation and negotiation between the descendants of former slaves and specifically the Mijikenda community. At the same time, the chapter discusses the main performative features of *kinyago* and its stylistic transformations.

Chapter Three focuses on the causes and processes of the decline of the masquerade tradition in the 1970s onwards. We argue that in the decade following Kenya's independence, patronage among other factors enhanced the popularisation of masquerade performance in the Kenya coast, but consequently the lack or apathy of patronage prompted its apparent decline. This chapter examines the resilience of this heritage in the midst of existing challenges and what this portends for the future of masquerading in the Kenya Coast.

Chapter I

Slavery and the slave trade in Coastal Kenya

The history of masquerading traditions in coastal Kenya must begin with a discussion of slavery and the slave trade. The trade in humans played a major role in bringing social change to the entire coastal region. But the historiography of slavery has been understudied; moreover, important cultural aspects of the former slaves have not been fully documented. To appreciate these cultural attributes we must understand the history of slavery in costal Kenya. In this research we re-examine the history of slavery and slave trade to enable us understand the aftermath of the abolition, and in the process, unearth buried or silenced histories and cultural practices of the Central-Eastern Africa slave diaspora. This chapter therefore forms a linkage between the known historical record and the unrecorded oral material in the following chapter for the purpose of enriching the historiography of Kenya.

This chapter gives an outline of slavery and slave trade in Africa with special reference to coastal Kenya. It demonstrates how as an institution, slavery, was used variously in the region, and the processes culminating to the emancipation of slaves. It highlights European involvement in the anti-slavery movement interspersed with extreme ambivalence orchestrated by individual

and national interests such as those illustrated by the missionaries working for the Church Missionary Society of England (CMS), the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACO) and by extension, the British government. Moreover, the chapter explores the desperate multiple relations and roles played by the slaves, runaway and fugitive slaves in their quest for survival in an extremely hostile environment.

Slavery in East Africa

In Africa slavery and slave trade subsisted since the 1st Century A.D. involving slaves from East Africa and the Horn of Africa who were taken to Egypt.[55] Other trade goods were rhinoceros horn, tortoise shell, palm oil and ivory. Of these goods, ivory and slaves were in great demand in Eurasia.[56] Nevertheless, in their reports historians and geographers like Al-Masudi, Al-Idrisi and Ibn-Batutta a trade and commerce in goods such as ambergris, iron and ivory but hardly highlight the significance of slavery and slave trade as lucrative trade components of that period.[57] Early Chinese writers of the 10th and 13th centuries illustrate that slavery and slave trade thrived on a rather minimal scale.[58]

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[55] Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, ed. W. H. Scoff (London, New York), (1921):142; Coupland R., *East Africa and Its Invaders: From earliest times to the death of Seyyid Said in 1856* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938): 17-20; Sheriff, A., "Slave Trade and Slave Routes of the East African Coast", in *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa,* (eds.) B. Zimba, E. Alpers and A. Isaacman (Maputo: Filsom, 2005): 91-123.

[56] Coupland, *East Africa*: 20 -32 .

[57] Kusimba, M.C., "Archaeology of Slavery in East Africa," in *African Archaeological Review,* 21, 2*,* (2004)*:* 63

[58] Ibid.

The trade in humans progressed gradually in the middle centuries and in the East African coast it blossomed in the 18th century largely motivated by Oman's transformation after the expulsion of the Portuguese from Muscat in 1650.[59] As the commercial importance of Oman expanded the merchant class invested heavily in the production of dates for export to India using slave labour. This political economy created a huge demand for agricultural slaves from East Africa.[60] Around the 19th century about 3,000 East African slaves were exported to the Middle East annually through Kilwa and Zanzibar following this commercial boom.[61]

Conversely, the development and expansion of the sugar plantations in the French Mascerenes (Mauritius and Re-union) and the Americas, especially Brazil,[62] created a high demand for agricultural slaves.[63] These were initially sourced from West Africa but by the 1730s the trade had extended to Madagascar. By the 1770s the French exported over 3,000 slaves annually from Mozambique via the Cape Delgado.[64] But at the turn of the 19th century efforts were afoot to restrict slave trade. Several policies were initiated commencing with the Moresby Treaty of 1822 which forbade the export of slaves to the south of Cape Delgado; the Hamerton Treaty of 1845 which made illegal the export of slaves to the north of Lamu.[65] These treaties

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[59] Horton, M., and Middleton, J., *The Swahili,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 86; also Sheriff, A., *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar* (London: James Currey, 1987): 2; See also, Sheriff, "Slave Trade and Slave Routes": 23.

[60] Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*: 2; See also, Sheriff, "Slave Trade and Slave Routes": 23.

[61] Sheriff, A., "Slave Trade and Slave Routes", 24.

[62] Harries, P., "Making Mosbiekers: History, Memory and the African Diaspora at the Cape," in Slave Trade and the Diaspora on a Global Scale", in *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition*: 91-123. See also, Florentino, M., "Slave Trade between Mozambique and the Port of Rio de Janeiro, c. 1790-1850, Demographic, Social and Economic Aspects", in the above volume, 63-90.

[63] Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*: 2 and Sheriff, "Slave Trade and Slave Routes": 26.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Coupland R., *East Africa and Its Invaders*: 214-5; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*: 223; Sheriff, "Slave Trades and Slave Routes": 26-7; Morton, *Children of Ham*: 52-3.

authorised British Naval warships to patrol the Indian Ocean, capture slave dhows and rescue the slave cargo.

Nevertheless, slave traders in East Africa resisted all the abolitionist policies, as implementing them would be ruinous to their political and economic survival.[66] Undeterred by these treaties slave-traders resorted to clandestine overland movement of slaves.[67] Morton notes that by 1873, traders marched their slaves from Tanganyika's hinterland to Pangani and Tanga from which they supplied Pemba, Mombasa and other northern towns.[68] By 1874 approximately 32,000 slaves were sold annually through the overland routes thereby benefitting Mombasa, Takaungu, Malindi and Lamu which had well established plantations producing grains such as millet, rice and sesame for the lucrative export trade.[69] Through persistent pressure, however, in 1873 Sultan Seyyid Bargash of Zanzibar signed the Frere Treaty that was negotiated by Sir Bartle Frère on behalf of the British, abolishing the Indian Ocean slave trade.[70]

Sheriff states that enforcement of the anti-slavery policies resulted in several significant impacts: first, slave traders countered it by introducing the surreptitious overland treks of slaves as discussed above. Moreover, the anti-slavery policies transformed the slave sector from an export based enterprise to one that exported agricultural commodities produced through slave

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[66] Sheriff, A., (1987): 223; Harries, J.E., *East Africa and Its Invader: The Case of Kenya* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1987): 22.

[67] Martin, E. B., *The History of Malindi: A geographical Analysis of an East African Coastal Town from the Portuguese Period to the Present.* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau,1973): 58-60; Coupland R., *East Africa and Its Invaders:* 289-290.

[68] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 66.

[69] Salim, I. A., "Sir Ali Bin Salim", In *Kenya Historical Biographies* (eds), Kenneth King and Ahmed Salim, EAPH, Nairobi, (1971): 112; Morton, *Children of Ham:* 52-3

[70] Harries, J.E., *Repatriates and Refugees in a Colonial Society. The Case of Kenya* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1987): 22; Morton, *Children of Ham*: 52

labour on plantations.[71] This development undermined the anti-slavery treaties by rendering them rather ineffectual; in the Kenya coast slave trade prospered discretely until 1907 when it was finally abolished.[72] But the emancipation of slaves did not come on silver platter: it was a long, tormented and traumatising experience as we shall discuss below.

Liberation

The emancipation of slaves in Coastal Kenya was achieved through four major processes: legal policies such as the Moresby Treaty of 1822, the Hamerton Treaty of 1845 and the Frère Treaty of 1873; manumission, escape and confrontation as shall be discussed below. The 1907 abolition ordinance enabled thousands of slaves to be emancipated and their masters compensated.[73] Cooper suggests that by that period approximately 10,000 slaves may have been in captivity within the farms of Malindi. Additionally over 2000 slaves were emancipated in the larger Malindi district. But some slaves chose to stay with their old masters.[74] Nonetheless, the huge disparity in the above figures suggests that some slaves may have been manumitted or most plausibly escaped.

Manumission

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[71] Sheriff, A., *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*: 2, 223

[72] Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*: 178; Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 58; Morton, *Children of Ham*:175

[73] Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*: 176-8

[74] Ibid: 178.

Manumission is the liberation of slaves from servility under the Islamic law, *sharia*. The Islamic law regarding slavery as an established institution affirmed that slaves had 'ownership over property, management and ownership, marriage, inheritance and emancipation'.[75] Coastal Arab and Swahili slave-owners applied the Sunni school which enjoined them 'to treat their slaves well, provide for their up-keep, respect their rights of property and family, and manumit them as a pious act'.[76] This law was, however, not enforced until 1890 through pressure from Busaidi governors backed by the British. Prior to this period it was not uncommon for manumitted slaves to be re-enslaved. Morton emphasizes that "at one time, Mombasa attracted manumitted slaves from other Kenya port cities because of its reputation for tolerance, but re-enslavement occurred even there".[77]

Escape

As with other parts of the world, enslavement in Coastal Kenya was harsh, coercive and cruel.[78] It involved the use of brutal force and judicial processes; adverse circumstances such as famine, indebtedness and birth.[79] Under the dehumanising situation thousands of slaves escaped.[80] Some took refuge in Christian settlements such as Frère Town (Mombasa), Jomvu, Rabai, Mazeras and

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[75] Wilding, R.F., "The Shorefolk": 55.

[76] Fair, L., *Pastimes and Politics*: 116; Morton, *Children of Ham:* 3, 11. The word in italics was inserted by the author.

[77] Morton, *Children of Ham*:11

[78] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 59

[79] Deutsch, J., "Notes on the Rise of Slavery and Social Change in Unyamwezi", in *Slavery in the Great lakes Region,* (ed) Henri Medard, (Oxford: James Currey, 2007):88

[80] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 10-11.

Ribe mission stations. Thousands more founded maroon settlements such as Gasi and Mwezang'ombe in the south coast, Koromio along the Kilifi Creek; Forodhoyo (Fuladoyo), Chakama (Makongeni) and Jilore in the interior of Kilifi.[81]According to Morton, Mwezang'ombe had between 3000 and 4000 fugitive slaves, *watoro,* in 1843 while Fordhoyo harboured about 800 runaways in 1883. Other notable coastal maroon sites were Witu in the hinterland of Lamu.[82] Across the border, the Juba River in southern Somalia hosted thousands of fugitive slaves known as *WaGosha* who had escaped from their masters in the Benadir coast since the 1830s and established several powerful entities.[83]

Confrontation

Escape was frequently countered by heavy retribution from the slave-owners; and, at times this led to open confrontation. In 1848, for instance, Mombasa slave-owners threatened to attack the Mwezang'ombe maroon settlement and recapture their slaves. Fearing such reprisal, Mwezang'ombe handed over "runaway slaves to their masters for a fee".[84] Nearby Mombasa, the Frere Town settlement and Rabai Mission Station also experienced similar threats.[85]

On several occasions, Mombasa slave-owners besieged Rabai, following which the Sultan commissioned an enquiry. The commission was composed of George S. Mackenzie, director of the IBEACO (Imperial British East Africa Company), Reverend Walter Price and

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[81] See Morton, *Children of Harm*: 11-78; and Champion, A. M., *The Agiryama of Kenya*, Occasional Paper No.25, (ed) John Middleton (Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain & Ireland, 1967): 6-7.

[82] Ibid: 13, 86.

[83] Declich, "Identity, Dance and Islam": 191- 222. See also Morton, *Children of Ham*: 192-199.

[84] Morton, *Children of Ham*:15. Mwezang'ombe was a maroon settlement called after a Digo person by the same name.

[85] Coupland, *East Africa and Its Invader*s: 228; Harries, *Repatriates and Refugees*: 22-25.

Lloyd Mathews. The commission discovered that 1,421 fugitive slaves were given refuge at Jomvu, Mazeras, Jimba and Rabai mission stations within a period of twelve years. Of these fugitive slaves 656 resided at Rabai under Reverend William Jones, one of the Bombay African ministers.[86] The commission recommended all the 1,421 fugitive slaves were emancipated on 31st December 1889 and their former owners compensated.[87]

The worst conflict though took place at Forodhoyo.[88]. The site is situated on the edge of the Rare stream, a tributary of the Ndzovuni River approximately 50km north-west of Kilifi. Apparently about 800 slaves from Malindi, Takaungu and Mombasa had escaped and taken refuge in Forodhoyo where they were receiving Christian instruction from a Giryama convert called Daniel Koi.[89] According to Morton, "Fuladoyo became as prosperous as it was orderly and as it was large. Daniel Koi made residence conditional on Christian observances, providing the first example of an indigenous evangelical Christian movement in East Africa. Koi's CMS connection was reinforced by visits to Frere Town by himself and Mangi, and by visits to Fuladoyo by missionaries, Bombay Africans and *mateka* schoolboy instructors. Even though Frere Town and Rabai missionaries had adopted a non-harbouring policy since the Kirk investigations, their involvement with Koi provided maroons the shelter they required".[90]

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[86] Bombay Africans were former slaves who had been rescued from the Indian Ocean slave dhows and sent to a Church Missionary Society run Nasik Orphanage near Bombay (India). They were given Christian training and later sent to Kenya and settled at Frere Town and Rabai; See Harries, *Repatriates and Refugees*: 13-22.

[87] Harries, J.E., *Repatriates and Refugees:* 26-7; Morton, F., *Children of Ham*: 117-8.

[88] Whereas Western authors refer to this site as *Fuladoyo/Fulladoyo,* the Mijikenda inhabitants of the area call it *Forodhoyo. Thus Fulladoyo/ Fuladoyo* shall be used herein on citations otherwise we shall adhere to the indigenous pronunciation *Forodhoyo.*

[89] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 47, 86-90.

[90] Ibid.

With such conviction the Forodhoyans therefore anticipated CMS/British empathy and support against their enemy. But whereas in principle the British were instrumental in the anti-slavery crusade, their official policy was complicit and sympathetic towards the slave-owners. In fact, the British consul implemented the policy of non-interference by compelling the CMS to withdraw any support to Forodhoyo.[91] Unsurprisingly, slave-owners exploited this ambiguity by invading Forodhoyo. Thus in 1883, Takaungu slave-owners supported by those from Mombasa and Malindi and accompanied by about 3000 followers attacked Forodhoyo. In the ensuing one year battle, the invaders burned down the entire settlement and carried away spoils of grain. As the battle raged some fugitive slaves lost their lives but hundreds of them scattered into the bush; unfortunately their mentor, Daniel Koi, was arrested and brutally murdered at the coast.[92] Shortly thereafter the traumatised maroons returned and rebuild their scotched off village.

We need to understand more about IBEACO in order to appreciate the historiography of Coastal Kenya. In 1887 a company named the British East Africa Association acquired a fifty-five year lease on the ten-mile coastal strip from Vanga in the south-coast to Kipini at the mouth of the River Tana from Sultan Bargash of Zanzibar.[93] Resultant to this authority the company administered the entire Coastal strip, collecting taxes, customs duties and concessions on minerals. In 1888, the Company acquired a royal charter hence it was transformed to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC/IBEACO) under George Sutherland Mackenzie as its director.[94]

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[91] Ibid.

[92] The Anglican Church of Kenya regards Daniel Koi as a martyr because of this historic episode. Adherents celebrate the annual Daniel Koi Day on 3rd October following the October Black History Month in Britain celebrating the contributions that Africans have made around the world.

[93] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 62.

[94] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 114; Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 62.

Though a commercial company, one of IBEACO's official policies was however to abolish slave trade "by degrees", in all its territories. Sultan Seyyid Ali supported IBEACO by issuing a proclamation in 1890 giving slaves the right to purchase liberation in his territory. Indeed, by 1887, the Malindi district had an estimated 5,442 slaves but these had declined by about a half as IBEACO facilitated the emancipation of 2,387 slaves by 1888.[95] Predictably Malindi's economy was adversely affected by IBEACO's anti-slavery philanthropy. Martin observes that:

> The effects of the 1890 Anti-slavery decree of the Sultan of Zanzibar and the gradual freeing of the slaves by IBEAC were that agriculture in the Mailindi region in the late 1890 began to wane. Besides, the slaves who were beginning to work for their freedom, many hundreds of others who were unwilling to pay their masters ran away especially up the Sabaki River outside the ten-mile strip owned by the Sultan of Zanzibar.[96]

IBEACO's compassion was short-lived as the leadership soon realised that its anti-slavery stance would be detrimental to its success, for its prosperity depended on the benevolence of the slave- owners. Earlier, the British consul had warned IBEACO's managers that "the company would not succeed unless relations between the missionaries and Arabs improved, particularly on the issue of runaway slaves".[97]

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[95] Martin, *The History of Malindi:* 62-68.

[96] Ibid. 63.

[97] Harries, *Repatriates and Refugees*: 25.

The company's ambivalence towards slavery and slave trade was exhibited commencing 1890 until the cessation of the company and the subsequent establishment of the British East Africa Protectorate in 1895, as IBEACO committed itself to employing slave labour, restoring fugitive slaves to their masters and supporting Mazrui rulers like Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gazi and Salim bin Rashid of Takaungu with arms to invade maroon villages.[98] The ambiguous and selfish policies notwithstanding, IBEACO is credited with the introduction of cotton and groundnuts in Malindi district, the development of the region's physical infrastructure through construction of the Mombasa-Malindi road, the construction of the 320km telegraph line from Mombasa to Lamu and of course the initial emancipation of slaves.[99]

More economic and political scrambles were recorded between the 1860s and 1890s involving Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi and Sultan Ahmed FumoLuti of Witu.[100] The two challenged the Busaidi hegemony of Zanzibar over the Kenya coast, the IBEACO as discussed above and the British East Africa Protectorate.[101] To strengthen their armies both men employed runaway slaves and retainers. During the Nabhani-Busaidi wars the *watoro* "…played an increasingly powerful and divisive role in the internal politics of Witu by supporting Nabahani

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[98] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 11-12.

[99] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 63.

[100] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 40-48; and Gray, J., *The British in Mombasa 1824-1826*. The Kenya Historical Society, MacMillan & Co. Ltd (Toronto, New York) 1957: 173-192; Coupland R., *East Africa and Its Invaders*: 271-294; Willis, J., *Mombasa, the Swahili and the Making of the Mijikenda* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993): 47; Herlehy, T, J., and Morton, Rodger, F., "A Coastal Ex-Slave Community in the Regional and Colonial Economy of Kenya: The WaMisheni of Rabai, 1880-1963", in *The End of Slavery in Africa*, (eds), Miers, S., and Roberts, R. (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988): 257.

[101] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 77; Morton, *Children of Ham*: 146-7; See also Allen, J. de V., "Witu, Swahili History and the Historians". Paper presented at the Goethe-Institute sponsored Conference on "The Process of State Formation in Eastern Africa in the 18th and 19th Centuries", Nakuru, 13th-16th September, 1979. Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, 2; Salim "Sir Ali Bin Salim": 113-114; Morton, *Children of Ham*: 30.

who opposed any accommodation with Zanzibar and the British".[102] Naturally, with their superior military power, the British responded by brutally crushing the three rebellions.[103]

Conclusion

For centuries slaves experienced extreme violence, brutality, exploitation and trauma under their masters. Throughout the coastal region runaway slaves belatedly engaged in fighting for the masters; but they also relentlessly fought for their rights – indeed, they established their own settlements and cultivated the land. Often times they formed independent gangs that raided villages for food stuff and captives who they either used as farm labourers, or, eventually sold them off to slave dealers. Morton who has written extensively on this theme summarises this ambivalence thus:

> For the freeborn Muslims of the coast, slaves were a means to wealth, social elevation, influence, and leisure. For runaways, slaves were a means of getting arms and powder, of increasing the size of their fledgling settlements, and of placing more land under cultivation. Muslim coastal owners counted on slaves to improve their social prospects and their general standard of living, but maroons in the bush needed them to increase their security and food supply.[104]

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[102] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 49.

[103] Salim, "Sir Ali Bin Salim":14.

[104] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 51.

The communities with slave identity in Malindi district are therefore residues of Africans who, as Kusimba states, for over centuries were transformed from independent to dependent relationships under slavery and slave trade.[105] Despite having been stripped of their social identity through traumatising transformations, nevertheless, the ex-slave community possessed and sustained a rich fountain of knowledge that was highly critical to their lives throughout that transition but was denied the opportunity to practice it under servitude.[106] This was the masquerading tradition that will be discussed in the next chapter.

[105] Kusimba, M.C., "Archaeology of Slavery in East Africa," in *African Archaeological Review*, 21, 2, (2004): 63.

[106]Alpers, E.A., "Mozambique and "Mozambiques": Diaspora and Identity in Mauritius", in *History, Memory and Identity* (eds) Teelock, V., and Alpers, E.A., (University of Mauritius Press), 2001:133.

Chapter II

The Golden Years of vinyago *(1907-1980)*

In this chapter we examine the masquerading tradition which emerged in the Kenya coast immediately after the abolition ordinance of 1907. I will argue that masquerading was a terrain for identity formation, negotiation and cultural integration and that the changes of masquerading from 1907 onwards – with important moments such as the Mkokoani declaration in which *vinyago* were bequeathed to the Mijikenda and the subsequent competitive culture generated by the Mijikenda appropriation – contributed to shaping the *Nyasa* identity. The chapter also describes the cultural processes which were involved in creating power relations between the liberated people and the coastal communities.

Slavery and cultural integration

A long-standing social integration existed between Mijikenda slaves and those from other ethnic groups through slavery. Champion observes that wealthy Mijikenda purchased slaves from Arabs

at the coast, originating from Kilwa.[107] They also bought slaves from Kamba caravans from upcountry for small scale agricultural and domestic labour.[108] Eventually the Mijikenda slave-owners assimilated the slaves to their own clans with full rights.[109] Moreover, Morton emphasises that a section of the fugitive slaves in Forodhoyo and Chakama (Makongeni) were Giryama (part of the Mijikenda).[110] Doubtlessly, these historic encounters must have provided opportunities for cultural integration between slaves, *watoro* and the Mijikenda.

Despondency and natural calamities also contributed towards the cultural integration between the two communities. Having been liberated but with nowhere to go, some ex-slaves settled on the former slave masters' plantations and provided wage labour. Incidentally, the Mijikenda residents of the Native Reserves in the immediate hinterland of Malindi experienced frequent drought and famine.[111] During such difficulties the agriculturally fertile coastal areas such as Mere and Ganda provided food and work to many Mijikenda people who migrated there.[112] The missionary Johan Ludwig Krapf observed that in 1837 the *Nyika* had sought food supplies from Mombasa during a major famine.[113] But their benefactors coerced them into surrendering their children to slavery in exchange for food.[114] Resultant to such calamities and

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[107] Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya*: 50.

[108] Spear, T. T., *The Kaya Complex, A History of the Mijikenda peoples of the Kenya Coast to 1900* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau,1978): 98-9. See also Willis, *Mombasa*: 56; Morton, *Children of Ham*: 1.

[109] Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya*: 50; Spear, *The Kaya Complex*: 99-100.

[110] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 85.

[111] Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya*: 6-7

[112] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 118.

[113] The term "*nyika*" or "*mnyika*" is a pejorative term for the Mijikenda people.

[114] Willis, *Mombasa* :51.

the quest for security some Mijikenda converted to Islam thereby becoming *mahaji;* these and many other Mijikenda enjoined the ex-slaves in the plantations as squatters.[115]

Naturally, this socio-economic phenomenon, strengthened by intermarriage, further enhanced the cultural integration between the Mijikenda and the former slaves. Indeed, Cooper emphasises that "despite religious differences, intermarriage between Mijikenda and ex-slaves took place. Mijikenda society also provided mechanisms by which both men and women could be absorbed into kinship institutions".[116] Besides the aforementioned factors, masquerading helped to further integrate the ex-slaves and their neighbours as shall be discussed.

The Rediscovery of Cultural Identity

Miers and Kopytoff have suggested that the detachment of slaves from one native group to another is analogous to rites of passage.[117] Accordingly, slavery changes the slaves' identity and status into a state of marginality. Further, the slaves lose their old social identity and acquire a new one. Concurring, Middleton emphasises that generally people of slave ancestry are perceived as inferior and their ritual practices marginalised.[118] Within this context, it is most plausible that psychologically the Malindi slaves yearned for their own identity. However, under

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[115] Cooper, *From Slaves To Squatters*: 227.

[116] Cooper, *From Slaves To Squatters*: 228-9.

[117] Miers, S., and Kopytoff,I., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspective* (eds), (University of Wisconsin Press, 1977): 15

[118] Middleton, J., *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 113. See also Glassman, J., *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciuosness on the Swahili Coast 1856-1888*. (Portsmouth: Heinmann, 1995): 108.

servitude this aspiration was unattainable as domestic and plantation slaves in Malindi were denied the right to any form of entertainment.[119] The abolition of slavery and slave trade thus opened up new possibilities for the innovative revival of the liberated people's cultural identity. This was achieved through rediscovery of their geographical roots, redefining their cultural identity and engagement with the Mijikenda.

In the Swahili coast, "identity is articulated within, between, and around multiple sets of dichotomies, such as Arab/African, maritime/mainland, literate/oral, foreigner/indigene, slave/ free, and coast/hinterland".[120] As Miers, Kopytoff and Middleton have argued, the immediate post-abolition decades found a people in limbo; a community who to a larger extent, had lost their ethnic identity. Further still, they were generally known derogatorily as *watumwa* (slaves) despite the emancipation. Hence soon after the abolition ordinance, the former slaves coalesced to define their identity by way of remembering and paying homage to their geographical and cultural roots.

They achieved the former by constructing two significant geo-political reference spaces namely, Wanyasa and Washambara*,* commensurate to their geographical roots. The term Wanyasa (people of Nyasaland) denotes a collective reference to slaves who largely originated from around the Lake Niassa (Lake Malawi) region.[121] Likewise, Washambara defines a people who originated from the Usambara Mountains in north-eastern Tanzania. It must be noted that slaves who came to the East Africa board were sourced mostly from the Central Africa region; however, slavery and slave trade was not exclusive of East Africa, not least the Usambara area.

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[119] Charo wa Munga and Mtawali wa Zimba, interview, 23/3/2011.

[120] Askew, *Performing the Nation,* 79.

[121] Strobel, M., *Muslim Women in Mombasa 1890-1975* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979): 30; Sheriff, A., *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*:140

In fact, slavery and slave trade was practiced in almost all African countries.[122] Furthermore, records are explicit that the Usambara region also played a key role in the trade in humans.[123] Yet, whereas the Central-Eastern Africa geo-political region is prominent for the masquerade tradition, and so, one may associate the coastal Kenya masquerading practice with that geographical space, the same cannot be said of the Usambara region. So far there are no records which associate the masquerading tradition with the Usambara geo-political area. We may surmise therefore that either the coastal Kenya masquerading tradition is not in any way analogous to the Usambara, or that, like the Malindi case, even though it exists, the *kinyago* tradition is virtually unknown because it has not been researched. That notwithstanding, we may prudently argue here that the ex-slaves' reference to the Usambara region appears more associated with the slave origins than to the slave culture of masquerading. Of the two references, the ex-slaves seem more comfortable with the Wanyasa term than Washambara although they often times apply both terms interchangeably.

Though the abolition ordinance was a legal instrument which granted freedom and rights to former slaves, both the ex-slaves and their descendants experienced an identity crisis under the colonial government and this situation extended well into the post-colonial era. Kenya prided itself (and still does so) of forty-two official ethnic communities excluding diasporic ethnicities like the Wanyasa. Hence a section of Kenyan registration officials refused to recognize members of the Wanyasa or Washambara community, etc. as bonafide Kenyans. Thus, in order for them to acquire Kenyan identification cards and assert their Kenyan identity, a section of this community

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[122] Miers, and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*: 14

[123] Coupland R., *East Africa and Its Invader.* (1938):345-8; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*:170-5; Alpers, "The Coast and the development of the Caravan Trade", in *A History of Tanzania* (ed), Kimambo, I.N., and Temu, A.J., (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969): 61.

struggled and succeeded to be registered as Washambara. Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro states that he managed to be registered as Mnyasa by virtue of the support he got from other staff at the Eden Rock Hotel where he worked.[124] Ali Barruti, his nephew who worked at the Lawford's Hotel was also registered as Mnyasa.[125] These labour networks enabled some of the ex-slaves to assert their ethnic identity. However, not many were lucky; a section of the ex-slave descendants who claimed Shambara origins on the one hand were registered as Wanyasa on the other.[126]

Ironically some of their off-spring were registered not as Wanyasa or Washambara but instead were compelled to claim Mijikenda origins for socio-political expediency.[127] Mohamed's son, Ramadhani was registered as a Duruma following his paternal grandmother who was of Mijikenda extract of the Duruma ethnic group. Ramadhani Khamisi Ramadhani, another nephew of Mohamed was registered as a Giryama after his mother's ethnicity.[128] Essentially their hope to keep their Central-Eastern Africa diasporic identity alive failed miserably. This geographical roots consciousness only resides in their collective memories as manifested by their powerful cultural masquerading expressions.

On the cultural roots scene, the rediscovery of cultural identity was achieved through the introduction of several dances such as *kimungwe*, *kinyasa, kindimba*, *kunju* and *kinyago***.**[129] *Kimungwe* has been completely forgotten. Both *kindimba* and *kinyasa* were wedding dances

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[124] Mohamed Ramadhan Songoro, interview, Mguruleni (Ganda), 25/10/2011

[125] Mohamed Ramadhan Songoro and Ali Baruti, interview, Mguruleni (Ganda), 25/10/2011

[126] Ibid.

[127] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Said Mohamed Ramadhani, Ramadhani Hamis Ramadhani, Ali Baruti, Mguruleni (Ganda), 28/8/201 and 25/10/2011.

[128] Ramadhani Mohamed Ramadhani and Ramadhani Khamisi Ramadhani 25 and 28/10/2011.

[129] Moshi Serenge, Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro(24/8/2011), Mohamed Ali Bozo and Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, (24/9/2011). Nobody would describe *kimungwe.*

while *kunju* was a spirit exorcism/propitiation dance.[130] *Kinyago* – the principal genre of this research – was largely a funerary dance. But a section of the ex-slaves observed *kinyago* for entertainment purposes (*ngoma ya furaha/sherehe*). With time the ex-slaves also appropriated *mwaribe*, a Pokomo wedding dance.[131]

Masquerading between ritual and entertainment

Since the early post-abolition decades, masquerading developed as a highly tense and contested field. Initially there were two distinct factions of ex-slaves each with their own ideological perception and creative expressions surrounding masquerading. The first faction was that composed of the former plantation slaves who had been liberated under the 1907 abolition ordinance. The Mijikenda, Swahili and Arabs generally referred to these people as *watu (mwa) wa minazini*, meaning literally 'slaves/people of the coconut plantations'. The other faction was composed of runaway slaves*, watoro.*[132] During slavery, the *watoro* had escaped from their masters and taken refuge in Mijikenda villages or established settlements outside the ten-mile coastal strip. On declaration of the abolition ordinance, the *watoro* gradually trickled back to the plantations and rejoined the *watu (mwa) wa minazini*.[133]

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[130] *Kindimba* might be the same as *sindimba* , the famous Makonde/Yao dance. There is need for more investigation on this genre as well as *kimungwe*, *kinyasa,* and *kunju*.

[131] The Pokomo belong to the Proto North Sabaki Bantu speaking group found along the lower River Tana basin. They shares linguistic and historical attributes with the Mijikenda, Bajuni/Swahili and Taita.

[132] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview 24/9/2011 and 29/9/2011, Malindi.

[133] Moshi Serenge, interview, Ganda, 24/8/2011; Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni (Ganda) 25/10/2011, Mohamed Ali Bozo and Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, Malindi, 24/9/2011 and 29/9/2011.

Despite their symbiotic cultural and historical experiences the two groups shared under servitude, the *watoro* perceived themselves as a superior community to the *watu (mwa) wa minazini*. Apparently this superiority complex developed due chiefly to the *watoro*'s alleged courageous and aggressive stance, which enabled them to escape to freedom. On the contrary, the *watoro* despised their counterparts as incapable of escaping and as having earned their liberation courtesy of the European driven emancipation, hence the purported inferiority.

More significantly, the *watoro* faction asserted superiority through the conservative mantle of *kinyago,* the masquerading tradition. Ideologically this group perceived *kinyago* as strictly ritualistic, performed exclusively as a funerary rite in honour of a deceased senior colleague or relative. Subsequently, the *watoro* forbade the performance of *kinyago* as a form of entertainment. Conversely, the *watu (mwa) wa minazini* faction was liberal: to them *kinyago* was merely entertainment, "a dance for joy" (*ngoma ya furaha/sherehe*) which they performed immediately after the new farm harvests in August and during the New Year festivities from December to February each year. The *watu (mwa) wa minazini* faction also performed *kinyasa, kindimba* and *kunju* dances.[134] Naturally the *watu (mwa) wa minazini/watoro,* superior/inferior and conservative/liberal dichotomy rendered the *kinyago* tradition a highly contested terrain. This contestation played a major role in shaping and reshaping the development and continuity of the *kinyago* heritage.

Through their conservative ideology, the *watoro* faction construed *kinyago* as a powerful cult that was governed by a strict code known as *mzinda*. *Mzinda* was both a mythical and magical receptacle *(pakacha)* made from green coconut palm fronds for the preservation of the

[134] Mosi Serenge, interview, Ganda 24/8/2011, Mohamed Ali Bozo, Malindi, 24/9/2011, Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, Malindi, 29/9/2011, Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni (Ganda) 25/10/2011.

kinyago oracle. *Mzinda* also denoted a *watoro* elder charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the receptacle. *Watoro* and later Mijikenda *kinyago* elders consulted and paid libation to the *mzinda* before any performance.[135] Essentially, the *mzinda* was the *de facto* custodian of the community's cultural interests, and by extension, its continuity and survival. Any person who transgressed the oracle was heavily penalized; such a judicial verdict included miraculous death of the offender.[136] The *watoro* faction therefore considered itself as the authentic custodian of the Nyasa heritage.

By virtue of their liberal ideology the *watu(mwa) wa minazini* observed *kinyago* entirely for purposes of merry making (*kusherehekea*). Contrary to the *watoro*, this faction did not have the ritual *mzinda* oracle. However, one could become an *mzinda* owing to his seniority, having acquired production and performance skills, drums and established a field.[137] Moreover, whereas the *watoro* faction had five funerary masquerades (*karuru, kasinja, kinyago, mwanakalulu,* and *ndovu),* the *watu (mwa) wa minazini* faction excluded all except the *kinyago* in their creative expressions. That exclusion notwithstanding, the *watu (mwa) wa minazini* faction involved itself with the innovative diversification of *kinyago* as a performance by introducing a wide variety of masquerade typologies including animals, birds, reptiles, fish, mysterious beings as well as automobiles from the 1940s onwards. The *watoro* faction gradually accepted this diversification

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[135] Kaingu wa Shauri, Mtawali wa Zimba and Charo wa Munga, interview, Bate 22-3/3/2011; Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, Malindi, 29/9/2011, Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni (Ganda) 25/10/2011.

[136] A story was told of one Charo wa Moyo, a Mijikenda *kinyago* enthusiast who used to perform for tourists in Beach hotels in Malindi despite several warnings by *watoro* elders. He died miraculously. People knew that Charo had violated the *mzinda* code because he died singing endless *kinyago* songs. *Mzinda* elders performed a special cleansing rite before his body was buried. This served as a warning to me not to photograph *vinyago* either during construction or when performing. This bordered on ethical issues, and so, I obliged (Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Shebani wa Mkutano, Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interviews, Ganda and Malindi, September – October 2011.

[137] Mohamed Ali Bozo met all these requirements and therefore became an *mzinda*, interview, Malindi, 24/9/2011.

which produced wide opportunities for creative competitions (*mashindano*) that have ever since been a major attribute of *kinyago* performance.

Kinyago **in comparative perspective**

Most informants define *kinyago* as a cult equivalent to the Mijikenda *Mwanza*. *Mwanza* is primarily a secret of the *Vaya* elders' cult of the A'Giryama community. It derives its name from *Mwanza Mkulu* (the great drum) – a symbolic drum normally kept in the elders' council house known as *moro*, of the *kaya* (Mijikenda traditional forest abode).[138] Further, *kinyago* is a mysterious or mythical "animal".[139] Wembah-Rashid writes:

> *Isinyago* means something near to "mysterious animals," spirits of animals, beasts caught from the bush. The dance takes place on a dark night between quarter and half moon. The idea is to conceal from the women and the uninitiated boys the details of the structure of the animal, but at the same time to let them see and recognize the general form of the beast. *Isinyago* are animals made of elaborate bamboo work thatched with grass and covered with rags. Inside this structure hide human dancers who give the beast the power to dance.[140]

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[138] Spear defines *Mwanza* as "a large friction drum with a knotted thong passed through its head. When played by drawing the tout thong across the head it emitted the eerie sound of hyenas howling at night and so sounded the presence of the dreaded *fisi* (hyena) oath specialists. No non-initiates could safely look on it when it was being played for the funerals of *vaya"*. See Spear, T., T*he Kaya Complex: A History of the Mijikenda People's of the Kenya Coast to 1900*. (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978): 59, 77 (fn17).

[139] See Yoshida, "Masks and Secrecy".

[140] Wembah-Rashid, *The Ethno-History*: 124.

In Malindi *kinyago* is the central "animal" from which the masquerading tradition derives its name. The term *kinyago* may have derived from the Makua (*Isinyago)* or the Yao (*Inyago*) as discussed below.[141] *Kinyago* is therefore the general nomenclature for the masquerading culture in coastal Kenya. Artistically, *kinyago* is created in varying sizes and decorative motifs. The creative plural of *kinyago* is called *vinyago*.

The Mijikenda and Swahili regard *kinyago* dance (*ngoma ya kinyago*) as a "slave-dance" *(ngoma ya kitumwa),* contextually due to the slave origins of the Wanyasa and their associated hardship. As such, a large section of the Swahili and Mijikenda communities do not recognize *kinyago* practice as an indigenous coastal tradition.[142] It is also regarded as a slave-dance, figuratively, because the masquerade dancers carry heavy loads synonymous to the heavy manual chores which previously, slaves performed under servitude.[143]

Nobody in the Kenya coast knows precisely the ideological origins and symbolic significances of *kinyago* apart from being ancestral spirits with roots in Central-eastern Africa, especially Malawi. In Malawi *nyau* masks are of three categories: feathered net masks, wooden facial masks and zoomorphic basketry. Most of the figurines represent various types of animals like *mkhango* (lion), *fisi* (hyena), *fulu* (tortoise), *inswala* (impala), *kasinga maliro* (eland) and *ng'ombe* (cow); and other forms like *makanja* (stilts) and *cayakamoto* ("that which is on fire").

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[141] Ibid.

[142] Kaingu wa Shauri, Mtawali wa Zimba and Charo wa Munga, interview, Bate 22-3/3/2011; Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, Malindi, 29/9/2011, Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni (Ganda) 25/10/2011, Mohamed Ali Bozo, Malindi 24/9/2011

[143] Kaingu wa Shauri, Mtawali wa Zimba and Charo wa Munga, Bate, 22-3/3/2011. On the relationship between slavery and masquerading see Argenti, N., *The Intestines of the State: The intestines of the State:Youth, Violence and Related Histories in the Camerron Grassfields* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Cakayamoto denotes a sorcerer who conceals himself in flames. There is also *kacala* (fingers) and *galimoto* (automobile).[144] Apart from *cakayamoto* and *makanja*, the rest of the *nyau* are collectively referred to as *nyau yolemba,* that which "draw circles on the ground".[145]

In the pre-independence period, the *nyau* critiqued Christianity by constructing imitations such as "Simoni" and "Maria", the Christian icons of piety.[146] "Simoni" (Simon Peter) is depicted as a buffoon while "Maria" (the Virgin Mary) as a prostitute. However, the post-independence *nyau* mimicry characters like "Kamuzu the Warrior" (a caricature of President Kamuzu Banda), a corrupt politician who visits the countryside and is offered "gifts of gratitude" collected from the community by district officials.[147]

Other masquerade figurines included motorcycles, buses, and airplanes which depicted European technical prowess and symbolised wealth.[148] This theatrical transformation marks the *nyau* society's conscience objection to social, economic and political hierarchy in both present and past eras in Central-Eastern Africa and elsewhere in the continent. According to Chewa cosmology therefore, maturation is a powerful process of incorporation into a community of storytellers, with *nyau* masks providing the vehicles and *nyau* cosmology the structure for witticisms, double entendres and satirical commentaries, in which the entire Chewa society must undergo, including prospective chiefs.[149] It is instructive that the masquerades found in Malindi,

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[144] Yoshida, "Masks and Secrecy":35-38.

[145] Ibid., 35

[146] David Kerr also mentions "Josephe", *African Popular Theatre,* (London: James Currey, 1995): 50.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions": 49-52.

[149] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions": 44-45.

Kenya are only composed of zoomorphic basketry with minimal symbolism compared to those from the Central-Eastern Africa region.

The early years of *kinyago* performance

From around 1907 until the 1940s the *watoro* had only five 'animals' in their stable: *karuru, kasinja, kinyago, mwanakalulu,* and *ndovu.* According to the *watoro*, when a senior *kinyago* society member died, *kinyago* members immediately gathered at the deceased person's homestead objectively to honour their departed colleague and thus authorize mourners to weep.[150] Then, under the command of an *akida*[151] the retinue of members formed a queue called *manja* and circumambulated the homestead three times.[152] Among the Mijikenda*, kinyago* membership has four levels: junior member (*mwana mwanza*), assistant *akida* (*akida mkubwa*) senior *akida* (*akida mkubwa*) and the overall leader (m*zinda*). *Mwana mwanza* is a Mijikenda term which arose when the community appropriated the *kinyago* tradition; the ex- slaves have assistant *akida, akida, mzee wa amani (elder of peace), mzee wa mizinga (elder of drums)* and *mzinda.* Some members clapped their hands while others played their shakers (*tsanje*).[153]

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[150] It is an abomination for mourners to commence weeping without the prior authority from *kinyago* members.

[151] The *Standard English – Swahili Dictionary,* defines *Akida* as a leader of commander of soldiers, a political agent or a messenger or chief's retainer (Ox-ford University Press, London, Geoffrey Cumberledge, 1948). See also Glassman, J., *Feasts and Riot*:110.

[152] This figure was cited in Ganda however, in Bate the *manja* went round the homestead seven times; this shows the impact of Mijikenda appropriation of the tradition.

[153] While traveling or performing, the *manja* shake the *tsanje* in order to guide the masquarede dancers as they cannot see when inside the animals. *Tsanje* is the Mijikenda name for the four toed elephant shrew which produces similar sounds to the shakers when running in the bush.

Within the *kinyago* society, members act like soldiers - providing security for the 'animals' and beating up wrongdoers. The *akida* always ensures that peace and harmony prevails whether the *kinyago* is on transit or at the arena. Thus for *kinyago* members paying homage to their just departed colleague, a senior *akida* led the *manja* in front as an assistant *akida* commanded the rear. In the process, the *akida* led by singing an ancient funerary dirge and was backed up by the *manja*. The dirge went thus:

Call:	*Ng'ombee! ng'ombee!*	Cow! cow!
Response:	*Eee ng'ombe!*	Eee, cow!
C:	*Ng'ombee! ng'ombee!*	Cow! Cow!
R:	*Eee ng'ombe!*	Eee cow!
C:	*Kamuleka nao, mwanang'ombe mlila*	He has carried it, am crying for the cow!
R:	*Eee ng'ombe!*	Eee cow!
C:	*Kamanda msamalila ee dede!*	Dear commander has passed on!
R:	*Kadamka kale!*	He has already gone!
C:	*Kamanda msamalila ee dede!*	Dear commander has passed on!
R:	*Kadamka kale!*	He has already gone![154]

Kinyago songs were mostly composed in the *Kinyasa* language; hence many Mijikenda would not understand their meanings unless the Wanyasa taught them. In the dirge the colleagues

[154] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi 24/9/2011.

are lamenting that their dear commander has passed on and people are going to weep and celebrate his departure by mourning and through merry-making (eating beef).

At the conclusion of the third round, the retinue suddenly stopped; the *akida* shook his *tsanje* on the head of the departed person while chanting some incantation to the deceased person's spirit. This gesture officially authorised the mourners to weep. Thereafter the burial was conducted without any other *kinyago*-related performance. After a couple of years, and on demand by the departed member's spirit, performers conducted *vinyago vidogo* (a minor masquerade ritual) followed by *vinyago vikubwa* (a major masquerade ritual graced by *ndovu*, elephant) sometimes later. During the *vinyago vidogo* funerary rite, only *karuru, kasinja, mwanakalulu* and *kinyago* as well as *ngaluma* performed at the deceased person's homestead. On the first day of the rituals *kasinja*, an antelope-like spirit which "sweeps (cleanses) the dancing arena" danced for about fifteen to twenty minutes.[155] Principally *kasinja* is very docile; it does not move around much compared to *karuru.*

The second day was animated by *karuru*. A fast-moving small masquerade akin to the hare danced at the person's graveside for about fifteen minutes under high pitched drum beat. Then it stopped by the grave-side and several elders paid libation seeking blessings and prosperity from the ancestral spirit. At this time palm-wine – a central recipe in Mijikenda rituals – was poured on the graveside to appease the ancestral spirit.[156] After the libation rite *karuru* performed at the *uwanja* before it retreated to the *dangbwe.*

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[155] In Malawi, *kasinja* or *kasinja maliro* is an eland spirit which visits the dead person's homestead to take away his spirit. As a highly revered spirit-animal, the *kasinja* spends several hours in the late member's house before it returns to the forest. Note that the *kasinja* ritual is not elaborate in Kenya compared to Malawi.

[156] Parkin, D.J., *Palms, Wines and Witnesses, Public Spirit and Public Gain in an African Farming Community* (Aylesbury: International Textbook Company, 1972): 63-68, 80-83. The ex-slaves appropriated the use of palm-wine during libation from their Mijikenda neighbours.

The third day was reserved for *ngaluma*. *Ngaluma* is a spirit-man adorned with a thick skirt and strands of rags on the upper part of the body; he moved around making sexually suggestive gestures thereby arousing great excitement from the audience. The *ngaluma* performance was probably a mockery of the end of man's active sex life. *Ngaluma* performed exclusively at the *vinyago vidogo* but did not feature at the *vinyago vikubwa* rite. We shall describe the performative nature of *vinyago* before we return to the ritualistic context of the practice.

Late in the evening prior to the performance, a *mzinda* accompanied by a few *akida* install a medicine spell at the venue of performance for protection against any form of indiscipline. The spell assures the entire community of peace and harmony, foes become friends overnight. Then at around 9.00pm, masqueraders start bringing their animals and assemble them at the temporary site, *dangwe ndogo* situated close to the *uwanja*. This is an ecstatic moment as masqueraders from different moieties come shouting themselves hoarse while singing:

R:	*Kauye, kauye!*	Returning, returning!
R:	*Ho kauye!*	Yes returning!
C:	*Kauye, kauye!*	Returning, returning!
R:	*Ho kauye!*	Yes returning!
C:	*Nyama nyama ho hiyoyooo!*	Animal, animal there!
R:	*Nyama nyama ho hiyoyooo!*	Animal, animal there!
C	*Kauye, kauye!*	Returning, returning!

R: *Ho kauye!* Yes returning!

This song, among many others, signifies the returning of the spirit-animal from the spirit world. It also alerts people to give way to the masquerade entourage; this includes putting off offending bone-fires in homesteads within close range of the entourage. When moving from one place to another, even drivers were compelled into putting off the lights of their automobiles failure to which the masqueraders attacked the vehicles. Flashing lights at the entourage is very offensive as it reveals the animal's identity.

Having been assembled, *maakida* inspect the animals as the initial phase of adjudication, ostensibly to determine the aesthetic quality of each animal. Dancing marks the second phase of the adjudication process. Meanwhile preparatory drumming commences. Drummers tune the percussions by warming them on a bone fire. At this time, novices are trained on the art of drumming. In other traditions (Chewa, Makonde, Yao) novices would be trained during puberty rituals. In the case of ex-slave and Mijikenda masqueraders, novices were initiated at the *dangbwe* either through their own will or through coercion for among other mistakes, peeping into the ritual site.

Principally novices were blindfolded and led to the *dangbwe* amid whipping ostensibly to instill fear and discipline unto them. Inside the *dangbwe,* the blinds were removed and the novices came face to face with *vinyago.* After being oathed to secrecy, induction commenced immediately, a *fundi* taught the novices what a *kinyago* was and general discipline required of a member. Novices were introduced to all the processes of production; they were taught songs and idioms used by masqueraders. They were also taught how do dance (*kutambisha*) various

"animals" and how to play the drums (*kupiga ngoma*). Drumming was not always done in the *dangbwe*, and so the best occasion was prior to the performance at the *uwanja*. The novices were instructed on how to play various tunes such as *ngoma ya karuru, mwanakalulu* and *kasinja; ngoma ya kinyago* and *mbwesa* and when the opportune time arose*, ngoma ya ndovu.*[157]

Kinyago comprises five percussion instruments: *milingo, mpanja, tiatia, msondo* and *kunda*. All these drums are vase-shaped, of varying sizes and shapes which respectively produce different sounds. The percussions are made from *mvovo* (Mijikenda, *m'bawa* in Kiswahili) wood. They range between approximately 3.5ft and 4ft in height. The tops of the first four percussions are fixed with the skin of a suni (*funo*) for producing high pitched sound effect. *Milingo* produces a rhythm tune, while *mpanja,* fixed with a rubber band at the middle of the skin, gives a slightly higher note. *Tiatia* produces a sharper tempo than the first two drums.

Msondo is slightly stout compared to *milingo, mpanja* and *tiatia;* it gives a sharp solo sound which is higher than the initial three drums. Lastly is *kunda,* the stoutest of all the drums and which is fixed with the hide of a bush buck or cow; it produces a bass sound when played. Three drummers start playing the *milingo, mpanja* and *tiatia* in that order, and they continue until these three percussions are in harmony. Then a fourth drummer plays the *kunda* and the fifth drummer plays the *msondo*. The drummers are backed by the shaking of *tsanje* and singing.[158]

Meanwhile the *maakida* identify how many moieties are represented at the function and how many "animals" represent each group to ensure equitable space for all to perform. Then they authorize the "animals" to dance, mostly, according to typology. Each masquerade performs for

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[157] Mtawali wa Zimba, interview 22/3/2011; Shebani wa Mkutano, interview, Ganda, 2/10/2011.

[158] Wembah-Rashid, "Isinyago and Midimu":127.

about ten to fifteen minutes after being "called" (*kuitwa*) by drumming. The drumming tempo at this time is slightly of a low intensity, this phase is referred to as *ngoma ya kinyago*.[159]

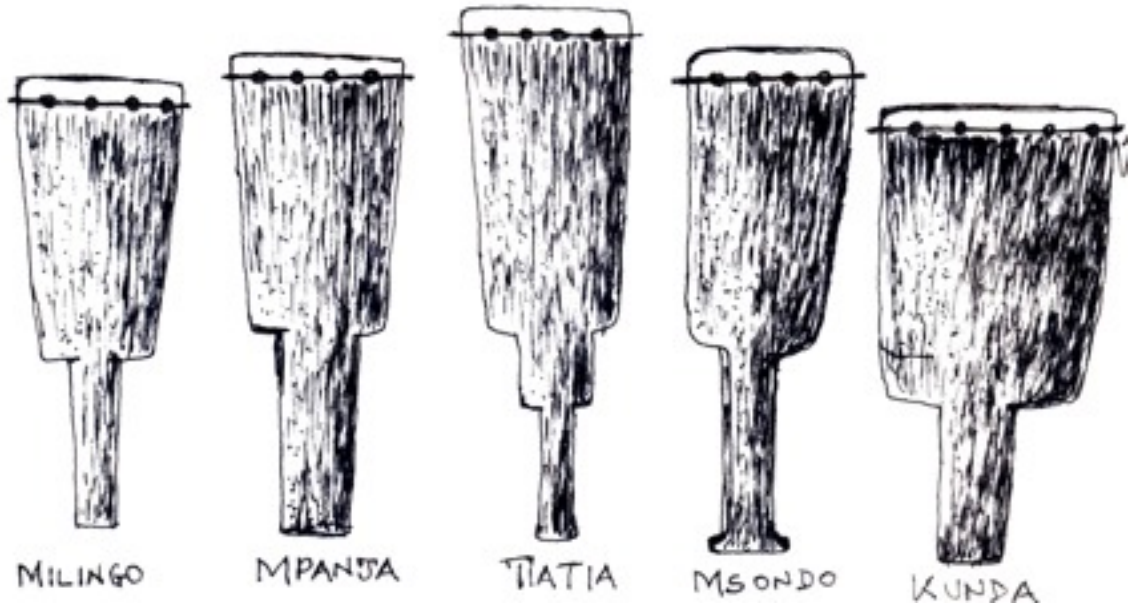

Chart 3: Percussion instruments used in kinyago (*illustrated by the author*).

I managed to record the drumming on a digital recorder but it cannot be reproduced here. People used to mimic the rhythm with their mouth in the same way Bozo mimicked the tempo, as it is common throughout Africa:

> Ndinde! tikete! ndinde! tikete! te! tikete!tikete!tikete! te! tikete! tete! tite!ndi! tite!ndi! kete! tikete! ndinde! Njenje! Nje!njenje!tingenje! njenje! tingenje! njenje! nde! Ngi! ndende! nde! Ndende! Ngi! ngite!ngite! ngi! ngite!ngite! ngi!...

[159] Charo wa Munga, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011.

The "animal" dances around the ring, back and forth, more or less like a mock performance. Soon afterwards a sponsor announces the "animal" to the crowd. Wembah-Rashid states that among the Yao, before a masquerade performs at the field, a sponsor elaborately introduces the animal. We shall reproduce the introduction process for comparison:

Announcer: Machete! Machete! Machete! Macheteeeee! (Do I speak?)

The audience responds, *eeeee!* (yes!). After a pause the sponsor continues:

The beast (that) came from far away!

And it has walked a long way then it crossed Namaunya!

And up Sokole's hill!

(And) down across the Namiungo!

(And) went upto Kambwili's homestead!

Whose beast is it?

Mr. Marko Meza (shout the sponsors).[160]

The Makua announcement describes the source of the animal and the difficulties it experienced before reaching the field of performance. The beast is introduced by a moral commentary, for instance, the "gigantic nteepana is accused of being a men-eater; the tax collector is asked not to register the young men as tax payers because they are still in school; the

[160] Wembah-Rashid, "Isinyago and Midimu": 126-7.

District Commissioner is asked to explain whey he is fond of eggs yet he does not keep his own fowls; the pig is noted for stealing cassava from the peoples' fields, etc".[161] The same occurs within *mapiko*, although, as Israel argues, it is marked by an ambivalent morality.[162] However, such social commentary and morality is non-existent among the ex-slave and Mijikenda *vinyago* in Malindi district.

This could have resulted from two things, that (1) as Turnbridge and Ashworth have argued heritage is selective; "heritage is what contemporary society chooses to inherit and to pass on… it is a created phenomenon continuously recreated anew according to changing attitudes and demands".[163] Israel concurs by arguing that in the aftermath of slavery cultural practices were "widely exchanged, appropriated, abandoned or taken up".[164] (2) As Miers and Kopytoff have argued, the ex-slaves lost significant aspects of their culture during slavery.[165] Therefore the ex-slaves introduced new aspects of culture which augmented those that had been abandoned or lost, including the social commentary. That notwithstanding, the *kinyago* tradition in Malindi shares similarities with the Yao, Makua and Makonde where the announcer (call) shouts out poetically and the crowd (response) responds:

C: *Huyo, nyama huyo! Nasema nyama!* There, the animal there! I am announcing the animal!

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[161] *Ibid*, 128.

[162] Israel, *In Step with the Times*, Ch. III, IV & V.

[163] Turnbridge, J.E., and Ashworth, G.J., *Dissonant Heritage* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1996): 6-10.

[164] Israel, *In Step with the Times*, Ch. III.

[165] Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*: 15.

R:	*Nyama!*	The Animal!
C:	*Nyama mzuri!*	A beautiful animal!
R:	*Nyama!*	The Animal!
C:	*Nyama nikamkatakata nyama!*	I chop the animal into pieces!
R:	*Nyama!*	The Animal!
C:	*Nikaona raha na nyama!*	I feel happy with the animal!
R:	*Nyama!*	The Animal!
C:	*Enyi wanawake hoyaaa!*	All women hoyeee!
R:	*Hoyaaaaa!*	Hoyeeeee!
C:	*Hicho! Hip! Hip! Hureee!*	There! Hip! Hip! Hurray!
R:	*Hureeeee!*	Hurray!!!!
C:	*Muhamadieeeee!*	Muhamad!!! **
R:	*Hoya eee eeyeeeeeee!*	Hoyee eee eeyeeeeeee! **
C:	*Huyo, nyama huyo! Nasema nyama!*	There, the animal there! I am announcing the animal!
R:	*Nyama!*	The Animal!

Call: *Nyama wa Kaingu! Kaingu wa Kalume! Kalume wa Tinga! Mwanafunzi, wa Mohamad Ali Bozo! Hapa hapa kwetu!*

The animal of Kaingu! Kaingu Kalume! Kalume Tinga! A student of

Mohamad Ali Bozo! From within our locality! (Greeted by great ululations). [166]

Contrary to the Yao scenario, the announcer in Malindi district commences with a direct introduction of the animal. He then highlights the aesthetic value of the animal after which he "dismembers" it. This is a figurative exposition of how in practice, hunters or butchers determine the aesthetic beauty of an animal before they slaughter and prepare the beef for eventual consumption. Here the respective sponsor is equated to a hunter who has caught the beautiful animal (*nyama mzuri*) from the bush and has brought it home where he shall butcher it (*nikamkatakata nyama*). In the process he explains the emotional satisfaction the hunter feels by catching the animal (*nikaona raha na nyama*).This denotes the satisfaction the masquerader, as an artist, feels after producing the masquerade. Finally he announces the name of the owner (producer/apprentice) and that of his mentor. This espouses both the apprentice and mentor to the audience and the ululations produced by the women and girls thereof demonstrate the masqueraders' status in society.[167]

Three key issues emerge in the Malindi scenario. The announcer's call (*wanawake hoyaaaa!*) to the women to applaud denotes the masqueraders' appreciation of women as significant players for the success of the performance. The "Hip-hip-hurray!" signifies the inversion of colonial terminology in African social functions, previously, such exclamations were non-existent. Like "*wanawake hoya*" exalting Prophet Muhammad in social functions is very

[166] As I could not record the announcement Mohamed Ali Bozo recited it for me during the interview. He used my name as his student. Mohamed did not mention the part with a single asterisk but I included it because I heard so many times during the functions I attended. Similarly he did not recite the section with double asterisks, but it was prevalent in all occasions.

[167] The funerary *vinyago* appear in honour of the deceased person therefore no announcement is made for them.

common among a section of coastal communities which are either predominantly Muslim or have been exposed to aspects of cultures heavily influenced by Islam. These performative aspects (*wanawake hoyaaaa!* and *Muhamadieee!*) are essential musical factors in the lower coastal Bantu-speaking traditional dances, such as Mijikenda, Pokomo and Swahili.[168] Both features help to enliven the performance. Moreover, the clarion call *wanawake hoyaaaa!* is a constant reminder of women's strength as indispensable in the performance; while *Muhamadieee!,* underscores the Omni-presence of God through his Prophet in music and dance, and, by extension, within society.

Immediately after the announcement, the particular animal which had been waiting close to the drummers, dashes to the middle of the field and starts dancing. In Malindi the tempo changes from *ngoma ya kinyago* (*kinyago* beat) to the rhythm of calling known as *mbwesa*.

> Nde! Nde! Tete! Te! Ngengete! Te! ndengete! ke! Ngete! Ngete! Ngi! nginge! ngi! Ndi! ngekete! ndi!ndate! nda! Nda! Nda! Ngekete! Nda! Ngete! Nda! Ngekete! nda! Ngeche! Ngeche! Ngendeke! nga! nda! Nda! Ngeteke! Nge! ngeteke!...[169]

Bozo used the mimetic choreographies to differentiate between the *ngoma ya kinyago* beat and the more playful and tantalising *ngoma ya mbwesa* tempo.[170] In the field the *kinyago* dances majestically towards the audience, normally clustered according to the respective moieties. One or two *manja* guide the animal, depending on the animal's size, by shaking their

[168] Personal observation.

[169] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi 24/9/2011.

[170] He was tapping the table in front of him as he mimicked the drumming with excitement.

tsanje. Namkungwi also join the *manja* and cheer the animal on while clapping their hands and singing.[171] The animal turns back and forth, and sideways, in sync with the drumming; and by so doing it shows off its decorations and dancing antiques to the audience.

Mbwesa is characterised by high pitched drumming urging the animal to demonstrate its prowess. When the animal approaches friendly clusters, especially the "home" groups the cheerers led by *namkungwi* shout "*Pea! pea! pea!!!.* This means shine! shine! shine!!![172] This motivates the "animal" to dance longer where the cheers are loudest. Once again the drums led by the *msondo* "call" the "animal" back to where the drummers are. Again it shows off its dancing dexterity in front of the drummers and *maakida* and then returns to the field once or twice after which it retires to the *dangbwe* to be devoured. Meanwhile the audience applauds with ululations and sings in praise of the "animals"' producer.

I also observed that on several intervals the drumming stopped either because the drummers were exhausted or they needed to warm and tune the drums. During this interlude each group would sing various choruses. I learned a few; one was lamenting the demise of Faini Kaingu in whose honour the ritual was being performed, in Kiswahili:

Nikikumbuka mimi sichezi ngoma! Mzee Faini leo hatuko naye!

When I remember I won't dance again! Mzee Faini is no longer with us today!

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[171] *Namkungwi* (*pl*. *Makungwi*) members of an association of female puberty rites.

[172] Personal observation, Ganda, 2011. In the olden days the namkungwi shouted: "Indiaza! Indiaza!!Indiaza!!!"This had the same interpretation as "shine! shine!shine!" (Mtawali wa Zimba wa Nguma, Bate, 25/3/2011).

Another chorus, also in Kiswahili and choreographed by youths clapping their hands and who trotted round the field went thus:

Kidomo-domo leo twakikomesha! Kidomo-domo leo twakikomesha!

We will silence the loud mouth today! We will silence the loud mouth today!

This was in apparent response to a group singing praises to performers from their own locality. The group singing this chorus seemed to be irritated by the other group and so vowed to silence them (with their "animals" in the arena). Such choruses are not threats but rather performative techniques generally applied in competitions. They are part of the competitive East-African *mashindano* culture. But there was another chorus, a Mijikenda one, which was more critical of the drummers who appeared to be taking ages to warm the drums and therefore making the audience restless:

C:	*K'aina enyeee ngoma!*	The dance has no owners!
R:	*Ngoma kaina enyeee!*	The dance has no owners!
C:	*Haya, k'aina enyeee ngoma!*	So, the dance has no owners!
R:	*Ngoma k'aina enyeee!*	The dance has no owners!

Bored with attacking each others' groups, a large section of the audience vented their impatience on the drummers who made frantic efforts to enliven the function. Essentially, the

cheerers were disillusioned that the drumming had stopped. The statement that "the dance has no owners" figuratively meant that the drummers were either incompetent or unavailable. This was prevalent throughout the three days of the late Mzee Faini Kaingu's *vinyago vidogo* and also at the Katana wa Ngoka's function. This onslaught on other groups is also part and parcel of *mashindano* culture. Most of the songs are in Kishambara language which most masqueraders and the audience did not seem to understand.

We shall now return to the exposition of ritualistic *vinyago*. The order of performance during the last commemoration rite, *vinyago vikubwa*, was similar to the *vinyago vidogo,* except that on the third day *mwanakalulu* preceded the elephant, *ndovu* (*ndembo*). Like the *kasinja, mwanakalulu* is a spirit-man completely dressed in white with grey hair. *Mwanakalulu* symbolises the spirit of wisdom appearing as precursor of the elephant spirit during the *vinyago vikubwa.* As the largest terrestrial mammal, the elephant, *ndovu* was (is) the most revered of the *vinyago.* It signified the highest order of the *kinyago* cult which symbolised seniority in the ancestral spirit hierarchy. *Ndovu* performed exclusively during the commemoration of a senior *akida* or *mzinda*. When *ndovu* appeared it made only two or three slow laps at the *uwanja* and one lap at the deceased person's homestead, mostly, owing to its physique, associated slow movement in a natural habitat and also as an expression of mourning.

Then it rested at the facade of the deceased person's house whereupon family members wept in remembrance of their beloved one. Meanwhile *senior kinyago* elders (*mzinda*) adorned the elephant with three pieces of red, black and white calico pieces of cloth each measuring about four metres long, on its back.[173] Libation was then paid to the spirit-animal after which it

[173] Ali Baruti, Said Mohamed Ramadhani and Ramadhani Hamisi Ramadhani, Mgururuleni-Ganda, 28/8/201 and 25/10/2011

departed slowly to the forest taking with it the deceased person's spirit. This rite symbolised the mortal and spiritual ending of the masquerade members' colleague.[174]

In the old days, on the morning after the *ndovu* had performed, the *manja retinue* of *kinyago* dancers observed the *ndawala* ritual, also called *kushindikiza ngoma,* "bidding farewell to the dance". In this ritual members paid their last respects to the departed colleague by clapping their hands and playing their shakers while singing *kinyago* songs as they visited every homestead within the village. People willingly offered them money with which they purchased palm-wine and foodstuffs. These were then consumed by all and sundry at the deceased person's homestead.[175]

The last three days of the *vinyago vidogo* ritual, group performances of various typologies of *vinyago* compete as in a carnival. The zebra, giraffe and the horse for instance, may dance concurrently, followed by *suli-suli* (sail-fish), python, and *kiparapara (snapper)*; ostrich and ducks, in that order. This organisation offers ample opportunity for competitive creativity.[176] During every performance *kiparamoto* – the fire cracker (also referred to as *ngelenje*), electrifies the audience in between the group competitions.[177]

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[174] Ali Baruti, Said Mohamed Ramadhani and Ramadhani Hamisi Ramadhani, Mgururuleni-Ganda, 28/8/2011. Note that the symbolism associated with the *karuru*, *mwanakalulu*, *kasinja* and *ndovu* is still prevalent to date. Nowadays, significant dynamic changes have occurred: during both the *vinyago vidogo* and *vinyago vikubwa*, other animals perform immediately after the *kinyago* has danced. In fact, as many as three *vinyago* may perform on the first day and others on the following days. The *vinyago* are succeeded by other animals such as reptiles, birds, fish, automobiles, and so on. On the final day of *vinyago vikubwa*, the elephant, *ndovu*, makes the final performance at around dawn to signify the physical and spiritual ending of the deceased person as well as the conclusion of the commemorative ritual.

[175] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni,Ganda, 25/10/2011.

[176] Personal observations during the funerary rite for the late Foleni Kaingu, from 22-24th October 2011 and also at Katana wa Ngoka's homestead, in honour of several deceased relatives 25-27th November 2011.

[177] On 23/10/2011 for instance, I observed four *kiparamoto* compete at the *vinyago vidogo* of the late Mzee Faini Kaingu in Ganda, drawing wide excitement from the audience.

My informants did not offer elaborate meanings and symbolism for the funerary "animals". Some comparative notes with Central African traditions might be of help. The Chewa consider that between the burial and the next commemorative rituals (*mpalo*), the ancestral spirits liberate the deceased person's spirit (*moyo*) from the earth to join other airborne ancestral spirits (*mizimu*).[178] During this transitory period, widows and widowers are prohibited from re-marrying until after the *mpalo* rite. These rituals celebrate the "arrival of the deceased in the spirit realm and the release of the living from their bonds to the dead".[179] The *nyau* attend the ceremony ostensibly to celebrate with the living; bringing along two "beasts of the night" – the hare, "owner of the courtyard" (*mwini wa kubwalo*) and the antelope, (*kasiyamaliro*), "the end of the funeral". [180] In the Kenyan case *karuru* is equivalent to the hare in Central-Eastern Africa while *kasinja* is short for *kasinjamaliro*.

The "animals" mark the end of the mourning period and herald the beginning of feasting on meat, maize porridge and beer, "a celebration of plenty following the prior suffering of loss… life and death are mutually entailed in the circulation of substance, blood for blood, meat for meat, between parallel worlds: spirits take the dead from the village so that the earth can eat them, and they return game from the bush so that survivors can feast".[181]

There were (are) no rituals in the entertainment masquerades (*vinyago vya furaha/ sherehe*) which the *watu (mwa) wa minazini* group practiced. Throughout the four-day carnival, masquerades performed competitively mostly according to village moieties. But for extremely

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[178] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions" :42

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

large *vinyago* the animals performed one after the other or two concurrently. This offered ample space for patrons and performers to demonstrate their artistic proficiency.

First transformations

Kinyago underwent fundamental transformations during the early post–abolition decades. In Ganda masquerade figurines were simplistic in both size and shape. They were also devoid of any decorative motif. Practitioners ensured the preservation and sustainability of the *kinyago* secrecy through the application of a deeply coded language; production of the masquerades at secluded sites in nearby forests (*dangbwe*); and finally, performing in a highly guarded arena called *uwanja*. Prior to the performances *kinyago* elders installed a magic device (*fingo*) at the *uwanja* for protection against all forms of adversity including witchcraft.[182] As a rule of thumb, all masquerades, irrespective of typology were referred to as "animals", *nyama*.

Ideally as "animals" the *vinyago* were not "produced" but rather "fished" from swamps situated within nearby forests (or from the Indian Ocean).[183] Hence, before they performed, the "animals" would be sent to the Chem-chem swamp around Mkokoani before or around dusk and smeared with slimy mud. Essentially, this pre-dance performative impression disguised the real identity of the masquerades and the masqueraders. Performers managed to psychologically convince non-members, especially some women and children to view the masquerades as water-borne natural creations instead of artificial constructions of dried grass thatched onto frames of

[182] This is similar to the "nshindo" that Israel describes in *In step with the times.* Ch. V.

[183] There is a saying that "*kinyago huvuliwa bahari kubwa",* literally, *kinyago* is fished from deep oceans; signifying the secrecy behind the masquerade tradition (Ali Baruti, Said Mohamed Ramadhani and Ramadhani Hamisi Ramadhani, Mgururuleni-Ganda, 28/8/2011).

wooden palins.[184] In spite of their purported naivety most women knew that the dancers were persons but they feigned ignorance. At the *uwanja* as the "animals" performed they were said to be "grazing" and thereafter they were returned to the *dangbwe* (production site) to be "devoured" – that is, burned into ashes. At dawn members would sweep away the heap of ashes using green twigs (amidst drumming and singing), purposely to conceal any evidence of the masquerades.[185]

Over time drastic changes have taken place. First, both the *vinyago vidogo* and *vinyago vikubwa* perform for four days. Secondly *kasinja* and *karuru* perform on the first day. Then the two spirits are immediately succeeded by *kinyago,* an animal of the antelope species and was (is) central to the cult.[186] The *kinyago* performs for a little longer than the *kasinja and mwanakalulu*. In most cases where numerous *vinyago* are scheduled to dance their performance takes longer and is more competitive. The symbolism associated with the *karuru*, *mwanakalulu*, *kasinja* and *ndovu* is still prevalent to date.

But during both the *vinyago vidogo* and *vinyago vikubwa*, other animals perform immediately after the *kinyago* has danced. In fact, as many as three *vinyago* may perform on the first day and others on the following days. The *vinyago* are succeeded by other animals such as reptiles, birds, fish, automobiles, and so on. On the final day of *vinyago vikubwa*, the elephant, *ndovu*, makes the final performance at around dawn to signify the physical and spiritual ending of the deceased person as well as the conclusion of the commemorative ritual.

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[184] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, interview, Mguruleni(Ganda), 25/8/2011 and 25/10/2011; Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24/09/2011.

[185] Kaingu wa Shauri, Mtawali wa Zimba and Charo wa Munga, interview, Bate 22-3/3/2011

[186] The *kinyago* may as well be an eland but with no apparent ritual symbolism like the *kasinja/kasinja maliro.*

The Mkokoani Declaration

Around 1945 elders of the ex-slave community realised that their population was very small and declining fast due to natural attrition.[187] Thus the Wanyasa elders convened a conference for all ex-slaves and their descendants during which the future of the community and particularly the *kinyago* heritage was deliberated upon. A few Mijikenda such as the Bikirao brothers of Mguruleni (comprising Safari, Ngala and Kaingu wa Bikirao) also attended the conference. The conference unanimously declared that the community should share the *kinyago* culture with the Mijikenda community who had by that time shown great interest in the practice. The historic conference which was held at Mkokoani around Mere, in Ganda location, is herein referred to as the Mkokoani Declaration.[188] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro recalled:

Songoro: We were summoned by the elders, at the *dangbwe*. By our elders who were remaining, they called us at the *dangbwe* down there.

Tinga: Here in Mguruleni?

S: Right here in Mguruleni. Not far away. All the elders were around. When we were summoned there, there were other people such as Safari wa Bikirao.

T: They were also summoned?

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[187] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, interview, Mguruleni, 28/8/2011 and 25/10/ 2011. We are not certain whether the Mkokoani declaration had something to do with the end of the Second World War. The date is estimated from the interviewee's assumption that he was about ten years old at the time of the declaration which he participated in. It may have coincided with the end of WW2.

[188] Mkokoani is on the periphery of the Chem-chem Swamp.

S: Yes, they were summoned. Together with his brother Ngala. They were summoned down there. The elders were there. They said, "We have summoned you here, and we shall tell you something and you must adhere to that thing. If you do not adhere to it you will suffer". They said, "We are Wanyasa. And this *ngoma* is not a Giryama *ngoma*".

T: It is not a Giryama *ngoma*!

S: "It is a *Kinyasa ngoma*. This *ngoma* is a *Kinyasa ngoma*. And do not joke with it. So we have summoned you, you together with our sons and our grandsons. We must involve the Giryama in this *ngoma*".

T: We must involve the Giryama!

S: "Yes, because our *Nyasa* seed is very small. Do you hear? It is extremely small. And we are going. If we do not involve them, you who will remain behind, you, our sons and our grandsons; you will not manage it…If we are with the Giryama, this *ngoma* will continue. When they are performing we must support them. *Muyu uvungwa ni mitsatsa.*[189] Now, because we the *Wanyasa* are still around, your performance will be according to the Wanyasa tradition. Everything!..."[190]

The Mkokoani Declaration was pivotal for it would determine the continuity and sustainability of the *kinyago* association: it served as social security. It also enabled the former slaves to gain higher status in society. This transformation marked the interface for the training

[189] A Mijikenda euphemism, literally, *baobab tree is enlarged by climbers*. Sometimes a baobab tree appears to be so huge due to being covered by parasitic climbers called *mitsatsa.* The Wanyasa elders sought for partnership and collaboration in order to magnify the *kinyago* tradition and to ensure its continuity.

[190] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, interview, Mguruleni (Ganda), 28/08/2011 and 25/10/ 2011.

and enculturation of the Mijikenda community. The memorable life changing decision was, nevertheless, not inclusive of sharing the entire Wanyasa religious and spiritual milieu. Indeed, the ex-slaves would empower the Mijikenda with the basic knowledge, skills and know-how on the masquerade tradition. But how could they cede the subtle power embodied in their ancient beliefs and practices that they had acquired and reverently safeguarded through turbulent periods to newcomers? The ex-slaves therefore maintained a strong foothold on the *kinyago* association.[191]

They controlled the *mzinda* and its mysteries. Saadi Mbarak Mkadam states that there are two *mizinda* (*pl.*) resultant to the Mkokoani Declaration:

> So, because whenever we performed there were certain things which were done very secretly, like witchcraft, I don't really know how, they feared. The Washambara. They thought that probably the Giryama would not be able to withstand the…or would not be able to keep the secrets and want to expose them. So they shared it with them. That is why even now we say that we have two *mizinda: mzinda wa bara na wa pwani* (the upcountry oracle and the coastal one).[192] Now the coastal one was given to them so that they would not lean so much on this side (of the Shambara) because this side is harmful. The hinterland oracle is harmful. So they thought that these people would be hurt. Because of this thing. Because here there is a *mkoba* (bag) which has stayed; it is the *mzinda.* It is at Mkokoani on a tree. And it is a receptacle made from coconut palm

[191] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, interview, Mguruleni, 28/8/2011 and 25/10/ 2011

[192] *Bara* is used to mean upcountry or hinterland, *wa bara* stands for upcountry people, more precisely, non-indigenous coastal people; *pwani* stands for coast, and *wapwani* for indigenous coastal people. See Askew, *Performing the Nation*: 253.

> fronds. Now, all these days why does it not rot? And it is still there to date! And it is rained on…even the strings, would they not rot and break? All these years we have seen it, and it is still there until this minute! So this, our side, is harmful...[193]

Hence, ever since that declaration, and even though the Mijkenda were empowered with an *mzinda*, senior Mijikenda *kinyago* members consult the Washambara *mzinda* custodians for guidance and directions on critical issues including conflict resolution among peers.[194] This scenario authenticates the *watoro* as the *wenye kinyago* – owners of the *kinyago*, in other words, the bonafide custodians of the *kinyago* heritage*,* and the Mijikenda as *mwangiriro* (newcomers) - people who appropriated the tradition and therefore perceived as not authentic practitioners.[195]

Soon after the declaration, a section of Mijikenda elders were initiated to the cult within Ganda, Mere, Mkaomoto, and Madunguni; Gede, Bate and northwards – Mambrui, Gongoni and Kadzuho ka Simiti.[196] Around that time, notable *kinyago* senior cult members like Majawala, Makafala, Kacheuka and Makanjira of Ganda; Rubea, Badi Mbega and Mkadam of Mere; Mpaji of Madunguni; Sinani and Said Msegere of Mambrui as well as Hamisi Kitangawizi, Ramadhani Songoro and Mndhiwa wa Sadi of Mguruleni had cultivated close social rapport with their Mijikenda neighbours within the Malindi axis.[197]

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[193] Saadi Mbarak Mkadamu, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011.

[194] Saadi Mbarak Mkadamu, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011; Shebani Mkutano, interview, Ganda, 3/10/ 2011; Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni(Ganda), 24/10/2011.

[195] *Mwangiriro* is a Mijikenda word literally, an entrant - not an original member, one who appropriated *kinyago.*Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24 &/09/2011; Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni(Ganda), 24/10/2011.

[196] Charo wa Munga Interview, March 2011 also, David Kenga Tsodzengo, Gede, 20/8/2011

[197] Charo wa Munga, Mtawali wa Zimba and Kaingu wa Shauri, interview, Bate, 22- 23/3/2011; Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni(Ganda), 24/10/2011, Hamisi Juma Kengewa interview, Ganda, 23/08/2011

Therefore the Wanyasa literally initiated and moulded interested Mijikenda people into the *kinyago* association. Mndhiwa wa Sadi, for instance, mentored Zimba wa Nguma 'Jampani' to become the *kinyago* kingpin in Mayowe (Bate). Other Mijikenda initiates were Gunga wa Gwashe of Mkoamoto and Shebani wa Mkutano of Ganda. This enculturation bore immediate fruits: the entire Bikirao family at Mguruleni (Ganda) was initiated. Further, Zimba wa Nguma initiated his whole family, including two-year-olds in Bate and Gede.[198] Following that momentous development *kinyago* practice effectively became the main vessel for identity formation, cultural negotiation and cultural integration between the Mijikenda and Washambara.

Writing on performance Askew cites Foucault's assertion that "power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and that it only exists in action".[199] Askew further emphasises that power is emergent, ephemeral, and contingent. "Performance, like power, is not a product that it can be given, exchanged or recovered. It always necessarily is a process that is subject to on-the-spot improvisation, varying expectations, the vagaries of history and context, multiple associations and connotations, and remembered or projected meanings. Just as power is a diffuse resource accessible – albeit to varying degrees – to everyone, so is performance engaged in by everyone present, be they audience members seated before performers on a proscenium stage or guests at a Swahili wedding in a coastal East African town".[200] The Mkokoani declaration echos askew's theory of performance and power in which

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[198] Mtawali, 60 years old in 2011, was informally introduced to the *kinyago* society at the tender age of 2 years but formally initiated at the age of 18 years. One of Mtawali's elder brother, Kaingu wa Zimba settled in Gede Native Land Settlement Scheme that was established in 1938. Mtawali wa Zimba interview, March 2011.

[199] Cited by Askew, *Performing the Nation*: 291.

[200] Ibid.

the Wanyasa used the subtle power of *kinyago* performance to negotiate and entrench their identity within the society in Malindi district.

The Mkokoani Declaration served as a powerful watershed and forum upon which the Wanyasa deliberately and voluntarily transmitted the *kinyago* power embedded in their collective memories and which they exercised as their principal foundation of their identity to the Mijikenda. This cultural power transfer ensured the resolute bonding of the two communities with high expectations of diversification and continuity of the *kinyago* tradition. Of course the Mijikenda willingly appropriated and helped to diversify *kinyago*. Its continuity or non-continuity, however, was ephemeral; it depended largely on multiple factors which were beyond both the two community's comprehension at that moment.

Performative transformations in the wake of Mkokoani

Around 1952 *kinyago* saw another remarkable transformation when artists introduced horizontal, vertical and rectangular patterns (*mtapa*) using dried fronds of the Borassus Palm tree (*mugumo*) on the sides of the "animals".[201] This dynamic and artistic transition changed the masquerades from their initial simplicity. Essentially, the *vinyago* were no longer the tedious "black" but rather, "black" and "white" "animals". Unsurprisingly the introduction of geometrical motifs which produced "white" impressions was highly captivating to spectators. To unsuspecting audiences, the new creative impressions increased the mystery surrounding the *vinyago.*

[201] Shebani wa Mkutano asserts that this transformation started during the year of the eclipse, i.e 1952. Shebani whose mentor is Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro of Mguruleni (Ganda) was later installed by senior cultists as the person responsible for all *kinyago* performances within the eastern section of Ganda (Interview 3/10/ 2011).

A few years later, there was yet another artistic improvement on the sizes, shapes, motifs and typologies. *Vinyago* artists created bigger and diverse typologies with more elaborate motifs including floral designs all throughout the Malindi Axis. Normally a *kinyago* had one hump, nonetheless, artists created larger *vinyago* with "as many as 20 humps".[202] Mbarak Mkadam of Mere is remembered as the best constructor of double-decked masquerades with multiple decorative motifs in the region.[203] In Ganda, such a highly thrilling *kinyago* was called *mirongo* or *nyama mirongo* while in Bate it was referred to as *kupuo*.[204]

Other electrifying constructions consisted of *tsatu* (python), *suli-suli* (marlin), *ndondo* (whale) and *jinni-malemba* among many more. The *jinni-malemba* is a pair of giant male and female supernatural beings of about 10ft tall and dressed in white garments. When performing, the male, characterised by an equally large protruding sexual organ seductively follows behind the pregnant female who is seen holding her bulging tummy protectively.[205]

We must admit here that in spite of the purported inferiority by the *watoro* faction, the *watu(mwa) wa minazini* people (and their Mijikenda accomplices) were instrumental in this fundamental transformation. Perhaps this was a conscious or unconscious approach the *watu (mwa) wa minazini* faction was applying to demonstrate their creative supremacy over the *watoro* faction. Contrastingly, the *watoro* accepted the new changes discreetly.[206] Of their original ritual masquerades, only the *kinyago* was affected by the changes; while *karuru, kasinja,*

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[202] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, interview Mguruleni, Ganda 25/10/2011

[203] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24/09/2011.

[204] Charo wa Munga, interview, Bate March 23/3/2011; Mohamad Ramadhani Songoro, interview Mguruleni, Ganda 25/10/2011.According to Charo wa Munga, the *kupuo* may be performed by as many as 23 dancers.

[205] Personal observation, Ganda, 2011.

[206] Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, 27/9/2011, Malindi.

mwanakalulu and *ndovu* have retained their originality to date. The dynamism illustrated by the novel developments heightened the competitive nature of masquerading that had characterised the tradition since the formative decades as shall be discussed below.

	Typology of "animal"	**Name (English)**	**Mijikenda**	**Kiswahili**	**Nyasa / Shambaa**
1	Mysterious human-beast	- - Fire eater - - - Jinn	Kasinja, Karuru Kiparamoto Mwana wa Kalolo Ngaluma Jini-Malemba	Kasinja, Karuru Kiparamoto Mwana wa Kalolo Ngaluma Jini-Malemba	Kasinja Karuru, Kiparamoto Mwana wa Kalolo **Ngalumae** **Jini-Malemba**
2	Wild animals	Elephant, Giraffe Lion Pig, Zebra Hyena Hare Tortoise Crocodile Python Yellow headed gecko	Ndzovu Tia/Twiga Simba Nguluwe Foro/punda milia Fisi Tsungula Kobe Ngwena Tsahu Mjusi kafiri	Ndovu Twiga Simba Nguruwe Punda-milia Fisi Sungura Kobe Mamba / Ngwena Chatu Mjusi kafiri	Ndembo Twiga ? Simba ? Nguruwe ? Mbunda Fisi ? Sungura ? Kobe ? Mamba ? Chatu ? Mjusi kafiri ?
3	Domestic animals	Cow Goat Horse Donkey	Ng'ombe Mbuzi Farasi Punda	Ng'ombe Mbuzi Farasi Punda	Ng'ombe? Mbuzi? Farasi Mbunda
4	Birds	Ostrich Duck/Turkey Pigeon	Nyaa/Mbuni Bata/Bata Mzinga Gia/njiwa	Mbuni Bata/Bata Mzinga Njiwa	Mbuni? Bata/Bata Mzinga Mbalambe

5	Fish	 Snapper Saw fish Marlin Whale	Parapara Tangu Papa Upanga Sulisuli Nyangumi	-? Tangu/Changu Papa Upanga Sulisuli Nyangumi	Parapara ? Tangu ? Papa Upanga ? Sulisuli ? Ndondo
6	Automobiles	Scooter/vespa Combi Tractor Train Bus Aeroplane Ship Man of War	skuta Kombi Trekta/jongoo Gari ya moshi Gari Ndege Meli Manuwari	skuta Kombi Trekta/jongoo Gari ya moshi Gari Ndege Meli Manuwari	skuta Kombi Trekta/jongoo Gari ya moshi? Gari? Ndege? Meli? Manuwari

Chart 4: Typologies of vinyago *in the Kenya coast*

As *kinyago* practice flourished its meanings and symbolism evolved and expanded in relation to the coastal cultural environment. First, the masquerade language that denotes production of the "animals" as "fishing" coupled by the fish typology was influenced by the vast Indian Ocean environment and its products. Hence the emergence of masquerades simulating aquatic organisms such as sail-fish, whale and snappers demonstrated the magnificence of marine life which coastal communities have exploited for millennia.

Second, masquerades like giraffe, zebra, hippo, camel and ostrich conjured the rich and abundant terrestrial heritage that Kenya is prominent for. Third, the coastal belief in mysterious beings like *majini* – "human (as opposed to angelic) spirits, of malevolent and benevolent

types"[207] was pivotal in creation of the *jinni-malemba* typology. *Jinni-malemba* and the *mtumwa* spirit helped entrench *vinyago* into the mystic world which many coastal cultures still ascribe to.

In his discussion on *kanga* (a type of East African cloth) Clarke states that the "Jumbo Jet motif on a contemporary *kanga* illustrates the theory of aspirational iconography and desirable commodities".[208] In Malawi, automobiles depicted European technical prowess and symbolised wealth, commonly, elitist possessions.[209] We herein expound on this theory by emphasising that the Malindi automobile masquerades are a product of powerful artistic intuition and creativity which underscores the producers' unfulfilled childhood vision of becoming engineers of international (superpower) status equivalent to the Japanese and Russians.[210] I managed to interview Bozo and Saadi together:

Saadi: So I realised that whenever we performed, the *ngoma* was of the same type. I came to realise that this, my counterpart [Bozo] had changed the face of the field. Aah! He brought something very interesting! In fact, everybody started singing (*akimwimba*) songs in praise of him at the performances instead of us singing our songs [*kinyago* songs]; we used to sing songs praising him, Bozo. Eee! You see? Now …that thing was extremely incredible…

Tinga: The aeroplane?

S: Yes, the aeroplane. We stayed. When another function was organised, aah!

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[207] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 214.

[208] Clarke, Simon, A., "Motif, Patterns, Colour and Text on Contemporary Kenyan cloth: An analysis and Personal Response". Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Central England in Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (2005): 121, 148.

[209] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions": 49-52.

[210] Mohamed Ali Bozo (25/9/2011) and Saadi Mbarak Mkadam (29/9/2011).

He brought the "man-of war!" Eeh! I said, "This man!" So when another function was organised by the elders, I said, "Now I am also going to immerse myself in the *misanaa* (miracles) and challenge him". In fact, we nicknamed each other. Me and him. He was… I don't know... *Mrusi* (Russian).

Bozo: *Muamerica* (American).

S: Ee! I was the American. So we said, "Now we shall challenge each other, the American and the Russian.

B: You were the Japanese, I was the Russian.

S: Yes! We nicknamed each other.

T: Therefore you became the American and he was…

B: No, no! This one is the Japanese!

T: He called you the Russian?

S: Yes! I told him, "*haya tutapambana!"* (Now we shall challenge each other!). Until we established our own field of performance because our masquerades were not compatible with those of the elders, the funerary *vinyago*. In fact, initially our masquerades were rejected. We were prohibited from performing.

B: Yes, especially on the side of these (*watoro).* The "miracle masquerades" would never perform!

S: They would never perform!

An impression of kinyago from Bate

Kinyago from Ganda(15ft long)

Kinyago from Ganda (about 8ft long)

Kingago from Ganda (about 12ft long)

Parapara mgambo (about 6 ft long and 4.5ft high

Sulisuli (this fish was 33ft long and 6ft high at the middle)

Chart 5: Illustrations of selected "animals" (by Kaingu K. Tinga (April 2012).

Kinyago in Mijikenda mortuary rites

For us to appreciate the final integration between Wanyasa and Mijikenda culture we need to understand some aspects of Mijikenda funeral rites. The traditional funeral rite (*hanga*) for an elderly Giryama male is seven days and five for a female.[211] The day of interment is called *kusindirira majembe*, literally "filling in the hoes", which refers to removing the marks left by the hoes used in digging the grave. The following day is known as *mitsanga mitsi*, red earth. The third day is referred to as *kuanza madzi* or *madzi mosi* (first water). It marks the beginning of official mourning, followed by *madzi hiri* (second water)*, madzi hahu* (third water)*, madzi ine* (fourth water) and *madzi tsano* (fifth water) in that order.[212]

Throughout the five days elderly relatives of the deceased person perform a ritual bath at a nearby water source or secluded structure (*uwa*), at dawn, hence the five–water-ritual days. As they return to the homestead in a queue they break into weeping wildly as homage to the departed soul.[213] The third day of mourning (*madzi hahu*) is known as the day of sacrifices (*siku ya kutsinza*); people slaughter goats and cows at the fresh graveside, after which, the carcasses are prepared and served with maize meal.

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[211] Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya*: 25.

[212] Ibid.

[213] *Personal observations*. The final mourning day, *madzi tsano,* is also called *kushera ng'ongo*- sweeping the ruffia-palm waste. Basically elders sweep and burn all the waste deposited during the week long ceremony. It signifies physical cleansing of the homestead and returning it to normalcy.These traditions are quickly disappearing.

Among the Mijikenda *kinyago* performers, when a senior *kinyago* member dies, colleagues dance around his fresh grave before and immediately after burial.[214] Meanwhile a *karuru* is hastily assembled to perform at the graveside around dusk as a pacification of the freshly departed *kinyago* member's spirit.[215] But generally *vinyago* perform on the third day (*kuanza madzi)* and conclude on the night of sacrifice, *madzi hahu,* after mourners have danced various *ngoma,* dined and wined at daytime. Observation of the *kinyago* rite during Mijikenda funerals is mostly situational. Larger, wealthy and well-organised conservative families conduct extremely elaborate ritual functions than otherwise. Thus *vinyago* may even perform for four days ending on the *madzi ine* night.

Finally the *kinyago* rite is observed during the commemoration ceremony of a senior male member, about a year or so after his burial. The commemoration ritual, called *nyere za mwezi,* takes place on the sighting of the new moon (*kuzuma mwezi*).[216]On this lunar occasion, members of the bereaved family and their close relatives weep briefly in remembrance to and in honour of their beloved one.[217] From around midnight *vinyago* perform for three to consecutive nights.

The Giryama had a powerful gerontocratic leadership system called *Kambi* consisting of two secret societies called *vaya* and *gohu*.[218] The former was the political wing while the latter

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[214] The ex-slaves do not perform *vinyago* on the burial of a senior colleague. It is only the Mijikenda who practice this rite as part of their appropriation of *kinyago. Kinyago* associates spend much of the afternoon playing drums interspersed with shakers and singing *kinyago* funeral dirges as colleagues dance around the grave.

[215] According to Mohamed Ramadhan Songoro, this aspect was introduced by Zimba wa Nguma when his mentor, Mndhiwa wa Saadi died. Zimba literally forced Saadi's family to perform kinyago in honour of the guru.

[216] Parkin, *Palms, Wines and Witnesses*: 84.

[217] This rite is synonymous with the sighting of the elephant, *ndovu* during the *vinyago vikubwa* rite.

[218] Spear, *The Kaya Complex*: 60-5; Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya*: 22-9; Brantley, C., "Gerontocratic Government", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 48, 3 (1978): 248-264.

was charged with spiritual, and sometimes, political responsibilities as well. If the deceased person belonged to the *gohu* society, his living colleagues erected memorial posts generally called *k'oma* and *kigango (pl. vigango)* for *gohu* members, about one year after his death.[219]

Therefore if the deceased person belonged to both the *gohu* and *vinyago* cults during his lifetime, the commemoration ritual called *sadaka ya kigango* (pl. *vigango*) would be preceded by funerary *vinyago* masquerades commencing on the sighting of the new moon on the eve of the *sadaka*.[220] As per tradition, the funerary *vinyago* perform from around midnight until just about dawn when they retire to the *dangbwe*, after concluding the ritual with a performance by the *ndovu* masquerade. Immediately after departure of the *ndovu*, *gohu* elders secretly install the *vigango* at the deceased person's homestead quintessentially ending the commemoration rite.[221]

My informants were unanimous that the Wanyasa commemoration of their departed elders with *vinyago* is equivalent to memorialisation of ancestral spirits through the installation of *vigango* by a section of the Mijikenda.[222] The two commemorative cultural aspects demonstrate a significant symbiotic and yet contrasting cosmological relationship. Whereas among the Wanyasa cosmology *vinyago* spirits return to the forest where they are burned to mark the conclusion of the funerary rite – after which the spirits never revisit the living–, among the Mijikenda *vigango* spirits are brought home from the forest and installed at the living persons' homestead. The *vigango* symbolise both the physical and spiritual presence of the ancestors who

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[219] Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya*: 24-5; See also Tinga, K. K., "Commemorative grave posts (vigango)", in *HAZINA*: *Traditions, Trade and Transitions in Eastern Africa*, (eds) Kiprop Lagat and Julie Hudson (Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya, 2006): 60-61.

[220] Mtawali wa Zimba, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011.

[221] Mtawali wa Zimba, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011.

[222] Charo wa Munga, Mtawali wa Zimba and Kaingu wa Shauri, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011; Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, interview, Mguruleni(Ganda), 24/10/2011

play a mediatory role between humans and their creator. Yet, according to both Wanyasa and Mijikenda cosmology the final rites of passage epitomise the reconciliation of the departed person with the spirit realm.

At this crucial moment both *vinyago* and *vigango* demonstrate powerful aspects of heritage from the Wanyasa and Mijikenda peoples. Through the two funerary rites the intangible cultural heritage elements of both communities are tangibly inscribed onto the living families of the deceased persons' homesteads – for the former through the performance of *vinyago* and for the latter by erection of the memorial posts, *vigango*. It should be noted that intangible heritage is intertwined with tangible heritage. However, as Proselandis argues, "all tangible heritages have intangible values associated with them, but not all intangible heritages have a tangible form". [223] Both *kinyago* and *kigango* are tangible forms of heritage which embody powerful intangible values. But while *kinyago's* tangibility is temporary, the tangibility of *kigango* is more enduring. This epic moment marked the apex of the cultural integration between the ex-slaves from the Central-Eastern Africa region and the Coastal Mijikenda. But this was not the final phase of the embodiment of Mijikenda appropriation of *kinyago*. Aspects of *kinyago* were introduced in divination, as we shall see later.

[223] Proselandis, S,. Input at the Workshop on Intangible Heritage, HRSC, Cape Town, 30 June 2003, cited in Deacon, H., *et al*, *The Subtle Power of Intangible Heritage: legal and Financial Instruments for Safeguarding Intangible Heritage.* HSRC Publishers, Cape Town, South Africa, (2004):11.

The role of women in *Kinyago*

A discussion of gender in *kinyago* dance is important. Practically, *kinyago* was enhanced by singing which was largely performed by women called *Namkungwi*. Strobel defines *Namkungwi* (*pl*. *Makungwi*) as members of an association of female puberty rites called *unyago* which existed in Mombasa and its immediate environs until the turn of the 20th century.[224] Like *kinyago unyago* and its *Namkungwi* association had origins in the matrilineal people of Central-Eastern Africa especially the Yao, Makua, Nyasa, and Makonde.[225]

Richards states that female puberty rites were distributed throughout Central Africa where, for instance, initiation ceremonies among Mozambican Yao, Makua and Makonde boys and girls were marked by masquerading.[226] As rites of passage, masquerades were performed during puberty initiations for both boys and girls, on the occasion of the installation of chiefs and funerals.[227] They were "part of the legacy of royal ritual inherited from pre-colonial period".[228] Furthermore, puberty rites among the Chewa cosmology defined maturation as an integral part of the entire society, irrespective of gender.[229] Among the Ndembu of Zambia women prepared foodstuffs and provided powerful back-up singing during the graduation of boys from the

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[224] Strobel, M., *Muslim Women in Mombasa*: 196-7. See also Gearhardt, "Ngoma Memories": 21-47; Gearhart, R. "Ngoma Memories: A History of Competitive Music and Dance on the Kenya coast", unpublished dissertation, University of Florida (1998): 9, 22-24, 183-186.

[225] Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa*: 196-7.

[226] Richards, *Chisungu*: 181-2.

[227] See Gluckman, M., "Masked Dancers in Barotseland":138-157; Turner, *The Forest of Symbols;* Yoshida, "Masks and Secrecy".

[228] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions": 34-5. It should be noted however, that the term "inheritance" is applicable to things like wealth, genes and widows (or widowers), for instance, or any tangible (objects/ things); knowledge and skills are "acquired' but not "inherited."

[229] Kaspin, "Chewa Visions and Revisions": 44-45.

mukanda circumcision rites.[230] Apparently these were common feminine roles, including those of *Namkungwi*, practiced throughout the Central-Eastern Africa region.

However, there are two definite concepts of *Namkungwi* in the Kenya coast, each independent of the other in both geographical space and ideology. In the olden days the *Namkungwi* of Malindi were mostly old women who had passed menopause. Young girls or childbearing women were regarded ineligible to *Namkungwi* membership because either they were too young to keep secrets or mostly because of the notion of impurity associated with menstruation. Pregnant women were prohibited from the society as a way of safeguarding their pregnancies from being affected by evil spirits.[231]

The *watoro* faction denied the *Makungwi* (pl.) any freedom of access to the main *dangbwe.* But it is probable that the *watu (mwa) wa minazini* allowed them to the site. On their part, the Mijikenda allowed them but as a common rule, they never participated in the practical production of *vinyago*. Principally, women associates were marginalised to customary feminine roles only. Senior male masqueraders guided the *Makungwi* in oath-taking at the *Namkungwi dangbwe* ostensibly to observe secrecy. Following this form of empowerment the *Namkungwi* were responsible for mentoring newly initiated females to the *kinyago* association, and preparation of foodstuffs in their respective *dangbwe* for consumption by the men at the main production site. During an interview with Moshi Khamis Serenge (Mshambara) and Amina Rashid Kalu (Mijikenda/Bajun) in Ganda the following information emerged:

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[230] Turner, Victor, *The Forest of Symbols*: 255-6.

[231] Charo wa Munga, Mtawali wa Zimba and Kaingu wa Shauri, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011; Shebani wa Mkutano, (Ganda 2/10/2011); Amina Rashid, Moshi wa Hamisi Serenge (daughter of Hamisi Kitangawizi- Ganda 24/8/2011), Sidi Tsui and Sikubali Katana Ngoka, interview, 24/102011

Tinga: So I wanted to know what exactly is a *Namkungwi*?

Moshi: Do you want the *ngoma*?

T: First, I need to know the work of a *Namkungwi.*

M: Her work? She is supposed to cook.

T: To cook?

M: Yes, when the men are busy in preparation for the *ngoma* the *Namkungwi* are also busy.

T: Which *ngoma* is that?

M: That, that *ngoma*. That *ngoma.* That is when they become busy.

T: The *kinyago ngoma*?

M: Yes! When they come at night with their meat, they come to eat food. They rise early the next morning and return to the forest. Until their *ngoma* is concluded, whether it is three days or four days…they conclude their *ngoma*. Then they come back home.

T: I came to understand that in Mombasa there were women like you who were *Namkungwi*….

Amina: That is now different!

M: Very old women?

A: Those are different. This *Namkungwi* is for *vinyago*. Those *Namkungwi* are for girls. There are two *Namkungwi,* you hear?

T: Yes.

A: Let me cut you short because if you take her far you will confuse her.

T: That is alright.

A: This *Namkungwi,* when the men are there in the *dangbwe,* these (*Namkungwi*) cook

food, and no unauthorised person enters the place (*namkungwi dangbwe*) except those elderly persons who were trained on how to prepare the meals. Because the meals are not prepared simply like this; the meals are sung for. Even when pounding maize, when we were young kinds, they pounded maize accompanied by singing. Those are the *Namkungwi*! Yes! The others are *Namkungwi* who stay with adolescent girls and they take them to the bathroom. They are different. So, you, this *ngoma* is completely different!

T: So Madam Amina, are you also one of them?

A: A ha'a!

T: Yes, because you explain so well. Maybe you know something?

A: So what she is telling you, that is what am saying it is different. This one is a *Namkungwi* of *vinyago*. For *vinyago* when the men are in the bush, doing their work, these ones together with their colleagues have songs which they sing; even when they are taking the meals to the men, they sing until the men realise that the *Namkungwi* are coming. So they get out (of the *dangwe*) and come for the meals and send it to the others. The other *Namkungwi* are for girls, when the girls have reached their puberty, the *Namkungwi* take them to the bathroom accompanied by *ngoma*. It is different from *kinyago*.

Lastly *Namkungwi* functioned as singers and cheerleaders at masquerade functions.[232] In an interview with Sidi Tsui and Sikubali Katana Ngoka (both Mijikenda women) regarding

[232] Ibid.

kinyago songs, one song struck me. It was a critique of a "vehicle" masquerade which went like this:

C:	*Gari hiyo oh gari!*	The vehicle oh vehicle!
R:	*Gari ya Mzungu*!	Vehicle of a *Mzungu*
C:	*Gari hiyo oh dereva*!	The vehicle oh driver!
R:	*Dereva Mkikuyu!*	A *Kikuyu* driver!

In their interpretation the ladies equated the "gari" masquerade to a real vehicle owned by a European and driven by a Kikuyu.[233] Basically the song denotes the perception by a section of coastal inhabitants that Europeans are very unsympathetic; they would not offer a lift to people. They employ Kikuyu (upcountry drivers) who, like their employers, are perceived to be very mean. The moral behind the song is that the "gari" masquerade is a hopeless innovation.

The *Namkungwi* discourse raises two significant issues. That the *Namkungwi* association of Mombasa was a vibrant social stratum that exercised power over matrimonial relations and it enhanced stability and integrity through *unyago*.[234] Even though Ranger states that *Beni* drew upon Central Africa *Vinyago* masking traditions among other performances; there was no distinctive *kinyago* society in Mombasa.[235] In Malindi, *Namkungwi* played a pivotal role within the *kinyago* institution. As producers in their own right, *Makungwi* ensured sustenance, stability and discipline of *kinyago*. There was no *unyago* in Malindi. Whereas *unyago* puberty rites and

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233 Kikuyu (*Gikuyu*) is an ethnic group which inhabits the Central Kenya region.

234 Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa*: 196- 217.

235 Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 24.

the *Namkungwi* association demonstrate the powerful roles of feminine institutions prevalent in Central-Eastern Africa, the *Namkungwi* of the Kenya coast *kinyago* served a basic littoral function within a predominantly masculine funerary transitory rite.

Patronage and competitions

Patronage played a key role in the development and evolution of the *kinyago* tradition. Characteristically *vinyago* practice was (and still is) entirely competitive in both factions and the Mijikenda as well. Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, an *mtoro*, surmised that, "competitions are healthy and they have always been there".[236] He stressed that, "*mashindano hukuza ngoma*" ("competitions help develop the tradition"). On any impending *vinyago* dance, the host village sent out invitations to neighbouring villages.[237] And, indeed, *vinyago* practitioners were very enthusiastic artists. Often times the people of Bate for example, would compete against those from Madunguni, across the River Sabaki.[238] During his time Zimba wa Nguma would invite his team from Bate to compete in Ganda.[239] In the early 1960s Gandan *vinyago* artists would pack their 'animals' in an old Bedford truck and perform at Kadzuho ka Simiti village

[236] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni, 24/10/2011

[237] Informants refer to the invitation process as "*kupeleka fundo*"– sending the note: an invitation for competition.

[238] Kaingu wa Shauri and Mtawali wa Zimba (Bate, 23-4/3/2011).

[239] Zimba had a farm in Ganda but part of his family was in Bate and Gede. Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Mguruleni, 24/10/2011

about 30km north of Malindi.[240] Therefore *kinyago* performance enabled members to create social networks and establish ethnic consciousness.

Thus members from the invited moieities sent their masquerades and competed in a festival-like manner under close supervision of their *maakida* (pl. of *akida*). By virtue of their status the *maakida* adjudicated the "animals" visually prior to the performance at the *dangbwe ndogo* and when dancing.[241]The *maakida* exhibited a high degree of neutrality to avoid conflicts among the competitors and to enhance respect and integrity among members. Overall, *kinyago* artists ensured that they demonstrated exemplary creativity in production of the "animals", drumming, dancing as well as dancing.[242] All these artistic elements, not excluding singing, were complementary to each other.

But principally, the success of *vinyago* rested solely on the craftsmanship of each *fundi* (master-craftsman/mentor). A new member, literally regarded as an apprentice (*mwanafundi*), was attached to (or chose) a mentor (*fundi*) who he understudied. The *fundi* either produced "animals" for his *mwanafundi* (or *wanafundi* – pl.), collaborated with his apprentice(s) in the production of "animals" or both. Indeed, both *fundi* and *mwanafundi* shared the accolades when finally their "animal" was adjudicated as the best.[243] By virtue of his mentorship responsibility, the *fundi* was in essence a patron, who sometimes sponsored his *wanafundi* to produce 'animals'.

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[240] Shebani wa Mkutano, Ganda, 3/10/2011

[241] *Dangbwe kubwa* (main *dangbwe*) is the production cite while *dangbwe dogo* (minor *dangbwe*) is the site where all animals from various localities are assembled before they perform. It is usually situated very close to the *uwanja* (Shebani wa Mkutano, Ganda, 3/10/2011; Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24/09/2011.

[242] Charo wa Munga, Mtawali wa Zimba and Kaingu wa Shauri, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011

[243] Charo wa Munga, Mtawali wa Zimba and Kaingu wa Shauri, interview, Bate, 23/3/2011; Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi 24/9/2011; Shebani wa Mkutano, Ganda, 2/10/2011

But in Ganda, a new breed of patrons entered the scene and soon revolutionised *vinyago*. Around the late 1940s and early 1950s several Arabs from Malindi town became interested in the cult, so, they were initiated and became passionate members of *kinyago*. These included wealthy and influential personalities such as Shariff Assad, Shariff Said Hussein, Shariff Juma Juwana and Shariff Omar Nassib. These new members used their wealth to patronise *kinyago* by sponsoring the production of large, iconic double-decked and intricately decorated masquerades. Councillor Mohamed Ali Bozo, a famous Mijikenda *kinyago* enthusiast contends that Shariff Assad hired Pekele Bombom, Mtondoo Bombom and Mnubi Mbaruk, all of them ex-slave *kinyago* experts, as his artist producers and performers.

Likewise, through their financial prowess the other Arab patrons contracted proficient ex-slave artists to produce and perform during annual competitions known as *mashindano.* Two of the Arab patrons, Shariff Omar Nassib and Shariff Juma Juwana competed aggressively against each other with their '*Juba*' creations at the Kilolongo field, in Ganda. But sometimes later, Shariff Said Hussein decamped from practicing *kinyago* and castigated the above two combatants for engaging in idiotic traditions.[244] We are not certain about Shariff Said Hussein's castigation of *kinyago* but he might have been inspired by the reform movement in the Middle East which emerged around the early 1930s in the Kenya coast. Beni had experienced serious opposition from the Mohamedan Reform League which adhered to the Islamic Reform movement.[245]

The most exhilarating *mashindano* were between two Wanyasa, namely, Omar Potosa whose *vinyago* performed at Kilolongo in Ganda, and Hassan wa Shebani, of Mkaomoto. At the

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[244] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24/9/2011

[245] Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 85-88.

pinnacle of their competitions, the two combatants composed songs challenging each other to a fight. Hassan wa Shebani's song went as follows:

C:	*Mganga wa chiraho ooh chimbirani!*	An oracle medicine man ooh run away!
R:	*Ooh chimbirani!*	Ooh run away!
C:	*Napiga chiraho ooh chimbirani!*	I cast an oracle ooh run away!
R:	*Ooh chimbirani!*	Ooh run away!
C:	*Cha Tsawe Konde ooh chimbirani!*	Oracle *o*f Tsawe Konde ooh run away! [246]
R	*Ooh chimbirani!*	Ooh run away!
C:	*Ooh dede mganga chiraho!*	Ooh oracle medicine man my friend!
R:	*Ooh chimbirani!*	Ooh run away![247]

During such competitions, all the masquerade experts from one moieity rallied together in support of their colleague's *kinyago*. Their colleague's success was a collective success for the entire moieity. Women and children enjoined the masqueraders by singing, clapping and ululating. Thus as he led his 'animal' (nicknamed *Juba*) and followers to the *uwanja,* to everybody's astonishment, Hassan wa Shebani would blow an Oryx-horn while singing this Mijikenda song. This was a unique performative technique never exhibited before in the history

[246] In the late 1930s early 1940s Wanje wa Mwadori (Tsawe Konde) was the most popular witch hunter in Kaloleni. Supported by the colonial government, Tsawe Konde conducted witch-hunting campaigns throughout Mijikendaland, giving a lethal medicine oath (*kiraho*) to any suspected witch or sorcerer, whose power would stop or kill the offender if they practiced witchcraft again. Shebani likened Omar Potosa to one using witchcraft in *kinyago* and vowed to crash him for good through his own masquerade creations. See Brantley, C., "An Historical Perspective of the Giriama and Witchcraft Control", *Africa*, 49, (1979): 112-133.

[247] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24/9/2011

of *kinyago*.[248] By blowing the Oryx-horn Shebani was deliberately asserting himself as the undisputed 'king of *kinyago*' who commanded power among the ex-slave and Mijikenda communities within the region. Further still, this was a powerful statement implicitly illustrating that no foreigner (read "Arab") could stamp their authority on the *kinyago* heritage. In turn, Omar Potosa stressed that he would pursue Hassan until he conceded defeat at the Mkondoni field of performance. His response went thus:

C:	*Nampinga Hassan mpaka mkondoni!*	I am opposing Hassan up until the stream!
R:	*Ooh mkondoni!*	Ooh at the stream!
C:	*Anipe mkono bwana ooh mkondoni!*	(Till) he shakes my hand sir, at the stream!
R:	*Ooh mkondoni!*	Ooh at the stream![249]

In Ganda active *vinyago* competitions of this nature continued until 2003. The last such *mashindano* was between Mbarak Mkadam of Mere and Khamisi Mnyapara of Kakuyuni during which, according to Bozo, Mbarak Mkadam outshone Khamisi Mnyapara.[250] *Kinyago* is still practised but not with the novelty, artistry, competitiveness and euphoria witnessed in the 1950s, 1970s -1980s and 2003.

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[248] At that time blowing the Oryx-horn was only associated with Mijikenda traditional dances but not *vinyago.*

[249] Mkondoni, where the Maziwani Primary School is now situated was one of the major dancing fields at the time; for a long time the two combatants competed there drawing excitement all over the region.

[250] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi 24/9/2011

The *Kinyago* miracles: the Man-of-War and the airplane

The year of 1969 marked another memorable turning point in the history of *kinyago*. A few years earlier some innovative artists had developed a '*manuwari'* (Man-of-War) masquerade fitted with kerosene lanterns covered with translucent paper for control of the lighting effect, as masqueraders forbade any form of light.[251] But the *manuwari* brought near disastrous results when the lamps almost blew up shortly after it 'set off'. Following that unfortunate episode, *kinyago* elders re-asserted their authoritarian compliance with the traditional norm.[252] Nevertheless, that extraordinary imaginative form of creativity awakened many artists' (both Mijikenda and ex-slave descendants) desire to challenge the stasis of *kinyago.*

Mohamed Ali Bozo of Mere in Ganda location achieved this vision by creating an 'aeroplane' (*ndege*) using conventional lighting system and thereby broke off from the static nature of the *kinyago* practice.[253] He also contracted Mohamed Ali Kithorobe and Omar Ali Kithorobe, descendants of ex-slaves as electricians who fitted the plane with a set of dry cells that functioned as the 'engine'. The Kithorobe brothers ensured that the plane's wiring system was perfect, complete with multi-coloured miniature bulbs and propellers. The *ndege* was an incredible instant success, which elevated Bozo to a celebrity throughout the Malindi axis.[254]

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[251] The "manuwari" was a common feature of competitive *beni* performances during WW1 and WW2. See Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 23, 34; Askew, "As Plato Duly Warned": 74.

[252] Fire or any form of light was prohibited by the *kinyago* association. If a person flashed a spotlight when *kinyago* was passing by or dancing, he was thoroughly beaten up by *kinyago* members.

[253] Bozo is a Mijikenda of a Kauma father and Digo mother and a resident of Mere, Ganda.

[254] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 24/9/2011, Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, Malindi, 29/9/2011

In 1983, Bozo used that accomplishment to vie for political office. Using *ndege* as his campaign logo, he crafted a big paper-box toy plane and hung it across the main street in Ganda. That campaign strategy worked miracles. Surprisingly, within days a colony of bees settled in the toy plane. Influential inhabitants of Ganda interpreted that incident as a good omen as it demonstrated that Bozo would lead people to greater heights of socio-economic development. Resultant to that prophetic toy plane and its "bee-passengers", Bozo won the local authority elections by a landslide and became councillor of Ganda Ward for fifteen successive years.[255]

After the *ndege* spectacle Bozo crafted a *helikopta* (helicopter) that proved more sensational than the initial novelty. For almost five years, Councilor Bozo was the undisputed king of modern *vinyago* in Malindi. He called this typology of masquerades *vinyago vya miujiza/ misanaa* which literally means, the "masquerades of miracles".[256] Soon however, Bozo was challenged. Around 1974/5 Saadi Mbarak Mkadam of Mere, a descendant of ex-slaves from the *watoro* faction entered the modern *vinyago* scene.[257] Through the inspiration from Bozo, Saadi made his maiden *skuta* (scooter) fitted with miniature bulbs. However, like Bozo, Saadi's ingenuity raised immediate conflict between two opposing groups of the *watoro* faction.[258] One group supported Saadi's innovative acumen while the other condemned him bitterly for bringing disgrace to the *watoro* and the *kinyago* institution. The scandal developed into a serious physical

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[255] It must be understood that the *vinyago vya miujiza* always performed alongside the traditional *vinyago*.

[256] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011

[257] Saadi's father was himself famous for the double-decked masquerades.

[258] Bozo's plane had generated immense conflict from the Watoro faction but was supported by the liberal *watu (mwa) wa minazini* group. Bozo's support accrued from his upbringing. He contends that "*nilifugwa na watumwa*" - I was brought up by slaves. He spent nine years under the tutelage of Thubu Mbaruk one of the famous plantation ex-slave descendants and a talented *kinyago* and *mwaribe* performer in Mere from 1956-1965. Having been ex-communicated by the Watoro faction, Bozo performed with the liberal group and later established his own field. (Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011).

confrontation. Eventually it was agreed that Saadi should remove the lighting system before his "*skuta"* could perform. He relented and peace prevailed again among the *watoro*.[259]

In 1979 Saadi made a *kombi* (Volkswagen combi) without much interference from the *watoro* elders.[260] Realising that he was being challenged, Bozo created a *helikopta* to counter the *kombi*, followed by a *manuwari* (man of war - complete with fireworks as rockets) to compete with Saadi's *trekta* (tractor).While the "man- of –war" in *Beni* was inspired by WW1, Bozos *manuwari* seems to have been motivated by the cold war and the military supremacy that was associated with the superpower syndrome. Ecstatic fans lifted Bozo shoulder high as he sang:

C:	*Manuwari yawaka, manuwari baharini!*	Man-of-war is alight (bright) in the ocean!
R:	*Manuwari yawaka!*	Man-of-war is alight (bright)!
C:	*Manuwari yawaka, ooh de manuwari baharini!*	Man-of-war, oh friend is bright in the ocean!
R:	*Manuwari yawaka!*	Man-of-war is alight (bright)![261]

The two combatants established a field where they competed freely.[262] Both Bozo and Saadi asserted that during that epic period the duo would compete honourably as friends. Following the friendship and mutual respect they had for each other Bozo nicknamed Saadi,

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[259] Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011

[260] Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011

[261] Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi 24/9/2011.

[262] Being able to establish a field implies that a *kinyago* member is an accomplished as an artist drummer, singer, dancer and mentor; he must also acquire his personal set of percussions.

"Japan", while Saadi referred to Bozo as "Russia" – congruent to the economic and military prowess of the two Asian countries.[263] Bozo and Saadi had reached the apex of modern *kinyago* power in Ganda and the larger Malindi Axis.

Kinyago **in divination and exorcism**

Besides the religious influence that we have already discussed, some aspects of *kinyago* penetrated deep into the Mijikenda spiritual realm through spirit possession. The Mijikenda cosmology encompasses hundreds of benevolent and malevolent spirits. Two malevolent spirits – *peph'o msambala*, a spirit perceived to have originated from the Usambara region and *peph'o mtumwa* – connote slave origins.[264] For purposes of this research we shall concentrate on the latter. Basically, *peph'o mtumwa* operates under instruction from three powerful "Arab"/"Swahili" oriented spirits, namely: *Mwarabu* (of Arab origin), *Mwalimu* (teacher-of Swahili origin) and *Subiani* (also of Arab roots).[265] The *peph'o mtumwa* is therefore a slave spirit enslaved by Arab/Swahili spirits. But we cannot certainly determine when these aspects of *kinyago* were introduced into spirit exorcism and propitiation. We may however, postulate the early decades of cultural integration around the late 1940s to early 1950s.

A person possessed by the *mtumwa*-spirit feels completely fatigued and this may result to physical and sexual dysfunction and eventually to poverty and infertility. As a remedy diviners

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[263] Mohamed Ali Bozo, and Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011

[264] Ali Baruti, interview, Mguruleni-Ganda, 28/8/2011

[265] Kabucheche Saidi Tinga, interview, Gede, 27/8/2011.

prescribe a divination dance for exorcism or propitiation of the spirit. In the spirit world, each spirit responds to specific prerequisites for appeasement. The victim of a *peph'o mtumwa* adorns a *kishutu piece* of cotton clothing among other attire associated with the three overlord spirits, at most, during the propitiation ritual but also casually, on demand by the "enslaving spirits".[266]

Historically the *kishutu* (Mijikenda; *kisutu* in Swahili) originated from north-west India in the 19th century. Over time its motifs have acquired East African significance and symbolism. Among the Swahili, *kisutu* functions as bridal attire won by the bride during her wedding night.[267] Moreover, the *kishutu* encourages wealth and fertility among the Mijikenda communities.[268] Immediately the victim demands for *ngoma ya mtumwa* (slave spirit beat) during the spirit propitiation/exorcism ritual dance, the drumming transforms to that of the *kinyago* tempo – fast, high pitched with a deep throbbing bass. Similarly, the songs and accompanying dance movements resemble those of the *kinyago* dance. This phenomenon is very significant. During exorcism of the slave spirit is the following song is sung repeatedly:

Nalalaje mkwewa nalalaje hee!	How do I sleep my in-law how do I sleep!
Nalalaje mkwewa nalalaje hee!	How do I sleep my in-law how do I sleep!
Kitanda kimoja nalalaje hee!	One bed how I sleep!
Nyama nyama nyama hee!	Animal, animal, animal!
Nyama matope hee!	Animal mud!

[266] Ibid.

[267] Clarke, Simon, A., "Motif, Patterns, Colour and Text on Contemporary Kenyan cloth: An analysis and Personal Response". Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Central England in Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (2005): 93, 121, 148 and 212.

[268] Kabucheche Saidi Tinga, interview, Gede, August, 2011

Kauye kauye! Returning returning![269]

The first stanza is a lamentation in which the singer is asking how he is going to share the same bed with his in-law.[270]According to Swahili and other coastal Bantu customs, it is taboo for a son or daughter in-law to share the same bed with their mother or father in-law. Metaphorically, this is a contestation of how a human being can have intimate relations with an evil spirit. Following that dissonance, in the second stanza the exorcists are compelling the evil spirit to return to where it belongs. This corresponds with the song masqueraders chant when a *kinyago* is in transit. *Nyama matope* (animal mud) resonates with masquerading in the olden days when the masquerades would be smeared with slimy mud before they proceeded to perform at the *dangbwe* as explained earlier in this chapter.

The fact that a "*kinyago* beat" is the major therapy for an *mtumwa*-spirit possessed person denotes the persistence and dynamism of the cultural appropriation of the *kinyago* tradition by coastal communities. Furthermore, the notion that the *mtumwa* spirit is itself enslaved by a tripartite corporate order of powerful Arab/Swahili oriented spirits is a metaphorical implication of the severity of the East African trade in humans and its psychological impact on coastal cultures. It is instructive that in the aftermath of slavery the Mijikenda memorialised the oppression, cruelty and exploitation meted onto slaves in Malindi district, mostly by Arab and Swahili overlordship and transformed it into the spirit world. The Mijikenda have since the abolition of slavery and slave trade continuously enlivened those

[269] Kilifi District Socia-cultural Profile: Kenya Governement, Ministry of Planning and National Development, and Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, (1988): 184

[270] Mkwewa in Kiswahili is short for my in-law, that is, *mkwe,* in-law, *wangu,* my.

collective memories which they fervently re-enact as a painful reminder of those dark days of servitude, courtesy of spiritualist rituals. Implicitly therefore, coastal slavery may have "ended" but to the Mijikenda, it still lives on, albeit, in various forms such as those exemplified by the spirit world.

Conclusion

The abolition ordinance of 1907 which ended slavery and slave trade in Kenya created opportunities for the rejuvenation of cultural practices which had almost been written off during the slave trade era. The Subsequent Mijikenda appropriation of *kinyago* helped to produce a powerful and unique competitive tradition which further entrenched the Nyasa identity. But intra ex-slave rivalry generated by ritual and entertainment genres of the *kinyago* tradition enhanced the power relations within the ex-slave community, and between the ex-slave community and the Mijikenda. This scenario created a new social setting. The power relations helped to diversify the masquerading tradition throughout Malindi district.

We may surmise therefore that since the early post-abolition decades to date the Wanyasa have passionately used *kinyago* as a powerful instrument to express their collective consciousness; negotiate their identity; assert their claim to higher social status; and developing diverse social networks within a large part of Malindi district. The Wanyasa have also used *kinyago* partly to demonstrate their aesthetic and creative expressions and partly as a transitory rite through different levels of life cycle as well as to create linkages with the ancestral spirit realm.

Chapter III

The decline of vinyago *from the 1980*

Kinyago started to decline dramatically from the 1980s. Many other dances have disappeared (for example Beni); others live on (*nyau* and *mapiko* in Central-Eastern Africa and *egungun* in West Africa and initiation amongst hinterland communities). Why specifically did *kinyago* disappear or decline? This chapter critically analyses the causes and processes of the decline of the masquerade tradition during this period. Recent research has found out that in Kenya cultural beliefs, activities and objects were fast disappearing due mainly to government's non-prioritisation of culture in its development agenda; effects of new religious affiliation; modernisation, illicit trade in cultural objects by Western antique collectors, poor policing by government and ignorance by communities towards the value of their cultural objects.[271] In this chapter we postulate that social, environmental and economic factors – as well as inept government policy – contributed towards the decline of masquerading in coastal Kenya. Often we only look for "cultural" factors but the environmental explanation is very crucial as we shall soon find out in the foregoing discussion.

[271]The Endangered Heritage Assets Programme (EHAP) was conducted from 2005 to 2009 and coordinated by the Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA), Mombasa, Kenya.

Gede: a generation passing away

Of the three study areas, that is, Gede (Gedi), Ganda and Bate, Gede was the first to experience the decline of the *vinyago* tradition followed by Bate and Ganda respectively. The decline may be attributed to several factors which will be herewith explored.

Gede was founded in the early 12th century A.D. and grew to be one of the largest and most prosperous coastal medieval towns that flourished in the 15th Century but it was mysteriously abandoned in the early sixteenth century.[272] The city was reoccupied towards the end of the sixteenth century and then completely abandoned in the beginning of the 17th Century. Its abandonment is partially attributed to incursion by the Orma, a pastoralist group, who drove out most of the inhabitants on the mainland settlements that included Gede, and for a short spell, occupied it. The unreliability of fresh water may also have contributed to the abandonment of the settlement.[273]

After Gedi was abandoned pockets of Waata/Sanye hunter- gatherers who inhabited the region continued living there until the 19th Century when it was occupied by the Zaheri branch of the Mazrui Arabs.[274] Having been expelled by Seyyid Said from Mombasa in 1837, the Mazrui established scattered slave plantations in Takaungu and surrounding areas. They also extended their control to north of the Kilifi Creek especially around "Konjora, Mtondia, Roka

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[272] Kirkman, J., *Gedi The Palace*, (Mouton & Co., The Hague, The Netherlands), (1963): 9.

[273] Kirkman, *Gedi The Palace*:10.

[274] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 93-96.

and Watamu" (*read Gedi*);[275] and essentially, their territory covered 160,000 acres. Major agricultural exports from the slave plantations were "millet, maize, sesame, rice, and beans"; totaling "an estimated fifty-five hundred tons".[276] Besides the slave labourers, *Mahaji* - Giriama Muslim converts also settled on the Mazrui plantations. Given the geographical proximity and historical relationship between Watamu and Gede the Mazrui plantations in Watamu covered the entire Gede location at the time.

The colonial government established the Gede Native Land Settlement Scheme in 1938 in order to settle hundreds of Mijikenda who had squatted on Arab owned farms especially in Ganda.[277] The new settlement attracted many Mijikenda from the interior who either had earlier developed close socio-economic relations with the Ganda ex-slaves or initiated this rapport after a short period of settling down. Following the Mkokoani Declaration, a section of the Gede inhabitants embraced the *kinyago* tradition. Most of *Mahaji* also joined the *kinyago* society. Hence Gede became almost like an extension of Ganda; in fact, during the 1950s onwards the *kinyago* tradition was akin to a mass movement in Gede. Entertainment *vinyago* was practiced annually, after harvests, at the main field, *Uwanja wa MiNgunga*, situated about one kilometre from the Gede trading centre on the way to Watamu.[278] Funerary *kinyago* was also common; it was, however, conducted entirely within the homesteads of the deceased persons.

By the 1970s, several fundamental changes occurred. The first significant change was the natural attrition of members of the first generation of Gede settlers including ex-slaves and

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[275] The insertion in parenthesis is the author's.

[276] Morton, *Children of Ham*: 93-96.

[277] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 118.

[278] David Kenga Tsodzengo, interview, Gede, 20/8/2011.

Mijikenda who were above seventy years. Notable personalities were Kadenge wa Thinga, Zimba wa Mwijo, Kalu wa Thinga (Sheni), Kithi wa Choyo (Kithimangilo), and Kenga wa Mwanongo, MiNgunga and Mwana Amina (Dziga Petu) among many others.[279] The first five persons constituted the first generation of Mijikenda inhabitants of the Gede Native Land Settlement Scheme. Kadenge wa Thinga became the first *mzee wa lalo* (the equivalent of a location chief) as well as a senior member of the *kinyago* association. Together with other members like those mentioned here, they established the MiNgunga field which belonged to a Mijikenda *namkungwi*. Mwana Amina was one of the last ex-slave *namkungwi* in the region. She was responsible for initiating many women into the *namkungwi* association of *kinyago*. Tzodzengo had this to say about the decline of *kinyago* in Gede:

> Because those people who introduced the association, those elderly people, those who were highly responsible for that association, the Shambara, died out. They died out. And so when they passed on those who remained behind, the sons and the grandsons; some were members because they were Shambara. And probably they were in the association but they had no interest in the *ngoma*, and so, they were on their own. Yes, he is truly a Shambara but he is not concerned…they died out. Their sons and their grandchildren were not interested…[280]

Tzodzengo attributes the decline of *kinyago* to the attrition of the Shambara and Mijikenda *kinyago* leadership in the region and the subsequent disinterest in the practice by their

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[279] Kapita wa Thinga (Bumbushu), interview, Gede, 02/10/2011.

[280] A Mijikenda euphemism that denotes continuity of a social practice.

offspring. He emphasises that the Mijikenda have also lost many traditional dances and cultural beliefs due to the above factors:

Tsodzengo: For in stance, we used to dance *dungu.* Do you know *dungu*?

Tinga: Yes I do.

Ts: Where was it danced in Gede?

Ti: It used to be danced at Hare wa Kidongo's place.

Ts: And where else?

Ti: Around Sita at Kahindi wa Kituto's place.

Ts: Kahindi wa Kituto and Msanzu….they used to dance in Sita.

Ti: There is no *dungu* any more.

Ts: We used to dance at Hare wa Kidongo's place…now Hare passed on and all the rest passed on…is there *dungu* any more?...*muhi ukigbwa ni kuremera mwanziwe* (a falling tree leans on another one). When you are being leaned on you must be strong to stand firm...if this person leaves another one holds the wheel. But if there is nobody to hold the wheel, the vehicle will rot![281]

While this attrition saw a high frequency of funerary masquerades on the one hand, on the other it marked an exponential decrease in the population of the most dynamic generation which had originally acquired the tradition from the ex-slaves.[282] At this juncture several

[281] Dungu is a Giryama traditional dance that was commonly performed in Gede and Sita(a sub-location of Gede) until around the early 1980s. Dungu is no longer active. David Kenga Tsodzengo, interview, Gede, 20/8/2011.

[282]Robert Yaa Mangi, interview, Malindi, 10/10/2011. Rev. Yaa is the current Archdeacon of Malindi Anglican Church of Kenya Archdeaconry and a former member of *kinyago*

questions beg for answers. Chief of these is why did not the new generation engage in *vinyago*? What made them uninterested? Why is there nobody to "hold the wheel"? What is the social rationale that made the youth abandon the masks? These questions open up avenues for future work.

Socio-economic and environmental change

Besides, some people grabbed the main entertainment field that was situated on a parcel of land which belonged to Gede Primary School and turned it into a farm instead. Unfortunately this development destroyed the intangible significance of the site. Around that time *kinyago* practitioners had their main *dangbwe* within the south-western fringes of the vast Gede National Monument. Fearing encroachment onto the heritage site the National Museums of Kenya, which is the custodian of the country's natural and cultural heritage, fenced off the property. Thus *kinyago* artists had lost both their main production and entertainment sites within a short time.

Similarly, in Ganda and Bate, most inhabitants considered farming as more economically rewarding than *vinyago* therefore they cleared many production and performance sites for agricultural expansion. Reverend Robert Yaa said:

> After the death of the ex-slave elders, the *kinyago* tradition started waning gradually. Where our home is situated (at Kwa Upanga near Mere), there was a farm of Mzee Rubea Maruzuku. That is where his *dangbwe* was. The site stayed for a long time without being

destroyed. People feared it…But nowadays it has become a homestead. It was completely destroyed.[283]

By this time, agricultural production in the entire Malindi region had diminished immensely due chiefly to exhaustion of the soil fertility, climate change owing to decimation of the natural vegetation and poor farming methods of slash and burn**.**[284]

Clearing of forests for agricultural expansion produced more adverse environmental effects all over the three study areas.[285] Important plant species such as the *Mugumo* palm (Borassus Aethiopicus), *M'bavu-bavu* (*Grewia glandulosa*), *Mriangamia (Cassitha filiformis), M'boho, Kahumbo ka mbuzi* (grass) *and Kimbiri* disappeared and therefore it rendered the production of quality constructions extremely challenging. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, for instance, Gandan artists would seek for *Mugumo* palm leaves in Madunguni about 7km westwards, and sometimes as far as Tarassaa in Tana River District, about 70km north of Malindi**.**[286] In Gede practitioners also travelled long distances scouting for the *Mriangamia* climber used for thatching masquerades.[287] In Bate practitioners substituted *Mriangamia* with *M'boho*.[288]

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[283] Rubea Maruzuku was one of the famous ex-slave masqeuraders within the Ganda area (Reverend Robert Yaa Mangi, interview, Malindi, 1/10/2011)

[284] Martin, *The History of Malindi*: 118-122.

[285] To counter this environmental predicament, Saadi Mbarak Mkadam has conserved a portion of land with both indigenous forest and also planted fast growing foreign species such as neem trees on their farm in Mere for future use as a production site for masquerades.

[286] Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro and Ali Baruti, interview, Mguruleni-Ganda, 28/8/2011.

[287] Jimmy Mrira, interview, Gede, 20/3/2011.

[288] Mtawali wa Zimba, interview, Bate, 22/3/2011

The disappearance of essential natural resources led to yet another fundamental transition in the creation of masquerade decorative motifs. Throughout the Malindi region *kinyago* practitioners replaced the endangered Borassus palm leaves with white plastic materials.[289] Zimba avers that:

> Plastic sheets harmonise well with the dark body of the *kinyago.* There is no paint used. In the olden days we used leaves of the Borassus palm tree. But nowadays it is white plastic sheets.[290]

Kinyago production took one month during which time enthusiasts from various moieties constructed "animals" for competitions at funerals or general celebrations. While in the "bush", they mostly relied on maize meal and cowpeas-stew (*kunde)* as their staple foodstuffs.[291] The four-day funerary rite required that the host provided twenty-four chickens; four were slaughtered daily at the main men's *dangbwe* and two at the Namkungwi *dangbwe,* plus copious supplies of toddy.[292] The decline in the production of maize and cowpeas coupled by the subsequent escalation of the market price for these cereals as well as chickens and palm-wine ensured that *vinyago* became an economic liability to practitioners.[293]

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[289] Mtawali wa Zimba, Bate, 22/3/2011; Shebani wa Mkutano, Ganda, 3/10/2011.

[290] Mtawali wa Zimba, Bate, 23/3/2011.

[291] Initially *kunde* was abundant but when in short supply it was substituted with beans (*maharagwe*) or pigeon - peas (*pojo*).

[292] *Ibid.*

[293] Sidi Tui, interview, Ganda 27/9/2011; Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011.

Many artists perceived the tendency of spending a whole month producing *vinyago* as economically burdening to themselves and their families.[294] During their active days as *kinyago* practitioners, Mohamed Ali Bozo and Saadi Mbarak Mkadam would go to work in the day and construct their "animals" late at night, using pressure lamps.[295] But currently how many people would commit themselves that far considering the high cost of living?

Saadi Mbarak Mkadam argues that his intention to host *vinyago vikubwa* in honour of his late father who died in the year 2000 has proved extremely difficult considering that he is responsible for fending for his family and that of his late elder brother.

> You know, I am pressed hard by secondary school children. I have three children and all of them attend private schools. None of them got a government school. Two of these are my children and one is my brother's. My brother died. And he left me with three children. And I gave birth to four children. Another one died. Now, mine are four, two of who are in secondary school, one is in form four. One went to form one this year. Of my brother's children, one is in form three. He also depends on me…I am currently the elder of the entire homestead…My elder brother is dead, my father too is dead. So I am the head of the family. So I have no otherwise but to educate them, they are my children. My brother's children are my children...conducting *vinyago vikubwa* for my late father is a big challenge...it could cost between 25,000.00 and 30,000.00 shillings.[296]

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[294] In one *dangbwe* in Ganda, I personally observed a few artists working mainly late in the evenings. They lamented about "*kazi*"- work commitments inhibiting their progress in constructing their animals. Consequently, the function had to be postponed as members could not meet their deadline.

[295] Mohamed Ali Bozo and Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011.

[296] Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011

Saadi estimates that the four-day function could cost the equivalent of US$360.00; such high costs are quite prohibitive to low income earners. Similarly, the Bumbushu family in Gede has not conducted *vinyago* for Thinga wa Kalu (alias Bumbushu) who died in 2010, due to financial constraints, despite being haunted by the deceased person's spirit.[297] It is therefore instructive that patronage was crucial for the survival of *vinyago* performance in the region.

Modern education, religion and patronage

More critical transformations came with modern education systems and modernisation; religious conversion and general amnesia contributed heavily towards the decline in *vinyago.* Indeed, the majority of the potentially active youth all over the Malindi, and, throughout the country spend much of their time in school and college; later they seek employment in urban places thus ignoring cultural practices such as *kinyago* and instead opting for lifestyles perceived as more "modern". Reverend Robert Mangi Yaa states that principally the *kinyago* association helps to elevate the youth into maturity. It also moulds practitioners into very talented, highly artistic and dignified members of society. However, many *kinyago* members are looked down upon by society as illiterate "liars" for disguising masquerades as "animals" and this situation makes them loose their dignity. After his conversion to Christianity Reverend Mangi personally

[297] Kapita wa Thinga (Bumbushu), interview, Gede, 02/10/2011.

perceived *kinyago* as a deceitful practice that conflicted with his faith; therefore he abandoned *vinyago*.[298] Reverend Yaa posits:

> Education has contributed a lot in the decline of *vinyago.* Now you will go and construct these things…they are not beneficial. Now it is as if their eyes have opened. After completing standard seven. In those days we had standard seven…I used to attend *vinyago* but as the time goes on you start seeing that they are not important. It was like deceit. You make things which you know what they are but you go and tell people there that this is an animal…So you start feeling like...no! You start loosing interest slowly until you abandon it completely… Other people feel that the practice has no payment. So they abandon it.[299]

As people convert to the fast-growing monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, indigenous cultural beliefs and practices are disintegrating. Reverend Mangi contends:

> Another thing is that of Christianity. Christianity, because you will realize that what is happening there is not Christian. But you see that instead of telling the truth you lie. You tell somebody that this is an animal which I have fished from a certain place. But in reality you have made this thing from grass. So, Christians have left because of such things.

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[298] Robert Mangi Yaa, interview, Malindi, 10/10/2011.

[299] *Ibid*.

Tsodzengo was even more explicit concerning religious interference:

> It is said that this is a satanic dance, it is a dance of darkness…this, according to my understanding, it goes according to…it does not go according to light…You see, I have told you that when a major *vinyago* dance was being conducted, the major *vinyago*, of the elephant. They conducted something like a feast. So meat would be eaten there. It is human meat…There, meat would be eaten but it is not of a cow. It is human meat. That is why it is said, "the Shambara eat one another!" Like the Makonde. You see now?[300]

Tzodzengo had a checkered life as a Christian, backslid severally during which he was initiated to the *kinyago* association in the early sixties. He recently reconverted to Christianity. Hence according to his views, and by extension, Christian perception, *kinyago* is a satanic cult in which members are thought to engage in immoral acts such as partaking of human flesh during their ritual ceremonies. Neither Tsodzengo nor the other informants confirmed that they had witnessed the purported cannibalistic *kinyago* rituals. We may surmise that the cannibalism perception which Tsodzengo equated to Makonde practice, is a fallacy promoted by many monotheist religions like Christianity and Islam when evangelising people.

Councilor Bozo, pioneer of the "masquerades of miracles" states emphatically that masquerading is not a Mijikenda tradition and that according to Islam *kinyago* practice is irreligious.

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[300] David Kenga Tsodzengo, interview, 20/8/2011.

> God forbid, but when I die, I do not want people to perform *kinyago* rituals for me…or any other kind of customary rituals…because *kinyago* is not a Mijikenda culture, furthermore *kinyago* rites are not found in the Holy book (Koran)…let them wash me, cover me in *sanda,* pray for me and bury me. That's all!...My spirit will never ever come back and haunt anybody…[301]

After such a challenging and illustrious contribution in *kinyago* Bozo's change in mind is stunning. Indeed, such sentiments if widespread challenge the continuity of *kinyago* rites. Partially concurring, Saadi Mbarak Mkadam argues that many Muslim *kinyago* practitioners have realized that Islamic tenets are opposed to *vinyago*. Citing that the Holy Scriptures teach that, "*Usijitengezee sanamu…"* (Do not make idols for yourself), he nonetheless asserts that the Koran instructs succinctly, "*Lakini waweza kufanya kwa dharura ikiwa jambo lakuumiza, lakini usiabudu*" (But you may do this for critical cases where you are suffering, but do not worship it" (the 'idol').[302] Accordingly, this principle empowers people to make masquerades for funerary rites but not for purposes of worshipping them as doing so would be tantamount to idolatry.

We saw in chapter two how Malindi Arab patrons, among them Shariff Assad, Shariff Said Hussein, Shariff Omar Nassib and Shariff Juma Juwana patronized the entertainment *vinyago* and competed against each other in Ganda in the early 1950s onwards**.** It is instructive that later, Shariff Said Hussein withdrew from practicing *vinyago* and reprimanded his peers for engaging in "idiotic traditions". It may suffice that the "idiotic traditions" signified heathen

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[301] *Sanda* is the Swahili word for white burial shawl. Mohamed Ali Bozo, interview, Malindi, 25/9/2011

[302] Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, interview, Malindi, 29/9/2011.

traditions or more specifically, idolatry. Shariffs claim direct pedigree to Prophet Mohamed, and so, it would indeed be foolhardy for the Prophet's descendants to engage in "heathen practices".

Similarly, Rebecca Gearhart asserts that, "the decline of *ngoma* competitions on the East African Coast seems to correspond with the Islamic reform movement that swept through the Muslim world in the 1970s in response to the Iranian revolution".[303] Indeed, the discontinuation of Arab patronage which revolutionized and enlivened the competitive nature of *vinyago* culminated to the decline of such competitions in Ganda and the entire Malindi region at the time.

In fact, two waves of Islamic reform were witnessed before the 1970s: (1) the emergence of the Mohamedan Reform League in coastal Kenya which resulted from the Islamic Reform movement in the Middle East in the early 1930s and which challenged Beni and almost caused its collapse;[304] (2) the Islamic reform in the middle to late 1950s which caused the termination of "*juba" vinyago* patronized by Arabs in Malindi. This corresponded with the cessation of Makua and Yao masquerades due to Islam in the same period.[305] But there was always a re-awakening of aggressive *kinyago* performances in between the reform eras such as the modernist *vinyago* of the 1970s and the brief re-emergence of the *juba*-type *vinyago* of the 1950s in 2003.

As we have discussed in the previous chapter, in the year 2003 Mbarak Mkadam of Mere and Khamisi Mnyapara of Kakuyuni revived the massive types of *vinyago* called *juba*

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[303] Gearhart, R., "Rama Maulidi: A Competitive Ritual Ngoma in Lamu." (2005): 364.

[304] Ranger, *Dance and Society*: 85-88.

[305] Israel, *In Step with the Times*, Ch IV.

which Malindi Arab merchants had patronised.[306] The dynamism and persistence demonstrated by *kinyago* in the midst of adversity is significant. The recent revival of *kinyago* within Malindi and *mapiko* in Mozambique implicitly denotes that there is always a strong possibility of revival of *kinyago* performances.

National patronage

The non-prioritisation of culture in the country's development agenda is also a critical factor in the gradual decline of cultural practices such as masquerading. Kenya ranks one among few African countries which have a fully-fledged Ministry of Heritage and Culture. However, a major challenge for the Ministry is the lack of a national heritage policy.[307] This lacunae creates enormous challenges for heritage management in general. It has contributed significantly in the gradual decline of the *kinyago* tradition in Malindi.

Patronage has been a crucial factor in the history of African art.[308] In chapter one we saw how the British colonial government promoted *beni* performances in the Coast of East Africa by sponsoring music groups. We also saw how new African states consolidated power by constructing national cultures objectively for national healing and re-uniting through the establishment of cultural policies during the immediate post-independence period. Consequently,

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[306] This resuscitation was similar to the resurrection of old *mapiko* forms by a master artist called Nampyopyo. *Ibid,* Ch IV.

[307] Republic of Kenya, Office of the Vice President, Ministry of State for National Heritage, Strategic Plan, 2006/7-2010/11: 14.

[308] Kasfir, S. L., *African Art and the Colonial Encounter: Inventing a Global Commodity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

through such aggressive cultural policies, for instance, the Tanzanian government institutionalised *ngoma* and thus helped to popularise the genre. But unlike Tanzania, Kenya's cultural policies were not explicit as demonstrated by the lack of a comprehensive national heritage policy as mentioned above.

The existence of such a policy would help in developing legal and financial instruments for researching, managing and safeguarding the country's tangible and intangible cultural heritage at community, national and international level. As a consequence of the above limitation, *kinyago* remains unknown beyond Malindi district. On the contrary, in 2005, for example, Malawi proclaimed *Gule wa Mkulu*, an ancient ritual practice rooted in the *nyau* association as a significant element of Malawian cultural heritage. Following that proclamation, in 2008 UNESCO inscribed *Gule wa Mkulu* to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.[309]

Conclusion

We have noted that since the 1970s *kinyago* practice in the Malindi region has been declining gradually owing to a combination of factors, key of which are monotheistic religious affiliation, patronage, environmental destruction and general amnesia among the young generation due to the desire of "modernity". Currently Gede relies heavily on support from Ganda, Mkoamoto and Mere in hosting *vinyago*. In Bate, the tradition is still prevalent but tottering on the edge of collapsing. Ganda, the cradle of the *kinyago* tradition still boasts a strong base of practitioners

[309] See http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00142.

but the aforementioned negative factors have critically overwhelmed the practice and it is a matter of time before the tradition fades out.

The discourse of heritage also emerged. Whereas a section of both ex-slaves and Mijikenda opined that *kinyago* is entirely a slave, Wanyasa or Washambara heritage, some Mijikenda assert that initially it was a "slave tradition2 but the Mijikenda appropriated and still practice it; hence they claim ownership of the *kinyago* heritage. As Charo wa Munga emphasizes:

> *kinyago* has become our association [read "heritage"] because we were initiated to the association. It is our association. When a person dies here and he was one of us, we must conduct *kinyago* in his honour. Yes! There are no slaves any more here!"[310]

The Mkokoani Declaration effectively empowered the Mijikenda to appropriate, nurture, practice, and therefore to claim ownership of the *kinyago* tradition. Having acquired the skills, knowledge and know-how *kinyago* became part of Mijikenda culture as much as it is Wanyasa culture. Slaves introduced the *kinyago* tradition in Malindi district alongside other dances such as *kinyasa*, *kindimba*, *kunju* and *kimungwe*, some of which are still practiced. We need to investigate these dances before they die out completely.

Unlike Zanzibar, in Kenya there are no archival records which show the ethnicity of the slaves who were resident in the country at any given moment. That notwithstanding, many *kinyago* songs are sung in the *kinyasa* languages which a few people can understand and

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[310] Charo wa Munga, interview, Bate, 23-25/3/2011; Shebani wa Mkutano interview, Ganda,02/10/2011

interpret. Therefore there is need for linguistic research on *kinyago* songs. This would help us to understand their meaning and symbolism. It would also enable us to discern the ethnic background of the ex-slaves and therefore enable us enhance our knowledge of the *kinyago* tradition.[311] During performance we noted some artistic variations in the production techniques of *vinyago*. It would be interesting to organise an exhibition on *vinyago* performance, for example, involving artists from Gede, Ganda and Bate. This would expose the different production techniques, patterns and designs for a better understanding and appreciation of the artistic dynamism of *kinyago* in the Malindi district.

[311] Except for Khamis Juma Kengewa who claimed Yao origin, the rest of the Shambara informants were uncertain about their exact ethnicity.

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Interviews

1. Ali Baruti, Shambara, Mguruleni-Ganda, August, 2011
2. Amina Rashid,Mijikenda, Ganda, August, 2011
3. Charo wa Munga, Mijikenda, Bate, March, 2011
4. David Kenga Tsodzengo, Mijikenda, Gede, August, 2011
5. Jimmy Mrira, Mijikenda, Gede, March, 2011
6. Kabucheche Saidi Tinga, Mijikenda, Gede, August, 2011
7. Kapita wa Thinga (Bumbushu), Mijikenda, Gede, October, 2011
8. Khamis Juma Kengewa, Yao , Ganda, August, 2011
9. Kaingu wa Shauri, Mijikenda, Bate, 2011
10. Mohamed Ali Bozo, Mijikenda, Malindi, September, 2011
11. Mohamed Ramadhani Songoro, Shambara, Mguruleni-Ganda, Aug/October, 2011
12. Moshi wa Hamisi Serenge, Shambara, Ganda, August, 2011
13. Mtawali wa Zimba, Mijikenda, Bate, March 2011
14. Ramadhani Hamisi Ramadhani, Shambara, Mgurululeni-Ganda, Aug/October, 2011
15. Robert Yaa Mangi, Mijikenda, Malindi, October, 2011
16. Saadi Mbarak Mkadam, Shambara, Malindi, September, 2011
17. Said Mohamed Ramadhani, Shambara, Mgurululeni-Ganda, Aug/October, 2011
18. Shebani wa Mkutano, Mijikenda, Ganda, August,2 011
19. Sidi Tsui, Mijikenda, Ganda, October, 2011
20. Sikubali Katana Ngoka, Mijikenda, Ganda, October, 2011